

**A CASE STUDY OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL
MANAGEMENT TEAM IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AT A SECONDARY
SCHOOL**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Ntombifikile Sweetness Ndlovu, declare that:

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SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation is submitted with my approval.



Professor Inbanathan Naicker

DEDICATION

To the Almighty God who always gives me strength to soldier on through thick and thin. This study is also dedicated to my parents Mr Thulani Ndlovu and Mrs Busisiwe Ndlovu for their motivation, encouragement and full support.

Nomthandazo Shezi, my best friend, my prayer partner, my shoulder to lean on for always listening to me and pray for me in times of discouragement. Sthembiso Gamede for your full support and encouragements during this long journey.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the mechanisms used by the school management team (SMT) to quality assure teaching and learning. The focus of this study was to explore the leadership practices used by the SMT of the selected township secondary school in quality assurance with regard to teaching and learning. The study aimed at answering these following research questions: What mechanisms are employed by the school management team to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school? How effective are the mechanisms employed by the school management team to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school? and; How can quality assurance in teaching and learning be improved in the case study school? Five SMT members (Principal, deputy principal and three departmental heads) from one secondary school were purposively selected based on their characteristics and experience. The distributed leadership theory by Helen Gunter (2005) and the conceptual framework for quality education in schools by Elizabeth Garira (2020) underpin this study. Using an interpretive paradigm, qualitative research approach and case study research design, I conducted semi-structured interviews to generate primary data from the participants. I also used three documents (Quality Management Systems, School Improvement Plan and curriculum coverage monitoring tool) that were requested from the research site to obtain secondary data. The analysis of data was done using thematic analysis. Findings point to that there is a disparity in leadership practices by the SMT. They separate the school into two phases, namely, the Further Education and Training phase (FET) and the General Education and Training phase (GET), and their focus is mainly on the FET. Monitoring seems to start from grade 12 to lower grades; extra classes are implemented only in the FET phase, and tracking of learner performance is mainly done in grade 12. The main recommendation was that The SMT distribute the power to the subject heads, who are *de facto* teacher leaders, to assist in other management duties. They can also delegate the work to the Learner Representative Council so that all the school grades can be attended to.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DH	Departmental Head
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
IEB	Independent Examination Board
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management Systems
JIT	Just In Time
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
KZN DoE	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management System
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
PM	Performance Management
PPN	Post Provisioning Norm
QMS	Quality Management Systems
RCL	Representative Council of Learners

RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SASA	South Africans Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMT	School Management Team
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page number
Title	(i)
Declaration	(ii)
Supervisor's statement	(iii)
Dedication	(iv)
Acknowledgements	(v)
Abstract	(vi)
List of acronyms and abbreviations	(vii)

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Background to the study	2
1.3 Problem Statement	5
1.4 Rationale and Motivation of the Study	6
1.4.1 Personal Dimension	6
1.4.2 Professional Dimension	6
1.4.3 Theoretical Dimension	7
1.5 The Significance of The Study	7
1.6 Research Questions	8
1.7 Definition of Key Terms	8
1.7.1 Leadership and Management	8
1.7.2 Quality Assurance	8
1.7.3 Quality in Teaching and Learning	9
1.8 Chapter Outline	9
1.9 Conclusion	10

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Quality Assurance	12
2.3 The Role of The SMT in Quality Assurance	13
2.3.1 Planning	14
2.3.2 Organising	14
2.3.3 Staffing	14
2.3.4 Motivation	15
2.3.5 Evaluation	15
2.4 Mechanisms used by The SMT to Quality Assure Teaching and Learning	16
2.4.1 Class Visits	16
2.4.2 School Improvement Plan	17
2.4.3 Monitoring	18
2.4.4 Provision and Management of Proper Resources	20
2.4.5 Effective Maintenance of School Discipline	21
2.5 Factors that inhibit the Implementation of Quality Assurance in Schools	23
2.5.1 Inadequate Funding	23
2.5.2 Overcrowded Classrooms	24
2.5.3 Weak School Managers	25
2.5.4 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities	26
2.5.5 Other Factors that inhibit the Implementation of Quality Assurance in Secondary Schools.	27
2.6 Techniques that can be used to improve Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning	27
2.6.1 Professional Learning Communities	28
2.6.2 Learning Leadership for the SMT	29
2.6.3 Involvement of Parents	30
2.6.4 Involvement of Students	31

2.6.5 Other Techniques that can be used to Improve Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning	31
2.7 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework	32
2.7.1 Distributed Leadership Theory	32
2.7.1.1 Authorised Distributed Leadership	33
2.7.1.2 Dispersed Distributed Leadership	33
2.7.1.3 Democratic Distributed Leadership	34
2.7.2 The Effectiveness of Distributed Leadership	34
2.7.3 Conceptual Framework	35
2.8 Conclusion	36

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Research Paradigm	38
3.3 Research Approach	39
3.4 Research Design	40
3.5 Selection of Site and Participants	40
3.6 Methods of Generating Data	42
3.6.1 Interviews	42
3.6.1.1 Piloting Research instrument	43
3.6.2 Documents	45
3.7 Data Analysis	46
3.8 Ethical Considerations	47
3.9 Issues of Trustworthiness	47
3.9.1 Credibility	47
3.9.2 Confirmability	48
3.9.3 Transferability	48
3.9.4 Dependability	48
3.10 Conclusion	49

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction	51
4.2 Profiling of Participants	52
4.3 What Mechanisms are employed by the SMT to Quality Assure teaching and Learning in the Case Study School?	52
4.3.1 Monitoring Curriculum Coverage against the ATP	52
4.3.2 Conducting Announced and Unannounced Class Visits	54
4.3.3 Managing Extra Classes for Grade 12	56
4.3.4 Tracking of Learner Performance	56
4.3.5 Weekly SMT Meetings	59
4.3.6 Implementing Disciplinary Measures	60
4.4 How Effective are the Mechanisms employed by the SMT to Quality Assure Teaching and Learning in the Case Study School?	61
4.4.1 Effectiveness of the Mechanisms	61
4.4.1.1 Extra Classes Improve Learner Results	61
4.4.1.2 Monitoring Identifies Gap in Teaching and Learning	62
4.4.1.3 Class Visits Improve Teaching Skills	63
4.4.2 Non-Effectiveness of the Mechanisms	64
4.4.2.1 Post Provisioning Norm hinders Effective Monitoring	64
4.4.2.2 Teacher Unions Politicizing the Education System	65
4.4.2.3 Extra Classes do not contribute to Quality in Teaching and Learning	66
4.4.2.3.1 High Learner Absenteeism in the Extra Classes	67
4.4.2.3.2 High Teacher Absenteeism during Normal School Days	68
4.4.2.4 Unclear Roles of Representative Council of Learners	69
4.5 How can Quality Assurance of Teaching and Learning be Improved in the Case Study School?	70
4.5.1 Professional Development	70
4.5.1.1 Replace Orientation workshops with Content Workshops	71

4.5.1.2 Leadership Courses for SMT Members	72
4.5.2 Change the LTSM procurement Process	73
4.5.3 Outsourcing Veteran Educators to collaborate with Underperforming Educators	75
4.6 Conclusion	77

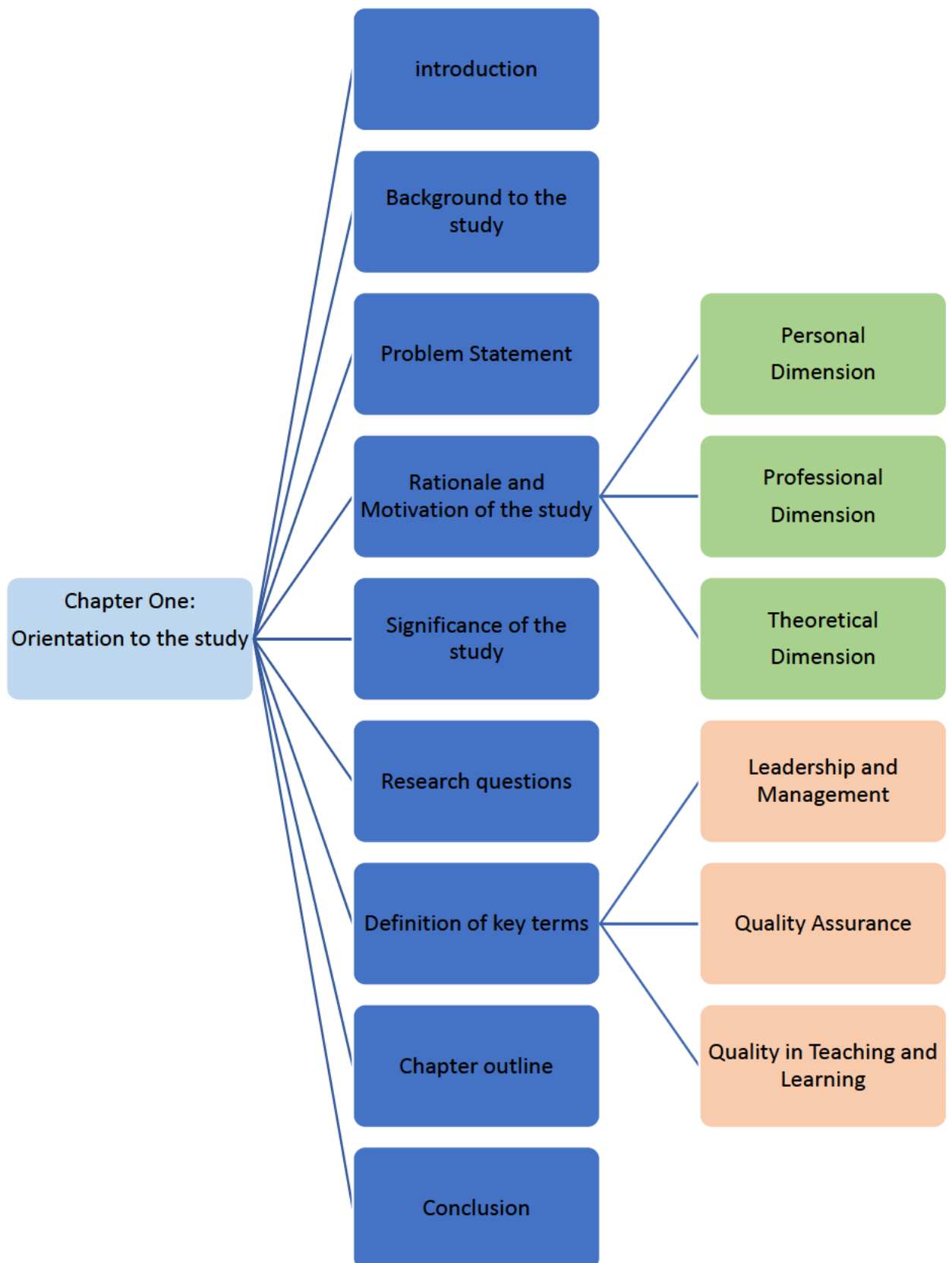
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction	79
5.2 Summary of the Study	79
5.3 Conclusions	80
5.4 Recommendations	82
5.5 Conclusion	83
6. References	84

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University of KwaZulu-Natal	102
Appendix B: Permission Letter to Conduct Research in KwaZulu-Natal School	103
Appendix C: Permission Letter to Conduct Research to the School	104
Appendix D: Informed Consent for each Participant	106
Appendix E: Permission Letter to Conduct Research from the School	109
Appendix F: Turnitin Certificate	110
Appendix G: Interview Schedule	111
Appendix H: Document Analysis Schedule	115
Appendix I: Language Editor's Certificate	118



CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Education is an extremely important instrument and a fundamental driver of personal, national, and global development (Furlong et al., 2011). According to South Africa's annual budget, one of the most important sectors in the nation is undoubtedly education (Motala & Carel, 2019). Effective management of this most important sector is necessary to provide high-quality education in a nation and obtain the highest-quality output. Countries such as Kenya, Australia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Singapore, and South Africa have set up quality assurance systems in support of more effective school education (Ingvarson & Rowley, 2017).

The aim of this study is to explore how the School Management Team (SMT) contributes to quality assurance regarding effective teaching and learning at a particular secondary school situated in Hammarsdale Township, KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. This chapter's main goal is to familiarize the reader with this research. I achieve this by giving the study's background, outlining its rationale, stating the study's problem statement, and highlighting the significance of the study. I also define the terminologies which are frequently used in the study and set out the research questions that served as the study's guide. Finally, I summarize the contents of each chapter and the study's overall structure.

1.2 Background

In South Africa, quality assurance is a term that was introduced in the early 1990s in the education system (Kistan, 1999). Traditionally, inspection has been a mechanism particularly associated with schools to ensure quality in teaching and learning (Coetzee, 2019). Inspectors could be subject and educational experts, who visit teachers to monitor how they are teaching and school principals to monitor how they run the school and give them support (Allias, 2009). Allias (2009) further stated that inspection has been particularly criticised because it was used to spy on teachers and to report on any who appeared to be critical of the government. Coetzee (2019) alluded that inspection was fault-finding rather than problem-solving, therefore it needed to be reviewed.

In 1992 the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) engaged with the Education Policy Unit at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) to develop an educator appraisal system as a method of quality assurance in education which will substitute inspection (Biputh & McKenna, 2010). In August 1994, the Gauteng Department of Education and Wits Education Policy Unit organised a colloquium on School Management, Teacher Development, and Support (Biputh & McKenna, 2010). All delegates at the colloquium engaged in discussion and reached a consensus to introduce the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) which was perceived as the solution for the previous punitive inspection to a better approach to teacher accountability and development (Thabane, 2000). On 28 July 1998, DAS was implemented in the South African education system and its essential elements were self-evaluation, peer review, and consideration of contextual factors (Biputh & McKenna, 2010). Duma and Khuzwayo (2015) mention that the system was formative and developmental as it gave educators more opportunities to grow as professionals. South African Department of Education provincial ministers were certain about the implementation of DAS and advocated national minister a system-wide approach that would assess a school's overall efficacy (Department of Education, 2002).

In 2001 the National Policy on Whole School Evaluation (WSE) was introduced to quality assure education in South Africa (Department of Education, 2001). It introduced an efficient mechanism for monitoring and assessment, which is crucial for school performance. The processes include self-evaluation, ongoing district-based support, monitoring, and the development of external supervisors (Department of Education, 2001). WSE was not intended to be harsh or judgmental, but rather to be developmental and supporting (Department of Education, 2001). Teacher unions further proposed an approach that will appraise individual teachers and be remunerated (Biputh & McKenna, 2010).

Performance Management (PM) was introduced and implemented on 10 April 2003 with the purpose of evaluating individual educators for salary progression and incentives (Department of Education, 2003). According to Booyse (2018), performance management is a continuous cycle that includes planning, monitoring, and reviewing both teachers and department heads. The role of the SMT was to implement PM to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to satisfy educators' developmental needs (Booyse, 2018). According to Mohamud and Belle's (2019) study, PM was implemented haphazardly and some of the educators neglected it. The negotiations between teacher unions and the

government proceeded and led to *Collective Agreement 8 of 2003* (Biputh & Mckenna, 2010).

The three mentioned above programmes (DAS, WSE, and PM) were integrated in 2003 to constitute the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) which has a fivefold purpose namely: “to determine competence, to assess strengths and areas for development, to provide support, to promote accountability and to monitor an institution’s overall effectiveness” (ELRC, 2003, p.2). Sigudla (2019) argued that the purpose of IQMS is to assess the quality of teaching and learning. However, Johanna et al. (2015) pointed out that most educators developed a negative attitude towards IQMS because they felt that it was an extra burden on their job. Furthermore, authors such as (Thobela and Oliver, 2014; Booyse, 2018) posit that the IQMS was ineffectual for managing schools and did not fulfil its intended role. Sigudla (2019) also shares the same sentiments and alluded that most SMTs viewed IQMS as a purpose to determine salary progression and exercise control, therefore is required to be revised.

In November 2014 at the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), the IQMS was reviewed; Quality Management Systems (QMS) was approved by all parties and was finalised in September 2019 (ELRC, 2020). The components of QMS are performance standards, targets, performance indicators, time frames, and contextual factors (ELRC, 2020). The SMT has been delegated with the entire task of managing the planning and execution of QMS procedures that comply with Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) (ELRC, 2020).

In South African schools, the SMT is made up of the principal, deputy principal, and departmental heads, and their duties and responsibilities are prescribed and categorised in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document (Department of Basic Education, 2016). The departmental head has five duties which are categorised as: teaching, personnel, communication, extra & co-curricular and administration, and they are also applicable to both the deputy principal and the principal (Department of Basic Education, 2016). The deputy principal has six and the distinct one above the five; is the interaction with stakeholders which is also applicable to the principal and seven duties for the principal and the seventh one is the academic performance of the school (Department of Basic Education, 2016). One of the common duties among all SMT members under the personnel category: is to take part in the established school appraisal processes with the aim of enhancing the

quality of teaching and learning (Department of Basic Education, 2016). This indicates that the SMT should display strong leadership practices in ensuring that quality in teaching and learning occurs in the whole school.

This study's focus is to explore the leadership practices utilized by the SMT of the township secondary school in quality assurance with regard to teaching and learning. The purpose is to examine how they employ the mechanisms to quality assure teaching and learning across school grades.

1.3 Problem statement

The secondary school's goal is to produce learners who are valued contributors to a nation's economic development and who have the potential for higher education. (Osakwe, 2016). The South African grade 12 results reveal the opposite of the above-mentioned aim of the secondary school. For instance, in the class of 2021 NSC examination, only 36.4% of learners obtained a bachelor's pass which is a minimum entry requirement at the university, 26% achieved a diploma pass (Technical university minimum requirement) and 13.7% higher certificate (Further Education and Training Colleges minimum entry requirement) and 23% of learners failed grade 12 (Department of Basic Education, 2021). Osakwe (2016) displayed a solicitude that products of secondary schools are raw and becoming a burden rather than becoming an asset due to poor standards resulting in an educational system that is full of defects. Naicker and Mestry (2016) also share the same sentiments and posit that the continuous low academic performance of South African learners constitutes a strain on the economy of the country.

Jang (2006) also mentions that the South African education system is among the least successful education systems in Southern Africa. For instance, in 2020 and 2021; the education system was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Department of Basic Education published a directive that schools should adopt a rotation system except for grades 7 and 12 because they are perceived as critical grades (Department of Basic Education, 2020a). This is where learners were alternating days at school to comply with COVID-19 preventative measures. However, teachers were told to give learners homework for all the days that they were not attending and the SMT to monitor the learners' written work (Department of Basic Education, 2020a). The *2021 KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Diagnostic Curriculum Coverage Analysis* reveal that an average of more than

40% of the curriculum was not covered and very limited evidence on homework in grades 8 to 11 for the years 2020 and 2021. This might cause a strain for some grade 12 teachers because they end up conducting recovery lessons after school, on weekends even on holidays. Against this problem statement, the main emphasis of this study is the quality assurance role of the SMT across school grades of the secondary school.

Uriri (2019) declares that the SMT has been tasked with the responsibility to assure quality with regard to teaching and learning across school grades. There are several studies based on quality assurance in schools, but the literature is not specific on the significance of assuring quality in every grade of a secondary school. Therefore, I have highlighted the significance of the SMT to quality assure effective teaching and learning in every grade across the school.

1.4 Rationale and motivation of the study

The reasons underlying the study may be linked back to personal, professional, and theoretical sources.

1.4.1 Personal dimension

I am residing with my niece who is in grade 11 and attends a secondary school in a township. I have observed that most of her subject exercise books were unmarked for the whole year. She stated that they did not write any informal or topic tests that prepare them for examinations throughout the year. The parents' meeting at her school is solely for grade 12 learners. Last year, 2021 when she was doing grade 10, she did not receive any progress report during the year, but in December 2021, all learners in her school received four progress reports for all the terms. I am concerned about the leadership practices of the SMT of secondary schools that are located in townships in the manner they quality assure teaching and learning across school grades.

