

**COMPLEXITIES OF LEADING AND MANAGING CURRICULUM IN RURAL
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

by

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of education in the discipline, Education Leadership, Management and Policy.

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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Durban, South Africa

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DECLARATION

I, Dumisani B Zondo, declare that

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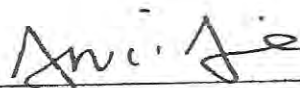
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ABSTRACT

Rural schools are often plagued with educational problems such as the isolation from specialised services, limited access to staff development and universities, serving teacher shortages and decreasing enrolment which result in decreasing funding (Wallit & Reimer, 2008). The study sought to explore challenges of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools from the school management teams' perspectives of five rural secondary schools within the proximity of Pinetown District. This is a case study that employs a qualitative approach which adopts an interpretivist paradigm. Data was generated through in-depth semi-structured interviews accompanied by documents review. Purposive sampling was used to identify these schools for their convenience. Data was analysed by repeatedly reading transcripts in order to identify ideas that are emerging, code them, categorise and group them into themes. Findings elucidated complexities that SMTs are grappling with on daily basis and successfully or otherwise are enabled to mitigate them in their attempts to achieve wider educational goals. The results and recommendations may inspire the government and education authorities to enact new strategies to devote their efforts in influencing other stakeholders to provide and maximise the required facilities and continuous support in rural schools.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL FROM UKZN



3 June 2015

Mr Dumisani Brian Zondo 935315283
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Zondo

Protocol reference number: HSS/0317/015M

Project title: Complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 13 April 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the above-mentioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

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

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

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

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

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/s/

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work first and foremost to the Almighty God for His blessings for this achievement, my family for understanding what I was going through since 2014 and my late parents Mrs A.N. Zondo and Mr J.M. Zondo for fulfilling their parental roles.

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2. My wife who has always been in charge of the family and supportive.
3. All the principals and HODs who contributed to this study materials and interviews.

ACRONYMS

HOD: Head of Department

IQMS: Integrated Quality Management System

DoE: Department of Education

DBE: Department of basic Education

CPTD: Continuing Professional Teacher Development

OBE: Outcomes Basic Education

SMT: School Management Team

NCS: National Curriculum Statement

CAPS: Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement

SASA: South African Schools Act

SGB: School Governing Body

HSRC: Human Science Research Council

PPN: Post Provision Norms

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is an orientation to this study, and therefore it sets the scene for the discussion of key issues pertinent to the study. It provides the background, purpose, rationale as well as the significance of the study. This is followed by outlining the objectives and critical research questions guiding the study. Furthermore, this chapter provides a brief discussion of how key terms can be understood in this study, followed by the demarcation and the outline of the study. Lastly, the chapter is summarised.

1.2 Background to the study

The official school management team (SMT) is made up of the principal, deputy principal and the heads of department (HOD) that are responsible for ensuring smooth running of schools in order to meet broader national intentions of the current curriculum (Hoadley, Christie, Jacklin & Ward, 2008). They are expected to plan, direct the work of a group of teachers and learners, monitor their work and take correcting actions where necessary (Hoadley, Christie, Jacklin & Ward, 2008). There is lot that is addressed in the literature about the roles and responsibilities of leading and managing curriculum by the SMTs. However, there is a need to take into cognisance different contextual factors that might impact negatively on the fulfilment of these roles and responsibilities. This study focuses on exploring some of the complexities of leading and managing curriculum in secondary schools that are situated in rural communities from SMTs' perspectives. The study also sought to explore the strategies that the SMTs were using to mitigate the effects of complexities in leading and managing curriculum in secondary schools that are situated in rural areas.

Since 1994, the post-apartheid government of South Africa made efforts to move away from content based and teacher centred NATED 550 curriculum by enacting a radical approach that is outcomes-based education (OBE). Such an approach was learner centred and competency based (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009). The introduction of OBE principles were incorporated into Curriculum 2005 (C2005) as a new policy for a democratic and free South Africa (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009). Curriculum 2005 was not specific on what content teachers should be teaching (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009). The SMTs on the other hand had to play their primary roles and responsibilities which embrace some aspects such as planning, monitoring,

controlling, giving guidance and support, analysing and interpreting curriculum policy design and then showing effective delegating ability (Department of Education, 2000).

There was no clear guide from Curriculum 2005 given to the teachers and the learners who needed clarity on exactly how teaching and learning should be done (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009). These shortcomings were identified and consequently, some revisions became necessary. The Curriculum Review Report in 2000 led to the introduction of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) which was adopted in 2002 as a national policy. The RNCS is, according to Bernstein's concepts, a mixed method which is being content led but is also learner-centred competence model (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009). This has caused confusion and contradiction on how the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) is to be implemented in schools. The NCS as a curriculum did not provide the sequence of activities to be followed by the teachers (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009). According to Christie, Sullivan, Duku and Gallie (2010), the NCS (Grade R-12) is a learner-centred outcomes-based initiative. Motshekga (2015) posits that the NCS provides the disciplinary content to the qualification and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is a streamlined version of the NCS. The CAPS clearly indicates the scope and depth of the content to be covered, together with the assessment requirements and the pacing of the content areas per quarter (Motshekga, 2015). The CAPS was implemented in 2012 in Grades R, 1; 2; 3 and 10. In 2013 it was implemented in Grades 4; 5; 6 and 11 and in Grades 7; 8; 9 and 12 in 2014. The class of 2014 Grade 12 learners was the first to write a content-based examination.

According to Hoadley, Christie, Jacklin and Ward (2008), the new curriculum policies are directed towards dismantling spread-out practices but on the same breath they build new systems to effectively reconfigure the work of curriculum leadership and management. The SMTs are expected to have intimate understanding of the schools as these must be run on daily bases. It is imperative that the SMTs possess the knowledge of what is needed to guide the schools along in translating policy decisions into practice to achieve broader intended national goals (De Clercq, 2006). The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) spells out the expected roles and responsibilities in leading and managing curriculum. However, the reality is that it has not been precisely explored as to what the SMTs are actually doing in particular contexts such as schools that are located rural areas (Skosana & Monyai, 2013).

The research that is reported in this dissertation makes frequent use of the term leadership and management. The two terms are closely related but at the same time, they do not mean one and the same thing. The term management tends to be linked with processes and structure whereas the term leadership is usually aligned with vision and values (Hoadley & Ward, 2009). The two terms are used interchangeably in this study although they have different meanings but one cannot be practiced without the other term. The SMTs were established to ensure that the schools deliver and maintain good quality education that is adaptive to school contexts and change (Department of Education, 2000). However, in many schools the SMTs are struggling to provide a supportive environment and extending their support into classrooms due to a variety of contextual factors (Ndou, 2008).

1.3 Purpose and rationale for the study

Prior to the new democratic dispensation in 1994, leading and managing curriculum was the sole responsibility of the principals (Chisholm, Hoadley & Kivilu, 2005). I, as a researcher in this study, received teacher training during an era of the content-based curriculum which was also teacher centred. The main objective of teaching was to impart and train a learner to master subject content. The role of the principal was confined to monitoring and managing the curriculum and also to perform administrative duties. Teachers were managing curriculum implementation in their classrooms with less supervision from the principals because their time was largely devoted to administrative matters (Chisholm, *et al.*, 2005). The establishment of school management teams (SMTs) in the early 21st century provided principals with support to lead and manage curriculum effectively (Walters, 1993 & Fleisch, 2008).

Naidoo (2008) avers that it is essential for the SMTs to understand the curriculum content to link various curriculum components and its use in planning, instruction and assessment. Most research studies that I have reviewed focus on different roles and responsibilities of the SMTs towards effective educational leadership and management (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and Van Rooyen, 2009; Van Wyk and Marumoloa, 2012; Mathipa, Magano, Mapotse, Matlabe & Mohapi, 2014; Monametsi, 2015; Milondzo & Seema, 2015). Whilst these pieces of literature seem to cover different contextual factors of curriculum leadership and management, practices differ from one school to another on the bases of individual schools' peculiar contextual conditions. Furthermore, the findings of various research studies reveal a gap that exists whereby researchers discover that the SMT members are not well acquainted

with the differences in leadership and management responsibilities of the individual members and those of the SMT as an official structure (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2009). According to Mafora and Phorabatho (2010, p. 210), some SMTs appear to be unclear about their roles and there is perceived existence of “role ambiguity”. This becomes even more prevalent in schools that are located in rural areas as a result of conglomeration of rural contextual factors. Therefore, this study sought to explore the perspectives of the SMTs about the complexities they experienced in leading and managing curriculum in secondary schools that are located in rural communities. It also sought to understand how the SMTs mitigated such complexities in order to ensure that there was effective leadership and management of the curriculum.

It is imperative to note that rural schools are facing more challenges as compared to their urban counterparts due to the lack of social and rural developments. The lack of most amenities in rural areas poses a lot of challenges that impact negatively in the schooling environment. This results in emerging complexities of leading and managing curriculum that are experienced by the SMTs of rural secondary schools in particular. An interest was generated from the researcher on how SMTs are enabled to mitigate challenges to create an environment conducive towards effective teaching and learning in these rural secondary schools.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study sought to provide insights about complexities of leading and managing curriculum in secondary schools that are located in rural communities. The study may serve as a point of reference against which the SMTs in secondary schools serving rural communities can reflect on complexities they face in leading and managing curriculum. It is also hoped that these school managers may reflect on effective strategies they are employing to mitigate these complexities in order to effectively lead and manage the curriculum. It is anticipated that this may contribute towards creating an awareness of some of the solutions that work within peculiar rural schooling conditions. By so doing, the present and the future school leaders may be able to target their efforts on aspects of the job that are likely to be most effective and efficient in improving learner achievement.

1.5 Objectives of the study

- To gain in-depth knowledge of complexities from School Management Teams' perspectives of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.
- To elucidate how School Management Teams mitigate the effects of complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.

1.6 Critical questions

- What complexities are the School Management Teams experiencing in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools?
- How do the School Management Teams mitigate the effects of complexities in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools effectively?

1.7 Definition of key concepts

There are six concepts that underpin this study and these are leadership; management; curriculum; complexity; administration and rural schools. Each of them is briefly explained in this section. The term *leadership* has been used to refer to the act of exercising influence to other stakeholders and set directions in order to achieve the organisational objectives. The term *management* has been used to refer to the leadership function that is concerned with efficiently maintaining processes by which schools meet their educational goals. The term *curriculum* has been used to refer to the school curriculum which actually constitutes a group of subjects studied in schools. The term *complexities*, has been used to refer to problems and difficulties that the SMTs are experiencing in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools. The term *administration* has been used to refer to the application of management functions such as planning, organising, actuating, coordinating and controlling. Therefore, the term has been used in its management sense. The term *rural schools*, has been used to refer to those schools that are located in the outskirts of the country within rural communities and they are experiencing social, economic and educational deprivation with peculiar cultural factors.

1.8 Demarcation of the problem

The notion of demarcation of the problem is usually used to mean establishing the boundaries of the problem area being studied (Horberg, 1999). Making boundaries for the problem makes it more manageable and focused (Kid, 2006). In the context of this study, the research was confined to five secondary schools that are located in Ndwedwe area. The schools that were close to each other were almost six kilometres apart due to the geographical

landscape of this rural area. The distance to the city was more than forty kilometres. In addition, the study was limited to school principals and an HOD per school, thus excluding Post level one educators.

1.9 Outline of the study

Chapter One - Orientation to the study

This chapter discusses various aspects such as the introduction; background of the study, stating a problem, purpose and the significance of the study. The chapter further provides objectives of the study, critical research questions and demarcation of the study. The summary of the chapter is provided at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Two - Literature review and theoretical framework

This is a literature review chapter which describes various concepts and research projects that were conducted in the area of focus. The body of the literature review is guided by the two research questions.

Chapter Three - Research design and methodology

The chapter presents the research design and methodology that was used in generating data that would address the research questions guiding the study. The following aspects, namely, the introduction followed by the research paradigm, design of this study, research methodology, identifying participants, information generation and methods of data analysis form part of the chapter.

Chapter Four - Data presentation and discussion

This chapter is about the presentation and discussion of data that was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews with school principals and HODs. A chapter summary brings the chapter to a close.

Chapter Five - Study summary, findings and recommendations

This chapter presents the findings of the study drawing from the data that was presented and discussed in Chapter Four. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations are made. The implications of the study follow and lastly the summary of this chapter is presented.

1.10 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an orientation to the whole study with well-articulated procedures that were to be followed in conducting the research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the study, by among other things, indicating the way the study was going to unfold. This chapter discusses the ideas that are drawn from the literature that relate to complexities of curriculum leadership and management in rural secondary schools in particular at international as well as national levels. It is imperative for any reader to understand different concepts and perspectives of what the literature speaks about and what curriculum really entails. Leaders and managers should be well acquainted with different concepts and interpretation of curriculum so that they will develop their expertise of its effective implementation as an external policy to be adapted into their schools' contexts (Bush & Glover, 2009). The literature that is consulted elucidates the concepts about leadership and management as it is used interchangeable in most studies in South Africa. Various aspects of curriculum leadership and management which ultimately focus on rural secondary schools in South Africa are discussed at length. Thereafter, a theoretical framework upon which the study is based follows these discussions, ultimately enabling the researcher to draw informed inferences from the findings. The summary of this chapter is presented at the end of these discussions.

2.2 Background on curriculum leadership and management in schools.

There are multiple demands facing the education system in South Africa that are related to involving the communities, the need to improve the quality of curriculum delivery and the continuing change in policy framework (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009). Curriculum leadership and management are often taken as synonymous in South African literature (Bush, 2007). Furthermore, Bush (2007) asserts that leadership and management have distinct concepts but these terms must be treated equally if broader national goals of education are going to be brought into fruition. Leaders manipulate and direct a mindset of a person to think in a certain way and the manager ensures that correct procedures are always observed (Northouse, 2015).

2.2.1 Conceptualising curriculum

There are different approaches from literature which explain what the curriculum really entails. However, Stenhouse (1975) argues that to continue unpacking curriculum concepts widely may result in realising that there has been no significant change. A variety of concepts about curriculum that were brought to the fore have shown that apparently there is no single and explicit definition of the curriculum (Breault & Marshall, 2010). However, the definitions of curriculum emerge as confluence of different discourses with little difference towards the kind of a learner that is envisaged at the end of the schooling system (Breault & Marshall, 2010). For instance, Carl (1995) argues that curriculum may have a narrow as well as a broader meaning. Viewed from this perspective, the narrow meaning can be regarded as a set of subjects whereas a broader meaning would include all the learning experiences offered by a school during and after school.

According to Hunkins and Hammill (1994), a curriculum is a well organised strategic tool encompassing its aims, subjects and their contents, resources and also the teaching approach. Stenhouse (1975) posits that curriculum is a policy that stipulates the methods that will enhance the achievement of educational objectives. Curriculum is enacted as a guide that the teachers ought to use that will enable a teacher to judge whether the projected outcomes can still be realised or not (Stenhouse, 1975). Newman and Ingram (1989) bring to the fore the concept of curriculum as an accepted programme of learning that is delivered to recipients. The programme of learning is run by the process of reciprocating planning, doing the necessary activities, assessing and reflection (Grundy, 1987).

Cornbleth (1990) avers that curriculum is an ideal policy that prescribes what actually happens in the classrooms which involves the learners and the teachers playing their meaningful roles to interact with knowledge in a given context. The involvement of the learners and the teachers is aligned with Curriculum 2005 (Department of Education, 1997, p. 10) stating that “a curriculum is everything planned by teachers which will assist in developing the learner”. Pratt (1994) considers curriculum as only a plan for instructional acts. A certain perspective emerges to describe curriculum in adopting a stance of “narrow” curriculum in which it is viewed as a policy artefact to be “examined” or measured that is reflected as “context” and as “syllabus” (Graham-Jolly, 2012, p. 249).

The analysis of different approaches of what curriculum really entails encompasses a planned document which provides a variety of knowledge to be covered and attained by the learners from all public institutions within an expected time frame. The four core elements of curriculum are teaching, learning, assessment and resources used for teaching and learning (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 1994). This brings about an emerging line of thinking that curriculum is a policy that has to be implemented without reservations or alterations at school level and is inclusive of the subjects and their content (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2011). To this end, curriculum definitions then include the explicit curriculum, the formal curriculum, the syllabus as well as the subjects that are taught (Wilson; Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2011). Reed, Gultig and Adendoff (2012) aver that curriculum emphasises subjects to be taught in schools, strategies of how curriculum should be taught and knowledge to be imparted. Curriculum that is provided in the classroom provides the learners with the minimum knowledge.

2.2.2 Curriculum leadership

Jefferies (2000) avers that the leaders of curriculum instil positive thinking to their followers toward the attainment of educational goals resulting in the enhancement of their working ethics. Leadership is regarded as a strategic approach to tap on the mind of the followers in directing their thinking towards the achievement of objectives where followers show their dedication to their roles and responsibilities (Bush, 2007 & 2011). Leadership can be viewed as a process of channelling the conduct of others towards the attainment of set objectives (Marishane & Botha, 2011). Hargreaves (2005) posits that curriculum leaders develop and maintain their commitment to practices and seek the support of teachers in the enhancement of the positive and successful learning atmosphere in their schools. Effective curriculum leaders are influential to the teachers in empowering them to adopt and acquaint themselves with the philosophy encapsulated in the curriculum document (Jefferies, 2000). According to Jefferies (2000), these curriculum leaders render the professional support and provide the necessary resources whilst modelling good conduct and professional practices in their schools. However, Burns (1978) avers that there is too much emphasis on leadership and less on finding common ground to understand it.

Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) aver that it is imperative to generate more knowledge of leadership activities in order to interact with, interpret and implement successfully the policy imperatives. Bush (2007) argues that it is very difficult to decide on

the appropriate leadership practice that can direct organisational activities towards achieving the main objectives. This argument by Bush (2007) is in agreement with Cuban's (1988) definition of leadership that is about directing others' behaviours in continuing with a process of changing current to new practices in achieving the broader objectives. Leaders shape goals, motivations and actions of others thus leadership takes much energy and skill (Bush, 2007). Leadership may be understood as a relationship of influence directed towards goals whether formal or informal (Bennis, 1990; Burns, 1978; Yukl, 1998). Curriculum leadership occurs when there is social interaction between a person in leadership position and the person is being led for specific purposes (Nivala & Hujala, 2002). In promoting good and effective relationships between the leaders and the followers, Glover (2007) avers that leaders should have the open line of communication, deep listening, respecting others and voicing personal opinions that will enable others to bring out their best.

Some characteristics of curriculum leaders have been identified in the literature. However, more research is needed in curriculum leaders in action to identify effective practices (Jefferies, 2000). Yukl (1998) posits that practices refer to social processes where people analyse the environments within and also external to the organisation that will determine the selection of relevant activities to make an organisation prosper. Wiles (2008) stress that most effective curriculum leaders embrace dynamic roles that enable them to go beyond the expected responsibilities. This scholar further alludes to the view that effective curriculum leaders have a common goal post towards which all the resources are maximised and directed towards reaching the goal post. Taylor (2007) argues that the utilisation of resources in the South African education system is problematic and the extent and its impact of this problem have not been exposed. The dynamics of curriculum leadership can be exacerbated by the shortage of key resources for effective curriculum leadership which can either be, human, financial and/or physical. An effective leader would be eager to forge something quite new and different to overcome challenges of the current system (Wiggins, 2014).

Curriculum leadership has different leadership domains that involve leaders having the end in mind; the curriculum with its delivery route map, curriculum assessment, human resource development and collaboration as well as management (European Climate Research Alliance, 2010). Curriculum leaders focus on engaging others in complex work of progressing towards achieving mission, vision, engagement and adaptability (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Danielson, 2006). It is the essence of influential ability of leaders to mobilise all stakeholders

in education in multiple pathways which lead to positive impact to learner achievement (Copland & Knapp, 2005; Wiles, 2008). The tasks of curriculum leaders involve providing continuing support and professional development to the teachers in order to enhance teaching methods that will improve learner achievement (King, 2002).

2.2.3 Effective curriculum leadership

Thus the significance of successful leadership is based on three basic sets of practices, namely, setting the directions, developing people and redesigning the organisation (Leithwood, Louis & Wahlstrom, 2004; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). In setting the directions, leadership practices aim at developing shared understanding and a sense of purpose of an organisation, specifically in a school. People are motivated by leadership practices that are identifying and articulating vision by creating high performance expectations (Leithwood, *et. al.*, 2004). Hallinger (2000) postulates the setting of direction as defining the school's mission as one of the three dimensions of leadership which are to set the direction, developing people and redesigning the organisation.

To develop the people, the followers need to be capacitated in order to productively move towards those work-related set directions. According to Leithwood, *et. al.*, (2004), significant leadership practices that are influential to the people include using different techniques for the individual to be intrinsically motivated, individualised recognition for success and improvement in a well-established and maintained school climate. The influential aspect of a leader rests on the specific objectives an organisation intends to achieve (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). Danielson (2001) posits that effective curriculum leaders focus on enhancing staff development process through different approaches thus empowering the teachers to improve their professional practices that will result in enhanced learner achievement. The leaders of curriculum provide opportunities and encourage the formation of professional learning communities enacted by extensive staff development and teacher collaboration environments (Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2001; Patterson & Patterson, 2004; Copland & Knapp, 2005). On the same vein, Hallinger (2000) identifies this leadership dimension as managing the instructional programme. This is to promote continuing teacher development and enhance teacher knowledge, skills, competence and sustain and improve commitment (Shulman, 1987).

It is critical to build the knowledge base about effective curriculum leadership by reconciling different forms of leadership so that we harness their benefits for the positive impact in order to improve learner achievement. Scholars such as Leithwood, Louis and Wahlstrom (2004) stress that literature provides the following different forms of leadership, namely, instructional leadership that directly focuses on improving classroom practices for effective teaching and learning, transformational leadership that brings attention to the schooling environment that is necessary to bring improved changes to teaching and learning, participative leadership that involves other stakeholders in decision making processes for schools to prosper.

The achievement of educational outcomes will be effective if instructional leadership is implemented and continually strengthened (Mulford, 2003). According to Bush and Glover (2002), and Southworth (2002), an instructional leader deals with the core business of schooling which is that of providing learners with quality education. The literature (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009; Bush, 2013; Bhengu & Mkhize, 2014) that has been consulted relates the instructional leadership to the activities of principals in enhancing learner achievement but it does not provide the clear alignment in this regard of what other members of the SMTs should exactly be doing. Some of the principals' activities as instructional leaders include developing an environment where each teacher develops a sense of producing better results, improving professional practices as well as modelling the desired values (Hallinger, 2005). Reitzug, West and Angel (2008) aver that instructional leadership occurs as ongoing learning of teachers and other school personnel about individual practice and overall school's practice. Thus, the SMTs' practices should be enabling the effectiveness of the instructional practices of the principal hence one of the three forms of the principal influencing teaching and learning is that of indirect effect (Southworth, 2004).

Leadership practices need to be adaptive to instructional goals therefore effective curriculum leaders must have an ability to monitor and assess the current practices for improvement to be relevant to current demands in education. The continuing analysis of the SMTs' achievement practices will possibly provide an opportunity to develop new strategies to improve learner achievement amicable (Danielson, 2006). In most studies that have been conducted (Fullan, 2002; Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009; Bush, 2013; Bhengu & Mkhize, 2014), leadership has been given prominence to principals; however, Bush and Heystek (2006) argues that principals lack continuing understanding of the importance of their leadership roles that must

yield good learning outcomes. Thus the principals' high degree of involvement will bring their influence to promote a positive learning climate (Lee & Dimmock, 1999; Hallinger, 2000). Similarly, Robinson (2003) posits that the real role of leadership is not and should not be command and control; however, leadership is about creating a climate of possibility.

Leadership practices are directed to modify, strengthen and sustain organisational structure and collaborative processes in an attempt to redesign an organisation. They almost certainly rely on the degree of motivation of all stakeholders in a school. Leaders need to possess the repertoire of practices thus catering for the continuing change of contextual factors and curriculum framework. There is no single set of "ideal" style of leadership that can be effective for an example in both large and small secondary schools hence different capacities are required (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Effective leaders foster shared beliefs by being influential on community based relationships that inform and enhance professional culture. This practice increases the involvement of human resources that will have a positive impact in leading and managing the affairs of schools effectively (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002; Spillane, 2006; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005) thus promoting a positive learning climate (Hallinger, 2000).

Curriculum leaders monitor the performance of schools, reorganise structures that may undermine progress and use the right platform to address concerns in order to improve learner achievement (Leithwood, *et. al.*, 2004). However, leadership practices are informed by the social, cultural and historical factors within which schools are located (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). In all highlighted forms of leadership, the principal is expected to develop human relationships among all stakeholders in a school which are earned through expertise (MacBeath, 2005). Carter (2000) discusses lessons from 21 high-performing, high poverty schools that had adopted a "No Excuses Campaign" in America where many of these secondary schools use signed contracts by parents, teachers and learners alike and consistency was observed on established contractual expectations. Carter (2000) further argues that secondary schools have a burden to remediate because the earlier grades fail to educate. In the case of South African education system, the focus has always been on secondary schools to monitor progress and render support services disregarding the importance to start at earlier grades at primary levels.

2.2.4 Curriculum management and educational administration

Organisational assets need maintenance, management of human and financial resources, school functionality and effective curriculum implementation (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2013). According to Buchanan and Huczynski (1997), management, in contrast to leadership is an organisational concept related to structures and processes by which organisations meet their goals and central purposes. Management is about maintaining effectively current organisational arrangements (Cuban, 1988; Bush, 2007). Administration is the confluence of both curriculum leadership and management responsibilities. Răducan and Răducan (2014) posit that managers are the ones who administrate all the activities of an organisation, people linked to it to do what they have to. Copland, Ford, Knapp and Markholt (2003) aver that the relevant management practices that are informed by the immediate contextual conditions enhance learner achievement. The effective curriculum management practices enable the development and the maintenance of environment that is conducive to instructional improvement (Marsh, 2002; Spillane, 2004; Taylor, 2007). The SMTs have a task to conceptualise curriculum aspects for them to align their practices toward attaining the educational objectives (Meyers & Nulty, 2008). The attractions of approaches to curriculum theory are within an understanding that curriculum involves people with strong knowledge of what the curriculum really entails and what their requirements are and use the multiplicity of strategies to meet the external demanding environments.

According to Tyler (1949), school managers should acknowledge that the main objective of education is to develop the mind of a learner who interacts successfully with the environment within which the learner lives. Therefore, it is imperative that the school vision and mission statement of each school is informed by broader national objectives (Tyler, 1949). The approach to curriculum management develops through dynamic interaction of planning, acting, evaluation and reflection which form part and parcel of achieving broader educational objectives (Grundy, 1987). The significant contributing factors of effective curriculum management include the well-organised work plan articulating the main objectives of curriculum implementation (Gustafsson, 2005; Kanjee & Prinsloo, 2005; Taylor & Prinsloo, 2005; Van der Berg, 2005).

The basic requirement of the curriculum management is to make the organisation, specifically the school to be functional (Department of Education, 2008). It is one of the tasks of the curriculum manager to encourage and motivate the learners and the teachers to take full responsibilities of their expected roles they need to observe to enable effective learning to take place (Pandor, 2006). There are different approaches of how school should be managed which ultimately determine the way different resources are effectively utilised by curriculum manager to the benefit of schools (Bush, 2007). All these models comprised seven managerial functions for schools that school managers must select the relevant model based from the situational analysis of the immediate conditions (Caldwell, 1992). The curriculum managers' practices are goal driven; they often do the needs analysis; they prioritise some activities from a work plan and review the whole process (Caldwell, 1992). The curriculum management practices are about the successful implementation of curriculum imperatives toward the realisation of education objectives (Caldwell, 1992).

Educational administration is defined in different ways; however, Bolam's (1999) view is that it is used to cover educational policy, leadership and management activities at all levels. (Ogunsaju, 1998) and Nkwankwo (1987) describe administration to be the strategic organisation of relevant resources and environmental conditions in order for the successful attainment of educational objectives. Based on this understanding, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2006) determine five administrative duties which are to plan; organise; actuate or direct; coordinate and control or evaluate. This view coheres with Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) when relating these administrative functions to a managerial leadership model that focuses on functions, tasks and behaviours to be carried out competently. These scholars also allude to the fact that authority is vested on managers in formal positions and this provides them with influential powers due to their status.

2.2.5 Models of curriculum management

There are six models of management that have a bearing to curriculum management. These are formal, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguity and cultural models (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). Formal management model is related to formal structural elements of an organisation and is hierarchical in nature. In schools, it is the principal, the DP and the (HODs) that are in formal position that are enabled to make decisions through the rational process (Department of Education, 2008b). The incumbents take managerial decisions which

are focused on managing existing activities successfully (Dressler, 2001). This is the current situation in South African education system where our schools are goal-seeking organisations (Bush & Glover, 2002).

Collegial models are management approaches which assume that all organisational members have to be included in the decision making processes (Bass, 2003). Collegial models are linked to participative leadership approach which apart from taking decisions collectively in an organisation; it also enables others to have leadership duties delegated to teachers in the case of the internal school community. Participative leadership model approach tends to ease the pressure on school principals; hence, principals spend more time on administrative duties than being instructional leaders (Chisholm, Hoadley & Kivilu, 2005). This situation therefore, demands that some management duties are delegated to other teachers at different levels in a school. One of the limitations to collegial management models is that they are so strongly normative with respect of obscuring reality; they are slow and cumbersome tortuous and time consuming (Bush & Glover, 2002).

Political managerial models are characterised by decision-making between interest groups as a bargaining process and power struggle is the normal phenomena (Bush, 2003). The interested groups involved in political managerial disposition assume that the development of the set of rules and guiding principles are finalised after engaging the relevant stakeholders in fruitful debates until the decision favours the dominant group (Bush, 2003). Ultimately, schools will not achieve the desired educational goals unless this is done at higher government levels outside the schooling environments; hence, the nature of conflicts are about resources and power (Ball, 1987).

Transactional leadership is aligned with this political model and adopts the notion of give-and-take scenario between the curriculum leaders and the teachers for their mutual benefits and that of the school (Miller & Miller, 2001). The limitation of transactional model is the notion of the dedication bearing positive attitude to be short-lived which is detrimental. Subjective models promote individualistic understanding of the situation that may differ substantially and that may result in the failure to coordinate different efforts for the realisation of school objectives (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999).

Postmodern leadership is aligned to subjective model that considers individual characters and personalities whilst disregarding the position that an individual holds in a school. According to Keough and Tobin (2001), the postmodern approaches promote individualised and uncoordinated realities that are based on individual interests and opinions thereby losing track of authority. The school environment becomes less secured if subjective management models creep into schools as they are perceived to provide few guidelines for management action. Leaders have a task to review the current postmodern leadership practices towards the emerging school culture that hamper the delivery of quality education (Sackney & Mitchell, 2001).

The ambiguity management model stresses uncertainty and unpredictability in organisations when they experience difficulty in ordering their priorities (Bush, 2003). The objectives of the school are not treated as the focal point towards which all efforts will be directed but aims become clear through the behaviour of teachers in that particular school (Cohen & March, 1986). Schools are perceived to operate without concrete rules that serve as driver to achieve school goals because relatively there are autonomous groups that are loosely connected with one another. Schools are unable to introduce new and frequent changes effectively because of fragmented roles without direction (Bush, 2003).

Contingent leadership is appropriate in a climate of ambiguity; hence, there are prevailing opportunities to consider in the school context in order to decide on the appropriate leadership style that will result in the realisation of school objectives. Yukl (2002) argues against curriculum leaders to rely on sets of prescribed management roles on account of uncertainty of the conditions on the ground. This implies that the curriculum leader requires a manager to adopt a variety of leadership and management disposition in order to meet the demands of the current emerging situation (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999).

Lastly, cultural models are reliant on individual epistemologies based on experiences that have long been adopted reality that are influential in a manner a person views the world around and the kind of behaviour that is displayed (Bush, 2003). On the same vein, Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1992) aver that each school develops a culture which is value-laden and serves to define the unique qualities of individual schools; hence, values are acknowledged and should be fostered. The critical focus of the cultural model depends on the

analysis by leaders to identify and give value to emerging morality that must be considered when taking contexts into consideration (Sergiovanni, 1991).

2.2.6 Effective curriculum management

All six management models and different leadership styles provide different approaches to curriculum implementation. The continuing changing dynamics in our schools require leaders and managers to adopt the multiplicity of competing models for their relevancy in relation to each school's contexts. Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker and Riley (1978) posit that there is no one leadership and management model that can accommodate all contexts of our complex schooling environments. Formal school structures are dominant for schools to implement curriculum successfully hence principals are to account to educational authorities at higher managerial levels of this bureaucratic education system in South Africa.

Recent research studies of curriculum leadership and management such that of Neumann, Jones and Webb (2012), Botha and Triegaardt (2014), Cebiso and Maqubela (2015), stress the need for the involvement of all interest groups in schools in decision making processes and the management of school programmes. Many principals may aspire to collegial management and participative leadership approaches but it is further research that will reveal how they cope and survive in continuing change of school dynamics based on social, economic, political and cultural factors.

Cultural models of management accompanied by moral leadership approaches enhance values, beliefs and ethics of schools in order to reinforce the school culture thus minimising the adverse dynamics in leading and managing curriculum at school levels (Bush, 2003). The diverse nature of educational contexts needs leaders and managers to adapt their styles, and this expectation is similar to the notion of contingent leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1984). Curriculum managers have a responsibility to be strategic to deal successfully with the shortage of resources, uncertainty with respect to school contexts, unqualified and under-qualified teachers (Lingam, Lingam & Raghuwaiya, 2014). According to Bolman and Deal (1984), managers need to analyse the current and understand the situation in order to be enabled to make informed decision on the leadership and management approach to particular school issues.

2.2.7 Curriculum leadership and management in rural schools

The profile for rural areas includes distance to town; conditions of roads; bridges to schools; access to information technology; transport infrastructure; access to services and facilities; health, educational and economic status of the community; access to lifelong learning; social conditions in the community as well as activities of political and civil society organisations (UNESCO, 2005). Different contextual factors determine the leadership roles that need to be adaptive to the current environmental situation of each school. It would be naïve of us to hold on the tradition that curriculum leadership and management is the sole responsibility of the principal; hence, school principals spend more of their time in attending to administrative activities (Hoadley, Christie, Jacklin & Ward, 2007). The primary influence of the principal is on ensuring that the purpose of the school is always a focal point thus creating conditions for teaching and learning to take place by setting visions, missions and goals of schools (Hoadley, Christie, Jacklin & Ward, 2007).

