

**Exploring the involvement of Head of Department (HODs) in strategic
planning in three primary schools**

By

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Education in the School of Education in the discipline, Educational
Leadership, Management and Policy**

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15 November 2013

Mrs Promise F Ngcobo (210551414)
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Dear Mrs Ngcobo,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1102/013M
Project title: Exploring the involvement of Head of Department (HoDs) in strategic planning in three primary schools

Dear Mrs Ngcobo,

In response to your application, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **Expedited Approval** and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

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

Yours faithfully



.....
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/ms

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late sons Vukile and Sipiwo Ngcobo and my late mother, Thelile Nxumalo.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the experiences of the head of departments with regard to their involvement in strategic planning of their schools. To fulfil the purpose of this study, a critical question such as what are the experiences of the Head of Department with regard to their involvement in strategic planning was used. Qualitative approach method such as interviews and document analysis were adopted as data generation techniques. Five HODs and Three principal of three primary schools were selected through both convenience and purposive sampling techniques.

The study argues that the involvement of HODs in strategic planning is a critical feature acknowledging that they are important for the implementation process. If middle management is involved there would be a clear understanding of a vision shared and motivates its subordinate for vision accomplishment. Vision would be communicated for positive results. It also assesses the degree to which HODs are involved in this process in identify external and internal factors that positively or negatively affect school planning. It aims at showcasing the extent to which strategic planning can be an avenue to improve the performance of educators and improve their learners' performances in the school environment.

It is also argued that there is a salient among HODs to confuse strategic planning with action planning or operation planning. The findings of this study concluded that the HODs are not involved in the process of strategic planning; rather, they are involved in action planning or operational planning of their schools. Findings indicated that HODs are involved in action planning but not strategic planning of their schools. The finding suggested the need for the development of schools in strategic planning and support from the department of education. Moreover, monitoring of schools is also recommended. I further recommended further research on the practicability of strategic planning in schools.

ABBREVIATIONS

UK	United Kingdom
DoE	Department of Education
HOD	Head of department
NCS	National Curricula Statement
SMT	School Management Team
USA	United State of America
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
OBE	Outcome Based Education

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

South African education is currently experiencing drastic changes (Van Der Linde, 2001; DoE, 2013) accompanied with uncertainties in schools (Maluleka, 2014). Tight interconnections such as policies and legislations, ever changing curriculum and high immigration rate resonate “unpredictably and often chaotic and dangerous” (Bryson, 2011, p.1) education system in the whole society. To sustain schools in this ever-changing environment, principals are required to collaborate and sustain interrelationship among different stakeholders (Lumby, 1998; Al-Zboon & Hassan, 2012; Kupers, Mantere & Statler, 2013) and formulate strategic plans for effective management of their schools. They are expected to think strategically and concurrently work with people and through people (Al-Zboon & Hassan, 2012). Further, school principals “must think and learn strategically as never before in transforming their insight into effective strategies to cope with uncertainties associated with their environment” (Bryson, 2011, p.2). Coping with the unpredictable and challenging environment of leading schools requires the school management team (SMT) as a whole to be involved in the strategic planning of their schools. Their involvement is assumed in this study as the key in ensuring that teaching and learning is effective regardless of the challenges and unpredictable conditions of our education system.

Given the above call for their involvement, this study then explores the experiences of Head of Departments (HODs) or middle management with regard to their involvement in strategic planning. Since, I have acknowledged that HODs are the critical stakeholders to be involved in strategic planning (DoE, 2009) and one of their strategic functions is to translate strategic goals into action (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998; DoE, 2002; Thurlow, 2003; DoE, 2009). It was therefore deemed important that a study that tries to provide insights about the experiences of HODs with regard to their involvement in the strategic planning in their schools.

In conducting this research I was guided by Kupers, *et al.* (2013) views who suggest that constituting strategic planning processes without the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, particularly middle management is a fruitless exercise. In the light of the above, this chapter presents the background and the rationale for the study. It also presents the problem statement,

the purpose of the study, key research questions as well as the significance of the study. Literature review and theoretical framework that underpins the study is also outlined. The chapter concludes by providing a layout of the entire study and the summary of this chapter.