1.4.2 Professional dimension

My teaching career commenced in 2011 and included serving the Department of Education in a wide range of roles. I have extensive experience including working as an educator, accounting lead educator, cluster co-ordinator, and departmental head. Currently, I am serving as a departmental head in a township secondary school and that is why I became

interested in quality assurance and chose to engage in this study. What I have observed is that quality assurance in teaching and learning across school grades, especially in some secondary schools is compromised. More focus is on one grade which is grade 12 because monitoring of teachers' and learners' work, extra classes, forms of assessments, and pre and post-moderation is being done only in grade 12.

1.4.3 Theoretical dimension

Scholars such as (Bush et al. 2019; Blendea and Geana, 2018; Berhanu, 2011; Candido, 2020; Assemi et al., 2019; Timothy et al., 2019) have written extensively about Quality assurance in schools. They believe that one of the contributing factors to the ongoing decline in learner performance in secondary schools is inadequate leadership exhibited by several school principals. (Allen et al., 2021; Ndlovu, 2017; Makhanya, 2021; Perry, 2019) alluded that quality assurance practices such as monitoring, and deployment of teacher resources, and facilities are indices that guide the execution of quality assurance in the education system.

Given the efficacy of quality assurance in schools, more research was done on the phenomenon but I have seen a gap in the literature about the significance of assuring quality in each and every grade across the school by the school management team. Therefore, I have developed an interest in the study. This study will focus on the school management team as the leaders of the school.

1.5 The significance of the study

Members of the SMT, educators and the Department of Basic Education might benefit from this study. The findings of this study may assist the SMTs by allowing them to better understand what conceptions of quality in teaching and learning saturate their school and how these notions are lived, culturally conditioned, and promoted. With this viewpoint, the SMT may reaffirm, alter, or make modest modifications to the school's drive to assure high quality in teaching and learning. Study findings may also help the department officials at various levels in organising appropriate seminars about quality assurance in teaching and learning for school managers. This study may also encourage educators to maximise their commitment to teaching which may raise learner achievement and raise educational standards.

1.6 Research questions

- What mechanisms are employed by the school management team to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?
- How effective are the mechanisms employed by the school management team to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?
- How can quality assurance in teaching and learning be improved in the case study school?

1.7 Definition of key terms

The definition of the terms, “leadership and management”, “quality assurance” and “quality in teaching and learning” utilised mostly throughout the study are presented.

1.7.1 Leadership and Management

Leadership and management are terms that are often considered central concepts in comprehending educational organisations (Bush, 2019). According to Bush (2019, p.4), “leadership is an influence process, intended to lead the achievement of specific goals”. However, Mullins and Christie (2016) postulate that management is about planning, organising, leading, controlling, and problem-solving. Shaturaev and Bekimbetova (2021) argue that effective leaders must possess management skills, and managers should make it their goal to be excellent leaders. In South African schools, leadership and management are usually related to formal authority that is assigned to the SMT. For this study, leadership and management have been conceptualised as related terms.

1.7.2 Quality assurance

Generally, quality assurance in the production industry means a system of inspecting a product during and after production to guarantee that the product meets the standard desired by customers (Candido, 2020). Within the education context, the product is what a learner is hoping to achieve (Perry, 2018). Candido (2020) hinted that internal quality assurance is a component of an organisation's quality cycle and pertains to the monitoring of all teaching, learning, and assessment tasks that staff members or students will participate in. In the context of this study, quality assurance entails all the processes that the SMT of a secondary

school should engage in, to enhance teaching and learning across school grades. These include establishing a setting suitable for teaching and learning, maintaining accurate records, keeping an eye on the movements of both teachers and learners during teaching and learning, and making sure the school has normative teaching materials.

1.7.3 Quality in teaching and learning

According to Killen (2015), quality in teaching and learning is the process by which a teacher uses their knowledge, abilities, and pedagogical expertise to create engaging learning experiences for learners. It aims to change learners' perspectives and how they approach using what they learn to solve problems in the actual world (Killen, 2015). Stronge (2018, p.26) asserts that "to improve quality in teaching and learning, the teacher has to re-imagine his or her role at three levels which are not distinct but interconnect in simple ways: as an individual, as an educator of a learning area, and as a professional interacting with the community and education systems". In this study, quality in teaching and learning entails whole school processes such as continuous assessment of learners, promoting learner discipline, classroom management, record keeping, and affective and psychomotor domains of learners.

1.8 Chapter outline

The five chapters that make up this study are outlined below in brief.

Chapter One gives a brief overview of the main components of the study. The significance of quality education in the South African educational system is outlined in the study's introduction. The rationale and the significance of the study are then discussed. The aims and objectives and the key research questions that serve as a guide in this study as well as the definition of the frequently used terms in this study are enumerated. This chapter concludes with the chapter outline.

Chapter Two offers a detailed discussion of the literature reviewed to make provision for answers to the key research questions. The discussion largely touches both on the international and local perspectives on the issues of quality assurance in teaching and learning, followed by the theoretical framework which underpins the study.

Chapter Three provides a detailed account of the research design, methods, and procedures that were followed when conducting the study. It also outlines what was utilised to collect data for this study and lastly, the ethical issues that were considered regarding the collection of data.

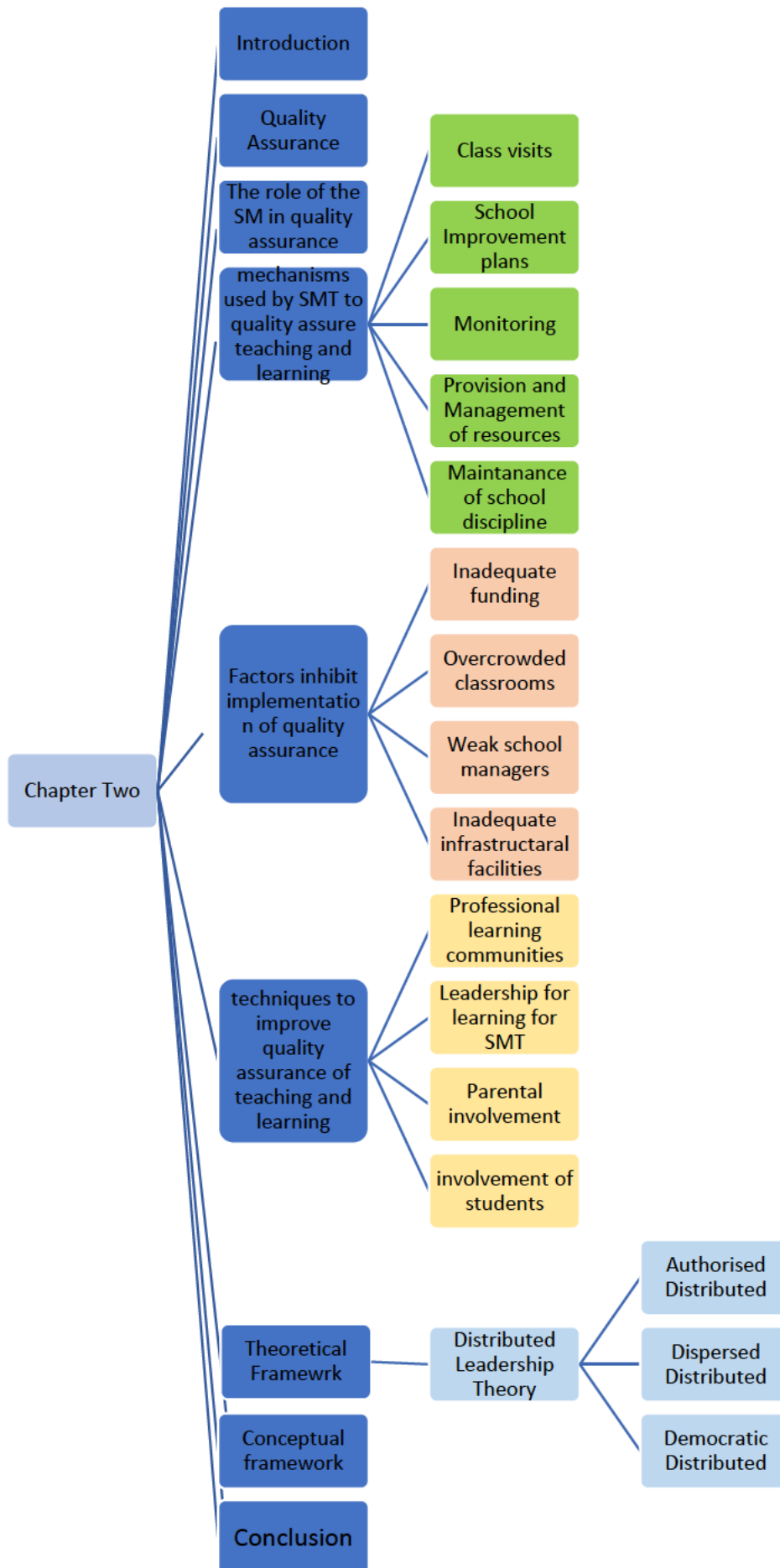
Chapter Four presents, discussion and analyses data that was obtained from the semi-structured interviews by presenting it as themes and subthemes that were formulated based on participants' views.

Chapter Five presents the summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations.

1.9 Conclusion

In this chapter the orientation to the study was made by presenting a detailed background to the study, the rationale, significance of the study, objectives of the study as well as critical research questions guiding the study. The layout of the study was presented towards the end of the chapter. I have learned that quality assurance is a broad concept, it is not restrictive to teachers' and learners' work, but it includes all the processes that occur in an organisation.

Chapter two focuses on the literature review and presents a theoretical and conceptual framework through which the phenomenon of quality assurance in teaching and learning can be understood.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the introduction and background of the study. It covered the core issues such as research questions, problem statement, and rationale and unpacked the key terms that are frequently used in the study.

This chapter reviews the literature on quality assurance with regard to teaching and learning. It explores the role of the school management team (SMT) in ensuring quality in teaching and learning, examines the mechanisms that are utilised by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning, analyses the factors that inhibit quality assurance in teaching and learning, thereafter the techniques that can be used to improve quality assurance of teaching and learning are discussed. This chapter also presents the theoretical and conceptual framework that underpins this study.

2.2 Quality Assurance

Schools in South Africa and all over the world acknowledge the significance and practice of quality assurance with regard to teaching and learning despite it being defined differently by scholars (Candido, 2020; Uriri, 2019; Perry et al., 2019) and the general public due to the complexity of teaching and learning. There is no one universal definition of quality assurance even though there seems to be consistency in quality assurance expectations in both private and public schools nationally and internationally. Perry et al. (2019) defined quality assurance as the methodical management and evaluation process used by educational institutions and systems to track performance against goals, guarantee the production of high-quality results, and promote continuous development in quality. Uriri (2019) viewed it as an organised action plan that is central to giving the trust used to fulfil vital needs of quality. Ugwulashi (2021) states that quality assurance from a school perspective may be viewed as how good and effective the educators are, and how appropriate and adequate the study materials are for proper teaching and learning in preparing the learners to competitively contribute to a society dominated by science and technology. Finally, Candido (2020) summed the definition of quality assurance as a summative effort gluing policies and actual actions to which the quality of a high school is maintained and developed. For this study, quality assurance refers to the procedures used by the SMT to ensure that quality in teaching and learning is implemented across the whole school.

2.3 The role of the SMT in quality assurance

As mentioned earlier, in the South African education system; the school management team (SMT) comprises the school principal, deputy principal, or two deputy principals (depending on the size of the school), departmental heads, and senior teachers (Department of Basic Education, 2016). Timothy et al. (2019) asserted that the SMT's requirement for quality assurance in secondary schools is predicated on the idea that human beings are inherently lazy, detest labour, and value their leisure over their job. Therefore, the school management team should set predetermined goals that need to be achieved by learners and state key performance indicators that all teachers to achieve in the delivery of quality teaching and learning.

In quality assurance, a teacher is the main actor because he/she is the one who delivers the content to learners. This view is supported by Timothy et al. (2019) who asserted that a basic fundamental aspect a teacher should possess is a good understanding of the curriculum and subject content. Atanda and Olaifa (2022) alluded that a member of the school management team is automatically a mentor of newly recruited teachers and even older experienced ones. Though most teachers are qualified, SMT still needs to both orient and assist teachers with school-based annual targets, strategic improvement plans, remedial work, lesson plans, and record keeping (Atanda & Olaifa, 2022). Atanda and Olaifa (2022) further mentioned that the SMT has to develop and explain the assessment tools to the teachers so that the cascaded information is made clear as well to the learners, and also make a follow-up to ensure quality is met and maintained in each department within a school. It is important that the SMT liaise with subject teachers since they might not be well knowledgeable in all subject areas within their department (De Lange, 2018).

De Lange (2018) views the school management team as a hinge that holds the door frame and door together. He further echoed that malfunctioning of the hinge prevents successful operation of the door amounting to total dysfunctionality of the house. Garira (2020) also shares the same sentiments and posits that the success or failure of an educational institution largely depends on the input and determination of the middle management. This means that the SMT has the responsibility to promote and facilitate the attainment of a curriculum to realise quality teaching and learning. Naidoo (2019) declared that members of the SMT are experts with regard to their subject matter, which empowers them to develop and design study and revision programmes.

The leadership role of the SMT on the road to quality teaching and learning is more of creating an enabling environment among the departmental staff members than instructing. Wilian et al. (2020) identified the following SMT responsibilities as central to quality assurance:

- Supporting, evaluating, and developing teacher quality.
- Supporting setting of objectives, assessment of formal and informal tasks as well as accounting to the principal and parents.
- Putting together systematic individuals that enhance school quality.
- Improving and managing financial and human resources for the best results.
- Developing a systematic support structure that enables outsourcing personnel and equipment.

According to Agih (2015), the SMT as managers of the school is entrusted with five management tasks to achieve quality in teaching and learning, and they are discussed below:

2.3.1 Planning

This is an essential feature of good management. This is whereby the SMT set goals and develops strategies. The management of the school looks ahead to the future to determine the school's objectives.

2.3.2 Organising

This is the ability of school managers to look at what needs to be done and the resources required to achieve goals and objectives. To pursue quality in teaching and learning, the core actors of learning who are teachers, learners, and the environment must be co-operatively organised.

2.3.3 Staffing

For the school's goals to be met, it is necessary to be able to find the right teachers and assign them to positions that best suit their qualifications in terms of both number and quality. It is essential to assign teachers to teach subjects in secondary schools where they possess the necessary content expertise (Agih, 2015). Johansen and Hawes (2016) share the same sentiments and mention that the SMT should consider variables such as teachers of specialisation, pedagogical skills, and the recommended teacher-learner ratio. The school

management must allocate teachers in a way that will enable them to bring their best towards achieving the best standard.

2.3.4 Motivation

According to Issa (2021), motivation is a key to an organisation's success. For the greatest amount of efficiency and effectiveness from their teachers and students, school management should be aware of how to uphold their moral principles (Chaudhary & Chaudhary, 2021). This includes praising and rewarding educators who have obtained excellent academic results in front of their colleagues and learners and leaving some room in the budget for small gifts which serve as a token of appreciation. The few mentioned may motivate teachers to excel in their allocated work and encourage learners to study hard and achieve good results.

2.3.5 Evaluation

The ability of school managers to compare the present situation with the past to identify whether outcomes and objectives have been achieved or not achieved. School good work can be affirmed and recommendations on school improvement can be made. Evaluation can assist school managers and staff to measure the quality indicators and empower them to build and sustain transformation in a school.

Jacobson (2018) asserted that it needs a shared set of values, a shared vision, and care for the school's welfare to manage a school. Therefore a school that is effectively managed and provides quality in the provision of their educational services is likely to expand and succeed (Jacobson, 2018). He further mentioned that such a school obtains loyalty and support from the community and the staff becomes encouraged to work in it. Uriri (2019) argued that for a school to pursue quality teaching and learning and obtain outstanding results, the SMT must have mechanisms that are efficient in ensuring quality.

2.4 Mechanisms used by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning

2.4.1 Class Visits

A class visit is a task that is being done by the supervisor visiting the teacher in a classroom, one teacher visiting the other, or a group of teachers visiting a teacher (Krida, 2021). According to Widodo et al. (2017), the goal of the class visit is to support and equip teachers with the tools they need to enhance their knowledge and abilities to achieve the objective of student learning. Krida (2021) asserted that class visits assist educators in improving their professional skills in the areas of academic knowledge, classroom management, instructional design, and technique application. Widodo et al. (2017) further echoed that class visits are teacher development programmes whose tasks are rescheduled to assist educators in comprehending information, assist teachers in implementing teaching, and assist them in recognising the degree of understanding and the way that values and attitudes are integrated.

Class visits can be put into practice in three patterns namely: conducting a class visit without notifying the teacher that will be visited; informing the teacher in advance; or by an invite from a teacher to a supervisor (Widodo et al., 2017). Widodo et al. (2017) revealed that these patterns have driving forces. The driving forces for conducting a class visit without notifying a teacher will reveal the real situation of how teaching and learning are conducted. Visits that have been informed prior may frequently find classroom situations that have been prepared in advance by the teacher and it is believed that teachers feel more confident because they were given time in advance. In terms of the class visits by an invitation from a teacher, teachers become prepared to receive feedback from their supervisors that will contribute to the growth of a teacher (Widodo et al., 2017). The SMT can implement any of the patterns based on the type of school.

The findings of Mahmoud (2020) reveal that teachers feel threatened about class visits if there is no good relationship before and suggested that it is better if there is communication prior to class visits. In a study conducted by Noor and Sofyaningrum (2020) in Indonesia, their findings reveal that class visits are being conducted twice a term by the school principal, teachers are notified at the beginning of the year about the schedule and all dates are written in a school year plan and placed on the notice board. The Findings of Noor and Sofyanigrum (2020) also reveal that they enhance the performance of teachers because teachers become energetic and

revived in teaching after a programme of class visits. Findings indicate that in every school, class visits should be part of the school programme that is implemented on a regular basis.

In South Africa, the general view of a class visit is that the superior wants to assess how the junior is conducting the lesson in a class, for instance when a departmental head assesses a teacher within his/her department (Kimberly, 2018). The latter has however encountered some resistance. The way the assessment is structured is such that marks are allocated according to set criteria like presentability of the teacher, classroom management, teacher-learner interaction, subject content, methodology and evidence of tasks (Kimberly, 2018). This therefore remains a debatable issue between teacher unions and DBE.

In a study conducted by Maddock (2016) about exploring the state of South African Education, findings reveal that the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA), National Teacher Union (NATU) are some of the main teacher unions who believe that the classroom is an indispensable vehicle of teaching and learning. The unions generally feel that the teacher member being observed should be the one who should request the class visit and should indicate the time and date unless otherwise the principal sees the urgent need. The visits have to be spread out over the calendar dates not piled up towards the end of term or year. The unions feel this can create undue pressure on their overloaded hardworking members.

2.4.2 School Improvement Plan

Alua (2018) defined a school improvement plan (SIP) as a tool that helps schools decide how and when to set improvement goals and develop plans for accomplishing them. School improvement plans are prepared annually indicating what tasks need to be performed, the person responsible, the amount of time needed to finish the task, and the resources (human and physical) needed as well as performance indicators (Alua, 2018). Alua (2018, p.116) stated that SIP focuses on six areas which are: “student learning, ongoing professional development for staff, infrastructure, school management and administration, school governance, community relations, and budget allocation to support SIP”. SIP has vision and mission statements, therefore Alua (2018) suggested that the SMT should communicate the vision with teachers and learners to work cooperatively and produce outstanding results.

School improvement planning and implementation are one of the organisational processes where principals can significantly affect schools and the performance of learners (Bickmore et al., 2020). Developing a school improvement plan has turned into a standard duty of school leaders (Bickmore et al., 2020). Bickmore et al. (2020) further echoed that SIP is conceptualised as an agenda that the SMT could utilise to improve the accountability tool to measure progress. Therefore, the SMT must assist and direct educators in developing SIPs. Alua (2018) posits that it is critical that the SMT uphold accountability and responsibility by following thorough planning to enhance the school, utilizing data to comprehend circumstances, pinpointing the underlying causes of issues, suggesting resolutions, and verifying success through monitoring based on a precise set of indicators.