Complexities in leading and managing curriculum, particularly in rural secondary schools emanate from low socio-economic status of rural communities and underdevelopment of rural areas. Under-development in rural areas is reflected on the quality of education available that emanates from particular socio-cultural environments and challenges can pose constraints on curriculum leaders. Curriculum leaders in rural schools are faced with a challenge to maintain the *status quo* due to contextual factors (Bush, 2003). Rural school leaders are faced with a burden to mitigate the complexities emanating from issues that are related to different stakeholders such as learners, teachers, the surrounding community, infrastructure and educational authorities.

2.2.7.1 Learners in rural schools

Gardiner (2008) argues that the whole of the South African education system is in a complex situation and learners in rural schools are affected the most. The findings from Gardiner's (2008) study reveal that the problem of the increasing numbers of learners dropping out of rural schools and less are enrolled each year is also experienced by other countries in the continent of Africa. Avital's (2012) study in Zimbabwe discovers that attitude of learners in rural secondary schools towards the school and its benefits have a negative effect towards the commitment to school work. Rural parents are also largely reluctant to play their parental roles to their children due to the negative attitudes they have developed about schools and

education as such (Adediji & Olaniyan, 2011). The high dropout rates lead to lower enrolment numbers which ultimately contributes to the shrinking financial allocation for the school. The continuing decline in enrolment levels results in some teachers to be redeployed to other schools leaving curriculum leaders with a double burden of having to spend a large percentage of time teaching (Maringe, Masinire & Nkambule, 2015). This may also compromise the provision of effective and helpful supervision of curriculum delivery (Adediji & Olaniyan, 2011). The school leaders ultimately face the multiplicity of complexities to provide essential resources to run the school effectively.

Children in rural areas on one hand are experiencing challenges of having to start doing household chores before going to schools and the same is expected of them after school (Taylor & Mulhall, 2001). These children walk long distances to schools, arrive late and in most cases miss the morning lessons. Similarly, schools are designated to follow a pre-approved curriculum and schedule of times without taking into cognisance the different contextual factors that make it difficult for rural schools to honour these policy directives (Taylor & Mulhall, 2001). According to Adediji and Olaniyan (2011), Sub-Saharan Africa bears significant numbers of children working in agricultural sector as child labourers and there is a shortage of schools. Learners are also faced with a challenge to adapt to a new culture which is not consistent with the values from those that they observe at home and this is a global phenomenon (Adediji & Olaniyan, 2011). The SMTs are faced with a task to develop a school culture that will take cognisance of the cultural background that learners bring into the school environment which must often be introduced as an ongoing process. They are to deal with an ambiguity climate on continuous bases that emerge in this process as postulated by March and Olsen (1976).

2.2.7.2 Teaching in rural schools

The poor quality of education in rural schools is evidenced by poor conditions that do not support the creation of environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning (Du Plessis, 2014; Lingam, Lingam & Raghuwaiya, 2014). Principals in the United States of America are free from micromanagement, are given the freedom and responsibility to make their schools successful and have powers to hire and fire teachers if they fail to meet their contractual obligations (Carter, 2000). It is not the case in South Africa where principals are unable to hire master teachers to do the job and a heavy burden is based on the fact that

qualified teachers are not attracted to rural schools particularly the secondary schools that require teachers with specific subject knowledge and expertise. According to Du Plessis (2014), qualified teaching staff does not want to work in rural schools because of the unfavourable environmental conditions to which it is difficult to adapt.

Teachers live far away from rural schools and that minimises the time teachers are expected to spend in schools. Teachers are experiencing time constraints to provide more learner support strategies because of the lack of resources and professional support (Gardiner, 2008). One of the problems in rural schools is the existence of negative attitudes by the teachers towards the principals, and the principals as leaders are failing to model good behaviour which ultimately contributes to teachers' low morale and poor work ethics (Gardiner, 2008).

Another factor that has emerged is the worth of teachers in Africa which has plummeted to lowest levels (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). This is mainly as a result of the negative attitudes towards them; of being undermined, demonised and portrayed to have no value by the communities and the parents as well (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). The two scholars further posit that the poor working and living conditions in rural conditions reduce the ability of the teachers to deliver quality education. It must be noted that effective curriculum leadership and management is determined by the delivery of quality education (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011).

Opportunities for the teachers in rural areas to improve their qualifications are not readily available (Hedges, 2000). To address this problem, the Tanzanian education system adopted the introduction of information communication technology (ICT) in order to enable teachers to utilise it as one of the teaching tools and also for continuous professional development in rural areas as well (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). It is believed that such interventions may minimise the burden for curriculum leaders in narrowing the gap of achievements between rural children and their urban counterparts. According to Lingam, Lingam and Raghuwaiya (2014), a high proportion of untrained or under-qualified teachers in rural schools are a challenge without immediate measures to find amicable solutions to. The study conducted in Ghana by Akinfe, Olofinniyi and Fashiku (2012) in assert that teaching in rural secondary schools is seen as a dumping ground for any unemployed school leaver who handle the job as a bye-pass venture to their desired ends. Curriculum leaders find it strenuous to allocate subjects to teachers; hence there are hardly any subject specialists. The high rate of

absenteeism by both the learners and the teachers is prevalent in rural areas due to contextual factors peculiar to rural conditions (Lingam, Lingam & Raghuwaiya, 2014).

2.2.7.3 Surrounding school community partnership

Authorities in rural community have authoritarian influence of imposing cultural values and practices. For instance, if there is death in the area, school leaders are ordered to suspend classes until such time that the burial is finished (Lingam, *et. al.*, 2014). Carl (2002) posits that the community and school are inseparably bound. Rural communities use different strategies to address the challenges that are attributed to their environmental situations. According to Starr and White (2008), curriculum policies are perceived by rural communities to have no value because these policies do not speak to or address their needs. The social development in South Africa has always been in urban areas leaving rural areas highly deprived of development and confining many families to living in extreme poverty (Starr & White, 2008). Starr and White (2008) posit that the curriculum policy framework tends to mandate, appraise and control when expectations are not met. The two scholars further argue that in most cases in rural communities, the poor relationships between the parents and the teachers make it impossible to seek parental and community support to the affairs of schools. This is congruent with Owusu-Acheampong and Williams' (2015) finding is that 51, 6% of the 163 teachers who were participants their study in Ghana indicates uncooperative attitude of parents as reasons for their inability to accept postings to rural secondary schools. According to Van der Berg (2008), curriculum leaders need to be more strategic and use a variety of methods to regain the trust and support from the community and parents.

The recommendation to schools in rural areas is to develop a plan of action to involve communities in decision-making forums and other measures that inculcate participation in the affairs of the schools (Republic of South Africa, 2005). However, the challenges that rural schools are facing emanate from the high levels of illiteracy among many parents in rural areas which is one of the reasons for parents not to be willing to cooperate with the schools (Du Plessis, 2014). For instance, parental support in Solomon Island schools is lacking and it is a major dispiriting challenge to curriculum leaders. However, on the same breath the resistance to change by any structure within the school community may jeopardise intentions for school development plans (Lingam, Lingam & Raghuwaiya, 2014). People in rural areas

often stereotypically emphasise their powerlessness marked by high rate of illiteracy (Du Plessis, 2014).

Rural school circumstances appear to cause school leaders to struggle to improve the quality of education in rural areas because the policy framework is the same for different contexts (Gardiner, 2008). The SMTs encounter compounded challenges if they are not aware of existing cultural beliefs, religious and interest groups that may act as hurdles in their professional duties (Lingam, Lingam & Raghuwaiya, 2014). The uniqueness of each school is rooted in the combination of local variables such as its location, parents, governance, school size, staffing, experience and morale for both the teachers and the learners (Lingam, Lingam & Raghuwaiya, 2014). To address this problem, rural high schools in California established sound relationship with other external stakeholders in order to extend their capacity toward the attainment of school objectives (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). In South Africa partnership in rural areas with local businesses are difficult because many schools must compete among themselves to get sponsors and the local business are also suffering with the poverty problems.

Most rural communities are uneducated and are not willing to support the education of their children but they abdicate their responsibilities to the teachers (Lingam, *et. al.*, 2014). Illiteracy and less knowledgeable members of the school governing bodies exacerbate the complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural schools. This hampers the provision of effective school governance which demands curriculum leaders to use a variety of strategies to establish the school vision, find means to get resources and human resources development for rural schools to compete with their urban counterparts (Du Plessis, 2014).

Families from rural communities are poverty trapped which is characterised by them being destitute, without shelter, low education levels, without employment, gangsterism and substance abuse (Revilla & Sweeney, 1997; Harris, 2002; Jesse, Davis & Pokorny, 2004; Day, 2005; Taylor, 2006). According to Payne (2003), poverty can be viewed as the situation where a person can survive under conditions of having no resources. According to Payne (2003, pp. 16-17), resources include financial; emotional; cognitive; spiritual; physical; support structure-related and orientation related. Poverty causes learners to commit acts of misconduct that demands curriculum leaders to implement lawful strategies to correct such acts of misconduct and that on its own is time consuming. Learners come to schools with

visible signs of unfavourable socio-cultural conditions which mostly do not conform to the school culture that will inform effective teaching and learning. Curriculum leaders in these types of environments must endeavour to have a sense of the positive relationships with the environment around the school including the knowledge of rituals and contexts of various units within the school (Murphy, 1996).

The Department of Education in South Africa has introduced a nutrition programme in order to mitigate the effects of poverty in the education system. However, learners return home to face the very same resource strapped social environment. It becomes impossible for most learners to complete tasks given after school hours and they also have to walk long distances back home (Kamper, 2008). Learners have to attend to other household chores; hence there is a problem of child-headed families as well (Kamper, 2008). Benson (2003) avers that schools are benefiting when all stakeholders that are not always physically present in schools actively play their meaningful roles.

2.2.7.4 Resources in rural schools

The South African schools receive financial allocation from the Department of Education but there are rules and regulations of how the money ought to be allocated and spent, and it is a criminal offence to deviate from them (Starr & White, 2008). Schools are therefore unable to spend the very small amount of financial allocation according to the needs of individual schools after doing the situational analysis. In my view, such a reality runs against the fundamental principle of decentralisation and devolution of power to the local level. The power for the schools to make its own decisions may be undermined by this scenario and the schools' responsiveness to its peculiar circumstances may be eroded. Schools are allocated varying amounts of money according to the number of learners annually enrolled in that school. Therefore, rural school suffer a lot because they are experiencing low enrolment rates; so funding is also less likely to meet the financial needs of rural schools (Du Plessis, 2014). Maintenance of facilities has also suffered considerably because of poor allocation of funds and other educational resources to rural schools (Du Plessis, 2014). This scholar further argues that many financially strapped rural schools in the researched rural area of Mpumalanga province often deal with aging facilities and limited funding for new equipment and technology. Apparently rural schools do not have the capacity to use the technology even if it happens to be available in many instances (Du Plessis, 2014). The work of the SMTs becomes difficult since technology usage is time efficient particularly when the need to

communicate with other stakeholders arises, and this reality is a major setback for them. Despite the decentralisation of the education system in South Africa, the delivery of services is still low (Du Plessis, 2014).

It is important that the SMTs are able to access all dimensions that are linked to the academic programmes including all relevant resources that are the backbone for the school to function (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). The managerial approach considers the school as an organisation and as a social system whereby groups in the community such as learners, teachers, parents, administrators and curriculum specialists interact according to certain norms and behaviours (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Such a behavioural approach relies on planning and managing curriculum in terms of programmes, schedules, resources, equipment and personnel (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). If one or some of these groups becomes ineffective, the whole process towards achieving set educational objectives is compromised to a larger extent (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). According to Harley and Wedekind (2002), schools cannot function without the necessary physical and human resources which are more important and other needs are secondary. This augurs well with the Johnson and Strange' (2007) view that it is highly unlikely that learner achievement may improve if teaching materials and other relevant resources are not supplied. The above discussion captures one of the complexities of rural schooling and school leaders have to contend with.

Rural schools can be regarded as deficient on every indicator of material provisions such as, for example, electricity, libraries and textbooks in particular (Du Plessis, 2014). Van der Berg (2008) avers that teachers must be capacitated to use material resources effectively; otherwise key objectives of education will not be achieved. The lack of political will to rural development by the South African government hinders the delivery of quality of education because the deficiencies in rural communities creep into the schooling environments (Du Plessis, 2014). Transport and road conditions mostly cause barriers for the learners and the teachers (Lingam, Lingam & Raghuwaiya, 2014). Late coming of both the teachers and the learners become chronic and leave curriculum leaders without any other option to avert this situation as it is beyond their control; yet, it poses a recurring detrimental effect on effective curriculum leadership and management.

2.2.8 Curriculum leadership and management in rural South African schools

Rural schools in South Africa are often plagued with educational problems such as the isolation from specialised services, limited accessibility to staff development and university services, teacher shortages and decreasing learner enrolment which result in decreasing funding (Wallint & Reimer, 2008). Gardiner (2008) posits that the curriculum policy framework was enacted with an ideal situation that is based on affluent areas. This was done in complete disregard for the inequalities which already exist within our society where there are many deprived rural communities in South Africa. Schools are also governed by the same curriculum, the same conditions of service, the same national legislation and the same policies as all other public schools in South Africa. However, conditions on the ground in rural schools indicate that there are backlogs in terms of facilities and equal educational opportunities (Gardiner, 2008). This poses a negative factor which compounds the problems in leading and managing curriculum effectively in rural communities. There is always an imperative to create conducive conditions that allow quality teaching and learning. Leadership and management of curriculum have a new approach that broadens the responsibilities of ensuring effective school management. This approach is informed by the imperative for cooperation between the principal and the SMT members (Nelly, 2008).

School leaders in secondary schools bear the brunt of public anger and the Department of Education if the average pass rate of a school is below the national minimum pass percentage benchmark. This occurs when they have to account to the departmental officials, particularly after the release of the NSC examination results. The Department of Education disregards the underlying factors to high failure rate with respect to bad conditions particularly in rural schools (Mbatha, Glover & Loock, 2006). Some have started to question the rigidly standardised leadership and management of curriculum which they argue needs reviewing in recognition of the fact that the conditions in schools are not the same (Hutcheon, 1992). Starr and White (2008) posit that the curriculum policy framework in South Africa is set up in such a way that it assists rather than to mandate, appraise and control when expectations are not met. This implies that curriculum management depends on a hierarchical management structure which is more traditional than innovative in nature.

In a dynamic world, curriculum leadership and management have to be adaptive in these conditions of constant change and unpredictability (Hunkins & Hammill, 1994). Individuals

in organisations come with different and, in most cases, with competing value systems based on different cultural perspectives (Hunkins & Hammill, 1994). The process of developing shared values and norms that will eventually lead to behavioural norms requires robust influential power on individual members of all stakeholders in South African schooling environment in order to develop cultural norms. It will then also be the responsibility of curriculum leaders to transform schools to form a cloud of high performing schools through the active contributions of all stakeholders in the affairs of schools (Bush, 1998).

2.2.9 The relevant leadership theory

Principals rely on dedicated teachers to delegate other managerial tasks as a form of distributive leadership practice (Hord, Steigelbauer & Hall, 1984). According to Gronn (2002), the distribution of leadership tasks to key teachers cannot be interpreted as principal relinquishing the official powers. Principals in rural schools play multiple roles due to challenges and constraints that are peculiar to rural conditions. These emerging complexities from rural contextual factors require the principals to adopt a multiplicity of leadership and management approaches for their schools to survive in order to achieve broader educational goals (Hunkins & Hammill, 1994). Curriculum leadership and management become effective if the teachers are given the opportunity to assume leadership responsibilities (Neumann, Jones & Webb, 2012). Distributed leadership cannot be a one-size-fit all recipes for effective leadership and management but rather as a guide to develop an effective leadership approach (Spillane, 2006). Thus traditional notions of leadership require modification for leaders to exert strong control over their own processes.

Modification of leadership in current studies is focused towards distributed leadership with substantial overlap with other conceptions of leadership as “shared”, “collaborative”, “democratic” and “participative”. These leadership approaches are directly linked with the mere distribution of management responsibilities (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). The latest development that emerges from literature emphasises that effective curriculum leadership is that which is distributed among teachers at school level; hence distributed leadership theory accounts to this notion (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). Distributed leadership which brings the conception of leadership as “shared”, “collaborative” and “democratic” suggests that some leadership functions are performed at every level in an organisation (Gronn, 2002). According to Spillane (2006), distributed

leadership is constructed between leaders, followers and their situations. Different studies have shown that principals spend most of their time doing administrative responsibilities (Chisholm, Hoadley & Kivilu, 2005). Distributed leadership is concerned with a shared decision making requiring the principals to play their supportive role in empowering teachers to assume leadership roles (Lieberman, Saxl & Miles, 1988; Harris & Muijs 2003). Where this happens, human relations are enhanced between the principal and the teaching staff.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Theories are enacted to explain, predict and understand phenomena and to mostly challenge or extend the existing knowledge base (Swanson, 2013). Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler (2000) define a theory as a system of interpretation that both helps to make sense of experiences and focus our attention on particular events and in short it refers to ways of seeing things. Such ways of seeing things then determines ways of leading and managing curriculum especially in South African education system in different contexts.