1.2 Background and the rationale for the study

Strategic planning plays a critical role in schools, not only to assist school leaders in exploring and understanding the internal and external factors of their organisation, but also to synchronise various management (Bush, 2010; Bush & Middlewood, 2005). It further plays an important role in facilitating the sustainable development of the schools while assisting them to survive in turbulent policy environment (Van Der Linde, 2001). Through effective strategic planning, schools' strategies of coping with the changes and challenges generated by government policies can be made easier (Cheng, 2011, p.212). Besides the turbulent policy environment, there is much pressure that places all management responsibilities on the shoulders of the school principals, Deputy Principals (DPs), Head of Departments (HODs), teachers and SGBs. This places the principals in the centre (Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge, Naidu, & Ngcobo, 2008) of being accountable to all these management responsibilities including learner achievements (Motshekga, 2014), staff development (DoE, 2013), school finances (DoE, 2002) and management of the school. Without workable, shared and accepted strategy there is no way that the principal can survive these roles (Ishaq & Kritsonis, 2009). Failure to carry these roles strategically will place schools at "a high risk of failure for education reforms and in turns a waste of government resources" (Hodgon & Chuck, 2003, p.10) including school finances (Ishaq & Kritsonis, 2009). Thus, it is a requirement in South African schools that leaders think, learn and act strategically. Jones (1987, p. 62) argues that "without having learnt the skills of strategic management and operational planning, heads are liable to find themselves involved in nothing but crisis management".

Strategic planning assists schools in gaining the direction; strengthen the relationship between internal and external community (DoE, 2010), develops collaborative thinking (Thurlow, 2003; Bryson, 2010) provide future direction of the school (Bush & Coleman, 2000; Fiedler, 2002; Thurlow, 2003) while also impacting on positive results, and improving teaching and learning. On top of all this, it assists the organisation in gaining its competitive edge (Hussey, 2000). Apart from its importance, it is the requirement of the Department of Education as it has been previously highlighted (Department of Education, DoE, 2009, p.9) that all schools must produce after consultation with all relevant stakeholders their long-term

plans. Such plans should be based on the school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Principals are expected to create the vision of the school (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998; Naidu, *et al.*, 2008) that forms part of its envisioned future. Such a vision must be shared (DoE, 2009), agreed and accepted by all staff members, more especially by the middle management (HODs) of the school, the SGB and other interested community members. The centrality of the role of the middle managers (HODs) in strategic planning has been highlighted (West-Burnham, 1994, Thurlow, 2003; DoE, 2010) but the involvement of all staff is crucial for the ownership of vision and implementation of strategy (Robert, 2006).

Looking at the importance of strategic planning and people that are to be involved in the strategic planning process, I just wondered as to what could the experiences of other HODs since for the past six years as an HOD I was not involved in the strategic planning of my school. I realised my personal experiences were affecting me negatively. For instance, I lacked motivation and commitment to supporting what my school principal was doing. Sometimes I felt that the school goals were not clear as I would have liked and they presented implementation challenges.

I was therefore wondering if there were any HODs who were going through similar experiences as mine. Understanding how the involvement or non-involvement of these HODs may have impacted on their work became the focus of my interest. I was interested in finding out if other HODs were involved; the extent to which the HODs' involvement was linked to their principals' leadership style.

The motivation to conduct this study was also strengthened when I was engaged in strategic management literature as I prepared for seminar presentation as part of our coursework programme in the Educational Leadership and Management module. During that course I was given the opportunity to verbally present on strategic planning. As part of my preparation for my presentation, I interacted with other HODs to get access to their copies of strategic plans because our school had no strategic plan. It must be noted that I was also clueless of what strategic planning was all about. To my surprise in one of the school I visited to request a copy, the HODs were also clueless about strategic planning yet the principal had the strategic plan in his office. This experience gave more impetus for the study.

Further survey of research in strategic planning indicated that there was a gap in the literature especially when it comes to strategic planning in schools. Limited studies that investigate strategic planning in schools have focused on theory but not practise. While strategic planning is a developing concept in educational organisation, more work remains within the business sector and less within education, especially the schools. As yet, I have not come across the study done in South Africa which investigated the involvement of HODs in strategic planning. Thus, this investigated the experiences of HODs in their involvement in the strategic planning of their schools.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Within the parameters of the researcher's experiences, strategic planning in some schools seems to be an abstract thing more especially among the HODs as it discussed in the previous section. Regardless of the fact that it is the requirement of all South African schools, the experience highlighted above has further shown that other HODs in few schools have had the same experiences. This happens against the backdrop of several changes including the area of curriculum such as the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in 2002, Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) in 2004; National Curriculum Statements (NCS) in 2007 and currently the CAPS since 2012. Similarly, management and governance structures have been undergoing changes as well with the introduction of flatter management and leadership structures and involvement of educators, learners and parents.