The SIP acts as both the cornerstone for ongoing improvement and a monitoring tool for tracking performance in particular areas of whole school development (Bickmore et al., 2020). (Redding & Sebby, 2020; Van Der Voort & Wood, 2014) confirm that SIP is a dynamic document since it acts as a guide that outlines the adjustments a school must implement in order to enhance student success levels, as well as how and when those adjustments should be made.

Findings of a study by Van Der Voort and Wood (2014) reveal that in some schools, SIPs do exist but they are poorly implemented based on two reasons: the first one is that the SMT lacks clarity on the significance of developing SIP and the second one is that they lack the capacity to design the plan. It was also revealed that in other schools they are preparing it for evidence purposes as they are required by the Department of Education. It was proposed that the education specialists should run workshops and develop school leaders on the curiosity of SIP.

2.4.3 Monitoring

Monitoring provides an answer to a question; how are we doing? (Ndungu et al., 2015). It includes scrutinizing the work that has been done by people. Ndungu et al. (2015) also mention that monitoring is a continuous process that determines whether teaching and learning occur as per the required standard. Monitoring helps school managers understand the necessities of learners and the obstacles faced by teachers and learners during teaching and learning (Ndungu et al., 2015).

Garira (2020) asserted that monitoring has to do with looking at and checking on the input, process, and school environment to guarantee that teaching and learning are in the right direction as per the required standard. Ndungu et al. (2015) argued that monitoring is about checking physical attendance of classes by teachers and learners, teachers' files which includes all the required documents such as lesson plans, annual teaching plans in correspondence with learners' work, assessment plans as well as quality and quantity of formal and informal assessment issued to the learners. Monitoring tools such as period registers, curriculum coverage tools, time books, and class attendance registers, pre- and post-moderation tools are utilised by the SMT to monitor teachers and learners. The purpose is to assess the performance level to determine whether the set objectives have been met or not (Ndungu et al., 2015). Osuji and Etuketu (2019) affirm that the SMT can declare quality teaching and learning after close monitoring has occurred.

The monitoring process should not be judgemental, but it should give courage to teachers and assist them to grow in their area of teaching Ndungu et al. (2015). Before the monitoring process commences, the teacher with his or her departmental head or peer educator must go through the three specific stages: firstly an agreement of what is expected against which quality indicators that are going to be used as a focus area, secondly, a consensus about how the desired data will be obtained, thirdly, the method of recording feedback and results to progress constructive evaluations (Ndungu et al., 2015).

In a study conducted by Mngomezulu (2015), findings reveal that there are four methods used by the SMT to monitor teaching and learning which entail: submission of teacher files to departmental heads, learner attendance verification, moderation of assessment tasks, and checking of learners' exercise books. It was also found that after monitoring have been done, the SMT is hesitant to hold educators accountable for infringing on the decisions that has been made. It was concluded that the reason might be that they do not want to ruin their relationships with their colleagues. This raises serious concern and a call for the Department of Education to emphasize the importance of monitoring to SMT members.

2.4.4 Provision and management of proper resources

According to Uriri (2019, p.21), “education resources comprise learning and teacher support materials (LTSM) such as textbooks, stationery; non-LTSM equipment (desks, chairs, paper copier machines); consumables and non-consumable items; educational aids, and information technology and non-small capital items”. The availability of the stated educational resources improves the efficacy of schools because these are fundamentals that can result in learners performing well academically (Uriri, 2019). Munje and Maarman (2017) assert that learners’ ability to learn to read and achieve the required performance standards is based on the quality and quantity of resources provided in a school. The SMT should ensure that proper resources are budgeted for.

Namunga and Wanjala (2017) concurred that the SMT should submit their budget proposal to the finance committee for budgeting of proper resources that are appropriate for the curriculum by the second week of the third term. The budget process should allow all educators to participate in decision-making and set priorities for the essential resources (Namunga & Wanjala, 2017). Munje and Maarman (2017) suggested that school managers should also form committees among staff members who will be responsible for fundraising or requesting economic support from community members such as private business owners and futurists to obtain adequate school resources. The intention is to make certain that all learners have access to resources, especially textbooks. Mwangangi et al. (2022) share the same sentiments and hint that the need for textbooks in the ratio of 1:1 is stressed especially if the learners are to complete their homework.

Mwangani et al. (2022) raised a concern that in most public schools, learners have challenges due to overcrowding in their classrooms and they have inadequate learning facilities which prevents teachers from giving them the personal attention they deserve. The raised concern is in accordance with the findings of a study conducted by Munje and Maarman (2017), which affirms that most teachers receive necessary resources from school while the responses from learners reveal that the majority of learners do not receive appropriate resources from the school therefore it was concluded that, it was an indication that schools have limited resources which are given to teachers solely for them to plan and teach. It is crucial for a school to have enough key resources for both teachers and learners that will create a conducive environment

as well as boost teaching morale. Mwangangi et al. (2022) argued that learners can still poorly perform even though they are provided with enough LTSM.

Mwangangi et al. (2022) in their view perceived a teacher as the most crucial resource in the education system. They refer to teachers as human resources and they are extremely important in a school because they influence student learning. Namunga and Wanjala, (2017) share the same view and refer to teachers as the most tangible and effective asset in a school. Teachers transfer knowledge, skills, and values to learners in a learning process. They need to be well managed and assisted in maximally controlling their expertise. Assistance can be pairing novice and competent veteran teachers, and workshops within a school that will assist them in strengthening their competence and confidence (Namunga & Wanjala, 2017). SMT should be responsible for the above-mentioned activity without any expectation from other educators to assume this responsibility.

2.4.5 Effective maintenance of school discipline

School discipline is perceived as a crucial trait in the effectiveness of a school (Uriri, 2019). One of the major causes of deficiency of school discipline can be ignorance caused by the absence of freedom where learners are not free to express their views and frustrations (Uriri, 2019). Kadioglu et al. (2015, p.517) argued that causes of indiscipline in schools are “teachers’ lateness and absenteeism in attending classes, overcrowded classrooms, uncondusive school environment, unenforceable school rules, the unpreparedness of educators in class, and poor leadership displayed by the school management.” The mentioned causes result in disruptive behaviour in schools and reveal that within a school setting, the SMT should institute and maintain discipline. Therefore, the school management needs to be proactive rather than reactive in instilling discipline in a school (Uriri, 2019).

A school needs to have a clear discipline policy/code of conduct that is in line with the legislation of the country (Kadioglu et al., 2015). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996*, the *South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996*, and the *National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996* are some of the legal documents that can assist school managers in drafting the code of conduct as endorsed in section 8 of SASA. The school code of conduct indicates the expected behaviour of learners. On admission to the school, it is imperative that learners and parents are given the school code of conduct and sign a pledge which binds the

learners to adhere to the school rules. Uriri (2019) posited that for a school to maintain discipline, it also requires the active participation of learners.

One of the alternative approaches that can be used to instil good behaviour in schools is to involve student leadership in maintaining school discipline. Learner leaders such as the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) can be developed and utilised by the school management to maintain discipline in a school (Kennedy, 2018). They should aspire and monitor other learners in the school to adhere to the set school rules (Kennedy, 2018). They should emphasize its importance and alert them to the consequences of breaking school rules. Student participation in various aspects of management contributes effectively to improving the functionality of schools and the overall progress of the students (Kennedy, 2018).

According to Kennedy (2018), discipline in schools can be assessed in two dimensions namely: academic achievement whereby a learner hands in homework on time, being attentive in class, being fully prepared for the examination and other activities related to academic pursuits. The second one is behavioural discipline which should be dealt with differently. Uriri (2019) is of the view that other learner's negative behaviour is caused by their family background therefore the SMT should create an intervention rather than punishing a learner by consulting outsiders in a particular specialisation such as psychologists, social workers, nurses, and other public servants to improve the behaviour of the affected learner. This helps to achieve the objectives of a well-disciplined environment by offering an extensive strategy to learners with critical behaviour problems and persistent offenders (Kennedy, 2018).

In a study carried out by Kadioglu et al. (2015) findings reveal that in Turkey, two obstacles hinder the appropriate execution of discipline in schools. Firstly, the centralised education system and secondly is the absence of authority for school managers. This leads to school managers not being flexible and coming up with ideas on how to deal with discipline in their schools based on the nature of learners.

Ndamani (2017) carried out a research project in Mangaung area of Bloemfontein on disciplinary policy in secondary schools and observed that the challenges emanate from different but interrelated factors such as lack of resources, overcrowding, socio-economic background, home environment, the school setting and the society contribute to ineffectiveness

of the disciplinary policies in schools. He also discovered that in some schools mostly from townships have noted with great concern mounting cases of parents who interfere and object to their children compliance to disciplinary measures like suspension and other forms of punishment. To remain relevant in this dynamic world, the SMT should come up with new disciplinary approaches that suit each situation and revolving society, rather than relying on outdated one size fits all approach.

2.5 Factors that inhibit the implementation of quality assurance in schools

Meeting and maintaining quality assurance standards in secondary schools is a significant aspect in teaching and learning. Studies (Osuji & Etuketu 2019; Olowonefa & Ogunode, 2021) have conducted studies to determine factors that inhibit quality assurance in schools globally and locally and they are discussed in details below:

2.5.1 Inadequate funding

Funding is crucial in quality assurance in secondary schools. This is because funding is needed to procure the human and physical resources required to quality assure teaching and learning. Sources of funding from schools are taxes, school fees, education levies, and sometimes donations (Olowonefa & Ogunode, 2021). The major source of income for most public secondary schools is from the government through grants and it is a most regular issue in some countries all over the world (Olowonefa & Ogunode, 2021).

Osuji and Etuketu (2019) declared that inadequate funding for secondary school education is responsible for the poor implementation of quality assurance in public secondary schools. Osuji and Etuketu (2019, p.107) revealed causes of inadequate funding in schools which are: “lack of political will, corruption from government officials, inflation, poor implementation of financial strategic plans for funding of secondary schools, poor support from private sectors, and an increase in population and demand from other sectors”. The mentioned causes may be difficult to overcome within a short period therefore the SMT should be able to adapt and become conservative when allocating and spending funds intended for school operations.

Literature reveals that in most public secondary schools across the world, the main source of funding is from the government. For instance, in America every public school is funded by three arms of government: federal, state, and local, according to the Centre for American

Progress (Franck & Nicaise, 2022). The Centre on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that “47 percent comes from the state, 45 percent from local government, and 8 percent from the federal government” (Frank & Nicaise, 2022, p.496). In India, schools are also funded by the government (Motala & Carel, 2019). Motala and Carel (2019) displayed a solicitude that funding is not enough in a way that sometimes teachers working in government schools do not often receive their salaries on time and this impacts their teaching and they become disappointed and demotivated. This also compromises the quality of education received in India (Motala & Carel, 2019). Both these countries findings reveal that funding received from the government is inadequate to cover all the aspects of education, therefore it becomes difficulty to quality assure teaching and learning.

2.5.2 Overcrowded classrooms

Osuji and Etuketu (2019) defined an overcrowded classroom as one where learner enrolment is higher than ideal, making it difficult to teach and learn in that space.. Osuji and Etuketu (2019) asserted that overcrowded classrooms are established by the enrolment of learners divided by the enrolment of teachers in a school. Olowonefa and Ogunode (2021) mentioned that overcrowded classes are caused by an increase in population growth. Olowonefa and Ogunode (2021) further mentioned that in overcrowded classrooms, teachers may experience difficulty in managing; they lose interest and desire in their classes and become discouraged which negatively affects teaching and learning. In overcrowded classrooms, teachers spend more time seeking learner attention, and this dilutes valuable time for the lesson (Olowonefa & Ogunode, 2021).

Ayu (2019) conducted a study about interactive activities for effective learning in overcrowded classrooms in Indonesia. Findings reveal that the recommended number of learners in a classroom is 32 but, in most schools, it ranges from 40 and above. Matsepe et al. (2019) in their study of finding the severe issues encountered by teachers in overcrowded classrooms reveal that in Pakistan, the average number of learners ranges from 70 to 120 in a classroom. Matsepe et al. (2019) also found that teachers have been complaining that effective teaching is not properly implemented in the overcrowded classroom because there is insufficient space between the rows and it is not easy to identify all learners’ needs and be able to mark all learners’ written work. Tahir et al. (2019) concur with the mentioned findings, and they posit

that even the best teachers could not be able to cope and do their best if classes are overcrowded.

2.5.3 Weak School Managers

The school management occupies a position that demands proper leadership skills, integrated roles, personnel, and facilities to fulfil the school's intended goals. Osuji and Etuketu (2019) are concerned that many school managers lack the proper leadership skills and traits to ensure the effectiveness of the school. According to Olowonefa and Ogunode (2021), some school managers lack the interpersonal relationship and collaborative skills necessary to manage the variety of teachers they supervise. Olowonefa and Ogunode (2021) suggested that school management needs to possess good leadership skills and different leadership styles based on the environment of the school or in a certain situation. For instance, the autocratic leadership style can be used in a crisis where deadlines must be met, and the laissez-faire style if the staff is well motivated.

A school require leaders who provide guidance and meaning, hold staff members to high standards, concentrate on enhancing teaching and learning, track and assess performance, and inspire educators to work at their highest level. (Olowonefa & Ogunode, 2021). Osuji and Etuketu (2019) also share the same sentiments and suggest that the SMT as leaders of the school should be setters of the tone of the school because if they are weak the whole school is likely to become weak. While Olowonefa and Ogunode (2021) raised a concern that poor managers that are appointed to manage the school are weak and contribute to the ineffectiveness of the school.

The appointment, transfers and promotional posts for teachers are clearly stipulated in the *Employment of Educators Act (EEA) 76 of 1998*, but what is happening in SA is a total opposite of what is mandated by the EEA. In 2021 in the Daily News newspaper, an SGB member of a secondary school at Kwadukuza accused teacher unions, particularly SADTU of selling teacher posts and management posts (Makwakwa, 2021). This concurs with study findings by Sibiyia (2017) which reveals that teacher unions mostly in township schools used a cadre deployment strategy which is a strategy based on employing the trusted member of the organisation to gain authority. The disturbing issue about this strategy is that they appoint and promote even school leaders who do not qualify for this position as long as they are loyal members of the

organisation. This may have a negative impact on managing a school which leads to the school producing poor results.

2.5.4 Inadequate infrastructural facilities

School infrastructure refers to facilities that support teaching and learning to run optimally in achieving learning objectives (Le et al., 2022). Facilities can be libraries, science laboratories, computer laboratories, and public use spaces (Le et al., 2022). Le et al. (2022) acknowledge that the availability of the mentioned facilities affects the teaching and learning process whereby learners may learn easily and enhance overall academic performance. Schools with unstable buildings have adverse effect on teaching and learning (Jacob & Nathan, 2021). Therefore, it results in some of the learners becoming reluctant to go to school because they fear that school buildings may collapse on them and become injured. Infrastructure contributes a significant part in the provision of quality education in any nation (Jacob & Nathan, 2021).

In South Africa, inadequate school infrastructure remains a major crisis (Amsterdam, 2010). Amsterdam further stated that the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) report revealed that 69% of public schools do not possess libraries, while 80% do not own any laboratories. The report also revealed that 5167 schools utilise illegal pit toilets and 5836 lack consistent water supply and 3343 lack consistent electricity. Many schools do not have sufficient classrooms to teach basic subjects such as Languages, History, and Geography. In such a situation, teachers cannot perform their best and the overall development of learners is retarded (Le et al., 2022).

Findings of a study by Machengete (2021) also reveal that both teachers and learners share the same toilet facilities which leads teachers to prefer not to eat or drink anything while at school avoiding the cause of a need to go to the toilet. Teachers raised a concern that this decision negatively affects their teaching. Sometimes they become tired and hungry because they have not consumed anything during the day. Learners also complained that some classrooms do not have doors and windows therefore in winter they become uncomfortable, feel cold and fail to concentrate in class. Machengete (2021) alluded that high-quality infrastructure makes it easier to deliver quality in teaching and learning, enhances student results, and lowers the number of learners quitting the school.

2.5.5 Other factors that inhibit the implementation of quality assurance in secondary schools

Watsulu and Simatwa (2011) conducted research on opportunities and obstacles encountered by the SMT in enforcing quality assurance in secondary schools in Kakamega Central district in Kenya using a descriptive survey design. The main factors flagged out as the main inhibitors of quality assurance in schools included non-participation of other educators especially those who felt they should have been the ones occupying high positions. It was also noted that school principals were not at liberty to avail their financial records to subordinates and even external quality assessment auditors. The investigation concluded quality assessment by the authorities was not conducted equally in schools. Big and well-established schools were assessed less frequently than smaller schools which generally did not sit down well with concerned school principals hence the source of passive resistance. Many obstacles were encountered during the assessment procedure of schools and sticking to recommended mechanisms of professional ethics. Assessment dates were not well communicated beforehand, hence giving the impression of faulty findings among the teaching staff subsequently causing a lack of co-operation. Teachers felt they were not trusted and treated as custodians of quality education with how the authorities have to team up to improve and maintain quality results in the district. The research recommended that departmental heads should ensure that teachers teach as per stipulated curriculum within a specified timeframe. It was also emphasized that teachers prepare lesson plans before lesson delivery, assess learners at least after completion of a concept, and keep records of work and marks.

2.6 Techniques that can be used to improve quality assurance of teaching and learning

Improvement in education is a central issue addressed at a different level that includes United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and Commonwealth of Learning (COL) (Uriri, 2019). UNESCO is an agency of the United Nations (UN) that specialise in promoting world peace through addressing issues of quality teaching and learning for a sustainable future, particularly in Africa (Uriri, 2019). The UNESCO focus on improving teaching and learning strategies and quality education through offering professional development modules in high school institutions. Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is another African initiative that is a reaction to the international call to improve quality assurance

in education (Uriri, 2019). These intergovernmental organisations have publications on strategies to improve performance to become a learning institution with structured and feasible quality assurance systems.

According to Kotirde and Yunos (2014) in Nigeria, a school's system is compared with other schools on the bases of its quality of learner outcome. Schools within a district and province often give different termly and yearly exams, but for uniformity and credibility, a common standardised paper is always given at the end of high school. Kotirde and Yunos (2014) emphasized that this type of system ensures that all learners in participating schools sit for the same paper to get the same standardised insight into the degree of learner achievement. This significant mechanism clearly and fairly checks whether subject teachers and schools are teaching the recommended curriculum justly. Each departmental head is accountable for his/her department performance and should jointly and accordingly come up with appropriate turnaround strategies or mitigation plans based on the achieved results and new targets. In South Africa, external examinations like Independent Examination Board (IEB) and National Senior Certificate (NSC) are used as vehicles for assessing and improving quality within schools (Ojo & Mathabathe, 2020). Ojo and Mathabathe (2020) expressed their dissatisfaction with external examination as a way of improving quality assurance in school when they highlight setbacks like, it encouraging teachers to teach to pass the test, is a once-off event, and the standard of papers not consistent.

In the South African education system, Umalusi and the Department of Basic Education are responsible for monitoring and recommending improvement standards of quality assurance in schools. The two institutions bestow the finer responsibility to the SMT, who administer monitoring tools like the just introduced method of evaluation called Quality Management System (QMS), which integrates the evaluation of schools, assessment of educator performance, and a system for assisting educators in performing their job (Ojo & Mathabathe, 2020).

2.6.1 Professional Learning Communities

A professional learning community (PLC) is a “programme and a platform of learning among teachers and educational staff within a school, with other schools, or among educational staff with various parties to improve the quality of teaching and learning” (Sutarsih & Saud, 2019,

p.157). Brown et al. (2018) define PLCs as a variety of school-community-led initiatives that enhance the quality of educational services provided in schools. Sutarish and Saud (2019) believe that collaborating veteran educators with the novice ones and connecting learning will affect school quality improvement and expand the teaching and learning framework. This means that in a PLC programme, teachers can discover and use instructional resources, pick up new teaching techniques, and deepen their dedication to enhancing learner outcomes.