Therefore, Swanson (2013) posits that the theoretical framework is the structure that explains why the research problem under study exists. The theoretical framework helps to inform the findings from this study which is exploring SMTs' experiences of complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools to the existing knowledge base. It also provides me with the foundation to analyse this study and substantiate the argument whether further research studies on this phenomenon are required or not (Swanson, 2013).

In view of theoretical approaches to a variety of curriculum leadership styles and management models, curriculum implementation becomes too complex to recommend a single style. The different definitions of what really curriculum is have been discussed above and have resulted in the adoption of multi-dimensional leadership and managerial practices that are informed by external as well as internal demands in the schools. Curriculum designing and planning is not done at school nor at district levels but it is a set of directives of what education authorities at provincial, district and at school levels ought to implement without deliberations on whether complex contextual factors at local levels will pose a threat to its success or not. Internal pressures in the schools come in different forms with underlying factors that may be societal, professional, resources based and culturally related.

Beauchamp's (1986) view of curriculum theory is that curriculum implementation and leadership are more of a problem than an issue. Similar to its implementation, curriculum evaluation is also more of a problem than an issue with respect to the know how to achieve this. The mere fact that the literature provides different conceptual framework of the curriculum as well as a variety of curriculum leadership and management approaches, implies that in fact, enacting the curriculum is a complex phenomenon. In view of the complexities emanating from the implementation of curriculum, it is imperative for curriculum managers to involve different role players. A distributed leadership model may be an ideal practice to adopt in different contexts.

Distributed leadership model is regarded as a strategy by the principal of giving leadership tasks to key teachers at school. The distribution of leadership enhances the positive culture of teaching and learning (Spillane, 2006). The new vision for institutional change is based on four pillars which are the curriculum development, resources materials, people development and school buildings thus emphasising reliance on human resources within the school (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013). This implies that rural schools have to rely on resources at their disposal for effective curriculum leadership and management which will result in the achievement of desired school objectives. It is therefore, important that school leaders develop clearer insights about various curriculum models and concepts regarding curriculum so that they can be able to develop it by offering subjects that are responsive to community needs.

People development is one of the four pillars of redesigning a new vision and mission statement for the school. This involves capacity building of all relevant stakeholders including parents in the school governing body (SGB) so that they are empowered to take their full responsibilities for various portfolios (Bhengu, 2013). According to Heystek (2002), school leadership has to take the initiative for community integration and collaboration in the schools. Similarly, curriculum managers need to find ways of mitigating complex situations that emanate from factors such as notably poverty, parental illiteracy, teacher capability and motivation (Fleisch, 2008). Motshekga (2011) avers that sound leadership practices have been proven to also direct disadvantaged schools to achieve high pass rates in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations.

The review literature on distributed leadership indicates that the discourse on distribution of tasks among various stakeholders and the benefits thereof has been around us for the past 30 years or so ago. For instance, according to Hord, Steigelbauer and Hall (1984), school leadership becomes a success in situations where competent staff members are given leadership tasks. The distribution of leadership responsibilities has benefits of having different sources of opinions that will yield positive outcomes to the benefit of effective curriculum management curriculum (Miller & Miller, 2001). Competency can develop from individuals who are committed to their professional responsibilities through hard work and diligent application (Georgiades, 1980). In addition, literature reveals that poverty has always been the source of grave learning deficiencies on accounts of behaviour resulting in the brain of learners to have adapted to suboptimal conditions in ways that undermine good school achievement that need to be addressed in formal education (Jensen, 2009).

Schools are complex systems with continuing changes in their dynamics thus, curriculum managers have to learn, adapt and change in order to survive (Morrison, 2005). This study therefore is informed by a complexity theory drawn from the central idea of the complex thinking as proposed by Morin (1990). Morrison (2002) suggests that it may be possible to manage a complex system with few guiding principles. According to Morin (1990) complexity theory seems to offer a possibility for putting together those separate elements and examining their reactions. The increasing demand to compete effectively in the global community puts pressure to improve the quality of our education system (Bar-Yam, 2000). Complexity theory is about the interacting dynamics amongst multiple, units and how events emerge from such interactions (Marion, 2008).

2.3.1 Complexity theory and curriculum management

Morrison (2002) avers that an understanding of complexity theory is important for leadership in education. Therefore, schools need to find order without control and to lead without coercion. Morrison (2002) further posits that complexity theory is a new way of thinking requiring new constructs rather than seeking to explain phenomena using existing constructs. This view is related to Morin's view that complexity theory focuses on the emergence of curriculum phenomena and it expects examples to demonstrate how the complex thinking paradigm fits comfortably into a curriculum management system. However, systems are complex, unstable, emergent, adaptive, dynamical and changing (Morrison, 2002). Hence, this view regards the present world as characterised by change and uncertainty,

unpredictability and instability which needs ever increasing schools self-efficacy and adaptability in order to survive. Therefore, with respect to the nature of current education trends, it is imperative that curriculum managers adopt a paradigm shift from a view of a stable world order to an ever changing and unfixed scenario (Koo, 2002).

The success of the SMTs toward curriculum delivery in rural secondary schools is informed by order that is emergent when these SMTs are always taking into cognisance the emerging and dynamic conditions peculiar to individual schools (Morrison, 2002). In keeping with this view, Morin (2006) posits that the principle of complexity in which distinguishing parts are connected must be communicated through the school by breaking them into greater number of actors possible for self-organisational efficacy. Thus school leaders must enhance common ambition among role players for knowledge movements that go from the parts to the whole and from the whole to the parts (Morin, 2006). This practice is based on the simple rules for interacting organisms. However, systems put emphasis on non-equilibrium that brings order out of chaos. Uncertainty and openness are the order of the day and school manager can respond to, live with, cope with and lead curriculum to its fruition. Morrison (2002) avers that postmodernism, chaos and complexity theories are inseparable from one another.

According to Keough and Tobin (2001), the South African society is so diverse such that to promote subjective management and related leadership may result in multiple realities which may enhance inequalities in our education system. The limitation of subjective management styles arises from particular situations of subjective truths and multiple interpretations (Keough & Tobin, 2001), thus paying less attention towards achieving common goals of education. There are only “truths” that are particular to a society or group of people and are limited to individual perceptions. Thus limitations can be linked to schools with a variety of school cultures that are enacted from the interpretation of the environments within which individual schools operate.

Curriculum management reflect only a particular localised culture or individual school point of view of how effective things ought to be done. This implies that there is no new and universal approach to curriculum management but can be understood as the relationship between the real objective world and the subjective reality that exist only in particular situations or cultural perspectives. Rorty (1998) argues that reality is not what objectively exists but is produced by our agreement of what it is. In short, we create facts about reality

and therefore, management approaches are developed and take a form consistent with local situations at school levels. Thus management cannot assume new approaches to modernism as modernism is still prevalent in the modern global society but could be a deconstruction of the subjective reality with respect of inventing new meanings attributive to the individual school situation. Grant (2013) asserts that the creation of new meanings intended for the development of new managerial approaches may result into chaotic situations; hence a chaos theory becomes apparent.

2.3.2 Ambiguity and curriculum management

March and Olsen (1976) accentuate that ambiguity is prevalent to large organisations where a variety of considerations need to be taken for an inclusive and binding decision. Ambiguity is defined in an Oxford English Dictionary (2010) as a state of having more than one possible meaning because of involving many different aspects. In most schools there are incoherent and opaque objectives (Cohen & March, 1986) and are characterised by fragmentation for reason peculiar to their schooling environment. This challenges the power of formal management models and management leadership that seem to be inadequate to cope with the multiplicities of challenges in schools. In a climate of ambiguity, effective leaders are to adapt their leadership styles to the particular environment. The degree of ambiguity is heightened by the needs of the school leaders to exercise judgement in particular situations, rather than the simple following of rules (Watson, 2003b).

Contingent leadership style may be aligned with ambiguity model of management because of continuing changes of external and internal conditions in schools that demand modification of traditional practices. This results in the adoption of alternative approaches to curriculum management.

2.3.3 Chaos theory and curriculum leadership

The literature (Fullan, 1992; Morrison, 2002; Sellnow, Sellnow, Lane & Littlefield, 2012) defines chaos as the science of surprises, of nonlinear and unpredictable; hence chaos theory deals with nonlinear things that are effectively impossible to predict or control. The recognition of complex and chaotic dynamic nature of school environment by curriculum managers can give new insight, power and wisdom in order to develop new and effective approaches to leadership peculiar to individual school environment. One of the principles of

chaos is that we cannot predict that a chaotic situation is going to happen but only when it has started then we may know about its intensity and the duration it will take (Grant, 2013). Chaos explores the paradigm shift from well executed plan and all of a sudden it is surprisingly disorganised (Grant, 2013). Grant (2013) avers that curriculum leaders and managers no longer seek entirely new approaches rather investigate what is already new and then relate to the current school situation. Curriculum leaders are to adapt their schools to their surrounding environments and develop strategies of how to cope with complex conditions of uncertainty.

The dynamic networks of interdependent structures of schools are complex and integrate ideas and collective behaviour that always strive toward their self-efficacy and self-reliant organisations. Schools need to be treated as complex adaptive systems as they exhibit principles like complexity, emergent, interdependence, chaos and evolution. Complex theory is characterised by a confluence of non-related interacting parts in different ways (Weaver, 1948). Borrowing from the concept of complexity, curriculum leaders may express complexity by referring to a combination of challenges emanating from the community, learners, teachers, School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and the Department of Education. The withdrawal of one of these stakeholders or role ambiguity may result in complex situation in the education system.

A system may be referred to as the way schools are organised in South Africa with pre-determined curriculum statement policy as a doctrine to be implemented without any input at school levels. The curriculum policy imperatives with defined systems may in advance cause complexity to arise from a number of distinguishable relational regimes. It is a widely accepted fact that schools differ in a number of ways, including the manner in which they are managed. This is due to a variety of contextual factors that can be attributed to their environment within which they are situated. Thus, differing environments may result in these schools to be perceived to portray either disorganised or organised complexities; hence, this is prevalent mostly in rural schools in South Africa where there are more challenges which are social, economic and cultural based. \

2.3.4 Disorganised and organised complexities

The review of literature has revealed that there are two broad categories complexities; namely, disorganised and organised complexities. The next section presents a discussion of each of the two categories of complexities.

2.3.4.1 Disorganised complexities

Weaver (1948) posits that disorganised complexities results from particular system having a very large number of parts. There is a variety of factors that impact negatively on effective leadership and management of curriculum in rural schools especially at the secondary school levels. The disorganised complexity emerges as a result of multiplicity of interacting factors that are not organised. The analysis of this complexity is by treating the whole systems in order to determine the impact to the school functionality.

Rural schools are faced with a significant number of factors that have a negative impact on the way schools are managed toward the achievement of school objectives. This is on the basis of the degree of involvement of other stakeholders and the availability of adequate resources in promoting the vision and mission of schools in providing continuing support to school leadership towards the desired outcomes.

2.3.4.2 Organised complexities

Weaver's (1948) view of organised complexity takes a form of factors that are less in quantity but have a deterrent effect. They have a negative effect on effective leadership and management of curriculum particularly in rural secondary schools. This may be understood in terms of various factors such as the kind of behaviour among stakeholders at school level which may be addressed for instance, through modelling and/or simulation. The interrelated organised parts of a system emerge as a complexity where no individual parts dictate and supersede the contributions of other stakeholders. My view is that leadership plays a pivotal role in dealing with all these factors that interact with each other. Thus the organised aspects of this system are said to be emergent without any guiding forces of dictatorship.

Thus organised complexity can be linked to schools that practice distributed leadership style as the notion that is emergent and needs further research studies on the positive effects that it enacts in our education system. It is an emergent property of a group of network of individuals in which group members pool together their expertise (Gronn, 2000).

Furthermore, Gronn (2002) and Leithwood, *et. al.*, (2004) posit that coordinated leadership and management activities from the distributed leadership approach result in effective curriculum leadership and management in schools. Different stakeholders in each school presumably understand their roles that they ought to play and they do it with an understanding that their collective efforts will result in successful reproductive ability for their school to survive despite the existence of adverse environmental conditions. The existence of this interconnectedness will provide curriculum leaders with the ability to explore different approaches of transitions between disorder and order in rural secondary schools despite the possibilities that prediction may remain impossible in the process. The next section presents a discussion about how the SMT members mitigate the negative effects of the complexities highlighted in this section.

2.3.4.3 The role of the SMTs in mitigating complexities

The achievement of the school's objectives through leadership is a result of co-operation of staff members having roles to play, hence distributed entails management responsibilities at different levels (Pretorius, 1998). The principal as a leader of leaders and as a curriculum manager is expected delegate some managerial duties to key teachers and render the necessary support for capacity building purposes (Hoberg, 1994). If teachers have high morale and are intrinsically motivated they increase their effort to improve learner achievement that makes the curriculum leaders to be less burdened (Robinson, 2007). Bush and Heystek (2006) aver that principals spend most of their time in doing administration at the expense of focusing on the business of the core responsibilities. It is therefore, disturbing to learn that research findings by Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and Rooyen (2009) reveal that most SMTs appear to lack knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. The closer supervision of curriculum delivery by the HODs will enhance effective teaching and learning activities (Ali & Botha, 2006). Southworth (2004) avers that principal needs to distribute other responsibilities which are less strenuous because it is a fact that principals are not knowledgeable (Fleisch, 2008).

It is to the advantage of the schools when the teachers assume some leadership responsibilities that the culture of teaching and learning is consolidated (Leithwood, *et. al.*, 2004). Curriculum leaders need to build a culture of trust but it is a risk if people do not honour that trust; hence the principals bear the ultimate accountability pressures as they are vested with powers to take the final decisions (Mbatha, Grobler & Look, 2005). It is this risk

that the principal undertakes which ultimately lead schools to disorganised complexities, as a result the situation in a school becomes random if people do not honour the trust from the principal (Weaver, 1948). It is important that the SMTs identify the teachers that have the potential to be leaders to be given those opportunities. The teachers in leadership position will work collaboratively with the SMTs and the staff with the benefit of building good relationship and trust among staff members (Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodley & Somaroo, 2010).

Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) posit that leadership style and decision that need to be taken are guided by the social and cultural perspectives. Christie (1998) relates this notion of socio-cultural dimension in the context of the historical perspective which is still prevalent in most previously disadvantaged communities. The crucial role of the SMTs is to develop a strategic plan to develop and nurture the professional expertise so that they are able to adapt to socio-cultural context (Pillay, 2008). A created culture of collegiality and shared decision is a platform that is crucial for distributed leadership to be dispersed which is a hallmark of organised complexity.

Watson (2003) posits that devolution produces increasing complexity in the role of principals and heightens tensions among the staff members. Schools are now regarded as organisations which need to renew themselves continuously in order to take present and future into account (Hallinger, 2001). It is particularly imperative for curriculum leaders and managers to exercise judgement in particular situations rather than simply follow a set of rules.

Thus, schools in South Africa can be plotted onto any point of functional-dysfunctional continuum. According to Christie (1998 & 2008) and Perumal (2009), dysfunctional schools are characterised by some of the features including teaching methods, teacher qualifications and poor leadership that have a detrimental effect to school functionality. Similar cases are prevalent especially in rural secondary schools where you find that qualified teachers who specialise in specific subjects shun such places. They view rural areas as places with lots of environmental constraints and other deprivations. There are no programmes that can be regarded as the quick fixes for the very complex challenges that face the South African school leaders (Williams, 2011). Nevertheless, there is extensive material about different techniques in curriculum leadership and management. However, less is known about how

these can be combined to provide a holistic approach to meet the needs of leaders and managers within different contextual factors.

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented discussions on a variety of views relating to issues of curriculum and curriculum leadership and management. A background to curriculum leadership and management has also been presented. Later on various theories that provide a framework for analysing the data are discussed. The chapter ends with a chapter summary. The next chapter deals with issues of research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The provision of literature review and theoretical framework in the previous chapter requires an appropriate design and methodology to be adopted in order to generate relevant data to respond to the critical questions. Therefore, this chapter presents and justifies the methodological processes that were followed in generating and analysing data. First, research paradigm and design for this study are discussed. Secondly, the research methodology, sampling and data generation methods are discussed. Furthermore, the following aspects are also discussed, namely, analysis of the data; issues of trustworthiness; ethical issues; the limitations of this study; and the chapter summary.

3.2 Research design

A research design is a plan of action with guiding principles of data generation and analysis strategies (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Various other scholars also describe a research design as the whole process and a plan for generating data to the end process (Kumar, 2005; Trochim, 2006; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2009; Creswell, 2012). A case study design was deemed relevant with an intention to offer an in-depth analysis of complexities of leading and managing curriculum in five rural secondary schools. The case study research is a 'systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest' (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 75). It can also be viewed as a study of events that are live (Adelman, Kemmis & Jenkins, 1980) or a study of a particular phenomenon (Stake, 1995). The case is regarded as a precise explanatory of a phenomenon at a particular time and space (Merriam 1988).

The researcher has an understanding that all SMTs, either in urban or rural schools are expected to lead and manage the same curriculum policy. However, the SMTs in rural schools grapple with burden of enormous challenges as a result of their geographic isolation, neglect and many social problems typically associated with poverty (Kühne & Meyer, 2009). The case study design was adopted in order to provide vast amount of information about complexities of leading and managing curriculum in a rural setting from the perspectives of SMTs in rural secondary schools. It also has to enable SMTs to narrate strategies they employ to mitigate the effects of complexities.