In addition to the changes highlighted in the previous section, schools are now more like businesses (Van Der Linde, 2001) and it has been suggested that in order for the schools to survive, there must be a strategic planning to establish direction for their unpredictable future (Weindling, 1997). Otherwise, they will fail to survive (Ishaq & Kritsonis, 2009), ultimately leading to crisis management (Van Der Linde, 2001). These changes have called for effective strategic planning that is inclusive of all stakeholders as suggested by the DOE (2009). However, as has been posited above, there is no evidence of involvement of HODs despite the fact that their role within the school environment is important as it is related to teaching and learning, the core business of the school. The study therefore, explores the experiences of HODs with regards to their involvement in the strategic planning.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The study explored the experiences of six Heads of Department with regards to their involvement in the strategic planning in three selected primary schools in the Pinetown District. Based on the above purpose, one key research question and five sub-questions for this study are provided below:

1.5 Research questions

What are the experiences of the six Heads of Department with regard to their involvement in strategic planning in the selected primary schools in the Pinetown District?

Sub-questions

- What do HODs understand about strategic planning?
- How does their involvement influence their understanding or lack thereof in their schools' strategic planning?
- What is the extent of HODs involvement in their schools' strategic planning?
- What influences does the involvement of heads of department in strategic planning have in their daily management roles?
- How do principals in their schools promote or hinder their involvement?

1.6 Significance for the study

As indicated above, there is paucity of information in this area of strategic planning more especially about schools. Lumby (1998) asserts that researchers around strategic planning show limited interest on strategic planning practises. This study explores the experiences of HODs in the process of strategic planning. It addresses the issue of their involvement as well as the extent of their involvement. Information gained could possibly close that gap between theoretical understanding and the practice of strategic planning in some South African primary schools.

There was a need to explore HODs involvement in strategic planning as they are strategic drivers (Simon, 2012). Involving the HODs is the way of assisting the teachers to improve professionally and better understand how they can contribute to the effectiveness of their institutions. The findings of this study have the potential to benefit educational practitioners

in identifying the areas that need attention as to how, through the principal leadership, may encourage or facilitate the involvement of the HODs in strategic planning.

1.7 Literature review

The review of international and national literature is presented in the next chapter. The main focus of that chapter is to provide a comprehensive discussion about most important tendencies and critical issues relating to strategic planning. The literature review does not only define the views and perceptions of strategic planning, but it also discusses the involvement of middle management in this case HODs in strategic planning as well as principals roles in facilitating HODs involvement for successful achievement of strategic goals. This study adopted integration of Bryson's (1988) and West-Burnham's (1994) models of strategic planning and strategic leadership as theoretical framework.

1.8 Methodology

This study was conducted through qualitative approach and adopted interpretive paradigm to generate and analyse the data. Case study approach was utilised to allow for in-depth understanding of HODs' experiences from their real life perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 2005). Semi-structured interviews and document reviews as discussed in details in chapter three were used. The detailed discussion of the methodology used in the study is presented in Chapter Three.

1.9 Definition of key concepts

There are two key concepts that encapsulate the study and these are briefly discussed below:

1.9.1 Middle management

This concept has been use in the study to refer to head of departments (HODs) as they are generally known in the context of South African schools. These two terms are used interchangeably (Leader, 2004) and most strategic planning and strategic management literature uses middle management to refer to what in the South African context is called heads of departments.

1.9.2 School development planning

School development planning is a new concept that enjoys prominence in the literature and seems to be replacing strategic management or strategic planning at school level (Xaba, 2006). The literature on school development planning was also deemed important for strategic planning.

1.9 Organisation of the report

The study consists of five chapters and each is briefly described below.