Sutarsih and Saud (2019, p.159) asserted that the characteristics of PLCs in a school are: “supportive leadership; shared values and vision; joint learning; supportive school conditions and share practice”. The mentioned traits show that a PLC is carried out collaboratively in a school. The principal’s role with his/her SMT is to formulate a culture of collaboration amongst educators where they can contribute ideas about the improvement of teaching and learning. Sutarsih and Saud (2019) recommend that the SMT should serve as facilitators and provide support in a programme of the PLC. Brown et al. (2018) argued that the SMT can also serve as instructional leaders and motivators who are necessary for providing a learning environment. When the SMT and teachers work collaboratively to resume the implementation of the PLC, the school results are likely to improve (Sutarsih & Saud, 2019).

According to Jacobson (2018), schools are not only compelled to improve the results and produce quality results but they are also compelled to ensure that quality teaching and learning is taking place. To achieve this, it is suggested that PLCs should be effective and be allocated time in a school timetable so that teachers can collaborate to continually enhance their professionalism in order to raise the standard of quality in teaching and learning. Poor assurance of quality in teaching and learning results in school underperformance (Watsulu & Simatwa, 2011). Research by Voelkel and Chrispeels (2017) reveals that in underperforming schools, teachers are likely to work in silos with other colleagues rather than working as a team while in performing schools SMTs and educators are working together towards achieving a common goal of the school.

2.6.2 Learning Leadership for the SMT

“In the 21st century, there is a need for excellent human resources with great leading skills in life aspect” (Swaffield & MacBeath, 2008, p.47). Education is the most effective mediator that

must build those human resources (Swaffield & MacBeath, 2008). School managers need to acquire specific leadership skills to achieve aspirational learning improvement.

According to Afandi et al. (2021), learning leadership can be defined as the extension of the person's ability to function well in leadership roles and procedures. It is a programme that can help leaders to be efficient in their day-to-day activities (Afandi et al., 2021). This emphasises that learning for leadership programme can be beneficial for improving the individuals rather than the communal capacity building of a group of leaders.

Afandi et al. (2021) recommended that districts should initiate learning leadership programmes that will enhance the leadership skills of the SMT to ensure quality in teaching and learning and also improve learner performance. Afandi et al. (2021) further suggested that districts should be proactive in equipping the novice principals, deputy principals, as well as departmental heads to manage all the necessities of the school. Frequent and effective communication between the school and district can make it easy for the SMT to learn and expand learning to teachers and learners (Afandi et al., 2021).

2.6.3 Involvement of parents

Parental involvement is a phrase used to describe a range of behaviours by parents with their children with the intention of boosting the children's motivation and academic performance. Some of these behaviours include talking to the kids about school and monitoring the kids' development. (Otani, 2020). According to Galindo and Sheldon (2012), parental involvement is divided into two categories. The first one is school-based involvement which involves practices that occur within a school such as attending school events and volunteering. The second one is home-based involvement which includes actions that take place out of the school such as going through the child's work, interacting in learning tasks at home, monitoring his or her progress, and also assisting the child with homework. Otani (2020) postulates that home-based involvement is the most suitable category because it contributes positively to the child's motivation and attitudes toward school. If parents actively engage with their children's school work, children might comprehend the significance of education because their parents have demonstrated interest in it.

Findings by Boonk et al. (2018) reveal that in performing schools, they allocate days on their school year plan to invite parents on a regular basis to keep track of their children's progress and they are given a chance to give their input on the improvement of quality results while in underperforming schools, parents are only called when there are behavioural issues of a child. It is imperative that the SMT involve parents so that the school can produce quality results.

2.6.4 Involvement of Students

Uriri (2019) reiterated that encouraging a student's perspective is an effective method to ensure quality. It is not the educators' objective but the assessment that defines the achievement of quality results (Uriri, 2019). SMTs should therefore advocate curriculum improvement from a student's perspective rather than teachers' perspectives according to Uriri. SMT should create a conducive climate for students to actively engage their knowledge and stimulate thinking outside the box for an informed competitive decision that fits in this dynamic world. "Students learning outcomes are the by-product of the engagement and relationship between the curriculum, pedagogy, and students learning experience and individual characteristics" (Kennedy, 2018, p.68). This needs a suitable learning arrangement and feedback procedures that are intertwined in the curriculum to help identify learner strengths and weaknesses. Since such feedback is vital for crafting, improving, and implementing teaching and learning activities, quality assurance has to be conducted on a monthly basis (Kennedy, 2018).

2.6.5 Other techniques that can be used to improve quality assurance of teaching and learning

Kaso et al. (2021) carried out research on methods that can be utilised to improve quality assurance in schools and identified the following managerial strategies for school management.

- Establish a school student support centre where learners get career guidance, especially during the transition from GET to FET phase.
- Establish a school committee that comprises SMT and selected teachers to order and assess the quality of material used for teaching as well as promoting learners to the next grade.
- To draw up an annual student assessment procedure and identify areas that need attention.
- Identifying academically smart learners for further motivation and extra work while struggling ones get remedial work. Such assessment helps the SMT to design study

material appropriate for their levels. Additionally, parents can be invited to come to school for discussion to enhance quality learning.

- Entrust classroom administration and curriculum-building resolution to the management of the School Governing Board (SGB).
- Allowing creativity from other stakeholders and accommodating changes that might happen.
- Creating a good relationship between educators, learners, and parents to instil a learning culture.
- Adequate funding and quality auditing of school finances.

2.7 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

A theoretical framework is a set of concepts and assumptions that are logically formed and interrelated, derived from one or more theories, and designed by a researcher to support a study (Varpio et al., 2020). They further echoed that researchers must read thoroughly to choose a theory that will best guide their study. This study is underpinned by Gunter's (2005) theory of distributed leadership and A proposed Conceptual Framework for Quality Education in Schools by Garira (2020) that form the framework of the study.

2.7.1 Distributed Leadership Theory

There seems however to be no precise description of distributed leadership, which other authors refer to as shared leadership. Several authors (Bush, 2019; Grant, 2017; Harris, 2010) believe distributed leadership as a widely used concept in educational leadership is somehow a vague concept that overlaps with other theories like collaborative leadership, participative leadership, and democratic leadership. Despite the absence of a clear conceptual difference between these two terms, most authors are in agreement on the basic 2 principles advancing the term of distributed leadership. The first one is that leadership is a shared influence procedure to which diverse individuals contribute substantially. The second one is that leadership develops from the constructive contribution and networking of several individuals with different expertise, thus forming a dispersed quality whole (Bush, 2019).

The most outstanding element that singles out distributed leadership from the other leadership concepts are the fact that it includes many elements related to secondary schools and is almost fed by the educational environment (Gunter 2005). Based on this understanding Liu (2021)

describes this leadership approach as a formation of a functional learning climate by a senior management team for educators and learners.

A study by Grant (2017, p.458) regarding activity in distributed leadership established that “leadership is more properly explained as a fluid and emergent, rather than as a rooted, phenomenon”. Distributed leadership is a school of thought that subscribes to the understanding that educational leadership is distributed among a group of individuals rather than its being held in the hands of often one person usually the top management. Naicker & Mestry (2011) reiterated that distributed leadership is not centred around the position *per se* in an organisation structure but on leadership as teamwork. This view is supported by several empirical studies which established that the location of leadership command is scattered throughout the staff members inside the school and does not always originate from the person of the leader (Grant, 2017). Harris (2010) defined distributed leadership as a leadership strategy which mobilizes expertise regardless of stratification level in a secondary school intending to create more leverage for change and improvement. This does not necessarily imply that nobody is responsible and accountable for the entire performance of the institution.

According to Gunter (2005), there are three characteristics of distributed leadership theory and they are discussed below:

2.7.1.1 Authorised Distributed Leadership

“This is where work is distributed from the headteacher to others” (Gunter, 2005, p.51); this means that the principal delegates power and authority to other fellow colleagues depending on the task that is being done. This type of leadership is mostly used in informal work groups and committees within a school. Gunter further revealed that this type of distribution is mostly acknowledged because it is recognized as legitimate in a hierarchical structure of relations.

2.7.1.2 Dispersed Distributed Leadership

Gunter (2005, p.52) alluded that “in this type of distribution, work goes on in organisation without the formal working of a hierarchy.” Grant (2017, p.469) revealed that “dispersed distributed leadership is not bound by the organisational hierarchy of a school and, instead, is evidenced in flatter structures, teacher agency and co-leadership”. Gunter further added that it works more bottom-up through networks, where people's private interests are advanced by partnerships and teamwork.

2.7.1.3 Democratic Distributed Leadership

Gunter (2005) revealed that democratic distributed leadership is almost the same as dispersed distributed leadership because they both recognise the importance of the position of those who are in receipt of distribution. Grant (2007, p.70) argued that “it is different because it does not assume political neutrality, but instead engages critically with organisational and societal values and goals”. With that said, Gunter (2005) believes that it is the most important strategy for change in the South African education system.

2.7.2 The Effectiveness of Distributed Leadership Theory

Harris (2010) also observed that high-performing educational institutions extensively and strategically utilise distributed leadership approaches. Research has been carried out locally and internationally on the potential effect of distributed leadership approach on quality assurance in schools. Papademetriou's (2012) study in a Cyprus district school discovered that the leadership approach brings about the development of students' outcomes, school effectiveness, and educators' work contentment. This notion was supported by Lucander and Christersson's (2020) findings that quality assurance by a senior management team increases learners' chances of success due to the input of a group of individuals in the system. De Lange (2018) argued that principals and the senior management team need to create an enabling environment that makes it easy for individual teachers to contribute significantly to the learners and the success of the school overall. Nonetheless, various investigations established the importance of investigating principals' and departmental heads' behaviour and conduct in the school teaching and learning environment (De Lange, 2018).

Distributed leadership provides chances for schools to gain from the group effort of different talented people learning and working together (Grant, 2017). Wallach (2016) investigated how distributed leadership impacts decision-making in quality assurance in secondary schools, the observation was that individualism was the main cause of lack of cooperation as well as destructive competition among colleagues. Papademetriou (2012) further feared that individualism will not improve educators' excursion of work and subsequently learner outcomes.

In South Africa, distributed leadership is swiftly being embraced in both public and private schools due to its standardizing, representation, and pragmatic power. A post-apartheid educational policy like the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* and Task Team Report on Education Management Development of 1996 foresees a community built on basic principles of social justice, equality, and inclusive consultation, legislation of structural democratisation of schools and approves participatory leadership and management practices (Grant, 2017). The policy framework enshrines every learner's right to representation and voice at all levels of the school. and this fits well with the concepts of distributed leadership (Krida, 2020). Harris (2010) further noted that allowing educators to collectively work as a group, increases their legitimate authority base.

2.7.3 Conceptual Framework

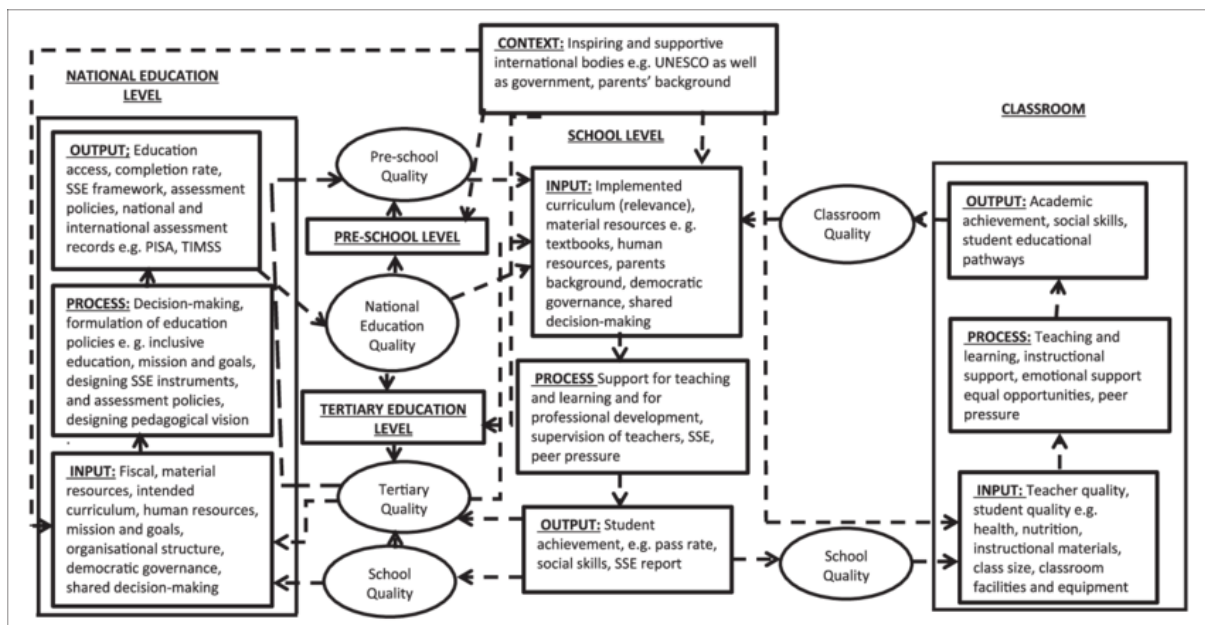


Figure 1 A proposed Conceptual Framework for Quality Education in Schools

A proposed unified conceptual framework for quality education in schools has been formulated by Elizabeth Garira (2020) with the purpose of facilitating a comprehension of quality education (Garira, 2020). This conceptual framework focuses on the components of quality education at all levels (national, pre-school, tertiary and school level). For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on a school level.

The conceptual framework for quality education is based on the input, process and output which should be specified at every level of education. According to Garira (2020), the school receives inputs from the tertiary, national and pre-school level, (refer to figure 1). These inputs can be human and material resources, education mission and goals, and assessment policies. After receiving inputs, the process commences then the SMT makes decisions on the allocation of the resources, then the process produces output.

Agih (2015) stated that excellent schools prioritise their learners, work to resolve problems that already exist, concentrate on resource and strategy investment, develop solid management practices and policies, and consider ways to improve quality. This therefore indicates that for a school to produce quality and achieve outstanding results, quality needs to be ensured from all components (input, process and output). One of the traits of quality assurance according to Candido (2020), is that it is easy to identify and prevent defects from the start. If quality is assured in inputs and processes, then the outputs (student achievement) are likely to be achieved.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter focused on landscaping the phenomena of quality assurance with regard to teaching and learning. The chapter began with a discussion of quality assurance as a concept and moved on to focus on the role of the SMT in quality assurance. Followed by the mechanisms that are utilised by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning as well as factors that inhibit the implementation of quality assurance in schools. Techniques that can be used to improve quality assurance of teaching and learning were also presented. Perspectives from various selected countries were presented with a view to obtaining a broad, global view of the need to quality assure teaching and learning. Lastly, the theoretical and conceptual framework were articulated. I have learned that quality assurance cannot be expedited, but it is an ongoing process that everyone in the organisation needs to be involved in and ensure that it is implemented. The next chapter deals with methodology and research design.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter articulated the literature review, the theoretical framework that underpins the study, and the conceptual framework for quality education in schools. This chapter presents the research methodology, the paradigm, and the research approach that has been utilised to explore the role of the school management team (SMT) in quality assurance with regard to teaching and learning. Lastly, the methodology that surrounds the process utilized to gain access to the field and the tools for data generation is presented. I also describe how data has been analysed as well as ethical issues that have been considered to gather data from the field.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a framework that serves as a comprehensive strategy or a guide for the scientific community in identifying key issues for its members to confront and outlining accepted ideas to solve defined problems (Guba & Lincon, 1981). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p.16) alluded that “a paradigm includes components such as ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (how reality is known by the researcher), and methodology (a strategy used to conduct research”. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) argued that research is not always driven by paradigms; rather, research is driven by its purpose. Therefore, paradigms are crucial because they offer convictions and guidelines that, for researchers in a certain field, determine what has to be researched and how the findings should be interpreted.

In this study, I have adopted the interpretive paradigm because it supports the research to be more focused on the specific topic and avoids generalisation (Guba & Lincon, 1981). This is because it heavily relies on data impacted by personal viewpoints and values. Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) echoed that in the interpretive paradigm, truth is subjective and can vary depending on the individual. To obtain concrete evidence in my research, the interpretive paradigm is essential as it contains multiple realities (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Thanh and Thanh (2015) reveal that when a researcher utilises an interpretive paradigm, the research focuses on the whole experience rather than considering certain parts of it.

My research study aims to explore the leadership practices that are utilised by the SMT of the township secondary school to quality assure teaching and learning. To gain rich data, knowledge from the participants was utilized as primary data. It is participant-centered because participants play a huge role in the research. Thanh and Thanh (2015) suggested that in order for an interpretive researcher to comprehend the social world from people's experiences, they should prioritise working with the studied participants.

Interpretivist researchers refrain from getting answers for their phenomenon in fixed ways but they take participant's perspective on reality (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This is because different people can understand the same objective reality in different ways and also justify their actions based on their individual experiences. My role as a researcher was to direct conscious and unconscious explanations people have for their lives through interacting with them.

3.3 Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was utilized in this study. The term qualitative research might be defined differently by various people. According to Lincon and Denzin (2003), Qualitative research is interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and counter-disciplinary, therefore it is difficult to have one definition of it. Silverman (2020) posits that it is multimethod, involving the collection and use of empirical materials and approaches. He further echoed that qualitative research struggles to capture and present complex phenomena partially because they tend to collect a large amount of data.

Lincon and Denzin (2003, p. 37) alluded that "qualitative research is a means for exploring, examining, and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribed to social or human problems". Therefore, the qualitative research approach is suitable for this study because the purpose is to examine the mechanisms that are employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning in a secondary school. Jonhson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) concur that a qualitative researcher constantly tries to understand the people s/he is observing from the participant's viewpoints. Using a qualitative research approach has helped me to better grasp how participants understood their environment because I have observed and engaged with them in their everyday experiences.

3.4 Research Design

A research design is a way that the researcher utilises to study the phenomenon (Yin, 1998). In this study, a case study research design was used. According to Creswell and Poth (2016), a case study is a critical overview of a particular real-world initiative, policy, institution, programme, or system from several angles to capture its complexity and uniqueness. For this study, the case is the secondary school that is located in a township that starts from grade 8 to grade 12. Yin (1998) mentions that case study research is holism, and a bounded system meaning that, when conducting a study, the researcher focuses on the relevant areas of interest taken together. The focus of this study is mainly on the SMTs as leaders and managers of the school who are compelled to ensure quality in teaching and learning. Also, bearing in mind that a case is a bounded system, I, therefore, confine the case to one secondary school. Furthermore, I confine the case to the period of three consecutive years (2020-2022). Creswell and Poth (2016) suggested that the researcher needs to thoroughly plan before embarking on research because he or she can lose focus easily.

According to Simons (2009) in a case study, a researcher can see reality in the eyes of the participants. Yin (1998) shares the same sentiments and notes that case studies are informative, easily understood, and spreadable, capturing the reader's interest with their vibrant reality-based narratives. He further mentioned that it is used to answer complex or challenging research puzzles. This study seeks to respond to the following research puzzles:

- What mechanisms are employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?
- How effective are the mechanisms employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?
- How can quality assurance of teaching and learning be improved in the case study school?

3.5 Selection of Site and Participants

Sampling is a technique, procedure, or instrument that researchers use to methodically select a small number of representative items or individuals from a target population to serve as study subjects in order to meet their research objectives (Sharma, 2017). Sharma (2017) reveals that researchers use sampling because it may be hard to research every single individual. A researcher may choose between probability or non-probability sampling depending on the phenomenon (Sharma, 2017).

Probability sampling is also called random sampling meaning that every component of the population has an equal opportunity to be included (Alivih, 2016). while non-probability does not give participants equal opportunities to be included (Alivih, 2016). Barreiro and Albandoz (2001) asserted that most researchers prefer non-probability sampling because it is much cheaper than probability sampling.