3.3 Research paradigm

A paradigm is a frame of mind that orients our thinking (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This study adopted a qualitative research approach as it sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools through the lens of the SMTs. A qualitative research is a research approach that seeks to establish knowledge from the information that has been generated by using qualitative methods from sources in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004) aver that qualitative research enables the participants to provide open-minded information in a free environment. As a researcher in this study, I sought to explore from the participants' perspectives, what they experienced and how they interpreted their experiences of managing the curriculum (Merriam, 1998). Epistemology is developed from socially and culturally based environments as opposed to sets of objective doctrines (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Qualitative studies are naturalistic, interpretive and use multi-methods approach (Kvale, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in capturing the lived experiences of the researched from their perspective (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Qualitative research approach was deemed suitable because the aim was to explicate through discussing with the participants, how they experience and structure their practice of leading and managing curriculum in their rural context. The study sought to explicate from the lens of the SMTs the experiences of complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.

This study adopted an interpretive paradigm that serves explicate reality about a phenomenon in its natural environment (Krauss, 2005). According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a paradigm guides the study based on the world view as a set of systems. The interpretive paradigm acknowledges that there are multiple truths since reality is subjective and constructed from a person's life experiences, background and social interactions (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Interpretive researcher assumes a particular stance with regard to epistemology that knowledge research evidence might include narrative accounts provided by participants through interviews which constitute reliable data and evidence (Gill & Seaman, 2014). Their theoretical belief is that epistemology is rooted from social and culturally based environmental settings (Crabtree, 2006).

I interacted with the research participants with the aim of trying to understand meanings, concepts, interpretations, contexts and descriptions that they have socially constructed about how they operate in their trying contextual environments. The interest was not on numerical statistics for generalisation as in quantitative approaches, but on meanings, explanations and experiences of leading and managing curriculum in their unique contexts (Krauss, 2005).

3.4 Selection of participants

Purposeful sampling was adopted with a view that participants may have relevant and sufficient amount of data due to the context in which they spend most of their time. Through that process, the researcher sought to get information on SMTs' experiences of complexities of lead and manage curriculum in rural secondary schools and they also mitigate the effects of complexities. The researcher identified the research population by adopting a purposive sampling strategy. The participants were selected in a manner that from each rural secondary school the principal and at least one HOD are invited to participate in this study. The researcher is avoiding redundancy of data by having more than one HOD from each school hence SMTs discuss all challenges in their meetings. There was an intention to involve the Deputy-Principals (DPs) in this study. However two out of five schools that participated in this study do not have the DPs and the involvement of three of them would have not provided the perspectives of all DPs from five rural secondary schools. Interviews were conducted on individual basis at different times and venues that were convenience to each participant. The criterion was that SMTs must be from rural secondary schools, and the targets were the principal and one HOD per school, making up a total of ten participants. These participants received letters accompanied by informed consent inviting them to participate in this study.

A sample was selected from schools in which the most information could be gained (Le Compte & Preissle, 1993). The aim was to generate data from different perspectives in similar school contexts (Teddle & Yu, 2007). Schools were also chosen for convenience (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) in order to minimise travelling costs as the study was self-funded. The five secondary schools belonged to Quintile 3. Quintile ranking is the classification system that is used by the government to allocate funding to school according to their socio-economic status. These schools were situated in a rural area in the north of Durban within the Pinetown District in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. The researcher viewed these schools to be relevant sources of information that could provide relevant responses to the research questions stated in Chapter One. The researcher also applied for permission to

conduct the study from the provincial Department of Education, and permission was granted. The researcher also applied for and was granted ethical clearance from the University.

3.5 Data generation methods

Both semi-structured interviews and documents reviews were selected and used to generate qualitative data. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because this tool was considered to be the most suitable one to elucidate data about complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools from the SMTs. The nature of semi-structured interviews settings is the creation of free environment without reservations where a participant share the ideas, concerns, experiences, views, opinions and attitudes about a specific subject (Cohen, *et. al.*, 2011). Interviews also afforded the participants the opportunities to narrate verbally their strategies of how SMTs mitigate the effects of complexities in their respective rural secondary schools as they emerge (MacMillan, 2008). Documents reviews were also chosen to gain further insight and also served to corroborate the findings from the interviews. These two types of data generation methods were also chosen in order to triangulate the data produced.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Merriam (2009), semi-structured interviews are the most common form of data generation method in qualitative research. The semi-structured interviews were the preferred tools to generate data due to their flexibility (Dahlberg & McCaig, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are in-depth and enabled me to formulate guiding questions that afforded an opportunity to make follow-up questions to all the participants. The guiding questions consisted of open-ended questions which provided the opportunity for previously unknown information to emerge. They also provided flexibility in posing probing questions to an interviewee to get in-depth meaning of responses (Cohen, *et. al.*, 2011). Semi-structured interviews afforded the participants an opportunity to talk openly and freely (Wolcott, 1992), enabling me as a researcher to make enriched meanings out of the participants' lives and experiences (Chen, 2001). A semi-structured interview is important in creating the kind of environment where the interviewee feels they can provide rich information (Rabionet, 2011).

3.5.2 Documents review

Documents review is the strategy that is used to test information that is contained in various records (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This strategy of documents review was adopted for triangulation purposes. Triangulation is regarded as the method of addressing the issues of trustworthiness in qualitative studies where more than one method is used to generate data (Cohen, *et. al.*, 2011). Triangulation serves a purpose of ensuring that data that was generated is addressing the issues of trustworthiness (Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

Document review involved analysing various school records such as time book, learner attendance registers, logbooks and a summary of all Grade 12 results for the previous three years from all five schools, SMTs' management files and their minute books. The researcher was afforded an opportunity to analyse the essential documents to reveal important information that was provided by the participants during the interviews.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is a way to process information so that what has been generated is then communicated to others. This study adopted a qualitative approach therefore a qualitative data analysis was deemed appropriate. Qualitative data analysis involves organising the generated data that enables the possibility to explain the emerging themes for discussions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). It seeks to describe the textual data from participants in ways that capture the text produced on their own terms (Morrill, Yalda, Adelman, Musheno & Bejarano, 2000). This implies that qualitative data analysis requires inductive reasoning; hence data is generated from the participants' perspectives in their natural setting.

All voice recorded interviews were transcribed *verbatim* before they were subjected to qualitative data analysis. Transcripts were read repeatedly, creating codes of meaning from data and was organised by categorising it into concepts (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Through the processes described above, I was then able to identify key ideas that were emerging and were given codes. Codes can be regarded as an indexing or categorising system that contains an idea for the purpose of analysing (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Similar concepts were then grouped according to categories with similar concepts. Furthermore, the categorised data was realigned into emerging themes that were then presented and discussed in Chapter Four of this study.

Inductive data analysis was deemed appropriate for this study. Inductive data analysis allows the researcher to elucidate key information as it appears whilst avoiding researcher's own perceptions and expectations to interfere with what emerges from data (Patton, 1980). In this study I used coding to analyse data. Coding was done on the knowledge that was emerging after the generated data was read for several times where knowledge with similar ideas was then categorised (White 2002). The information that was coded and categorised was then used to identify emerging themes that were used for data presentation and discussion in Chapter Four White (2002).

3.7 Issues of trustworthiness

Trustworthiness encompasses the issues of validity and reliability in a qualitative study (Patton, 2001). The two terms are very important in a quantitative research paradigm. However, for this qualitative study terms that inform trustworthiness are credibility, confirmability, dependability and transferability for quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Mishler (2000), trustworthiness speaks to the reliability and validity of a qualitative study approach. It is encompassed in the principles of qualitative research by virtue of the natural setting as a principal source of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Another factor is that the researcher was part of the researched work with direct interaction with the participants throughout the research processes such as data generation, analysis and interpretation of the results. Triangulation through documents review reinforces trustworthiness in qualitative research studies. Mathison (1988) advocates the use of triangulation which controls the biasness by establishing validity and reliability, which is discussed as trustworthiness issues in a qualitative study approaches. Triangulation was also observed when data was triangulated among principals and HODs of the same schools. An electronic version of transcripts was forwarded to the relevant participants for confirmability whether the content represented the true reflection of their experiences and responses that they presented during interviews. Time was then allocated for participants to comment on interviews in order to validate the recorded interviews (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

The researcher had prepared the interview guide which was not presented to each participant prior to the interview session. The interview and probing questions were the same for all the

participants and the interviews were voice recorded with a voice recording device. The purposive sampling of five rural secondary schools is characterised by multiple voices enabling emerging similarities, dissimilarities and a variety of data that is generated in order to gain more knowledge from different sources in similar contexts (Stake, 1994). The voice recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim which convey the participant's actual perspectives within the given context embracing credibility of this study.

Participants were each given an electronic version of their transcripts as a member check practice for accuracy of what is articulated was captured correctly from the recorder (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An inductive data analysis enabled the interpretation to be based from the information as presented from the participants' perspectives but it is not invented by the researcher to avoid biasness (Polit & Beck, 2012). The researcher used the quotation from transcripts to show the connection between data and findings (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

3.8 Ethical issues

Babbie and Mouton (2006) advocates that it is important to observe ethical principles in order to prevent problems that may arise during research and also to protect the rights of the participants. The researcher was granted permission from the provincial Department of Education to conduct research in rural secondary schools within the Pinetown education District and also from the principals to conduct research in their schools. This was done through the use of written to the participants. In addition, declarations of informed consent forms were filled by each participant. In each letter to the participants, promises were made regarding the guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity that were given to each participant. All the participants were informed that they enjoyed the right to withdraw from participating in the study at any stage if they so wished and that there would be no penalties or charges would be incurred by withdrawing from the study.

Schools and participants' names were not used in this study; instead codes were used in order to maintain their anonymity. The purpose of the study was explained to each participant so that they knew what they were involving themselves to. I also ensured that the information participants gave was treated with strict confidence and their anonymity was assured (Cohen, *et. al.*, 2011). The interviews were recorded *verbatim* after I had received permission from participants to bring a voice recording device during the interview sessions. Interviews were

recorded in order to reproduce the original voices for the purpose of trustworthiness. Interviews were conducted in their respective schools mostly after teaching hours. Ethical consideration was always observed throughout the study.

3.9 Limitations of the study

Limitation of the study is the disclosure of restrictions that a reader must be aware of in order to avoid generalising the study which will not serve the purpose of intent (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The study was limited to five rural secondary schools in a small rural geographical landscape of Ndwedwe in the north of Durban. The results of this study cannot be generalised for either national or international purposes due to the sample size being too small. The findings can only be used as a foundation for further development of more research studies with regards to complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools and also about how the SMTs can develop strategies to mitigate such complexities within their varying rural contexts.

3.10 Chapter summary

The main purpose of this chapter was to explain the research design and methodology utilised in this study and justify why these aspects were specifically chosen. The interpretative paradigm, qualitative approach and case study design were described in detail together with their relevancy to the study. Purposive sampling was deemed to be appropriate methods for this study. Other elements of the methodology were explained. These include the data generation methods which included semi-structured interviews and documents review. Data analysis techniques used in this study was subsequently discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three, a qualitative research approach and methodology as the preferred techniques to generate data focusing on complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools were discussed at length. This chapter presents and discusses the data generated through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and documents review. The discussion is presented thematically and is also scaled down into sub-themes that emerged from inductive data analysis. Discussion is systematically presented, infusing *verbatim* expressions of participants to enhance trustworthiness. Literature as well as the theoretical framework is also injected to support or dispute views of the participants. The main idea is to inform the reader of the nature of data that was generated and to answer the research questions that are presented in Chapter One.

Firstly, the profiles of five participating secondary schools followed by profiles of each participant in this study are presented. The names of schools are represented by alphabets and participants' names are pseudonyms. Secondly, the themes and sub-themes that emerged are discussed.

4.2 Profiling participating schools

The data was generated in five Quintile 3 secondary schools. Quintile classification is the method used by the Department of Education to determine the Norms and Standards for allocation of the amount of school funds for each school that is based on the socio-economic status of the community that the school serves. All five participating schools were declared as “no-fee” schools (DoE, 2005). Table 4.1 outline the profiles of these schools. The profile of each school is then discussed below.

Table 4.1: Profiles of participating schools

School Codes	DPs	HODs	Teachers	Enrolment			Matric % Pass		
				2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014
A	2	5	42	1326	1358	1279	77	78	78,7
B	1	3	28	913	932	881	64	57	35
C	0	1 Acting	7	218	228	241	54	44	55,55
D	1	4	18	508	551	577	63	86,27	42
E	0	2	9	306	356	358	88,89	90	53,25

4.2.1 School - A

School –A is approximately 35 kilometres away from Durban. It is the only school in this study that was supplied with clean piped water and septic tanks for sanitation purposes. It has 19 classrooms of which 3 classrooms are used as staff rooms, a fully equipped science laboratory, and ill-equipped civil and mechanical technology workshops. Besides the school principal, there are 2 deputy principals, 5 HODs, 42 teachers, 1 administration assistant, 1 general worker and 3 security guards personnel. The learner population comprises an average of 1321 learners in the past three years and the pass percentage in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations has stood at an average of 78% in the same period. Most of the learners walk to school and very few use public transport system to travel.

Most teachers in this school have a recognised teaching qualification by the Department of Education. However, one of them has a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) after he had initially obtained bachelor's degree which is not a recognised teaching qualification and three are currently studying towards obtaining the teaching qualification. There is one government's Funda-Lushaka bursary holder. There are 13 teachers who had obtained a Baccalaureus of Atrium (BA) degree and thereafter studied for different teaching qualifications. Four teachers have been declared additional to the staff establishment because the learner enrolment has dropped and they will be moved to other schools before the end of 2015. The school remains one of the high performing schools despite the rural contextual factors.

4.2.2 School - B

School - B is almost 41 kilometres from Durban and receives learners from the same increasing population of the surrounding community as School – A. Both these schools have a reasonable higher enrolment rates over the years. School – B has 16 classrooms, 1 science laboratory which is not furnished nor is it properly equipped. Three classrooms are used as staff rooms. The project of demolishing and replacing a class block of 4 classrooms with a state of the art building by the Department of Education was underway during the time of this study. Access road to the school is not tarred and also not in good condition. The school receives water from tanker trucks and there are four-seater pit toilets for male and also four for female learners. Besides the school principal, there are 28 teachers, 1 deputy principal and 3 HODs. Two teachers in this school that are in possession of a Bachelor of Arts degree, which is not a recognised teaching qualification, are now among studying towards obtaining the PGCE qualifications.

Pass rate in the NSC examination for School - B shows a sharp decline from 64% in 2012 to 35% in 2014. There has been no significant change in the enrolment figures in this school and it has stood on average of 909 learners. The enrolment had a high probability to increase; however, the principal revealed that the staff had agreed that they would begin not to admit learners from other schools in Grades 10 and 11 in 2015. The reason put forward was that they had realised that in most cases these learners came with reports that had been fraudulently received from a community member. It was alleged that this community member had developed reports for various schools and sold them to learners every year.

4.2.3 School – C

School – C is approximately 49 kilometres away from Durban with learner enrolment that has not exceeded 250 learners in the past 3 years. There are 7 teachers including the acting principal who is the only official manager in this school and she has been in this position for five years now. The school qualifies to have 1 HOD post, however it cannot be declared as a vacant post because it is a substantive post for the acting principal and the displaced principal has not been ‘absorbed’ as a principal in another school. This school started to experience decreasing learner enrolment from 2007 when School – D, a newly established secondary

school which is almost 6 km away, started to introduce Grade 8 to Grade 12. The population in this area is not increasing significantly.

There are 11 classrooms, one of which is used as a staff room, the other is utilised for split subjects where learners from the same class are doing different subjects. Three classrooms are not utilised at all. There is electric power supply, pit toilets and water is supplied by tanker trucks. The NSC pass rate has been fluctuating for the last 3 years and is still below the KwaZulu-Natal minimum benchmark of 60%. This school is the only one that is not offering sciences and commercial subject groupings in its curriculum as a result of having less number of staff members.

4.2.4 School – D

School – D is approximately 53 kilometres away from Durban. It has 18 teachers consisting of 4 HODs, 1 deputy-principal, and a principal. There is a security guard, general worker, administration assistant and the enrolment number of learners has been increasing gradually for the last 3 years with a record of 577 in 2015. Two teachers are not professionally qualified as teachers that are without the recognised teaching qualification. One has an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) certificate and the other has a Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) degree; nevertheless, both teachers are currently studying towards obtaining PGCE qualification and one staff member has a NSC certificate and is a Funda-Lushaka bursary holder towards a professional qualification.

There are 13 classrooms including 2 mobile and 2 steel containers convertibles as classrooms as well as a proper structure erected to serve as a computer room with evidence of vandalism and all 25 computers and other electric equipment were stolen. Water is supplied by tanker trucks and there is electric power supply. Teachers and learners use pit toilets for ablution and learners are provided with transport and is funded by the Department of Education.