1.10.1 Chapter One

The background and the rationale, for this study have been presented in this chapter. The chapter also discusses the problem statement, addresses the critical key question with its sub-questions that assisted in finding out the answers for this study. The chapter also presents the purpose and the significance of this study. A brief discussion of what is addressed in literature is also presented in this chapter and it is accompanied by the research design and methodology employed. To conclude the chapter, the outline of all chapters that constitute the study is presented.

1.10.2 Chapter Two

This chapter provide a detailed discussion of the literature on strategic planning. Pertinent information regarding the involvement of stakeholders, especially the HODs and theories underpinning this study is presented in this chapter. The literature is combines both international and local debates around strategic planning in schools and the involvement of different stakeholders.

1.10.3 Chapter Three

The chapter draws attention to the research design and methodology which was applied to generate data required to address research questions driving this study. It also presents the limitations associated with this study.

1.10.4 Chapter Four

In this chapter, data is presented and discussed. The *verbatim* quotes of participant are presented as evidence of the claims that I am making after interpreting the voices of the participants.

1.10.5 Chapter Five

This is the last chapter of this study. It discusses findings and presents the recommendations for possible alternative ways of ensuring that HODs get involved in strategic planning of the school. Recommendations for further research are also presented in this chapter.

1.11 Chapter summary

The chapter discussed the background and the rationale for the study. It has been argued that strategic planning plays a critical role in schools. This is not only limited to assisting school leaders in exploring and understanding the internal and external factors affecting their organisations but also to synchronise various management activities. It has also been indicated that strategic planning must be shared, agreed and be accepted by all staff but more especially the middle management (HODs).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One outlined the background to the study. This chapter focuses on literature review. The review of literature is guided by the research questions as shown in Chapter One. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006) literature review is a critique of the level of knowledge on a logically defined topic. The purpose of literature review is to outline the existing body of knowledge with an aim of integrating it with a pre-given topic. This existing body of knowledge provides a conceptual understanding of the topic and research questions underpinning the study. This chapter starts by providing a synopsis of the study, and then moves on to discuss theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. Debates about what strategic planning is all about and issues about its benefits are also presented from both local and international perspectives.

2.2 Study synopsis

South African education has experienced drastic changes from the past two decades. The most remarkable change we have experienced was the establishment of a unified education system in 1994 (Bolt, Wilson & Dove, 2000). This took the form of substituting the previously racially-grounded education system which had existed for almost a century (Bolt, Wilson & Dove, 2000). From a racially fragmented education emerged one national education and provincial departments located in nine provinces. These are Gauteng, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North-West, Free-State, KwaZulu-Natal and Northern-Cape Departments of Education. These provincial education departments were created in order to promote the education's vision and policies as set by the national Department of Education to achieve quality education for all. Coulby, Cowen and Jones (2000) note that the government's articulated vision for education system reform through the development of various policies such as Constitution, administration, school governance, school funding, curriculum, language, gender, teacher management and qualifications of educators were key instruments to drive education that intended to address educational imbalances of the past.

As from 1996, South African education has been encouraging school principals to work as a team. For more details, refer to the Manual 1-2 from the Department of Education (DoE, 2001), as well as the Handbook of school management team of (DoE, 2009). To promote teamwork, HODs were recruited in 1998 to lead and manage school direction as managers of various departments, phases or grades within the schools. Their roles were prescribed in the Educators Employment Act No. 76 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998).

The head of departments represent what international literature calls middle management (Blandford, 1997; Kemp & Nathan, 1999; Leader, 2004) and their roles are not limited to grade or phase or subject department leadership. They are also extended to strategic decision-making processes of the schools. Leader (2004, p.68) draws attention to the fact that middle managers are responsible for “key support functions to ensure an arena conducive to addressing the government’s agenda for strategic change” in schools. Furthermore, Leader (2004) argues that in order for the school to produce positive outcomes, middle managers’ strategies should be effective and efficient. In addition, middle managers provide a link between senior managers (principals and their deputies) and the teachers in that they relay relevant information with regard to strategic issues, curriculum, among other things (Leader, 2004).

It is worth noting that the participation of middle management in strategy formulation is crucial for the well-functioning of the school. Therefore leadership (namely, principal leadership) will need to ensure that approaches that promote the involvement of middle managers are employed in leading the schools. It is for this reason that this study among other things, tries to establish how leadership in the context of strategic planning facilitate the involvement of the HODs. The outline of what leaders do as provided below, provide the essence of leadership in ensuring that everyone is part of the process of formulating the school’s vision.