In the context of this study, non-probability sampling techniques were used which are; convenient and purposive sampling. The research site was conveniently selected because it is in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in Hammarsdale Township. Hammarsdale township is located about 50 km west of Durban (refer to Figure 3.1 below). Dockrat et al. (2022) reveal that in 1994, Hammarsdale township was also named Mpumalanga which is a name derived from the Zulu word meaning; ‘sunrise’ or the ‘sun comes out’. This is because there was a bitter and violent conflict between the two political parties (Inkatha Freedom Party and African National Congress) during the 1980s and 1990s, which claimed around twenty thousand lives. The township is still facing socio-economic challenges such as unemployment, poverty, crime, and drug abuse. It became convenient for me to choose this school as research site because it was easy to travel to and from it to obtain data. This reason concurs with Sharma (2017) who states that; in convenience sampling, participants are selected due to ease of access or geographical proximity.

Figure 3.1 Map of Hammarsdale Township



The source for the map of Hammarsdale Township.

<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=hammarsdale+kzn+map>

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. According to Alivih (2016, p.116), “In purposive sampling, participants are selected because they have a high degree of knowledge and are well-informed about a phenomenon of interest”. The school was purposively selected

because it has a high enrolment of learners and it has been underperforming for three consecutive years. The national senior certificate (NSC) results according to the Department of Basic Education (2022b) are shown in the table below:

Table 3.1 NSC results of the research site

Year	Number who of learners wrote the NSC examination	NSC results pass percentage
2020	266	49.2%
2021	230	44.3%
2022	200	56.0%

Alivih (2016) further mentioned that in purposive sampling, a researcher may have a specific group in mind. In this study, five members of the SMT (Principal, deputy principal, and three departmental heads) were purposively selected. The three departmental heads were selected because they are managing a department that has subjects that are being taught from grades 8-12.

3.6 Methods of Generating Data

3.6.1 Interviews

Interviews are most appropriate where deep insights are required from individual participants (Flick et al., 2004; Mathers et al., 1998; Olmo-Extremera et al., 2024; Stuckey, 2013). According to Alsaawi (2014), in qualitative research, there are four kinds of interviews. The first one is focus group interviews which are mostly used in brainstorming sessions where a certain number of participants usually six to twelve can challenge and debate with each other. Rabiee (2004) echoed that focus group interviews can be most appropriate for sensitive topics and also applicable for illiterate people. The second one is structured interviews; this is where the researcher prepares and asks participants questions that have little room for flexibility. The researcher controls the pace of the interview straightforwardly. The third one is unstructured interviews and they are the total opposite of structured interviews because the researcher can ask one question and the participant is not limited to the number of answers s/he can express. The last one is semi-structured interviews, which are a combination of both structured and unstructured interviews. Roulston (2014) mentions that in semi-structured interviews, the questions are planned but the researcher allows the participants to respond through the use of open-ended questions.

Semi-structured interviews have been adopted in this study. According to Flick et al. (2004), semi-structured interviews assist to in establishing the areas that need to be explored. In the context of this study, semi-structured interviews were utilized firstly, to gain rich data from the SMT members as the participants of the study. Secondly, to gain insight into SMT and draw on their experiences on how they implement quality assurance in teaching and learning across school grades. Thirdly, allow participants to ask clarity-seeking questions so that they can respond with proper answers. Kvale (1994) alluded that, before conducting interviews, it is crucial to design an instrument that has questions which will provide rich data about the study to address the aim of the research.

The interview schedule (see Appendix G, page 109) has been used as an instrument to collect data through interviews. Bearman (2019) alluded that an interview schedule has essential questions that generate insightful ideas and detailed explanations of the topic of interest. Barriball and While (1994) stated that questions should consider the responses of the participants. This is because participants may respond at their level best if they are clear about what is being asked. For my study, I constructed three interview schedules (principal's, deputy principal's, and departmental head's). Each interview schedule was guided by three main research questions that are stated in the first chapter of this study. For each research question, I generated interview questions to tease-out information related to the research question. After designing the interview schedule, I piloted it.

Bearman (2019) stated that while the interview is in progress, the researcher must be fully attentive to the participant and refrain from showing facial expressions which might seem judgmental to the participant. To comply with the stated view; I started by introducing myself to the participant and also outlined the purpose of the study. Every participant was given informed consent. The participants were interviewed in their offices because that is where they felt comfortable being interviewed. The duration of the interview took about one hour which was a duration that I was expecting because I had already done a piloting interview.

3.6.1.1 Piloting the research instruments

I have conducted the pilot interview with a departmental head, who is not a participant in my study to improve the trustworthiness of my research instrument.

3.6.1.1.2 Duration of the interview

According to Jamshed (2014), the initial process of asking questions in a face-to-face interview should be 30 minutes not more than 1 hour. While Shaw (2020) alluded that the overall process should be between 45 minutes to 1.5 hours, including the introduction phase, giving the participant the consent form and also summing up the interview. The pilot interview was 57 minutes which is within the stipulated time in the literature.

3.6.1.1.3 Understanding of questions by the interviewee

The questions in my interview schedule seemed to be very clear and unambiguous because no question needed to be rephrased or required further clarification. The interviewee responded to all the questions confidently and without any hesitation. However, I have realized that there are follow-up questions that cannot be prepared before the interview. This is because they are dependent on the participant's responses.

3.6.1.1.4 Order of questions

The questions flowed very effectively and they enabled the participant to give answers logically. However, the first question below research question one was removed because the colleague responded to some of the answers that will be asked in the next question.

3.6.1.1.4 Quality of the interviewee's responses

The interviewee responded using her experiences. She even quoted the incidents that occurred to her as a member of the school management team, class manager, and the one that occurred in her department.

3.6.1.1.5 Questions that I needed to change

Only three questions were changed and they are presented below:

- 1. How do you measure quality in teaching and learning in your department?*

This question was removed because it led the participant to give answers that will be asked in a following question. This question was therefore replaced by a new question: how do you understand the term quality assurance in teaching and learning?

The new question assisted to have an insight into the participant's understanding of the concept of quality assurance in teaching and learning.

2. *Do you promote the culture of team teaching in your department? If yes, how?*

In this question I needed to be mindful that the participant might say “no” therefore, I arranged it to cater for both yes and no responses. New question: Do you promote the culture of team teaching in your department? If yes, how? If no, why not?

3. *Are there any developmental programmes that you provide to equip teachers in your department to enhance quality in teaching and learning? If yes, which are those programmes and how do they assist teachers?*

In this question, a participant might also respond “no” therefore, it was structured to accommodate both yes and no. The arranged question was: Are there any developmental programmes that you provide to equip teachers in your department to enhance quality in teaching and learning? If yes, which are those programmes and how do they assist teachers? If no, which programmes do you think might assist your teachers to enhance quality in teaching and learning?

3.6.1.1.6 Things that I did differently with regard to my participants

I explained the purpose of my study and also allowed them to ask any clarity-seeking questions. I also gave them leeway to answer slowly as long as they offered insightful information relevant to my study.

3.6.2 Documents

Documents can be viewed as tangible traces of social contexts, data evidence of how the organisation represents and accounts for itself (Altheide et al., 2008; Morgan, 2022; Salminen et al., 1997). They can also provide background information before the interview commences (Koyuncu & Kilic, 2019). Altheide et al. (2008) argue that documents make the researcher alert and armed with evidence that can be used to clarify what is being told. In this study firstly, I have utilised 2022 documents being guided by the document analysis schedule (see Appendix J, page 113) which has been designed prior to accessing documents. Three documents were purposively selected as part of the data collection method. The first one is the school improvement plan (SIP) which was selected to analyse the strategies planned by the school to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. The second one was the quality management

systems document (QMS) that has been used to gather information about teacher appraisal and also analyse the scores that have been awarded to teachers. The last one is the curriculum monitoring tool that is being used by departmental heads; it has been selected to obtain evidence about curriculum coverage and the quality and quantity of work issued to the learners each term. The moment I gained access to documents; I then started the process of analysing them.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is where by creating raw data and sorting it to save only the most important, pertinent information that will best serve the study (Mayer, 2015). Creswell (2002) reveals that data analysis transforms created data into findings. He further mentioned that there are three methods of analysing data which are; content analysis, discourse analysis, and thematic analysis. In this study, I have opted for a thematic analysis.

According to Clarke (2015), thematic analysis is a method for identifying and interpreting themes within qualitative data. Thematic analysis can be used to find patterns within and across data concerning participants' lived experiences, views, and perspectives which seeks to comprehend the feelings and behaviour of participants (Clarke, 2015). Vaismaradi et al. (2013, p. 400) posited that “thematic analyses move beyond counting explicit words and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data that is themed”. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87) suggested six phases that are a guide using thematic analysis which: are "familiarising yourself with your data; Generating initial codes; Searching for themes; Reviewing themes; Defining and naming themes; Producing the report”.

In complying with the phases alluded to by Braun and Clarke (2006), I started by transcribing data that had been voice-recorded during interviews and also transcribed the one collected from the documents. I then read it repeatedly noting down the initial ideas. I followed by organising data based on my research questions and comparing it with the participants' responses. Further, I created and assigned data into codes using different coloured pens to make more meaningful meanings. I then used “axial coding” (William & Moser, 2019, p.50) where I sifted and refined data by drawing connections between similar codes and created themes. Lastly, I interpreted data connecting with my literature review, and theoretical and conceptual framework which are detailed written in chapter two of this study. These phases were crafted by being aware that the main aim is to ensure that the research questions have been adequately articulated.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

According to Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), all researchers must first obtain ethical clearance from the institution's Research Ethics Board before embarking on any research project. I applied for an ethical clearance letter from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Ethics Clearance Committee prior to visiting a research site (see Appendix A, page 100). I then acquired permission to conduct research from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (see Appendix B, page 101). Thereafter, I obtained a permission letter from the school as a research site (see Appendix E, page 107) and also acquired informed consent from the school principal, deputy principal, and departmental heads as they are the participants in the study (see appendix D, page 104).

Before conducting interviews, participants were given letters that elaborate on the study such as the topic, aims, and study activities. The principle of non-maleficence was also implemented where participants were assured that they would not be harmed in any matter. They were also notified that they could pull out at any moment if it made them uncomfortable to participate in the study. Confidentiality was also applied because the school's name and of the participants were kept confidential and I opted for pseudonyms.

3.9 Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the level of confidence in data and the techniques employed to analyze and understand to ensure the quality of the study (Lincon & Guba, 1985). Lincon and Guba (1985, p.48) state that "all research must have a truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality in order to be considered worthwhile". They proposed the terms in qualitative research to ensure trustworthiness which are; credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability and they are discussed below:

3.9.1 Credibility

The researcher needs to ensure that the collected data is truthful and correct (Lincon & Guba, 1985). They mentioned that confidence in the truth of the study is a crucial aspect to the readers. Rallis and Rossman (2009) also share the same sentiments and propose that the researcher should produce findings that are persuading and trustable. To ensure credibility in my study, I started by obtaining permission from each of the participants to utilise an audio recording device to record the interview process, thereafter I have done member checking that has been suggested by Lincon and Guba (1985), where I went back to the research site and checked with

the participants that I had properly recorded their responses that were gathered during the interview session.

3.9.2 Confirmability

According to Lincon and Guba (1985), confirmability simply means that the research findings should be validated by others. However, Ahmed (2024) alluded that confirmability pertains to the impartiality and objectivity of the findings, guaranteeing that they remain unaffected by any biases or preferences of the researchers. To avoid bias in my study, I asked a fellow colleague who pursues doctoral studies in research to read through my report to check for accuracy in the interpretation of data and findings. I have also appropriately used verbatim quotes from my participants, which served to support themes. My role as a researcher was also detached from the field; therefore, there was no manipulation of the phenomenon.

3.9.3 Transferability

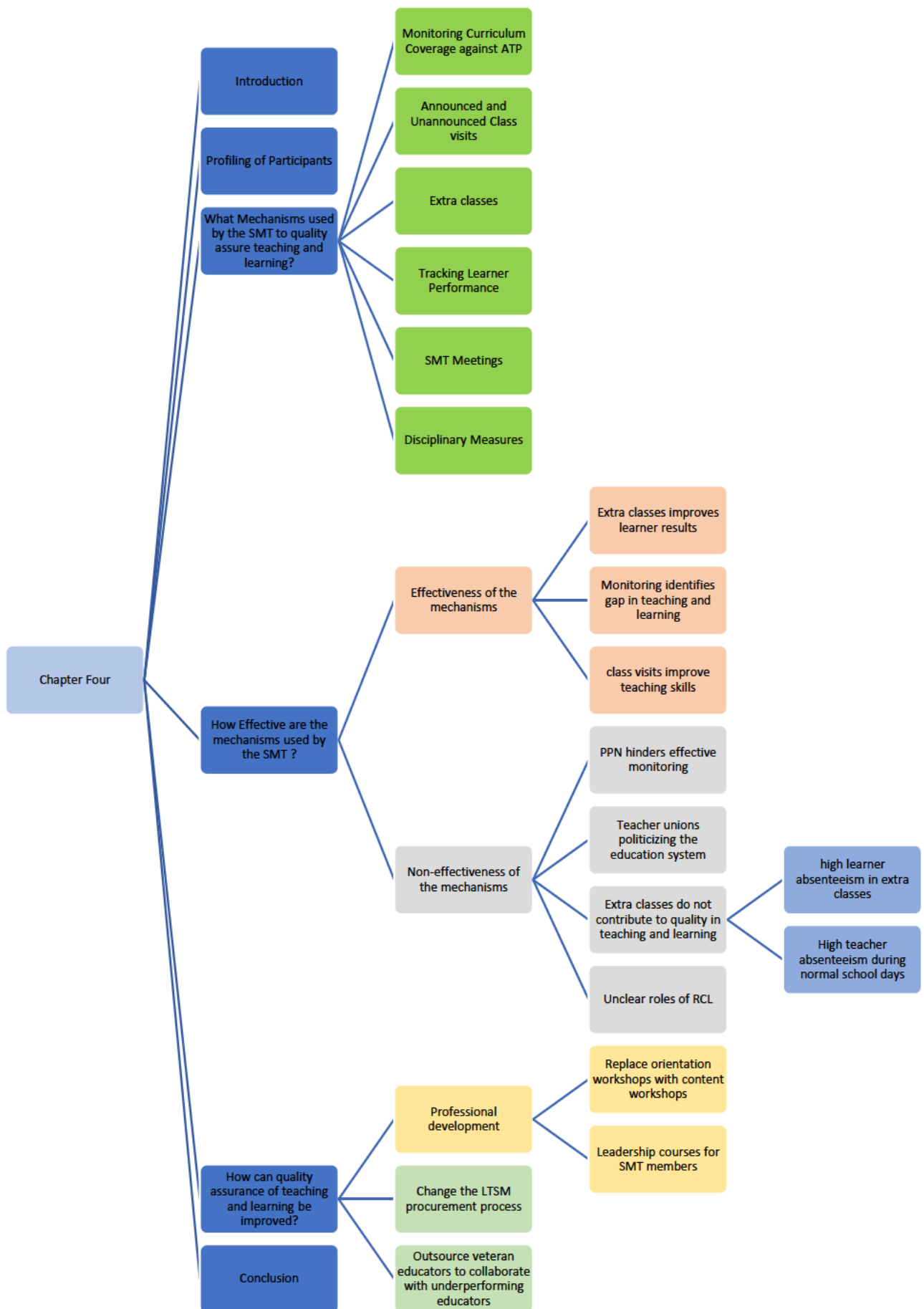
Lincon and Guba (1985) indicate that to apply transferability, the study should provide enough details so that the readers can make their own conclusions from the results. It should also be presented in a way that will make readers compare the results of the phenomenon with other cases that emerge (Lincon & Guba, 1985). To comply with this criterion, I have described the context of the study, the place where the study was conducted, the participants, and the research methods that were used to collect data.

3.9.4 Dependability

This relates to how stable is the data throughout the time and the conditions of the study (Lincon & Guba, 1985). This means that the researcher should provide the audience with evidence that if the same study were repeated with similar participants, the results would still be the same. Kakar et al. (2023) share the same sentiments and suggested that every research data must be replicated and have a degree of consistency to ensure trustworthiness. To address this issue of dependability, the whole research process that occurred at the research site was well explained. This was done to enable readers to comprehend the methods utilized as well as their effectiveness.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research design and methodology that has been used in the study to navigate the SMT members of a secondary school that is situated in a township in order to examine the strategies that they are using to quality assure teaching and learning across school grades. This has been done through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Thematic analysis was used as a method of data analysis. Furthermore, ethical and trustworthiness issues regarding my study were also attended to. The next chapter deals with data analysis and interpretation.



CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the research design, paradigm, and methodology that underpins the study. Five school management team (SMT) members were interviewed face to face using semi-structured interviews and three documents were analysed from the case study school.

This chapter focuses on analysing data that was obtained from semi-structured interviews, quality management systems (QMS) documents, departmental heads' monitoring tool, and the school improvement plan (SIP). Data was categorized into themes that display the information from the participants and the documents. I use the following presentation framework for each theme/sub-theme:

- I briefly explain what the theme/sub-theme is about supported by literature.
- I thereafter present a narrative description of the pertinent data. To enhance trustworthiness, I draw on verbatim quotations from the interview transcripts.
- Next, I bring in my voice to explain my inference/deduction of the data
- I then engage in analytical interpretation by drawing on my theoretical and conceptual framework as well as relevant literature to discuss and critique the data.

Direct words from the participants are written in italics, and they address the following three research questions:

- What mechanisms are employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?
- How effective are the mechanisms employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?
- How can quality assurance of teaching and learning be improved in the case study school?

4.2 Profiling of Participants

Participant Pseudonym	Designation	Number of years teaching in	Number of years in SMT	Gender	Age Range
Mr Kunene	Principal	28 Years	20 Years	Male	50-55
Mrs Luthuli	Deputy Principal	32 Years	6 Years	Female	55-60
Mr Xhonxo	Departmental Head-Science	9 Years	2 Years	Male	30-35
Mr Gumede	Departmental Head-Commerce	23 Years	14 Years	Male	50-55
Mrs Ngcongco	Departmental Head- Humanities	7 Years	2 Years	Female	35-40

4.3 What mechanisms are employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?

4.3.1 Monitoring Curriculum Coverage against the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP)

Monitoring of the curriculum means ensuring that what is required by the policy is being appropriately taught (Conto et al., 2020). According to guidelines of the Department of Basic Education (2020a), the departmental head is required to monitor the work of the learners against the ATP, checking the status of the curriculum coverage per subject, and per grade weekly to identify gaps in teaching and learning promptly. Further, it is mandated that once the departmental head has obtained findings, s/he should write a curriculum report of his/her department and bring it to the attention of the principal every month.

During the interviews, it was noted that the participants were aware of the guidelines prescribed by the Department of Basic Education because all three departmental heads responded similarly. Their responses are presented below:

Mr Xhonxo

I do it differently for example each week I am specific on a particular grade like in week 1 I monitor grade 12 then other grades follow. I do it weekly, every Friday I do monitor for example in the first week I will take learners' books of the particular grade and then in the following week I will take teachers' files.

Mrs Ngcongo

We do it on a weekly basis, we start by doing grade 12 on a particular week followed by 11, then 10 and lastly, I combine 8 and 9 in one week. I check learners' work using the ATP and a lesson plan.

Mr Gumede

When I am monitoring their work, I am being guided by the ATP to check whether teachers are following it correctly. So, in terms of monitoring, on Monday they submit their lesson plans and on Thursday I do monitor their work to check whether they have been following what was written on the lesson plan.

It is noted that in their monitoring, two departmental heads prioritise grade 12 which gives an indication that is their main focus. It was also noted that each week, they deal with one grade, but in grades 8 and 9, they combine them in one week. This reveals that the level of attention they bring to all grades is not the same. Chapter 2 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 108 of 1996*, stresses that in education, everyone has a right to equity. It seems as if the management is compromising the education of grade 8 and 9 learners. After obtaining the data from the interview, I then requested the monitoring tools that they are using to monitor the curriculum. Surprisingly what I got was the opposite of what they have said.