4.2.5 School – E

The school is approximately 39 kilometres away from Durban and has 11 classrooms and a science laboratory which enables teachers to conduct some experiments on site. Staff complement comprises 9 teachers including the principal and two HODs, one for sciences and the other for humanities. This school has an administration assistant and there are no security personnel. This school is fortunate to have all teachers being in possession of

recognised teaching qualifications. However, two among them have a PGCE qualification which implies that teaching to them was initially not their career of first choice as it is the case with all other teachers in possession of a PGCE qualification. Tanker trucks supply water which is also used for ablution purposes because they have septic tanks. Access road to this school is not in good conditions. Late coming by learners becomes the order of the day.

4.3 Profiling the participants

This section summarises the profiles of all participants from the five schools as presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Profiles of participants

		Schools A	Schools B	Schools C	Schools D	Schools E
Principals	Pseudonyms	Mr Thetha	Mrs Zimu	Mrs Dida	Mr Mathe	Ms Tirah
	Age Group	51-60	51-60	41-50	51-60	51-60
	Qualifications	B.Ed	M. Ed	B.Ed (Hons)	B.Ed	B.Ed (Hons)
	Years of experience	17	02	05	16	19
HODs	Pseudonyms	Mr Linda	Mr Mpofu	Mr Kubheka	Mr Madi	Mr Goba
	Age Group	41-50	61-70	41-50	51-60	41-50
	Qualifications	B.Ed(Hons)	B.Ed(Hons)	STD	B.Ed(Hons)	B.Ed (Hons)
	Years of experience	06	18	05	10	15

The numbers of years of experience for each participant on the table are for the relevant official management positions and only the highest qualifications are displayed. The HOD from School B and the principal from School C have completed their first year of course work towards M. Ed qualification and then deregistered in their second year of study.

Ms Tirah, Mr Thetha and Mr Mathe are the most experienced principals in their official management positions of 19, 17 and 16 years respectively. Mr Mpofu, Mr Goba and Mr Madi are the most experienced HODs in their respective participating schools in this study with 18, 15 and 10 years respectively and the least is Mr Linda with only 6 years of experience in the HOD position. Mrs Zimu and Mrs Dida are the acting principals in their respective schools and Mr Kubheka is the only acting HOD in these schools that are the participants to this study. Mrs Dida has been in an acting principalship position and Mr Kubheka as the acting HOD in School C had both served in their respective positions for a period of 5 years now.

The former official principal of School C was displaced years back and the irony is that Mrs Dida will not be fully appointed in this principalship position because the displaced principal has temporary been transferred to another school. This situation has led to the school governing body to recommend the appointment of the most senior teacher to assume an acting position in a HOD post and it happens to be Mr Kubheka who has also served for 5 years.

Almost all participants are in possession of four years teaching qualification with the exception of an acting HOD in School C, Mr Kubheka with a recognised three years teaching qualification.

4.4 Discussion of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data

In analysing qualitative data from interviews and with references to documents review, themes were identified. These themes depict significant challenges experienced by the SMTs in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary school. The following section discusses the dominant themes that emerged from the analysis of data generated through semi-structured interviews and documents review where appropriate. The themes are; Tasks (not) on time; out of field teachers; instability of professionally qualified teaching staff; scarcity of physical resources; social ills interfere with curriculum leadership and management; parents abdicating their parental roles to teachers; (In)sufficient support from higher educational authorities; low morale of both teachers and learners; mitigating the effects of complexities of leading and managing curriculum. Each of these themes is discussed in detail in the section below.

4.4.1 Tasks (not) on time

It emerges from data that was generated from five participating schools that leadership and management of curriculum in rural secondary schools is faced with a variety of factors with deleterious effects. These factors made it difficult for the SMTs to ensure that they effectively perform their tasks of ensuring smooth curriculum delivery and those administrative duties are honoured and completed on time. It emerged from the responses of the participants that there seemed to be insufficient time to plan, implement and control teaching and learning due to the heavy workloads of the SMTs which included teachers attending developmental workshops and teacher union activities. These disturbing factors are presented and discussed below:

4.4.1.1 SMTs' extended teaching loads

It emerges from the data that the SMTs in the participating rural secondary schools seemed to find it difficult to make time to honour some of their professional and management duties of ensuring that there is always effective teaching and learning in their schools. The participants claimed that it was prevalent in these rural secondary schools for the SMTs to have extended teaching workloads that impeded them from honouring their administrative duties on time. One of the reasons put forward was lower learner enrolments resulting in less number of teachers due to the post provision norms (PPN) imperatives. As a result of this, the SMTs tended to have higher teaching workloads which impeded them from honouring their professional and management duties on time. In this regard Mrs Dida from School C said:

Our PPN is very small. There are few educators who end up handling two or three subjects from Grade 8 to 12. I can't manage to perform other administrative tasks and other duties of controlling the implementation of pre-planned daily activities due to my teaching load demanding that I am always in class teaching most of the time. So it is not easy to manage teaching and learning effectively. I just do not have time
(Mrs Dida from School C).

Corroborating the claim made above that SMTs lack time to honour their administrative duties, Mr Madi from School D said:

The number of specialist educators is very inadequate. The evidence is that I should not be having a large number of teaching periods that is even much greater than level one teacher. I find myself to be more of a teacher than HOD and a manager. So in this way, administrative work lacks behind when I have to spend more time teaching learners that seem demotivated
(Mr Madi from School D).

Similar sentiments were echoed by other participants who also claimed that the SMTs battled to focus on their administrative duties which resulted in some work not being done on time. Apart from more workloads in the classes, it also emerged that the SMTs frequently addressed a myriad of challenges that emanated from the multiply deprived contexts which characterised rural communities. These are external to teaching and learning. Participants acknowledge the pervasive demand for SMTs to continuously engage with relevant stakeholders compelling them to suspend teaching and learning as well as their administrative duties. In this regard Miss Tirah from School E said:

During the day I go to class but I remain after school to do some planning, preparation and some administration work. I have a problem of balancing teaching and administrative responsibilities because apart from big class sizes and heavy workload, I also have to frequently attend to SMT and SGB meetings and to those meetings organised by the circuit manager. I also have to attend community members; parents and departmental officials who visit the school regularly without making appointments, and other issues of discipline at school (Miss Tirah from School E).

The extended workloads of SMTs in School – A, and School – B were caused to a greater extent by larger number of learners and teachers, making it difficult for them to finish some tasks on time. Mr Mpofu, School – B said that the school was “busy” and that “everything except time to complete tasks was extended. You feel that you are overworked”. According to Msila (2012), the work overload of school management and teachers in general is common and can lead to a poor school climate. On the same issue, Du Plessis (2014) contends that some principals in rural schools do not have the luxury of having deputy principals and administrative support in undertaking external demands, resulting in work overloads.

According to Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document, the schedule teaching times for the HODs is 85% and principal’s is between 5% and 60% in secondary schools (Government gazette, No, 15767, 1999). The SMTs seemed to exceed these percentages as a result of very low PPN which means less teaching posts for that particular school and this is evident in School - C and School - E respectively, and to the lesser extent to School – E as well. School - A and School - B are have become exceptional cases. This is due to the fact that their enrolment rates were higher because they are situated in rural areas which are receiving the essential services that other rural communities are still deprived of and most deep rural families migrate to such areas.

4.4.1.2 Teachers attending developmental workshops

Absenteeism due to teachers attending developmental workshops organised by DBE seemed to offer challenges to the participating rural secondary schools. The majority of the participants pointed out that as more teachers were invited to attend developmental workshops or meetings, they left the SMTs with complex duties to keep the schools fully functional. Evidence from reviewing time-books indicates that it is common from three of the

five participating schools for up to half of the teaching staff to be absent from work because of workshops and moderations. Participants pointed out that teachers did not start at school when they have to attend workshops as they were commonly held far from these rural schools. For instance, Mr Linda from School A said that such a scenario left the SMTs “managing chaos instead of curriculum.” Evidence can also be seen from the following excerpts from the other two participants:

You find that they [DBE] organise workshops on the same week for the same teachers. You find that teachers will be absent for two to three consecutive days from schools. Where then do you find time to monitor curriculum as you will be marching up and down trying to maintain order (Ms Tirah from School E).

Similar sentiments were shared by Mrs Madi from School D said:

There are a number of changes that are being implemented at the same time, to the same people. These people are expected to attend different workshops. It is frustrating to be a manager these days because you are compelled to suspend your teaching periods in order to establish and maintain order in the school when teachers leave for workshops (Mrs Madi from School D).

The continuing changes in the curriculum policy since 1994 in South Africa seem to develop complexities in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools. Hence, the SMTs are left with less manpower to run the schools effectively. Teachers are unable to start with teaching in their respective schools due to the remoteness of these rural schools and the problem of unavailability of reliable transport system exacerbates the problem.

Apart from teachers heeding a call from the Department of Education, leave registers from participating schools showed that on average, a teacher has applied for a leave in every week. There is no evidence of intervention programmes to make up for time that has been lost. There were also no records of batting system in place for all absent teachers in each school. According to Obeng-Denteh, Yeboah, Sam and Monkah, (2011), it is always a difficult situation when there are teachers that are absent because the SMTs have to review their plans and postpone their administration duties and to organise a temporary replacement. All these adjustments put a lot of pressure on the leadership and management of curriculum and discipline (Adediji & Olaniyan, 2011).

4.4.1.3 Union activities

All participants were unanimous that some trade unions sometimes invited their members to union activities during teaching and learning time, giving short notices or sometimes without prior notifications. There was unanimity of views from the participants that this practice by the teacher unions disturbed their operational plans. Participant highlighted that the teachers usually came and left very early or did not come at all to the schools because of transport problems as venues for such union activities were always located urban centres. Participants also pointed out that it became a complex management activity to decide what to do about learners that have been left behind in schools when teachers have heeded the call made by their unions. Mr Linda from School A said:

Leading professionals is complex. It is sometimes worse here in rural schools because some educators use any opportunity to absent themselves. This upsets our planning. You may do all the planning of curriculum and assessment and is just disturbed by ... union activities (Mr Linda from School A).

Similar sentiments were echoed by another participant who stated that there were a variety of planned union activities during the school hours which impacted negatively on their programmes. He said:

The unions are disturbing the schools lately. You find that there is mass meeting at 10h00 and then you cannot teach. The following week there is another mass meeting, they organise games on Fridays and teachers do not come to school. They attend to these activities. These activities are disturbing teaching and learning big (Mr Goba from School E).

The above excerpts about the negative effects that the trade unions had and which made leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools difficult was corroborate by the utterances of other participants from other schools in this study. These participants pointed out that those union activities negatively affected their time on tasks. Another emerging narrative was that the SMTs were unable to complete their administrative duties due to the untimely disturbances by teacher unions when they suddenly invited teachers to attend meetings during teaching time.

The views of the participants were corroborate by the utterances of Zengele (2013) who posits that the growth of teacher unions is contributing to school decline in South Africa and

that union's interests come first before those of the Department of Education and the learners. The research findings of Msila (2014) are in agreement with these findings when suggesting that strong political union affiliations among the teachers are disturbing effective school management and leadership with negative consequences.

4.4.2 Out of field teachers

It emerges from data that it is common for teachers in rural secondary schools to teach most of the subjects in which they were not trained as their subjects of specialisations. I view these teachers as "out of field teachers". Participants felt that teaching outside their specialisation contributed to inadequacies to their teaching and it compromised enhancement of learner achievement agenda. Due to the prevalence of out of field teaching, teachers were always in need of ongoing professional development and support. However, limited access to relevant institutions of higher learning and time constraints were hindering efforts of teachers in rural areas. Various reasons for this phenomenon were given, and these included low PPN which then resulted in less number of teaching posts being allocated to the schools; and lack of quality subject specialists was attributed to unattractive rural environments. The following challenges were raised by participants:

Teachers of late are not adequately qualified, although they have teaching qualifications but their problem is the lack of expert knowledge of the subjects they are teaching. This is because most teach outside their specialisations (Mr Linda from School A).

The view expressed in the above extract concurs with those raised by other participants who opined that most teachers in rural secondary schools were teaching subjects that were outside their specialisation.

Our school does not have sufficient number of subject specialists. It is hard to get suitable qualified educators especially in scarce subjects. Teachers in our school end up teaching any subject because of shortage of subject specialist. PPN makes it worse (Mr Goba from School E).

The prevailing lack of teacher capacity was revealed when teachers displayed apathy which was highlighted as contributing to them becoming demotivated.

It is important that the principal gets the teachers with relevant qualifications for each subject and not leave it to chance because you find that a person who is

supposed to be in class just arrives late by 15 minutes and also leave the classroom earlier by another 15 minutes (Mr Linda from School A).

The out-of-field teaching phenomenon had disastrous results for effective curriculum leadership and management in the sense that teachers affected by this problem lose confidence in teaching these subjects. This is one of the contributing factors to the lack of teacher capacity to teach effectively. The following utterances are made by the participant from School C:

One of the reasons is that teachers have no confidence in teaching subjects that they have never been trained to teach whilst bearing in mind the huge duty loads that teachers are expected to handle (Mr Kubheka from School C).

In short, it appears that some rural secondary school teachers lacked subject content knowledge, general teaching methods, emerging environmental conditions (Shulman, 1987). According to Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011), the quality of education offered to the children in many rural secondary schools is poor to some extent due to out of field educators.

4.4.3 Instability of professionally qualified teaching staff

Participants alluded to the view that there was a vicious cycle of recruiting teachers to teach in these rural secondary schools. The continuing teacher recruitments in rural secondary schools had a prevalence of experience of a vicious cycle of continuing recruiting unqualified or professionally unqualified novice teachers. Participants explained that once new recruits have established themselves to teaching profession, there was a tendency for them to move on to schools that are situated in more affluent areas. The following viewpoints are in support of this recurring trend:

Some teachers are qualified; some are partly qualified. Those teachers that are qualified have difficulty to work here because of environmental problems. When they get job in better schools, they leave the school with the vicious cycle of having to recruit replacement teachers again. Some teachers that the school gets are really not specialists but they end up teaching those subjects because of a shortage of people who are qualified in those subjects (Mr Goba from School E).

Similar sentiments were shared by Mrs Dida from School C who also viewed attracting and retaining suitable qualified teachers to rural secondary schools as a challenge. This is what she said:

Teachers want to leave this area and I don't blame them. Teaching in rural areas has its toll. That's why there are constantly vacant posts or posts occupied by temporary educators in these schools (Mrs Dida from School C).

Confirming the gravity of the problem, Miss Tirah from School E said:

I am also on the move. I want to teach in more affluent schools.

Concurring with the two views expressed by the two participants above, Mr Madi from School D said:

One thing that worries me is that all those teachers who were funded by Funda-Lushaka bursary scheme from the DoE do not come to rural schools after they are professionally qualified but they are in nice places, not in the places where they need them the most. This is the reason why our school does not have sufficient number of specialist teachers (Mr Madi from School D).

The teacher profiles that were accessible from participating schools have teachers who were initially professionally unqualified. The dominant qualifications outside education professional qualification were Bachelor of Science, National Diploma in either in Chemistry or in Human Resources, Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Technology. Teachers with these special qualifications took up to 21, 6 % of the total of 111 teachers of all five rural secondary schools that participated in this study. In most cases, these were teachers who tended to pursue other better remunerating jobs or migrate to perceived better environments if the opportunities arise.

The view that rural secondary schools are faced with major problems of creating an inviting environment to adequately qualified teachers and be enabled to stabilise this situation is also supported by Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011). Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) affirm that when novice teachers have established themselves in the teaching fraternity, they migrate to urbanised areas leaving rural secondary schools to keep on recruiting mostly novice teachers. This view is shared by Stinebrickner (2001) who further draws attention to the inclination for high quality and accomplished teachers who increasingly choose to leave rural secondary schools for better conditions of service elsewhere.

The report of the Human Sciences Research Council (2005) and Pennefather (2011) opine that competent, qualified teachers do not apply to vacant teaching postings in rural secondary

schools because of a variety of contextual factors that are attributed to rural conditions. According to Billingsley (2003), and Utah Foundation (2007) report, research on attrition and retention of teachers in rural secondary schools in particular shows that conditions in the work environment affect the teachers' job satisfaction and subsequent career decisions. For instance, Pitsoe (2013, p. 309) asserts that in general, teaching has become a "stopgap" profession or profession of "last resort". Other factors that foster attrition and are precisely prevalent in rural settings include the lack of facilities for teaching, overcrowding of schools and classrooms, inadequate incentives, poor parental participation, policy overload, role conflict, favouritism and nepotism (OECD, 2008). Teachers who acquire generic than specific human capital are more likely to leave teaching for other jobs (Hannah, 2011).

4.4.4 Scarcity of physical resources

It emerged from data that schools were running short of classrooms and most of these schools in the study were faced with a problem of overcrowding in classrooms. The physical conditions of the existing classrooms for all schools that participated in this study were in bad condition, and thus did not meet the requirement of an appropriate physical environment that each school should have. This is what one participant from School A had to say in this regard:

There is overcrowding in classrooms and you will find that this problem has been with us for many years and we are getting used to it now because these classes are not enough to carry the number of learners (Mr Linda from School A).

Corroborating the notion of prevalence of overcrowding in classrooms, Mr Thetha from School A said:

Overcrowding is worse in Grade 8 and Grade 9 classrooms and there is no chance of this getting better in the near future (Mr Thetha from School A).

Similar views were also echoed by other participants such as Ms Tirah from School E who had this to say regard the shortage of classrooms:

Previously the learner enrolment was not largely increasing but now it has gone up because of results. We do not have enough classrooms to accommodate learners, so we have to limit the number of learners we are enrolling (Ms Tirah from School E).