“Good managers create order and they have all effective systems for direction in which the school has to take but leaders inspire, give direction and motivate their people” (Van Der Westhuizen, 2003, p.43) toward intended direction. For strategic planning to occur, strategic leadership that ensures success in schools is paramount. Strategic leaders can be able to connect the present events with the historical analogies in a rapid moment of recognition (Grandstaff, 2009) to lay the foundation for the future. Moreover, strategic leaders practice

suitable leadership style that enhances vision-sharing, thereby promoting the buy-in of others in the strategy. Furthermore, leadership could be the means to communicate the vision to all staff through the middle managers, in this case the HODs. Clarke (2007) asserts that vision needs to be 'sold' to the school community which are parents, staff and school governing body. When the vision is sold appropriately, it is more likely for the staff to share the leader's "enthusiasm for and commitment to the vision and strategy if they have been a part of the process of developing it" (Clarke, 2007, p.3). The involvement of the HODs in this case as middle managers may ensure that lower level managers (subject teachers and class teachers) understand the strategic goals and that they are able to implement them.

For a vision to be effective, it calls for a strategy that is based on educational improvement. Clarke (2007) asserts that school strategy differs from business strategy in a sense that the focus is more in education improvement than the total change. On the one hand, strategic plan is about an act and outcomes, not about glossy presentation by the principals or detailed document (Daniell, 2004). It is also associated with the allocation of resources, direction of the organisation and prescribed behaviour of what will happen and what will not be, in pursuit of a vision (Daniell, 2004). On the other hand, strategic management involves day-to-day activities of the managers concerned and they ought to provide premeditated direction of every school. Based on schools strategic management, the HODs can constitute their phase or grade planning yearly but drawing from the priorities set out in the broad school strategy. However, effective planning for the purpose of quality teaching and learning depends on how the principal invites the participation of all stakeholders (Ahuru & Giles, 2011).

2.3 Strategic planning

For a better understanding of this concept, it is important to unpack the concepts of 'strategy' and 'planning' separately before conceptualising strategic planning.

2.3.1 Strategy

The literature presents three realms about the meaning of strategy. The first realm is military-based where "military commanders employ strategy in dealing with their opponent" (Pitt & Lei, 2006, p.10). The military theorist such as Tzu (1963) defines strategy as 'the art of war'. In his book called the '*Art of war*' Tzu indicates that strategy requires strong commanders who understand the mission of the troops and must provide clear goals to them. In addition, Karl Von Clausewitz (1993), one of the greatest military strategists, defines strategy as the art

of the employment of battle as the means of achieving intended goals for war. Winning here is the name of the game plan, and that is why they devise the technique of winning the battle through strategy. According to Mintzberg (1994), strategy is a ploy, a plan, a pattern, a position, and a perspective.

It must be noted that the strategy was devised for the intention of outwitting the enemies. Therefore, from top commanders to middle leadership downwards, the mission must be clear so that the troops understand their expectations. Magretta (2012) suggests that one who has clear goals and mission has better chance of winning the battle. He further advises that there must be a balance in knowledge and strength between the officers and commanders and warns that if one party is stronger and clear than the other, the result would either be insubordination or collapse.

The second realm of meaning is from the business perspective. Here, strategy is much on the long-term future of the organisation and is for gaining competitive advantage through distinctive competences (Magretta, 2012). Competitors have no direct contact like in a battle or war but firms need to create distinct capabilities and skills of targeting the market to win the customers. Goldman *et al.* (2010) from the business perspective, regards strategy as the tool used by any management to guarantee the business' successful achievement as well as its survival and the future progress. It is much about the leadership communication and implementation rather than about diagnosis and design of action plan (Daniell, 2004) and involvement plays an important role in this process. Additionally, from a business realm, profit generation is implicit for the organisation or company to achieve its strategies. Scholars such as Pitts and Lei (2006), as well as, Stacey (2011), state that strategy is designed to assist the organisation achieve competitive advantage and it is understood as a plan of action. What seems clear is that strategy is used at a formal setting where all shareholders must be involved for formal planning. Then strategic planning became the solution to bridge high level goals and operational actions (Stacey, 2011). Management serve as the agents for the business owners, but they were often criticised if financial returns were below the expectations (Stacey, 2007; Stacey, 2011).