Secondary data obtained from the curriculum monitoring tool document was also analysed using document analysis schedule and findings were not in line with what was being said by the participants during the interviews. Out of three departmental heads, there was only one departmental head who had the evidence of curriculum monitoring from grades 8 to 12 and the evidence revealed that it was done once per term. Then the other two departmental heads, there was no evidence for monitoring of grade 8 and 9 work. It was also noted that other monitoring tools only had signatures for departmental heads and the deputy principal but not for the educators. This indicated that it might happen that after monitoring, the feedback was not provided to the teacher concerned. Gunter (2005) advises that one of the principles of distributed leadership is reflection and feedback which can assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses as well as promoting personal growth.

Wallace (2001) also asserts that feedback provides the opportunity for ongoing performance improvement. It is a concern that teachers do not receive feedback from their superiors which may put them in a position of no performance improvement.

Garira (2020) hints that how the curriculum is implemented depends on the quality of the processes within the school. This means that if the processes are not correctly followed, it is likely that the school might not achieve quality in teaching and learning. The departmental heads are compelled to play a pivotal role in ensuring that the curriculum is properly implemented as per prescribed guidelines (Department of Basic Education, 2020a).

4.3.2 Conducting Announced and Unannounced Class Visits

In the South African education system class visits are being guided by *Collective Agreement 2 of 2020*, which states that class visits should be done twice per year (ELRC, 2020). The departmental head is the one who is responsible for observing teachers. It is also stated in the collective agreement that before the observation, the educator and the Departmental Head (DH) must discuss what is expected during teaching and learning. After the class visit, there must also be a post-discussion. There must also be a lesson observation instrument that must be signed by the educator and the departmental head.

It appeared that participants do class visits as per *Collective Agreement 2 of 2020* and Mrs Ngcongco stated:

I do them twice per year. I have a plan, then in four weeks I visit them, check their timetable, and give dates to every educator under my department two weeks before the visit.

Mr Gumede also shared his actions by saying:

We do them once per semester. At the beginning of the semester, we agree on a date for conducting class visits and remind them on the WhatsApp group when the date is closer. Sometimes I conduct unannounced class visits where I will just pass the class and see that there is an educator in this class, I would just pop in and sit and listen to what the educator is doing in class but I also ensure that the educator is also comfortable even in the unannounced class visit.

Mr. Xhonxo has his own way of doing class visits not as per *Collective Agreement 2 of 2020*. He believes class visits should be done regularly (at least once per term) and they must be unannounced to educators to get the real picture about what takes place in the classroom. He commented by saying:

I do class visits once a term, the once a term is one that a teacher knows that I am coming. I give them schedules of class visits every term. There is a second visit that I do randomly where I won't tell the teacher that I am coming to see the reality. What's the purpose, if you tell the educator that you are coming, the educator will prepare for you, while I need educators to prepare for learners, not for me. So, the second surprise visit will be checking when they are informed compared with when they are not informed to my surprise, I found that teachers were preparing for me then I would be able to find gaps and develop them. Now since they are used to surprise visits so they prepare for the learners and their teaching skills have improved.

Participants' views reveal that, as departmental heads of the same school; they are not working collectively in managing their departments. Mr Xhonxo is doing it in his way and it seems as if it is working because he attests that the teaching skills of teachers in his department are improving. Garira (2020) proclaims that shared decision-making as an input at a school level produces high student achievement as an output. It stipulates that, if decisions are taken collectively by the school managers, learners can achieve outstanding results.

After the interviews with the departmental heads, I was given *Annexure E2* of the Quality Management System QMS resource pack that is being used as a tool to conduct the class visit. The tool has a criterion that must be followed by the departmental head and scores range from 1 to 4, and then they are added all together to contribute to 100% (ELRC, 2020). It was noted that all educators were ranging above 80% and there was no evidence for pre- and post-discussions as per requirement. This therefore indicates that educators are not being given an objective opinion. Howe et al. (2019) emphasize that class visits should reveal the strengths and weaknesses of an educator during teaching and learning. It seems as if this is not how it is done in the case study school. What contradicts this is that SMT said teachers are improving yet they get above 80%. The school cannot be severely underperforming as it does if its educators are getting such scores in their teaching. Maybe class visits are being done just for compliance to claim the 1.5% of the pay progression as it is part of the appraisal that is stipulated in the *Incentive Policy Framework for Employees in The Public Service* (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2019).

4.3.3 Managing Extra Classes for Grades 10-12

Extra classes are additional lessons given to learners outside the normal school hours to improve their understanding of key concepts from the curriculum (Ubat, 2019). It is the SMT's role to ensure the effective running of the extra classes (Department of Basic Education, 2020a). The members of the SMT in the case study school stated that the school has extra classes but only for grades 10, 11, and 12 and they have a routine to monitor its effectiveness. Their views were presented:

Mr Kunene

We do have extra classes for Further Education and Training (FET), grades 10, 11 & 12 but for junior classes like grades 8 and 9, no it does not happen, it does not happen at all.

Mrs Luthuli

We do have extra classes from 7 am to 7:45 am, 15:00-16:00 from Monday to Friday and there are also Saturdays and school holidays. They are monitored by all of us but morning and Saturday classes are being monitored by the principal.

The above responses reveal that they are not treating all grades the same. Mr Kunene even called grades 8 and 9 as junior classes yet all these grades are in his school which is a secondary school. It is like they are having two different schools in one school. Mrs Luthuli's view also raises a concern when she mentions that the principal is the only one who monitors morning and Saturday classes whereas all other SMT members are monitoring only the afternoon classes. It reveals that grades 8 and 9 extra classes are not being implemented because the SMT is failing to allocate themselves equally then they leave more work with the principal. Donohoo et al. (2018) advise that school leaders must work together to build a positive culture designed to increase the quality of results. What has been proclaimed by Gunter (2005) that sometimes it is a challenge to lead leaders. Therefore, by noting the view of Mrs. Luthuli reveals that even the SMT poses a challenge to the school principal.

4.3.4 Tracking of Learner Performance

Tracking learner performance is necessary for learners to see how they are performing and for teachers to see that their teaching strategies are effective so that adjustments can be made for

learners to achieve good results (Khedher et al., 2019). It is also necessary for the school to contemplate itself for the target percentage that is being set by the Department of Basic Education (Department of Basic Education, 2020a). According to the Department of Basic Education (2023a) *Circular D3 of 2023*, a secondary school can be deemed underperforming if it has achieved less than 75% in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) results. Therefore, it is crucial that learner performance is always tracked to see whether the school can achieve the requirements of *circular D3*.

In the case study school, their responses give an indication that they track learner performance quarterly and their responses were:

Mr Kunene

We track learner performance at the beginning of each term, commencing in term 2 where we sit down as members of the SMT and analyse the quarterly results of common tests per subject, per grade and if the subject has obtained less than 75%, we request the departmental head to account.

In the same vein, Mr. Xhonxo responded as follows:

We do quarterly analysis three times a year which is April, July, and October so that we can identify the subjects that are dragging the school percentage down, after that, we come up with intervention strategies.

Participants' responses reveal that they only know about learner results after 3 months which I perceive as a very long time. It might be difficult to come up with effective intervention strategies after such a long time. This corroborates the view of (Khedher et al., 2019) stating that tracking of learner performance should be done regularly so that it might be easy to detect problems and come up with mitigation strategies promptly. It is also prescribed by the Department of Basic Education (2020a) that tracking of learner performance can be done daily using curriculum-based tests, observation and interaction as well as formative assessments.

It seems as if Mrs Luthuli is quite aware that tracking learner performance should be done on a regular basis because she shared her experience by saying:

As the whole SMT, we analyse the results of all subjects once a term but we rely on Heads of Department (HOD)s in their weekly departmental meetings to analyse marks of informal tests that are written every week.

The view of Mrs Luthuli is in line with Gunter (2005) who states that distributed leadership is horizontal because there is interdependency rather than over-reliance. This means that as much as the SMT tracks learner performance once per term on summative assessment results they are also dependent on departmental heads that are aware of the results of formative assessment because they can indicate what will be achieved in summative assessment. Department of Education (2020a) mandated that once the previous year's results of the school have been analysed, intervention strategies should be prescribed on the School Improvement Plan (SIP) in the following year.

SIP was analysed using the document analysis schedule. According to the Department of Basic Education (2020), SIP is a road plan that outlines the adjustments that a school will make and shows how and when they will be implemented. The SIP should be categorized into two sections; section A for interventions that lead to improved learner performance which has a maximum of eight objectives and section B for interventions that lead to an improved school environment which has a maximum of five objectives (Department of Basic Education, 2020a).

The SIP from the case study school has only four objectives and they do not indicate which section they belong to as it is mandated. There is nothing written about the school environment such as infrastructure in school buildings, school furniture, and working relations which reveals that they do not have a plan to improve in these aspects yet they are perceived as very important. Garira (2020) mentions that factors such as class sizes, student ratio, and the availability of furniture affect the quality of teaching and learning. This clearly shows that it should be included in the SIP.

It was also noted that in all four objectives, to achieve them, the responsibility only lies in the SMT members. Educators and learners are not included in the responsibility and also the time frame to achieve all the objectives is the same, there is no time allocated for accountability and reviewing, yet great leadership practice is about responsibility and accountability (Gunter, 2005). This reveals that the SMT is not aware of the requirements for drafting and implementing the SIP. This also concurs with the views of Fernandez (2011) who revealed that in schools, SIP is just being prepared as a document that is being filled in the office and not being implemented.

4.3.5 Weekly SMT Meetings

An SMT meeting is where the school managers meet in a regularly scheduled meeting to share information, and ideas and resolve matters that could arise or have already arisen in the school (Wallace, 2001). According to KZN Department of Education (2012) *Circular 41 of 2012*, SMT members should meet every week and discuss updates, progress, and challenges on matters such as curriculum coverage, areas of teacher development, school resources, and all other administrative matters. The SMT members from the case study school seem to comply with the Department of Education circular and their responses were presented:

Mr Xhonxo

We meet every Monday at 10:00 am and discuss what happened in the previous week and come up with strategies on how to deal with challenges in the coming week.

Mrs Luthuli

Every Monday we sit down as the SMT mostly to hear about curriculum coverage from HODs.

Mr Kunene

As an SMT, we meet on Mondays without fail, and the two standing items on our agenda are; curriculum and administration because we consider those to be the primary daily activities of the school.

Mr Kunene further revealed that they have a roster of who is going to be the chairperson of the meeting amongst the SMT members. He continued to say:

Every SMT member has the responsibility of chairing the meeting. Even at staff meetings, educators are used to the idea that any SMT member can chair the meeting, and the other SMT members support that individual to demonstrate staff unity.

The above statement by Mr Kunene is in line with Gunter (2005) who states that distributed leadership involves the distribution of power and authority. It is basically about shared management (Gunter, 2005). Distributing power amongst SMT members could also assist in promoting cooperation and better morale. This concurs with the view of Wallace (2001) who

states that when everyone feels that their positions matter, they may be more confident to bring new ideas and be productive since they know that they are considered.

4.3.6 Implementing Disciplinary Measures

This is where the school reprimands or take corrective action in response to learner misconduct using prescribed policies (Rossouw, 2003). Rossouw further proclaims that, implementing discipline results in a conducive environment such as moulding learner character and motivating them to do what is required by the school.

In the South African education system, disciplinary measures are being guided by the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* (SASA) (RSA, 1996a). According to SASA, there are three guiding principles of disciplinary procedures which are: fairness and consistency; transparency and accountability; and inclusiveness and participation. The school governing body (SGB) is responsible for execution of disciplinary procedures by drawing the school code of conduct that complies with SASA. The SGB should involve educators, parents, and learners to develop the code of conduct and disciplinary processes.

Mr Kunene, the school principal did not mention anything about the SGB and implementing disciplinary measures and his response was:

At the beginning of each year, we read the code of conduct to all learners, but we cannot give them a copy due to lack of resources. Then we elect three post level 1 who are going to be members of the disciplinary committee. They are dealing with disciplinary procedures depending on the type of case. When a learner commits a serious case, the DC suspends the learner to come on Friday with his or her parent to resolve the matter.

The principal is using the authorized distributed leadership (Gunter, 2005). This is because he delegated all power to the disciplinary committee. This power delegation conflicts with the requirements of SASA. It is stipulated in the SASA that there are different categories of misconduct such as minor, serious, and very serious misconduct. When a learner has committed a very serious misconduct, suspension should be done by the SGB and a formal disciplinary hearing must be conducted including the parent and the learner concerned.

The principal also mentioned that when a learner is suspended, the case is being attended to on Friday. This means that if a learner has committed a case on Monday s/he will come to school on Friday and have missed out learning for 4 days. This violates the learner's right to basic education as it is stipulated in the *Constitution of South Africa* (RSA,1996b). This might cause a problem for the school principal because he is the accounting officer in all the matters that occur in the school.

4.4 How effective are the mechanisms employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning across school grades?

Some indicated that the mechanisms they are using are effective and some indicated that they are not effective. Therefore, I will separate the responses and start with the effectiveness of the mechanisms and then follow with the non-effectiveness of the mechanisms.

4.4.1 Effectiveness of the Mechanisms

4.4.1.1 Extra Classes Improve Learner Results

This theme was formulated when participants were being asked about the impact of extra classes on quality teaching and learning. Most of the participants revealed only the challenges not the positive impact, but Mr Xhonxo's view differs from the negative comments that were stated by his colleagues. He alluded:

As a mathematics teacher, I can tell they are extremely effective since in past years, no learner has passed mathematics, particularly in grades 10 and 11. It was normal to get 0% pass and +/- 20% in the NSC results. When I was promoted to head the Department of Science, I introduced extra classes in grades 10 and 11, as they had already been implemented in grade 12. It has been two years since I was promoted, yet I can see that the mathematics results in the FET band have improved. Although we are not there yet, we are making progress.

Mr Xhonxo's view corroborates with the findings of a study conducted by Chikoko, Naicker, and Mthiyane (2015) that principals of Umlazi district schools commend extra classes and they believe that they contribute to outstanding school results. Ubat (2019) also concurs and reveals that parents also appreciate extra classes because they believe that they minimize leisure time for their children. This means that when learners spend more time at school, their results are mostly improved.

In Mr. Xhonxo's view, he did not mention anything about the results of mathematics for grades 8 and 9, which might be possible that his focus as a manager and a subject teacher is only in grades 10-12 yet the school starts from grade 8 to 12 and mathematics is compulsory in grade 8 and 9. He also mentioned that he introduced extra classes when he was promoted to be the departmental head, which indicates that he was not very concerned about the results when he was a post-level 1 educator. It raises a concern that it might happen that the SMT does not distribute power and authority to educators (Gunter, 2005). If he had come up with this strategy when he was a post-level one educator, maybe the mathematics results could have been even much better than they are. It proves that there are good strategies that can come from educators if they work together with the SMT.

4.4.1.2 Monitoring Identifies Gap in Teaching and Learning

Orphanos and Orr (2014) assume that monitoring can alert the SMT about the learners' needs and the issues that teachers face. The Department of Basic Education (2020a) affirms that monitoring can provide information to the school management about what occurs in the classroom regarding teaching and learning. Participants concurred with the above-mentioned statements and added that monitoring helps them to identify the gaps that could occur during teaching and learning. Their views are presented:

Mr Xhonxo

It is, because it shifts the teachers to teach according to what the curriculum requires, rather than teaching what they like. For example, in Maths, educators tend to teach algebra for the rest of the year and leave the geometry part. So that creates a gap. When I check learners' exercise books and find the missing topic, I request the educator to go back and teach.

Mrs Ngcongo

It is effective because if you do not monitor, you may find that the teacher is behind the ATP or is teaching the way she pleases. For instance, teaching other topics and leaving other topics behind.

The above extract reveals that monitoring should be done regularly because if educators are not monitored, the quality of teaching can be compromised. Furthermore, both participants revealed that sometimes a teacher can leave topics behind and it seems as if they are not curious about the reason behind that. It might happen that the teacher is not comfortable teaching the

topic and needs intervention. Gunter (2005, p. 53) advises that leaders together with teachers “can engage concertively through an anticipated or unanticipated activity that needs intervention and possible problem resolution”. Lamentably, what is being done by Mr Xhonxo when he says “*I request the educator to go back and teach*” indicates that he does not ask the reason for not teaching the topic. It appears as if monitoring is done to look for errors, not for development purposes.

4.4.1.3 Class Visits Improve Teaching Skills

Howe et al. (2019) posit that class visits are essential because they determine that teaching is centred around every learner regardless of age, gender, or socio-economic background and also to identify that no learner is left behind in the classroom. Garira (2020) stressed that it is crucial to identify and evaluate what is happening in the classroom, to find out where the improvement may be required for effective realization of quality education. What has been transpired by the participants is in line with the literature and their responses were:

Mrs Ngongo

At first, they did not like them, but I was always reminding them that it is not about criticizing them but it is about providing support through checking the challenges and assisting with areas of improvement regarding teaching now they are used to them and their teaching styles are becoming better.

Mr Xhonxo

Normally teachers are teaching the traditional way of teaching. They haven't shifted from the traditional paradigm to the modern one. Classroom visits and a tool that I give them force them to do so because after I visit them, I classify my teachers into three groups. There is an explainer type, there is an involver type, and an enabler type. For you to be an effective teacher you need to qualify up until the third one which is the enabler one.

In both of the participant's views, it is noted that they were autocratic in implementing class visits until they saw an improvement (Bowman, 2014). This reveals that when you manage people, sometimes you do not lead by how people feel but you lead based on what is right.

It is also noted that Mr Xhonxo's view is in line with one of the principles of distributed leadership which is "coaching", where the leader takes the role of being a coach to assist others

in developing their professional abilities (Gunter, 2005). Xhonxo mentioned that teachers were using traditional ways of teaching but now they are modern because he developed them to be relevant in the current education system. It shows that if you are a leader and a manager you need to be aware of current developments that are occurring in the system. It also reveals that you need to possess transformational leadership skills when you introduce change (Bowman, 2014).

4.4.2 Non-effectiveness of the mechanisms

4.4.2.1 Post Provisioning Norm (PPN) Hinders Effective Monitoring

This theme was formulated when participants were asked about the effectiveness of monitoring teachers' and learners' work. One participant illustrated that it is not possible to monitor all grades because their workload has increased due to the PPN.

PPN is a mechanism that determines the number of educators assigned to each public school while ensuring a suitable teacher-to-learner ratio in the classroom (Department of Basic Education, 2013; Naicker, 2006). In South African public secondary schools, the teacher-to-learner ratio is 1 is to 30. Due to financial constraints, the department has gone to a severe budget cut by not employing new educators but retaining the serving ones by moving the surplus educators from their current serving schools to schools that are short of educators (KZN Department of Education, 2021b). It seems as if the case study school had surplus educators and they were moved to other schools because Mr Gumede said:

You know I won't lie to you. In 2021 we were affected by PPN and 7 educators were declared surplus and were moved to other schools. We had to spread their duty load to all educators including us. Coming back to your question, I can say for now it is not effective because we are overloaded. Sometimes we do not monitor, we end up checking grade 12 because they are the mirror of the school and of the department.

Noting the view of Mr Gumede, they have not adjusted themselves to the new allocation of duty load. It is not that they are overloaded. The fact that the department declared 7 educators as a surplus, means in the previous years, they were allocated below their required duty load. The Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document clearly stipulates the percentage of teaching load of all educators including SMT members (Department of Education, 1999b).

PAM states that the DH of a secondary school should have a teaching workload of 85%, but in Mr Gumede's comments, it was noted that he is not overloaded because he continued to say:

Just imagine, I have 18 out of 29 periods per week yet I am a departmental head.

Calculating the duty load of Mr Gumede by taking his teaching periods dividing by the number of the school periods then multiplying by a hundred you get 62% of his teaching load which is less than what is expected. This reveals that he is just being lazy (Loss & Renucci, 2011). He is doing the opposite of what Gunter (2005) has transpired by stating that leading teachers are not disrupted by high-pressurizing school environments but they become more enthusiastic and committed. Based on Mr Gumede's views, it appears as if they were disrupted by the implementation of the PPN and they need to learn to balance their work for the effectiveness of the school.