The scarcity of resources was also raised by most participants, making reference to shortages of fully equipped laboratories, libraries, and computer centres and also the lack of adequate

learner-teachers support materials in the form of textbooks and stationery. The participants raise the following concerns:

It is a big challenge when you do not have the resources that you want because we do not have sufficient textbooks and the necessary teaching equipment (Mr Kubheka from School C).

Rural secondary schools in particular have less financial, human and physical resources when compared to schools in affluent areas (Bloch, 2009). On the same breath, the available resources needed to be managed effectively so that they help enhance teaching and learning (Mestry & Bodalina, 2015). It is also imperative that although there may be less funding being allocated to the schools, such funds should be used to procure appropriate material and such materials should also be maintained properly (Mestry & Bodalina, 2015). According to Ingersoll (2011), research reveals that rural teachers usually receive less access to teaching resources and teacher support programmes owing to their geographic remoteness.

4.4.5 Social ills interfere with curriculum leadership and management

Data reveals that the SMTs acknowledged that schools and their surrounding communities were closely and inseparably intertwined. The challenges within these rural communities permeated to school environments and hindered effective curriculum leadership and management. The participants seemed to be unable to be proactive in terms of curbing the social ills such as the high rate of teenage pregnancy, drug abuse by the learners, chronic absenteeism and to develop a culture of learning. The SMTs depended solely on the available services from the government. This is how they articulated their views in this regard:

Drug abuse is a major concern in our school and we report these cases to the SAPS (South African Police Services) (Mrs Zimu from School B).

The interventions from the Department of Education emerged as one of the initiatives that were undertaken to alleviate some of the socio-economic challenges such as hunger through the school nutrition programme.

The Department of Education assist our school to minimise school dropout on account of hunger by administering the school nutrition programme (Mr Mathe from School D).

It also emerged from the data that similar problems were faced by the learners and were treated by external stakeholders depending on the manner in which the problem manifested

itself. External experts were sometimes invited to come and address it within the school if the problem was severe. The following participant accentuates this issue:

We address issues of learner absenteeism with the learners themselves. If after our interventions with the RCL fails, we treat this matter like that of teenage pregnancy where we refer the matter to the social worker that is provided by the Department of Education(**Ms Tirah from School E**).

The records of learner misconduct and how cases were finalised with relevant sanctions gives a proof of deviant behaviour more especially by boys. According to Payne (2003), learners in rural areas in the case of the context of this study come to schools with effects of socio-cultural background which mostly does not relate to the school culture. It appears from records that serious cases were reported to the SAPS. Payne (2003) posits that curriculum leaders must implement lawful strategies when learners develop misconduct although it is time consuming on its own.

4.4.6 Parents abdicating their parental responsibilities to the teachers

It emerged from data that the lack of parental involvement has exacerbated the challenges of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools. The participants raised concern that the majority of the parents in their rural schools did not want to get involved in the education of their children. Most participants said it appeared as if some parents were actually abdicating their parental responsibilities to the teachers. Some of the reasons they raised for this claim were that some parents did not attend meetings; they did not check their children's school work; they did not ensure that their children had all the necessary resources for learning; they did not attend to their sick children and simply sent them to school so that the school will take them to clinics. The following excerpts from participants illustrate these assertions:

If learners have got a problem and I decide to call parents, they say they are working; others used to say we (teachers) are old enough, so they cannot come to school and most of them say that it is not their duty to come to school; teachers have to sort the problem as teachers at school (**Mr Mpofu from School B**).

This concern is congruent with other views expressed by other participants who made the following statements.

Parents in this area do not pay attention to the learning of their children. In some cases they do not collect reports at the end of the term for their children. They do not even attend parents meetings which could be a lack of interest or it is part of not being co-operative because you find that if the meeting is on a Sunday and they are not going to church, they do not come, they are lazy, so parents have got less interest in the education of their learners (Mr Linda from School A).

A similar concern was raised by another participating teacher who said that the teachers were playing their part in trying to create an environment conducive for effective teaching and learning. However, it was noted unfortunately, many parents were shifting their parenting responsibilities to the teachers.

One day you try to push learners to the right channels, the following day they are out and you cannot do more because parents have shifted their parental roles to the shoulders of teachers at the same time teachers also have a number of issues that they have to deal with. Teachers end up playing multi-roles of being a teacher, a mother, a father, an adjudicator in court when learners have fought in class or at our school. So we are really faced with disciplinary problem and you find that sometimes you do not even know how to tackle them and drug abuse is a major concern in our school (Mrs Zimu from School D).

Similar sentiments of parents in rural areas relinquishing their parental responsibilities to be a burden to the SMTs and the teachers in schools were echoed and shared by other participants in this study in the following assertion:

Parents do not come to school when they are invited and do not even turn in their numbers for parents' meetings either (Mr Kubheka from School C).

Some scholars indicate that parental involvement in rural areas face difficulties (Mashishi, 1994; Bhengu, 2005; Khumalo, 2008 & Mncube, 2009) whilst Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) opine that parental involvement in schools more especially in rural areas is not an easy task. These scholars assert that parents have a tendency of virtually taking a back seat when it comes to school governance because they maintain that teachers have the necessary skills to lead schools without their support. Msila (2012) also expresses similar views as the scholars cited above. Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004) assert that the low level of education of parents and low socio-economic status pose negative effects on leadership and management of curriculum in rural secondary schools. This is congruent with Kamper's (2008)

observations that parents in disadvantaged communities have low levels of education and that others are illiterate.

4.4.7 (In) sufficient support from higher educational authorities

The different views were echoed by other participants in this study which identified educational authorities to the level of Subject Advisors and the teaching and learning services (TLS) from the Department of Education as not providing adequate support to the schools. The following excerpt from the interviews supports this view:

The principal is very supportive but I would say when it comes to the Department of Education we do have subject advisor but you would hardly see him when you go to workshops, personally I do not gain anything. So, I would say I am not receiving any support (Mr Goba from School E).

It emerged that those teachers who were school managers in acting positions were not really given the same treatment as their colleagues in permanent official management positions.

The problem is that since I am an acting HOD, the Department only provide support to those that are officially appointed to these positions (Mr Kubheka from School C).

Another participant, who was the principal, expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of services rendered by the Subject Advisors. He raised the following concern:

The Department of Education should appoint competent senior education specialists who have proven themselves in their schools and classrooms and even Grade 12 results and those Subject Advisors should be tasked with the responsibility to capacitate subject teachers because the problem of teachers not teaching well or not wanting to go to class or absent themselves is the problem of capacity, that is the first problem (Mr Thetha from School A).

Apparently the SMTs also lacked the capacity to professionally develop the teachers in rural secondary schools and to render the necessary support to enable them to effectively use the scarce resources at their disposal. This should be the task of the officials from circuit and district level to pay special attention to rural secondary schools for their contextual conditions that hinder staff developmental programmes at school levels. The participants echoed the following impediments:

In most cases the available resources are under-utilised because when requisitions have been honoured by the school, they lie there unpacked for a long period of time. You find for example sealed boxes of science equipment and teachers claiming that there are no materials (Mr Madi from School D).

The lack of teacher capacity entails the lack of knowledge of what ought to be taught, how to teach and what it means to be a teacher (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Teachers being in possession of professional qualifications also lacked the teaching capacity due to their extended teaching loads and the main concern was the result of less PPN for the schools. To this end, teachers ended up teaching more subjects. In some instances, the teachers had not received any special training and they also lacked content knowledge of the subjects. The problem was compounded by the fact expressed in this report that there were limited teacher professional development opportunities in rural areas.

The literature supports this insufficient professional support from the Department of Education that rural secondary schools are experiencing more challenges as compared to their urban counterparts (Owusu-Acheampong & Williams, 2015; Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert, 2012; Du Plessis, 2014; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). In addition, frequent changes to the curriculum, from OBE to NCS and now CAPS, have resulted in challenges of the failure to provide appropriate teachers work support, inspection, and monitoring, lack of continuous in-service training of teachers, (Kaino, Dhlamini, Phoshoko, Jojo & Ngoepe, 2015).

4.4.8 Low morale of both the teachers and the learners

It emerged from the data that low teachers morale has a negative impact on curriculum leadership and management in rural secondary schools. The low morale attributed to a number of factors including the decline of discipline on the side of the learners; the continuing curriculum change, the lack of motivation by the teachers and the learners as well as overcrowding in the classrooms. According to Bentley and Rempel (1970), teacher morale can be regarded as the satisfactory level of personal needs and wants and the work related satisfaction from the tasks that were successfully completed. Morale can be defined as a person's mental state that is exhibited by assurance, control, and motivation to perform a task (Webster's Dictionary, 2010). Most participants raised the following challenges:

Teachers themselves have lost enthusiasm to work because of many changes. First and foremost, discipline in the school is a major concern because you cannot apply

corporal punishment, it was banished. Learners do not take their work seriously because no one is going to punish them. It is CAPS on the left and Jika Imfundo on the other side. A number of changes are being implemented at the same time to the same people and it is quite frustrating to be the teacher these days and it becomes a burden when you are faced with 60 learners in the class as it is difficult to apply individuality to all of them(Mrs Zimu from School B).

Another participant seemed to be concerned about the lack of punctuality by the teachers when they have to honour the full duration of teaching periods. Invariably, time was lost at the beginning and towards the end of teaching periods. Such loss of time was mainly due to the teachers arriving late for classes and leaving early.

There can be no curriculum implementation if the teacher who is supposed to be in class, just comes late and leaves the class earlier (Mr Linda from School A).

The low teacher morale manifested itself in different ways. Sometimes the majority of the teachers did not honour their teaching periods by remaining seated in the staff room until the principal subtly requested them to go to classrooms. It is doubtful if effective teaching takes place under such circumstances. A teacher from School C had this to say:

One of the challenges is on influencing teachers to do their work because of the negative attitude which disturbs the human relations that is not good within our school (Mrs Dida from School C).

It also emerged from the staff time-books and learners' attendance registers of all of these five rural secondary schools that there was high rate of absenteeism of both the teachers and the learners, and that was a serious concern to curriculum delivery in these schools. I also noted some significant incidents of teacher absenteeism. From the records it was evident that there was no week wherein all the teachers would be present in these schools. This was noticed to be rife between January 2015 and September 2015.

It also appeared from learners' attendance registers that in most cases they absented themselves without valid reasons. Parents or foster parents left their children behind when they went to work early in the morning. Their expectations were that their children would go to schools. Participants responded that some female learners in particular used to be absent when it was the day for social grants collection. This was due to the fact that they too, were raising their children as young mothers. Sometimes they had miss classes and go to clinic

either for family planning or to seek primary health care. These health care facilities were located far from their respective schools and public transport system was inefficient as it has been highlighted elsewhere in this report.

Scholars reveal that teacher morale is affected by high enthusiasm in trying to achieve the set objectives in a short space of time but failure results in total despair (Govindarajan, 2012). The working conditions that contribute to low morale have been directly linked with 'deficient' types of teacher practice and behaviour (Tao, 2013), such as absenteeism (AERC, 2013); corporal punishment that was banned (Feinstein & Mwachombela, 2010), and the avoidance of rural posts (PEDP III, 2013). Setbacks such as the shortage of resources and overloaded staff members were common in curriculum implementation in rural schools (Jansen, 2003). Morrow (2007) avers that setbacks affect teachers' attitude, morale and work ethics and hinder their ability to engage in their primary task of teaching. The rate of teacher absenteeism is influenced by various factors that are related to the school culture, the physical appearance of the school and the demand for certain duties to be completed (Kekahio, Dandapan, Goodman & Lee, 2015). Poor school facilities and infrastructure which are prevalent in rural schools contribute to this problem (Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan, & Rogers, 2006).

4.4.9 Mitigating the effects of complexities of leading and managing curriculum

Rural secondary schools are faced with a myriad of complexities that could not be resolved. However, it is important to learn that the negative effects can be mitigated. This section details some strategies that the SMTs used in order to cushion the severity of their effects on leading and managing curriculum. The participants revealed strategies to mitigate the negative effects of complexities in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.

4. 4.9.1 Going beyond the call of duty

This section presents the strategies that the SMT used in order to lessen the negative effects posed by contextual factors which tended to undermine effective curriculum leadership. There are three main strategies that emerged. The first one related to the dedicated focus to teaching. The second related to doing all administrative duties after schools hours but within the premises and the third and the last strategy was that of doing all leadership and

management duties after hours at home. All these three strategies are couched within the broad theme 'Going beyond the call of duty' which actually captures the SMT commitment to effective teaching and learning. The responses from most participants clearly indicated that they devoted most of their time in teaching and less to administrative duties. This strategy was adopted by most participants by postponing administrative responsibilities to be attended after school hours. The following utterances are then made.

This point is very difficult to really address because you find that I am first the teacher before the manager, So, I have to go to class and just remain after school, do all the planning, preparations and all the administration. It is possible to me I have my own transport and fortunately our school has a security guards by the gate and the police station is almost three kilometres away. So, it is much safer here than other areas. Although I cannot run away from administration work during the day because teachers come to me for support and other reports but I do less and finish up after school (Mr Linda from School A).

They normally attended to administrative duties after school hours. This is how Mr Kubheka from School C said:

Balancing teaching and administration is really a big problem because I have less free periods. I have a high duty load and I normally do planning and recording at home although I arrive very late but I spare at least an hour doing school work. During the day I am supposed to be in class and it's a big problem to balance teaching and administration (Mr Kubheka from School C).

In adding to this strategy, another participant mentioned that she was able to manage time because of proper planning. This is what she said:

I am able to manage time which is the only way after planning properly because if I do not plan properly, I will mess up. Although there is a lot that I have to do, I am an administrator, I am a manager, I am a teacher but I always revisit and review my plan, see my shortfalls and pull up my socks. I have realised that my plans always get disturbed, then I do my administration at home in the evening (Mrs Dida from School C).

Similar approach was also used even in School B where the HOD followed that same plan as other participants in this study. His voice is as follows:

I have some periods to teach because of the time constraints, I used to do administrative work after school. If I have to do administrative work during the school hours, I try sometimes to make up for the lost time whereby I had a class and then cover up for the lost time by organising extra classes. I must say that it is not easy because I have got so many periods like the post level one teacher (Mr Mpofu from School B).

The above section has dealt with a number of strategies that the SMT members used in order to address the complexities of managing the curriculum. Given the severity of the negative stories that the participants shared with me, it is not clear whether the strategies that they are talking about actually worked as they claimed.

4.4.10 Rural communities and impact on curriculum leadership and management

The discussion in Chapter Two has indicated that there is a relationship between rural areas and curriculum leadership and management. Participants highlighted a number of challenges emerging from the rural communities that negatively affected the ways in which they led and managed the curriculum. The dominant social ills raised by the participants included low socio-economic background of the parents; ill-disciplined learners; abuse of drugs and a high rate of learner pregnancy. What has emerged also is that low socio-economic status of the parents resulted in most of them being unable to provide financial support to the schools. What is clear is that the extreme poverty faced by the community played a prominent role in the problems mentioned above. The socio-economic status of the parents was directly linked to their level of education, less rewarding occupations and subsequent low income. A disturbing revelation from the data is that learners from low socio-economic backgrounds tended to be ill-disciplined at school, engaged in drug abuse and contributed more to the high rate of learner pregnancy. Participants believed that all the issues highlighted above negatively affected their leadership and management of curriculum.

Here are external factors which make it difficult to manage teaching and learning where a high rate of absenteeism is as a result of factors at home, learners often get ill, girls get pregnant because they fall in love with people who promise to give them money. We are experiencing bullying and gangsterism in our school and most male learners are threatened and get absent which result in increasing school dropouts.

You find that there are days when teaching and learning is disturbed by these gangsters (Mr Linda from School A).

The issue of the high rate of absenteeism by the learners has also been raised by the long serving SMT member who claimed to have observed the reciprocating absenteeism in these rural secondary schools for quite a number of years. This is what he said:

Most of these learners have been raised by single parents who left school very early themselves and also in most cases those parents were our learners who dropped out from school. Most of these learners were involved in criminal activities, some were not eager to study, dropped out of school and bore children which they themselves follow suite of not eager to study and not eager to listen. This is impacting on our management (Mr Mpofu, School B).

Similar sentiments were expressed by other participants that learners come into the classrooms being demotivated and were passive. Mr Madi from School D had the following to say:

I find that most of these learners seem to be demotivated although few of them may want to learn and they are passive even if the teacher tries to use all the strategies and approaches (Mr Madi from School D).

The concern of high rate of learner pregnancy in rural secondary schools was raised by other participants as a challenging factor in managing the curriculum.

There is this teenage pregnancy where learners are allowed to come to school being pregnant. These learners have divided attention because on one side this person is preparing to be the mother and at the same time the teachers demand schoolwork. One notices that they are always sick and weak and they need our special attention as well. SMTs are always in conflict with subject teachers about CASS marks of these girls which are often incomplete (Mrs Dida from School C).

Similar sentiments were shared by Ms Tirah from School E who posited that the school was faced with social ills like learner pregnancy and absenteeism.

We have a problem with absenteeism with learners themselves and we have noticed that most learners do not have parents. In our year plan we try to invite to our school a social worker who always does not come to assist in dealing with issues of

absenteeism, teenage pregnancy and other relevant issues (Ms Tirah from School E).