In the education sector, scholars seem not to have a clear meaning of what strategy is all about (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994; Van Der Linde, 2001; Middlewood & Lumby, 2002; Coleman, 2003). Instead, most of these authors merely adopt the meanings drawn from the business sector. The meaning of strategy as adopted in education literature shows that the

concept has been adopted from business and there is no difference between the manner in which it is utilised in these mentioned two fields.

2.3.2 The concept of planning

The concept of planning has been used by various scholars but its meaning shows a very similar understanding from most of those who have used it. There is an attempt by scholars of management to define it and what seems to be an agreement is that planning is an important task of the organisation. Davies (1998, p.462) posits that planning “is seen as desirable, necessary and (often, but mistakenly) as a solution for poor management practice”. Back in 1967, Loasby (1967, p. 300) writes that “the word planning has been used in so many and various senses that it is in some danger of degenerating into an emotive noise”.

Mintzberg (1994, p.7) supports the view that this concept is elusive in that it “lacks a clear definition of its own place in organisations and in the state”. Yet it is a variable niche of the organisation’s successes and failures. However, there are writers who have attempted to define planning as future thinking (Tovstiga, 2010); thinking about the future (Sawyer, 1983, p.1); controlling the future through actions not only thinking (Mintzberg,1994), is decision making (Nutt, 1984) and it is management (Mintzberg, 2000), future perspective (Davies & Ellison, 2013). These definitions of planning provide aspects of management such as decision making, controlling and management. Recently, planning has been associated with strategic choice. Friend and Hickling (2005) suggest the alternative way to view the challenge in planning as the concept in that it should be viewed as a continuous process of choosing strategically through time. In that sense, they view planning as a strategic choice. To strengthen their argument Friend and Hickling (2005) posit that the view of seeing planning as strategic choice implies that:

It can be seen as a much more universal activity than is sometimes recognised by those who see it as a specialist function associated with the preparation of a particular sort of plans...It allows planning to be seen as a craft, full of subtlety and challenges; a craft in which people can develop their capacity to think and act creatively in coping with the complexities and uncertainty that beset them in practise (Friend & Hickling, 2005, p.3).

The concepts *strategy* and *planning* can work as great tool that generate a concise understanding of the concept strategic planning.

2.3.3 Strategic planning: Education perspective

There is much misconception that has emerged in the usage of strategic planning as a concept (Davies, 1998). Even in education circles, there is still no agreement on what constitutes strategic planning (Van Der Linde, 2001). National Audit cycle (1994, p.41) regards annual plans as “annual strategic planning cycle” which could be considered as operational plan because of its nature (Davies, 1998). In the United Kingdom, Giles (2006) notes that the term development planning is used in the place of strategy without making a distinction between its origin and the culture of development planning. A similar case was noted in Prew’s (2009) work when investigating the involvement of community in development planning. Prew (2009) considers development planning as synonymous with strategic planning. In their comparative study of two countries namely, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom, Bell and Chan (2005) affirm that in the United Kingdom and Hong Kong development planning is used in the place of strategic planning. They justified that they used development planning because both these countries regard it as strategic planning. However, they also indicate their awareness of how different these two concepts are. Hargreaves (1995) also agrees that development planning is not strategic planning in a sense that it is not a long term planning. He further indicates that some writers have already “suggested that development planning is misguided and or misused” (Hargreaves, 1995, p.216). According to Caldwell and Spinks (1992, p.43)

Development planning is a statement of priorities to guide annual operational planning which is constantly reviewed to take account of strength, weakness, opportunities and threats that continuously arise in the school’s internal and external environment. Strategic planning is the means to help the school manage effectively in an era of continuous and turbulent change.