4.4.2.2 Teacher Unions Politicizing the Education System

The functionality of teacher unions in South African schools is regulated by the *Education Labour Relations Act 46 of 1993* (ELRA) and the *Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995* (LRA) (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001). The majority teacher union in South Africa is South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) because it comprises two-thirds of all registered teacher union members in SA (Wills, 2020). SADTU was launched in 1990 with the support of the African National Congress therefore its ideology is strongly influenced by politics (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001; Masondo et al., 2019; Mpisi, 2023; Wills, 2020). Members were concerned with how SADTU operates and their views were presented.

Mrs Luthuli

SADTU is our union but it has two sides. Sometimes some of their members do not know the difference between politics and education and they have politicized our education. If you have a problem with the teacher, they will not attend to the situation but they will politicize the situation. So, they also got a negative effect on the results of the school because some of the teachers don't do justice to learners. Maybe you move the teacher from grade 12 because it affects the results and take their teacher to another lower grade, they will report you to the union and the union will force you to return that teacher in grade 12 while the teacher is not good so therefore it is influencing our results negatively.

Mr Xhonxo

It is very hard to manage a teacher who is an active member of SADTU because they prioritise union activities.

In Mrs Luthuli's view, it is noted that when a teacher is not performing as expected s/he is moved from grade 12 to a lower grade. This creates a concern because it shows that a teacher can continue with negative behavior as long as that teacher is not teaching grade 12. Orphanos and Orr (2014) reveal that teachers are human beings, they do make mistakes therefore, the SMT should always provide developmental programmes that equip them. The SMT should also possess transactional leadership skills where they reward good behaviour and punish bad behaviour (Bowman, 2014).

What also has been transpired by Mrs Luthuli and Mr Xhonxo, concurs with the study by Matos (2022) which reveals that SADTU is one of the reasons for the failure of education mostly in the township schools. This indicates that the education system of our country is substandard. Garira (2020, p. 6) supports this statement by saying “School quality alone can be an indicator of quality of the education system”. Since the SMT is concerned about the behavior of SADTU members in their school, it is possible that even in other schools they are experiencing the same. Peculiarly, Mr Kunene has the opposing view to what has been said by his colleagues and he said:

Being a former union leader myself, I don't have a problem with union leaders at the level of the site because I strongly believe that unions have a role to play in our schools.

Mr Kunene's view shows that he does not see anything wrong with the behaviour of union members in his school. It shows that he understands how they operate because he used to be a union leader. This alerts one to the fact that if you are an active union member then you can understand and be able to handle the behavior of teachers who are union members.

4.4.2.3 Extra Classes do not Contribute to Quality in Teaching and Learning

Participants declared that extra classes do not contribute to the quality in teaching and learning, and also do not serve the purpose of improving school results. Their views were analysed and two sub-themes were formulated and discussed below:

4.4.2.3.1 High learner absenteeism in the extra classes

Learner absenteeism is when a learner fails to attend school during the agreed times (Mafa, 2018). Section 3 of *SASA 8 of 1996* states that a learner can be absent at school because of illness or death of a close family member (RSA, 1996a). Nomatolo and Dudu (2022) asserted that learners who are always absent at school are missing out which results in underperformance. Mafa (2018) also agrees and alludes that a learner can only gain full benefits from the planned curriculum when s/he is available for teaching time. Participants were concerned with the absenteeism of learners during extra classes, and they had the following to say:

Mr Kunene

Although educators are dedicated to extra classes, learners are failing us by not showing up. They escape with the grades 8 and 9, even during the afternoon sessions on regular school days.

Mrs Luthuli also revealed that learners who are not performing well are the ones who do not attend, she added:

The sad part is; you find that learners who are attending are the ones whom you know for sure they are going to pass even if they do not attend extra classes. Then those that we extremely need, the progressed ones, are the ones who do not come.

Mr Gumede revealed that he was also concerned about the absenteeism of learners in the extra classes not only as an SMT member but also as an educator, he added:

Last year, my grade 12 subject only achieved 23% in the NSC results. The biggest contribution was that many students did not attend extra classes while I was thoroughly revising previous question papers. Only 11 learners attended extra classes regularly out of a total of 35. What was unsettling was that they all wrote the final exam; when the results were released, I was not surprised with the percentage.

The above extracts indicate that the non-attendance of extra classes by the learners contributes to poor performance of the school. The only learners who pass are those who attend extra classes. This is supported by Mafa (2018) when she says that, learners who are always present

during teaching and learning time, are found to have better teacher-learner interaction which leads to good performance. This also concurs with the findings of a study by Nomatolo and Dudu (2022) when a learner has missed contact time several times with an educator, that learner is likely to fail.

What has transpired by the participants also reveals that extra classes are not properly managed by the SMT yet it is their duty to ensure that they are operating effectively (KZN Department of Education, 2021a). It seems as if they are not goal-driven and they are not working together to curb the absenteeism of learners. Gunter (2005) mentions that when leaders apply shared-distributed leadership practices, their desired performance can be achieved. Furthermore, Garira (2020) echoed that at a school level, shared decision-making as an input contributes to student achievement as an output. This means that if the school management is working together to achieve certain goals, they can minimize the inhibiting factors towards achieving good results.

4.4.2.3.2 High teacher absenteeism during normal school days

“In the South African Education system, absenteeism of teachers is regulated by *SASA 84 of 1996* and *Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998*” (Nomatolo & Dudu, 2022, p.26). SASA states that an employed permanent educator is entitled to various forms of leave such as sick leave, family responsibility leave, special leave, and annual leave. SASA addressed that if an educator has been absent from work for fourteen consecutive days without reporting to his/her supervisor can be discharged from work. This indicates that an educator can be absent as long as she qualifies for a leave and has reported to the supervisor. Nomatolo and Dudu (2022) raised a concern that absenteeism leads to a loss of teaching time. Participants' views indicate that they do experience the above-mentioned concern because they had to say:

Mrs Ngcongo

The main issue in my department is teacher absenteeism. What I normally do, when they come back from being absent; I give them the recovery plan template to indicate how they are going to cover the lost contact time. Most of them use extra classes to cover the curriculum.

Mr Kunene

We compensate educators who attend extra classes with a stipend for petrol. The crisis we are currently experiencing is that the majority of educators are now

being absent in the normal school days but honour the timetable for extra classes.

The responses from the participants reveal that educators do not cover the curriculum during their teaching time, they become absent knowing that they are going to utilize the timetable for extra classes. What is being done by the participants is the opposite view of Santhi (2011) who states that extra classes should be for revision and extra tuition for learners and not all subjects need extra classes. This is also supported by the Department of Basic Education (2022a) that every subject has its annual teaching plan that has start and finish dates for a particular topic. Extra classes are not included in the ATP, which means that every curriculum can be covered within the specified time of the department.

The view of Mr Kunene also reveals that educators might attend extra classes because they are given a petrol allowance which they do not receive when they teach on the normal school days. It seems as if the SMT was trying to encourage teachers to attend extra classes not knowing that it would create another problem. They were doing what was suggested by Bowman (2014) stating that, for a school to achieve quality results, teachers need to be encouraged so that they can be dedicated to their duties. Unfortunately, this places the SMT in a position where they need to come up with another strategy that will impact positively on quality in teaching and learning. This is also emphasized by Gunter (2005) that leaders should be creative thinkers and be able to solve organizational problems promptly.

4.4.2.4 Unclear Roles of Representative Council of Learners (RCL)

The RCL is a lawfully elected council of learners that represents every learner in a secondary school (Department of Basic Education, 2023b). Two representatives from each grade are voted for to formulate a council of learner representatives (Msweli, 2021). Their function in the school is governed by SASA (Msweli, 2021). SASA states that they must form part of the SGB and be included in decision-making. Research by (Mathebula, 2005; Msweli, 2021; Nkolola & Muzata, 2021) reveals that schools do not involve learners in decision making therefore learners end up not knowing their role. Findings on the case study school also reveal that RCL learners are elected every year but learners do not know their role. Mr Kunene said:

Let me start with the latter part of your question, the impact of RCL when it comes to quality in teaching and learning. As far as I have observed in the past few years the impact is minimal if there is any.

Mr Kunene's view reveals that in his school, RCL is not functional. His view contradicts the research carried out by Chikoko et al. (2015) that afternoon classes in some Umlazi schools are being monitored by the RCL, which means the SMT distributes power to learner leaders (Gunter, 2005). Mr Kunene's view also reveals that maybe they do not support them or do not allow them to attend an induction programme that is facilitated by the RCL district coordinator (Department of Education, 2023b).

Mr Kunene continued and elaborated on the process of electing the learners, he said:

Then when it comes to how they are elected, we ask the class managers to go to their classes and we emphasize the concept of democracy that when the person is elected to a position of leadership, the people must decide who is going to lead them. So, we say go to classrooms and give a space to learners to elect their leaders. I hope and believe that how things are done because we don't want to see a teacher appointing someone who is going to be an RCL, after all; that person does not enjoy the support of the majority of the learners in class.

Mr Kunene's view also reveals that he, together with his SMT does not know the election process of the RCL. Department of Basic Education (2023b) stipulates that the election process is being facilitated by the Teacher Liaising Officer (TLO) not by class managers. The department also mandates that once the RCL body has been elected, it should submit work plans that will include peer-to-peer capacity building. It seems as if the school does not comply with what is mandated, yet Garira (2020) echoed that at a school level, peers are an input that contributes output of quality results. This means that if learner leaders positively impact their peers, the school will achieve quality education and outstanding results.

4.5 How can quality assurance of teaching and learning be improved across school grades?

4.5.1 Professional Development

The term professional development refers to activities that enhance a person's knowledge, abilities, and other teaching-related characteristics (Sancar et al., 2021). Participants feel that the department is lacking in the area of professional development. Once you get appointed to a position, the department expects you to work and reach the performance standards without capacitating you. The departmental heads also were concerned that sometimes they manage

subjects that they have never learned at school nor studied at the tertiary level, yet they are required to manage and support teachers. Then they proposed the two following strategies as part of professional development:

4.5.1.1 Replace orientation workshops with content workshops

At the commencement of every year, the department of education conducts orientation workshops which are facilitated by subject advisors. The schools receive a circular that stipulates the date, venue, and subjects such as *Professional Development (PD) Circular 01 of 2024* (KZN Department of Education, 2024). According to the circular, the purpose of the workshop is to analyse the internal moderator's report for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) marking of the previous year, issuing of annual teaching plans, and the analysis of NSC results of that particular subject.

Mr Xhonxo expressed a concern about orientation workshops and his view was:

I would like the department to educate teachers about different teaching strategies on how learners can master the subject and move away from orientation workshops because they are doing one and the same thing every year and they do not capacitate an individual.

Mr Gumede also suggested that content workshops would be beneficial to educators, he added:

You know there were Just in Time (JIT) content workshops that were taking the whole weekend where the department was targeting underperforming schools. Those workshops were very fruitful. I would suggest the department to bring them back.

Both suggestions of Mr Xhonxo and Mr Gumede reveal that orientation workshops do not contribute to the quality in teaching and learning because they only deal with the previous year's internal moderator's report of the NSC exams. The internal moderator's report is based on the questions that might not be asked in the following year's examination because the department discourages the repetition of questions in the examination papers (Department of Basic Education, 2014). Therefore, participants believe that content workshops are more relevant because educators might be equipped with different teaching strategies. These views are supported by Felling and Felling (2022), who emphasize that subject workshops equip

educators to learn new teaching strategies and be able to diversify the curriculum better. They further suggested that skills and knowledge gained from the subject workshop by the educator should be shared with other fellow educators in the workplace. Mrs Ngcongco has the same suggestion as the one of Mr Xhonxo and Mr Gumede but Mrs Ngcongco further suggested that content workshops should be attended by all educators. She added:

The Department of Education should offer all educators with subject-specific training. Because there are teachers who are teaching subjects that they have not studied at tertiary such as languages, life orientation, and other subjects. Even if the educator is qualified to teach the subject and has taught it in the past years, he or she needs training.

Mrs Ngcongco's suggestion is based on the belief that each and every educator regardless of experience requires a content workshop. She also shows the necessity of attending workshops by all educators, not representatives because the information might not be cascaded properly. Gunter (2005) concurs that secondary data does not have the same impact as primary data. Harris (2013, p. 112) further mentions that "cascading information is like telling someone about an interesting movie that you have watched." It is evident that attending content workshops by all educators might be beneficial to them and contribute to quality in teaching and learning.

4.5.1.2 Leadership courses for SMT members

According to Cote (2023), a leadership course is a programme that is designed to capacitate leaders with foundational leadership skills. Burns (2016) mentions that leadership courses can play a key role in preparing leaders to be able to deal with day-to-day leadership duties and also easily overcome complex challenges. School leaders (SMT members) must enroll in leadership courses.

In the United States of America, to become a public school leader requires an advance degree in educational leadership, a teaching degree, and a minimum of three years of teaching experience while in South Africa, the minimum requirements are; teaching qualification and the number of years' experience depending on the type of the position (Bowman, 2014). This means that in South Africa a post-level one educator can become the school principal as long as s/he has an adequate number of years' experience. That is why participants proposed enrollment in leadership courses and their responses are presented:

Mrs Ngcongco

Most SMT members do not have leadership and management qualifications, I prefer that the department give us bursaries for that and make it compulsory to study, that will help us to become better managers.

Mr Gumede

Tertiary institutions to come and do presentations that motivate SMT to enrol for post-graduate modules which are relevant in managing the school.

Mr Xhonxo

I would prefer that the Department of Education promote educators who have qualifications for leadership rather than promoting people who are clueless about leading people. That is why our schools are like spaza shops. The problem is the school management. I was fortunate to do education leadership and management before I got promoted to be an HOD, but I registered on my own not knowing one day I would be promoted. If all of us can be mandated to have leadership qualifications, our schools might be better.

Participants' views are in line with Gunter (2005) who states that, for leadership to be distributed, school leaders need to be well-capacitated with necessities such as monitoring instruction, supporting teacher development, curricular knowledge, pedagogical and content knowledge. This is also in line with Bowman (2014) who asserts that leadership is learnable, it is not limited to personal characteristics. What has been transpired by the participants might assist the SMT members to be well-equipped with leadership skills and it is worse if there are educators who have enrolled for leadership courses yet they are not promoted to leadership positions.

4.5.2 Change the LTSM Procurement Process

Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) is a crucial element of any educational system, and proper administration, utilization, and preservation of this precious resource will ensure access and support for the delivery of quality education (Sayed & Motala, 2012). The LTSM comprises of textbooks, learner books, workbooks, and teachers' guide (Sayed &

Motala, 2012). According to KZN Department of Education (2015) section 20 and section 21 schools are allocated to spend 40% on textbooks and 30% on learner's stationery.

KZN Department of Education (2015) illustrates that at the start of each year, schools get allocated budget for textbooks together with the requisition form with different kinds of textbooks from various suppliers for all grades where they can order the required textbooks. In a case where the school needs a textbook that is not included in the requisition form, the request must be received by the district director to be approved. The participants seemed to be concerned with the process by the department and suggested a change and their concerns are presented:

Mr Kunene

The department should give the allocation of textbooks directly into our school bank account because textbooks are no longer useful. Remember that we are a no-fee-paying school; we only rely on the allocation from the Department of Education. For instance, this year they only gave us 50% of what we are supposed to get for norms and standards yet we received useless textbooks costing plus or minus R260 000 and we are struggling. As I am speaking right now, we don't have white paper to make copies, we don't have ink, we don't have toners yet we have piles and piles of sealed textbooks in our library and this impacts negatively because this time of the year is when the teachers engage in assessment activities so from time to time, we have a challenge.

Mrs Luthuli concurred with the views of Mr. Kunene and said:

I am a member of the LTSM committee. At the end of the year, we are given the top-up form to add to the textbooks that we are going to use in the following year. It does not help us because we keep on ordering one and the same books which we are no longer using and we are not allowed to change to new books. It is better if they give us money or white papers and ink to make copies for our learners.

The views of Mr Kunene and Mrs Luthuli reveal that the textbooks from the department are no longer relevant. They prefer that the department give them cash so that they can be able to purchase their preferred and relevant textbooks. Their views also reveal that they know relevant

textbooks and it might be possible that they have a copy of their preferred textbook and make copies for the learners because they both emphasized the issue of white papers and ink. Their leadership practice is driven by quality not quantity (Gunter, 2005). Referring to their profiles you could tell that they are well experienced educators therefore they might know what is useful to the learners.

Mrs Ngcongo shares the same sentiments that textbooks ordered by the department are no longer relevant, and she had to say:

We have enough textbooks but we are not using them, we use notes that are being sent by our subject advisors via emails or WhatsApp and we use previous question papers for tests, revision, and activities.

The view of Mrs Ngcongo also reveals the possibility that even subject advisors do see that textbooks provided by the department to schools are no longer relevant. As the subject expects, they cannot send notes to educators while the school has enough textbooks that are provided by the department they are working for. What is being done by the subject advisors and what is being said by Mr Kunene and Mrs Luthuli is in line with Garira (2020) who states that; at the school level, how curriculum will be implemented and the quality of education that is provided, depends on the quality of resources received from the national level. This means that the Department of Education should provide schools with relevant teaching material that contributes to quality in teaching and learning.

4.5.3 Outsourcing Veteran Educators to Collaborate with Underperforming Educators

Carrillo and Flores (2018) alluded that, being a veteran educator is not only about the length of service but also includes other aspects such as the degree of expertise and commitment shown in the development of professional responsibilities, several years results achieved in the taught subject and other accomplishments. Participants suggested that the Department of Education should outsource such educators to the schools to work with their non-performing teachers.

The Department of Education has a Matric Intervention Programme (MIP) that occurs during Saturdays and school holidays that assists schools which has grade 12 subjects that has high enrolment and they are being underperformed (KZN Department of Education, 2021a). They outsource veteran educators from high-performing schools within the district. They normally call them lead educators and are paid a stipend of R250 per hour where they are required to

teach a maximum of 2 hours on Saturday classes and a maximum of 8 hours in four days during school holidays (KZN Department of Education, 2021a). It seems as if participants were not satisfied with the mentioned intervention programme because they suggested the following:

Mr Xhonxo

I propose that the department reconsider the lead educator programme. The fact that the programme is only offered on Saturdays and holidays, not all students attend class on those days, and those who do not attend miss out, which makes the programme ineffective. If lead educators could come during regular school hours, that would be ideal.

Mrs Luthuli also stated that veteran teachers should work together with non-performing educators, and she shared her view by saying:

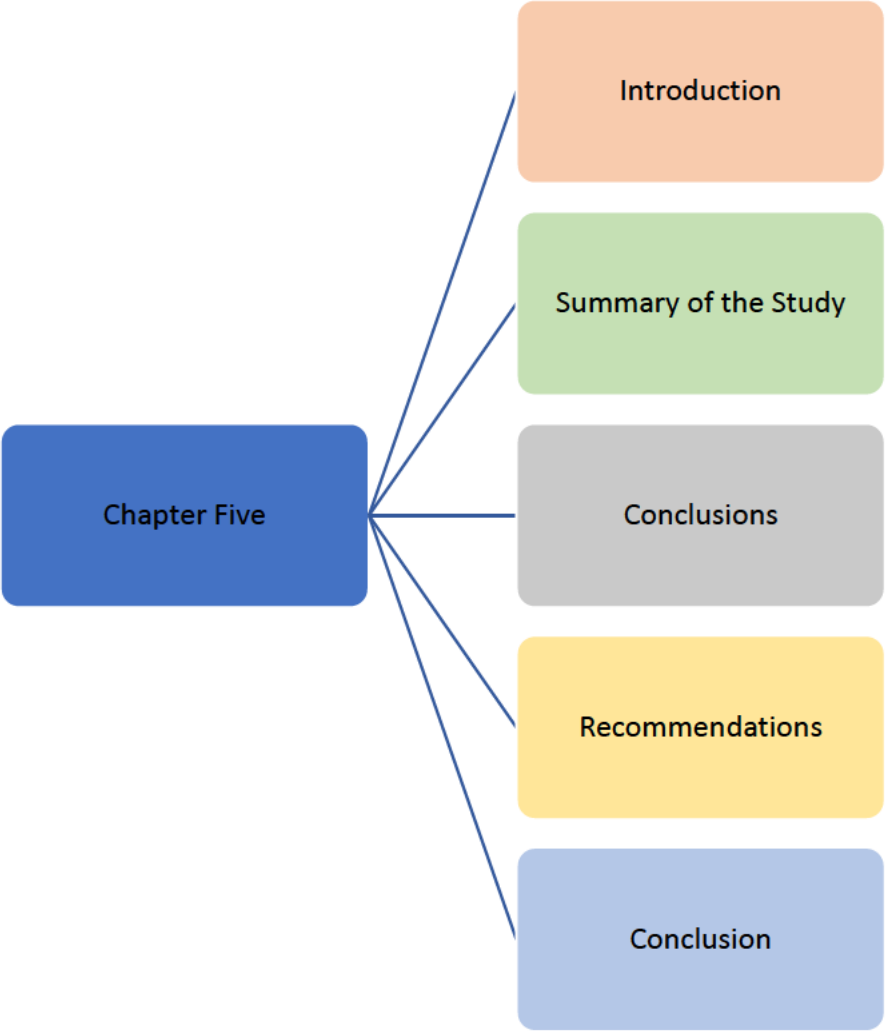
Sometimes you find that the teacher has a good knowledge of the learning area, but fails to present it to the learners. The department should form teams where educators who are producing good matric results come and assist our educators at least two times a week between Monday to Friday.