Some members of the communities around the school surrounding communities were targeting schools to sell their intoxicating substances. The participant said the following:

Drug abuse is a major concern in our school and it is even worse if the neighbouring school families sell these substances to learners and even if you inform the SAPS, they take time to respond (Mrs Zimu from School B).

The challenges that participating schools were experiencing from these surrounding communities included the stock theft and vandalism. The participants shared the same experience and have the following to say:

The school surrounding community appears to be in two folds because some members of the community are good members. They work hand-in-hand with the school. But some have their own hidden issues with the school and the management of the school. There is a high rate of vandalism that is coming from the community and that also has created that culture in learners (Mr Madi from School D).

It emerged that theft of and vandalism to the school property was rife and it occurred during the night. Most of the schools that participated in this study did not have security guards at night. The participants have the following to say:

We have a lot of problems in our school. There is no security guard at night therefore theft and vandalism take place at these times. In 2013, 25 computers were looted and have never been recovered until today (Mr Kubheka from School C).

It appears that the challenges of theft of and vandalism to school property will take some time to be resolved because when such incidents were immediately reported to the South African Police Services, the police did not take prompt reaction to apprehend the culprits. The following concerns of crime related incidents were raised by the participants:

It is really disturbing that after you have gone to report to SAPS about stolen goods for the school and neighbours selling drugs to learners, they take time to respond. So these incidents continue to exist and they are the major problems in our school (Mr Goba from School E).

It emerged from participants that most challenges pertaining to continuing learners' deviant behaviour could not be resolved apparently because not only that those parents were not

willing to cooperate with schools but most learners were also orphans. Some were raised by foster parents and others were looked after by their siblings. Participants have the following to say in this regard:

It becomes difficult for us as SMTs to address some challenges because some learners do not have parents at all to support them; so those learners are breadwinners, they are orphans therefore they fail to come to school regularly (Mr Mpofu from School B).

This view was shared by other participants that as managers, they had difficulties resolving most of the problems because there were many children who did not have parents to assist in maintaining discipline at home. In short, the schools had no partner with whom the issue of maintaining learner discipline could be shared.

Children are just on their own and you will find that some are orphans and we have a problem of how we can sort out problems as they lack discipline and are not willing to learn (Mr Kubheka from School C).

The incident records from the three schools (Schools C, D and E) showed evidence of theft of school property. I also observed informally during the interviews session that school property had been vandalised; there were many broken burglar guards, broken windows and doors that were still not repaired during the time of my visit to these schools. It emerged during discussions that a total of 35 computers had been stolen from School – C and 20 from School E. Similarly, the interview venue for School – D showed that it was the only well erected computer room and appropriate furniture. However, 25 computers and other electrical equipment had been stolen from the same school.

Research studies continue to show the fundamental effects of low socio-economic status of rural communities on curriculum leadership and management in rural secondary schools (Van der Berg, 2008; Lee & Madyun, 2009). Reddy (1996) opines that there are serious and widespread discipline problems such as insubordination, drugs, alcoholism, corruption, bribery, vandalism, violence and gangsterism in schools which are becoming difficult to control. According to Nelson Mandela Foundation (2005), domestic and long distances travelled to school often ate into the school day or resulted in absenteeism and transport is perceived to be the primary reason for learners dropping out of school. Socio-economic status is therefore seen as a strong predictor of learner achievement (Coleman, 1996).

4.5 Chapter summary

The chapter has presented and discussed the data that generated through the use of semi-structured interviews and documents review. The data was generated from five secondary schools that were purposively selected. Before the data was presented, the profiles of all five schools were presented, followed by that of the participants. Data was presented under the ten themes and these were listed in the introduction before they were discussed. The next chapter presents the findings and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has dealt with data presentation and discussions which is organised into ten themes that emerged from the analysis of in-depth interviews and documents reviews. This chapter presents the findings that were arrived at drawing from the data that is discussed in Chapter Four. Before the findings are presented, this chapter begins with a brief overview of the whole study called ‘study summary’. The findings are presented and discussed utilising the research questions driving the study. Thereafter, recommendations are made based on the findings. Finally, the chapter summary is outlined.

5.2 Study summary

The main aim of this study was to explore complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools from the SMTs’ perspectives. The study also sought to explore how exactly the SMTs in rural secondary schools mitigate the effects of these complexities of leading and managing curriculum whilst taking into cognisance their contextual conditions. Chapter One introduced the study and outlined various components of a research report which consisted of the background and rational of the study, critical research questions and the methodology that underpinned the study

Chapter Two reviews relevant literature that speaks to various issues including different concepts of curriculum, leadership and management and the in-depth theory of how curriculum leadership, management and administration is understood and practiced in rural secondary schools. The theoretical framework that underpins theory upon which the study is based was also discussed. The complexity theory was deemed to be relevant to this study. Both national and international debates surrounding leadership, management and how leadership relates to learner performance were also presented. The distributed leadership model was deemed to be the most relevant theory that can be utilised to understand how complexities of managing a rural secondary school can undermine quality education provision.

Chapter Three discussed the research design and methodology that was used in conducting the study. A case study design of five rural secondary schools that were purposively selected was adopted. Chapter Four presents the data that was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews and documents review. The generated data was organised according to ten themes that emerged from the analysis process. Each theme was first discussed followed by *verbatim* quotes from participants as evidence of the claims that I as a researcher had made. Literature was injected into the discussion of data. Chapter Five presents the findings and recommendations. However, before the findings are presented a summary of the whole study is presented. Recommendations are directly linked to the findings presented. The next section presents the findings and research questions have been used in order to organise the discussion of the findings.

5.3 Presentation of findings.

The presentation of findings, as mentioned in the previous section, is organised by the two research questions that guided the study. The first research question is; what complexities are the School Management Teams experiencing in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools? The second research question goes thus; how do the School Management Teams mitigate the effects of complexities in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools effectively? Each of the questions is used below as a heading which frames the discussion of the findings as alluded to in the section above.

5.3.1 What complexities SMTs are experiencing in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools?

The first finding is that the SMT members in the study faced enormous challenges as they tried to ensure that their respective schools remained operational despite the challenges they faced. The challenges were mainly contextual and related to low learner enrolment which was largely caused by unfavourable PPN as more teachers and the learners left the schools due to a number of factors. Therefore, I can without any fear of contradiction conclude that the experiences of the SMTs were characterised by their resilience to succeed despite the hostile conditions in which they found themselves. These conditions related to issues of out of field teaching which was prevalent in the five schools, and was also linked to the fact that properly qualified teachers did not like to teach in rural areas. Secondly, those who came to teach in these areas, found them to be inhospitable and they left at the earliest opportunity available.

A detailed discussion of these issues can be found in Section 4.3.2 as well as Section 4.3.3 of Chapter Four.

The other finding relating to the SMTs' experiences is that they felt abandoned by the same people (stakeholders) that were theoretically, supposed to support them in order to ensure that effective teaching and learning was happening in these communities. To start this discussion, the data has indicated that there was less time spent by the teachers providing effective teaching. The teachers came late for schools and also for their classroom duties and also left early. A number of factors can be attributed to undesirable contextual realities. These factors included unreliable public transport system and also the dearth of adequately skilled teachers who had clear understanding of subject content. That resulted in a situation where self confidence among affected teachers lacked; consequently, such teachers could not stay in the classroom for the duration of the period. Parents who are considered to be one of the major stakeholders had abdicated their responsibilities to support the teachers in terms of, for instance, supervising homework for the learners and also cooperating with the schools on a number of areas such as the maintenance of learner discipline. The officials of the department of Education in the form of Subject Advisors were not helpful either. A detailed discussion of these issues can be found in Section 4.3.6 and Section 4.3.7 of Chapter Four. As if the challenges highlighted above are not enough, there were too many social problems in the community that negatively affected schooling. Members of the SMT found themselves in the deep end in terms of the responsibilities of handling these issues. All the challenges mentioned in the discussion above characterised the experiences of the SMTs in the five schools as they tried to ensure that their schools stayed afloat and operated effectively.

5.3.2 How do the School Management Teams mitigate the effects of complexities in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools effectively?

The findings show that the SMT members in the study went beyond the call of duty as they tried to mitigate the negative effects of the complexities of managing the curriculum. It is clear that a number of attempts were made to ensure that the effects of the hostile environment within which their schools operated were minimised. For instance, the SMT members dedicated their entire time teaching in their respective classes as they had to straddle between managing the school and also teaching. It has been highlighted that staff establishment was not favourable. Their focus and dedication to teaching compromised their other responsibilities such as management and performing administrative duties. However, to

demonstrate their resilience that I have highlighted, most of the SMT members made provisions to attend to such administrative duties. There were two ways in which this was done; first, they set aside time after classes to perform these duties and secondly, they would do a lot of administrative work at home after school.

The other findings relate to management of the teachers as human resource through which the goals of the school could be attained. In that regard, it is evident that some attempts were made to ensure that there was optimal teacher participation in decision-making processes, hence the distributed leadership model comes to the fore. However, as the data suggested, their drive to maximise teacher involvement in participative management was weak and its value did not seem to have been clearly understood. The lack of discipline among the learners also posed a challenge for the SMTs. I can say that the SMTs were not succeeding in handling these issues as well. Their failure to decisively deal with learner discipline could be linked to their unsuccessful attempts at ensuring meaningful teacher participation in the resolution of these problems. More details on these issues can be found in Section 4.3.8 and also Section 4.3.9 of Chapter Four

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings discussed in the above section, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendation 1

There is no single leadership and management theoretical approach that can be regarded as a silver bullet to resolve all the problems confronting the SMTs in rural secondary schools. There is a serious need to leadership development among school principals in particular and other SMT members in general. For instance, they need a variety of skills that assist them in moving their schools forward in terms of facilitating effective teaching and learning. For instance, the SMTs need to create a climate that will allow community members to use school facilities creating the opportunities for fund-raising projects. This will promote the realisation, recognition and appreciation by the surrounding community that schools are there to serve the community thus generating a sense of ownership to the benefit of the school in terms of providing support and become vigilant.

Recommendation 2:

Linked to the need for leadership development among the SMT members is the need to shift the paradigm within which the principals operate. For instance, they need to learn to have a firm conviction that embraces and articulates teamwork and collaboration with school communities within the school. This can be done through invitational and distributed leadership practices. This will serve to inculcate a sense of belonging to schools from all stakeholders.

5.5 The implications of the study

This study was of a small scale and cannot be generalised to the larger education fraternity; hence the participants were the SMTs of five neighbouring rural secondary schools within the Pinetown District. The study was limited to five rural secondary schools due to financial constraints and their accessibility and it has provided with an insight for further and large scale studies.

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings that were drawn from the data that was presented in Chapter Four. Recommendations have been made to school leadership generally and school principals who participated in the study in particular. The findings did not come up with anything new that is not addressed by the literature reviewed. Nevertheless, the study has indicated that where there is dearth of understanding about the values of participation of stakeholders, their participation suffers. Similarly, where a deeper understanding about the essence of curriculum leadership entails, challenges dominate the discourse and frustration after frustration becomes the order of the day.

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Annexure A: Permission to conduct research in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education institutions.



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref:2/4/8/424

Mr DB Zondo
945 Inanda Glebe Phase 3
INANDA
4309

Dear Mr Zondo

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"COMPLEXITIES IN LEADING AND MANAGING CURRICULUM IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 24 May 2015 to 31 July 2016.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

(See List Attached)

Nkosingathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 22 May 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologileconnie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: www.kzneducation.gov.za

Annexure B: Letter to principals of five rural secondary schools requesting permission to conduct research.

945 Inanda Glebe

Inanda

4309

06 February 2015

Attention: The Principal

██████████ Secondary School

Inanda

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESERACH

My name is Dumisani Brian Zondo, an M. Ed student and a deputy principal at Makhapha Combined School. As part of my degree requirement, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct this research at your school. My study title is: **COMPLEXITIES OF LEADING AND MANAGING CURRICULUM IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS.**

This study aims to explore complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools despite challenges of different school contextual factors. Factors include the scarcity of various resources that include shortage of teachers with subjects of specialisation, changing curriculum framework policy, involvement of other stakeholders and other related factors in your school. The planned study will focus on school management team members (SMTs) (especially the school principal and the heads of departments). The study will use semi-structured interviews and documents review.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the school principal; the deputy principal and the heads of departments. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded. In addition, I will do documents analysis and documents that will be on request are the management files and minute books of records from SMTs, school governing bodies (SGBs), school development teams (SDTs), parent meetings, finance committees and representative council of learners (RCLs). Other documents to be included are year plans, school policies, teaching staff profiles and time books.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.

All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences or penalty on your part.

The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

You and school management team members will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Mr B.N. Mkhize at 031-260 1398 / 0836530077. E-mail: mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the UKZN Research Office through: P. Mohun, HSSREC Research Office; E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za Tel: 031 260 4557

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: Dumisani Zondo, Email: zondo.dumi1@gmail.com; Cell No: 082 361 4411/ 071 461 7805.

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Dumisani Zondo

.....

Declaration of informed consent

I (Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.**

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: _____ Date: _____

Thanking you in advance

Annexure C: Letter of consent to principals and HODs.

945 Inanda Glebe

Inanda

4309

13 March 2015

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Dumisani Brian Zondo. I am an M. Ed student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am required to conduct research. I have identified you as one of my potential research participants. I therefore kindly seek your permission to be part of my research project. My study title is: **Complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.**

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 45 minutes and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

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

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		

I Dumisani Brian Zondo; UKZN student no: 935315283 can be contacted at:

Email: zondo.dumi1@gmail.com

Cell: 082 361 4411/ 071 461 7805

My supervisor is Mr B.N. Mkhize who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

His contact details: E-mail: mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za; Phone number: 031 260 1398.

For additional information, you may also contact the UKZN Research Office through:

Mr P. Mohun (HSSREC Research Office)

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

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Declaration of informed consent

I (Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.**

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time should I so desire.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Witness/ Research Assistant: _____ Date: _____

Thanking you in advance

Annexure D: Interview guide to the principals.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PRINCIPALS

Researcher: Zondo D.B.

Student Number: 935315283

Research Topic: Complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.

PART 1: Preliminary questions

- 1.1 How long have you held this position?
- 1.2 Do you have the exact number of qualified and specialising teachers according to the 'PPN' of your school?
- 1.3 How has the enrolment of your school changed for the past three years and what is the current enrolment for 2015?

PART 2: Research Questions

- 2.1 What do you perceive to be the challenges in influencing teachers and learners to dedicate themselves fully to their responsibilities?
- 2.2 How do you exactly manage teaching and learning effectively in your school?
- 2.3 How exactly do you address or mitigate such challenges in your school?
- 2.4 How do you balance teaching and administrative responsibilities?
- 2.5 How is teaching and learning continuing in your absence?
- 2.6 What do you think ought to be done and by whom with regard to uplifting/ enhancing the teaching and learning standards in schools?
- 2.7 Before we end this conversation, is there anything that you would like to share with me that I may not have asked you about? Please feel free to share with me.

Annexure E: Interview guide to HODs

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENTS (HODs)

Researcher: Zondo D.B.

Student Number: 935315283

Research Topic: Complexities of leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.

PART 1: Preliminary questions

1.1 How long have you held this position?

1.2 Do you have the sufficient number of subject specialists' teachers in your department?

PART 2: Research questions

2.1 What do you perceive to be the challenges towards improving teaching and learning standards in your department?

2.2 What exactly do you address or mitigate these challenges for your department?

2.3 How do you balance teaching and administrative responsibilities?

2.4 Do you receive any support from the principal, the deputy principal and the provincial DoE at district level with regard to effective curriculum implementation?

If yes: Please, just a brief explanation of the kind of support that is provided will be enough.

2.5 What do you think ought to be done and by whom for effective curriculum leadership and management in schools?

2.6 Before we end this conversation, is there anything that you would like to share with me that I may not have asked you about? Please feel free to share it with me.

Annexure F: Turnitin certificate

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Complexities in leading and managing curriculum in rural secondary schools.
 BY DANEAN ZOMDO

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CHAPTER ONE
 ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is an orientation to this study, and therefore setting the scene for the discussion of key issues pertinent to the study. It provides the background, purpose, rationale as well as the significance of the study. This is followed by outlining the objectives and critical research questions guiding the study. Furthermore, this chapter provides a brief discussion of how key terms can be understood in this study, followed by the demarcation and the outline of the study. Lastly, the chapter is summarised.

1.2 Background to the study

The official school management team (SMT) is made up of the principal, deputy principal and the heads of department (HOD). They are responsible to ensure the smooth running of schools in order to meet broader national intentions of the current curriculum. They are expected to plan, direct the work of a group of teachers and learners, monitor their work and take corrective actions where necessary (Hendley, Christie, Jackson & Ward, 2008). There is lot that is covered in the literature about the roles and responsibilities of leading and managing curriculum by the SMTs. However, there is a need to take into cognisance different contextual factors that might impact negatively for the fulfilment of these roles and responsibilities. This study focuses on exploring complexities of leading and managing curriculum in secondary schools situated in rural communities from SMTs' perspectives. The study also seeks to explore the strategies SMTs are using to mitigate the effects of complexities in leading and managing curriculum in secondary schools situated in rural areas.

The post-apartheid government after 1994 in South Africa made an effort to move away from

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