The views of the participants revealed that the MIP programme by the department is not effective for their school. They also reveal that veteran educators come to school and teach the learners without interaction with the subject teacher. This means that they perceive the programme as a tick-box exercise because they teach and claim to the department without being concerned that the learner outcomes have been achieved or not. They further suggested that veteran educators must not work in silos with the learners but they must work closely with their teachers and do team teaching.

Participants' views concurred with the view of Jang (2006, p. 181) that "team teaching is about joint planning, joint construction, and joint evaluation." He further asserted that it encourages the experiment of new teaching strategies. Gunter (2005) reveals that the idea of team teaching is a critically important aspect of distributed leadership. It is perceived that participants believe that if veteran educators work with their educators, the school results will improve.

4.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present and analyse the findings from the SMT members about their role in ensuring quality in teaching and learning. The data that was gathered from the semi-structured interviews and documents has been analysed and discussed according to themes and subthemes. The main themes that were discussed in this chapter were mechanisms that are employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning, the effectiveness of the mechanisms, and the improvement of quality assurance in teaching and learning. The key learning to this chapter was that guidelines, and policies in managing schools to ensure that quality in teaching and learning is implemented are provided by the Department of Education and are available in schools and on the Department of Education websites, but the members of the SMT are ignorant. They manage schools in their way not as per prescribed policies which contributes to underperformance. The next chapter is the concluding chapter which presents a summary and recommendations of this study.



CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the findings and discussion of the data that originated from semi-structured interviews and documents. The focus of this chapter is to provide a synthesis of the study and therefore has three purposes: to provide a summary of the study, to draw conclusions based on the findings of each research question and to present recommendations emanating from the findings.

5.2 Summary of the Study

In Chapter 1 presented the introduction and the background of the study. I outlined the historical overview of the current process of quality assurance with regard to teaching and learning. I also articulated the problem statement of the study, followed by the rationale and motivation of the study on three dimensions: personal, professional and theoretical. Further, I stated the significance of the study and defined the terms that were commonly used. The focus of this study was to explore the leadership practices utilised by the School Management Team (SMT) of a township secondary school in quality assurance with regard to teaching and learning. The purpose was to examine the mechanisms they use to quality assure teaching and learning across school grades. The research puzzles that guided the study were:

- What mechanisms are employed by the school management team to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?
- How effective are the mechanisms employed by the school management team to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?
- How can quality assurance in teaching and learning be improved in the case study school?

Chapter 2 was based on the literature review from both international and local context being guided by the three research questions. Firstly, I explained the term quality assurance, followed by outlining the role of the school management team. Further, I engaged in a discussion of the mechanisms employed by the SMT and their inhibiting factors supported by the findings of the other researchers from both international and local contexts. Lastly, I discussed the techniques

that can be used to improve quality assurance of teaching and learning. In presenting the theoretical and conceptual framework that underpins the study, I explained The Distributed Leadership theory of Gunter (2005) and A Proposed Unified Conceptual Framework for Quality Education in Schools by Garira (2020), supported by various scholars, both local and international.

In Chapter 3, I presented the research design and methodology employed in the study. I commenced by outlining the research paradigm. This study is located within the interpretive paradigm and adopted the qualitative research approach. A case study was used as a methodology, and the case is a secondary school that is located in a township. The school was selected using convenient sampling, and the participants were five SMT members who were purposively selected. In order to gain primary data, semi-structured interviews were employed to gain data from participants. Then, for secondary data, document reviews such as Quality Management System, School Improvement Plan and Curriculum Coverage Monitoring tool were employed. I further explained the data analysis process that is used in the study. Lastly, the ethical issues and research procedures were observed.

In Chapter 4, I presented data analysis that was obtained from semi-structured interviews and documents. Analysis was done supported by the Distributed Leadership theory of Gunter (2005) and A Proposed Conceptual Framework of Quality Education in Schools of Garira (2020). Data was categorised into themes and sub-themes and direct words from participants were quoted and written in italics. As a result, I was able to answer the three research questions of the study and the key learning was that the SMT is not well-versed in applying the department of education policies in their daily management duties.

5.3 Conclusions

What mechanisms are employed by the school management team to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?

A significant conclusion that emerged from this research question was that there is a disparity in leadership practices by the SMT because the way they lead and manage the school differs. They separate the school into two phases, namely; the Further Education and Training phase (FET) and the General Education and Training phase (GET), and their focus is mainly on the FET. Based on the findings, monitoring starts from grade 12 to lower grades; extra classes are implemented only in the FET phase, and tracking of learner performance is mainly done in grade 12, which shows an imbalance in the execution of their management duties.

There is also a lack of collegiality amongst the SMT members because they have different ways of doing things. Things such as the issue of class visits, departmental heads are using different strategies to conduct them yet there is a prescribed policy on how they should be conducted in schools.

How effective are the mechanisms employed by the school management team to quality assure teaching and learning in the case study school?

The efficacy of the mechanisms used by the SMT seems to have a mixed success. Knowledge and the application guidelines provided by the Department of Education contributes to the effectiveness of the mechanisms. It is evident that when the SMT perform their duties following the guidelines, they achieve better outcomes. On the other hand, some of the mechanisms are not effective because there is a lack of dedication and extra effort amongst the SMT members. They perform their management duties only within the school working hours where they are also required to teach their allocated classes which makes them compromise some of their work.

It has been also noted that the SMT is working in isolation and does not involve other stakeholders such as school governing body, parents of learners, teachers as class managers and grade controllers, learners as class representatives and as Representative Council of Learners. This causes a heavy workload on them which contributes to the failure of the implementation of the mechanisms.

How can quality assurance in teaching and learning be improved in the case study school?

The Department of Education does not work with schools collaboratively in implementing some of the strategies and policies. The Department of Education is using the autocratic distributed leadership that has been alluded to by Gunter (2005) where they just impose the programmes and policies and do not consider the needs of the school as an individual. The department uses a decentralised system which sometimes is not beneficial to other schools because the schools are not the same in many aspects such as enrolment, geographic and demographic factors. The review of other departmental policies and strategies is necessary such as the Learner and Teacher Support Material (LTSM) policy, Matric Intervention Programme (MIP), development of educators to cater for the needs of each and every school.

5.4 Recommendations

Recommendation one

I recommend that the SMT engage teachers and learners for effective monitoring of all grades. The SMT can distribute the power of monitoring duties to the subject heads, who are *de facto* teacher leaders, to assist in monitoring curriculum coverage and provide feedback to the departmental head (DH) so that the burden of monitoring all grades by a departmental head can be reduced. Further, they can also delegate the work to the RCL to monitor the functionality of extra classes.

Recommendation Two

The school has five departmental heads and five grades, they should assign each DH to be responsible for a particular grade so that each grade can be attended to. The assigned DH can conduct grade meetings where all the matters regarding that grade will be discussed and be reported to the SMT and staff meeting.

Recommendation Three

I recommend that the Department of Education amend the recruitment procedure when promoting educators. They should include leadership and management qualifications as a minimum requirement. In many developed countries in the global north, this is a requirement. This will contribute effectively to the quality of education in South Africa because schools will be managed by people who have a theoretical overview of leadership and management.

Recommendation Four

A significant finding revealed that there is a high learner absenteeism in attending extra classes. To curb the issue, it is recommended that the SMT should always mark the attendance registers thereafter involve parents of those learners who are frequently absent during extra classes.

Recommendation Five

The department should review the *National Norms and Standards for School Funding Policy of 2008* by not using a blanket approach for all schools but provide funding according to the needs of the school. All funds including LTSM and other LTSM should be directly transferred to the school's banking account and let the school decide and purchase their own preferred learner and teacher material.

Recommendation Six

The SMT should identify a performing school within the district that has a similar enrolment and offer similar subjects and network with the SMT of that school for them to learn about the techniques that are being used to achieve quality results. They can also involve educators of the identified school to work with their educators collaboratively to learn about the strategies being used to produce good results in the subject.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the summary of the study. Findings of this study led to drawing of conclusions, then recommendations were made. These recommendations can assist the Department of Education to review their policies and SMT members to relook at their leadership practices.

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Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate



11 July 2023

Ntombifikile Sweetness Ndlovu (221116172)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear NS Ndlovu,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005750/2023

Project title: A case study of the quality assurance role of the school management team in teaching and learning at a secondary school.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 20 June 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 11 July 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix B: Permission to Conduct Research in KwaZulu-Natal Schools



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 392 1063

Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Ref.:2/4/8/61

Miss NS Ndlovu



Dear Miss Ndlovu

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"A CASE STUDY OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL"**, 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 17 May 2023 to 31 March 2026.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers above.
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.

PINETOWN DISTRICT



Mr GN Ngcobo
Head of Department: Education
Date: 18 May 2023

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

Appendix C: Permission to conduct Research-Letter to the school

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

23 April 2023

The principal

_____ High School

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

My name is Ndlovu Ntombifikile Sweetness and I am conducting research as a requirement of the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards a Masters Degree of Education. The title of the research study is: **A case study of the quality assurance role of the school management team in teaching and learning at a secondary school.**

.

I would like to use your school as a research site, and this letter intends to request your permission. The focus of the study is on the **school management team** therefore I would like to request the SMT members to participate in the study. Should permission be granted, the interviews will be scheduled for dates and times that are convenient for them. Care will be taken that no disruption is caused during such interviews. Please also note that the participation in this study is voluntary, and the participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. In addition, you are assured that details of the school and the participant will be kept confidential, and your identity will never be disclosed to anyone.

For more information and questions about the study, you may contact the following details:

Me: Ndlovu Ntombifikile Sweetness

Email: fikilendlovu97@yahoo.com

[REDACTED]

My supervisor: Prof. Inba Naicker

Email: Naicker1@ukzn.ac.za

Tel No. 031 260 3461

You may also contact the Research Office through:

HSSREC Research Office,

HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thanking you in advance.

Yours in Education

[REDACTED]

Miss N.S Ndlovu

Appendix D: Informed Consent Letter for each Participant

████████████████████
██
██
████████████████████

23 April 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Ntombifikile Sweetness Ndlovu. I am a Master of Education 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 therefore kindly seek your permission to conduct this research at your school. My study title is: **A case study of the quality assurance role of the school management team in teaching and learning at a secondary school.**

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by participants cannot be used against them, 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.
- Participants have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. They 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 you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		

I (Ntombifikile Sweetness Ndlovu) can be contacted at:

Email: (fikilendlovu97@yahoo.com)

████████████████████

My supervisor is Prof. Inba Naicker, at the School of Education, Edgewood Campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

His contact details: e-mail: Naicker1@ukzn.ac.za ; Phone number: 031 260 3461.

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

HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

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

Yours Sincerely

████████████████████

Miss N.S Ndlovu

DECLARATION

I _____ (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project: Quality Assurance with regards to teaching and learning: A case study of a secondary school and I consent to participating in the research project. I am also fully aware that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time should I so desire, without any negative or undesirable consequence. I am also aware that there are neither any foreseeable direct benefits nor direct risks associated with my participation in this study. I therefore understand the contents of the letter fully and I do GIVE CONSENT/DO NOT GIVE CONSENT to the interview being voice-recorded.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

Appendix E: Permission letter from the school



Miss NS Ndlovu



Dear Madam RE: **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT
HIGH SCHOOL.**

The above mentioned school hereby gives you permission to conduct research titled: **"A CASE STUDY OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AT A HIGH SCHOOL".**

Kindly be informed that the school will co-operate and make all necessary arrangements to accommodate your research.

We are looking forward to your innovations and expertise.

Kind regards.


PRINCIPAL.



Appendix F: Turnitin certificate

Turnitin Originality Report

1

 Turnitin Originality Report

dissertation draft 3.docx by Ntombifikile Ndlovu

From Thesis Dissertation (MEd and PhD Thesis)

Similarity Index 9%	Similarity by Source	
	Internet Sources:	8%
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- 1** < 1% match ()
[Nodada, Ntombizandile. "A case study of the instructional leadership practices of Mathematics Heads of Department in rural secondary schools." 2019](#)

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https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/17594/Ngcobo_Siphindile_%20Anne-Marry_2019_.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

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https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/12638/Mthembu_Sithembiso_Goodwill_2015.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

- 7** < 1% match (Internet from 10-Oct-2022)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/20475/Caluza_Primrose_Nomarashiya_2022.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1

- 8** < 1% match (Internet from 04-Nov-2019)
https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10413/13708/Nzuza_Zakhele_Dennis_2015.pdf?seq=

Appendix G: Interview Schedule (Principal)

- **What mechanisms are employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning across school grades?**
 - How do you feel about your school's performance in 2022 NSC results?
 - What are some factors that contributed to this performance?
 - Is quality assurance in teaching and learning being implemented in your school? Please elaborate.
 - Does the school have extra classes from grade 8-12? If yes, how do they operate. If not, what are the causes for not having them?
 - How do you go about developing school improvement plan?
 - Does the school have the code of conduct? Is it functional? Explain.
- **How effective are the mechanisms employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning across school grades?**
 - How do teacher unions influence your leadership practices in managing teachers in your school?
 - Does your support to the whole teaching staff meet your expectations of quality? If yes, how? If not, why not?
 - Which criteria do you use in selecting Representative Council of Learners and what impact do they have regarding quality in teaching and learning?
 - Does the school have enough teaching resources? If yes or no, what impact does that have on teaching and learning?
 - Do you think that school improvement plan is an important document? Explain.
- **How can quality assurance of teaching and learning be improved across school grades?**
 - Do you have any programmes that are in place that can develop SMT members and educators? if yes, which are those programmes? If not, which programmes do you need that can be beneficial to the whole teaching staff?
- **General**
 - Are there any further experiences that you may like to share with me about ensuring quality in teaching and learning across school grades?

Interview Schedule (Deputy Principal)

- **What mechanisms are employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning across school grades?**
 - How do you ensure that the departmental head does the following?
 - Monitoring teacher's and learners' work
 - Class visit supervision
 - Pre and post-moderation of formal and informal tasks.
 - How do you assist the school principal in ensuring that the school has proper resources and they are being managed effectively?
 - What is your role in preparation of the school improvement plan?
 - How do you measure quality in teaching and learning?
- **How effective are the mechanisms employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning across school grades?**
 - How do teacher unions influence your leadership practices in managing teachers and departmental heads and teachers in your school?
 - Does your support to the whole teaching staff meet your expectations of quality? If yes, how? If not, why not?
 - Does the school have enough teaching resources? If yes or no, what impact does that have on teaching and learning?
 - Do you think that school improvement plan is effective? Explain.
- **How can quality assurance of teaching and learning be improved across school grades?**
 - Do you have any programmes that are in place that can develop departmental heads, if yes, which are those programmes? If not, which programmes do you think they can be beneficial to the departmental heads?
 - As a manager what can you do differently to ensure that quality in teaching and learning is implemented from grades 8-12?
- **General**
 - Are there any further experiences that you may like to share with me about ensuring quality in teaching and learning across school grades?

Interview Schedule (Departmental Heads)

- **What mechanisms are employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning across school grades?**
 - How do you measure quality in teaching and learning in your department?
 - How do you go about doing the following from grade 8-12?
 - Monitoring teacher's and learners' work
 - Class visit supervision
 - Pre and post-moderation of formal and informal tasks.
 - How do you ensure that your department has proper resources and they are being managed effectively?
 - Do you promote the culture of team teaching in your department? If yes, how?

- **How effective are the mechanisms employed by the SMT to quality assure teaching and learning across school grades?**
 - Do you think monitoring of teachers and learners work has a positive impact on quality teaching and learning? Explain.
 - Do you think class visit observation helps teachers to improve their teaching skills? Explain.
 - Does moderation of formal and informal tasks contribute to quality in teaching and learning? Explain.
 - How does the availability or unavailability of school resources affect teaching and learning?
 - Does your support to teachers meet your expectations of quality? If yes, how? If not, why not?

- **How can quality assurance of teaching and learning be improved across school grades?**
 - Are there any developmental programmes that you provide to equip teachers in your department to enhance quality in teaching and learning? If yes, which are those programmes and how do they assist teachers?
 - As a manager what can you do differently to ensure that quality in teaching and learning is implemented from grades 8-12?
 - What support would you like from the Department of Education and the community to offer you as a member of the SMT to help you to ensure that quality in teaching and learning is implemented in the whole school?

- **General**
 - Are there any further experiences that you may like to share with me about ensuring quality in teaching and learning across school grades?
- **Wrap up**
 - The participants will be thanked for taking their precious time and participate in the interview. They will also be allowed to ask the researcher about any questions if they have.

Appendix H: Document Analysis Schedule

Monitoring tool for departmental heads

1. Does the document contains the following: <i>(Put a cross in the appropriate block)</i>		
School letterhead	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Title	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Subject and grade monitored	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Notional time allocated to a subject	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Signatures for both teacher and departmental head	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Date of monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
2. How many learners' written work has been monitored by the departmental head per subject, per grade?		
3. Comment on the curriculum coverage per subject, per grade.		
4. How many informal activities are given to learners per subject, per grade?		
5. Comment on the overall findings of the departmental head.		
6. Comment on the overall recommendations of the departmental head.		

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Aspects to Look for	Analysis
1. Learner performance tracking from grades 8-12	
2. Time frames	
3. Challenges and areas of improvement in the following aspects:	
3.1 Quality of teaching and learning and educator development	
3.2 Learner achievement	
3.3 Curriculum provision and resources	
3.4 School safety, security, and discipline	
3.5 Parents and community involvement	
4. Approval of the SIP by the following people: -Principal -SGB Chairperson	

Quality Management System (QMS)

1. Is there evidence of the pre and post-appraisal for the educator and the supervisor?
2. Did the principal sign and approve all the appraisal forms of the educators?
3. Comment on the educators' overall scores on the following performance standards:
3.1 . Creation of a positive learning environment
3.2 Curriculum knowledge, lesson planning, and presentation
3.3 Learner assessment and achievement
3.4 Continuous professional development, human relations, and contribution to school development

Appendix I: Language Editor's Certificate

25 Maple Crescent
Circle Park
KLOOF
3610

Phone 031 – 7075912
0823757722
Fax 031 - 7110458
E-mail:
dr1govender@telkomsa.net
sathsgovender4@gmail.com

Dr Saths Govender

30 MAY 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

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

A CASE STUDY OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL by NTOMBIFIKILE SWEETNESS NDLOVU, student no. 221116172.

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

Yours faithfully



DR S. GOVENDER
B Ed., (Arts), B.A. (Hons), B Ed.
Cambridge Certificate for English Medium Teachers
MPA, D. Admin.(2003)