This implies that schools can operate with development plans to improve quality of teaching and learning but only if the schools are not surrounded with turbulent changes. Strategic planning “is a force for good” (Hargreaves, 1995, p.216) in that all South African schools practice it rather than development planning because of recurring educational changes. The strategic planning in schools acts as a long term planning that assists organisations in dealing “with the inevitable change turbulences in a national’s progress” (DoE, 2009, p.1). Van Der Linde (2001) affirm that strategic planning indeed is for South Africa as now schools are more operating like business and are accompanied by unpredictable events. In support of this

view, Weindling (1997, p.219) regards strategic planning as “a means for establishing and maintaining a sense of direction when future has more and more difficult to predict.” Put differently, strategic planning is a long-range approach (Weindling, 1997) that involves intellectual and critical thinking through analysing internal and external environment surrounded by turbulent changes and re-organise to a desired destiny. It is a management activity (West-Burnham, 1994), part of strategic management (Fiedler, 2002); it is strategic management (Gleeson & Donnabhain, 2009).

Nonetheless, this misinterpretation about strategic planning is not only confined to education alone, but it is an error that affects business literatures as well (Bush & Coleman, 2000; Fiedler, 2002; Thurlow, 2003). This error involves using strategic management; strategic choice and strategic planning interchangeably. Let us look at how business scholars interpret strategic planning in their field of study.

2.3.4. Strategic planning: Business perspective

According to Business literature, strategic planning is a ubiquitous practise more in the United States (US) and involves future predictions and control of the organisation (Bryson, 2010). Dessler (2004) describes strategic planning as the process of identifying the business of the firm for today and for the future, and then identifying the course of action it should pursue, given its opportunities, treats, strengths, and weaknesses. It is just an alternative response to important challenges in practise (Bryson, 2010). According to Hussey (2000) strategic planning is the “detailed specification of both the long term goals and the strategy on achieving it” (Hussey, 2000). It is the formulation phase of strategic management (Rossouw, Roux, Groenewald, 2007).

Strategic planning is primarily concerned “with problem-solving, determining the new preferred linkages with the environment under the assumption that implementation and control will follow as secondary activities” (Hamel, 1998, p.1). Strategic planning concerns analysing what the environment can offer while analysing the potentials of people that the organisation has in attaining the objectives of the organisation. They then add that it is the rational analysis of the opportunity offered externally and the strength as well as the weaknesses within the organisation and the selection of match (strategy) within the two which best satisfies the projected objectives of the organisation. The main focus here is the future not the process (Bryson, 2010). Roberts (2006) argues that people can implement

strategic plans more effectively if they understand the difference between strategic processes or long term planning and operational planning.

Good strategic planning developers separate process from content. In other words they understand the difference between strategic planning and operational action plans. Literature argues that school management should understand that planning encompasses two distinct functions: operational planning and strategic planning. Confusing the two, organisations will be in crisis management (Robert, 2006). Without strategic planning the organisation is unlikely to successfully meet numerous challenges that face them (Bryson, 1988, p.74). Bryson (1988) notes that managers rarely meet for issues concerning strategic planning; they instead meet to discuss leave issues, social functions and diverse issues that are less important. Strategy begins with the development of vision for the organisation (Bryson, 1988) and then numerous teams or managers should engage to eliminate barriers to the vision but not directly to its achievement.

Mintzberg (2000) argues that strategic choice is not strategic planning. Though it might seem varied but all these concepts occur in one roof of strategic management. Planning forms the part of management activity (Van Der Westhuizen, 2003; Thurlow, 2003). Being strategic implies that the skill of choosing strategically is practised in the early stages of planning (Thurlow, 2003). That is what is associated with strategic choice.

This brings the view that those making plans and those making day-to-day decisions should merge together in decision-making when selecting the appropriate methods to accomplish future set goals. The view makes strategic choice being the process of strategic planning. Thus, strategic planning forms part of strategic management. When defining strategy, Hussey (2000), argues that strategic planning and strategic management articulate encompass both the strategy and the planning as part of strategic management.

2.3.4.1 Successful strategic planning

The results of a successful strategic plan require that all stakeholders are moving in a constructive direction. However, many school leaders fail in this important task (Ishaq, 2009, p.2). Yet, principals have a huge responsibility to drive the vision of the school (Ishaq & Kritsonis, 2009) that cannot be successfully implemented if all staff is not involved. Some principals find strategic planning challenging because of its imperative to involve stakeholders. Ishaq and Kritsonis, (2009, p.3) note that "Educational leaders usually get in their comfort zone and never think beyond changing the system of the school. They have a

fear to align everyone's vision and as they see obstacles as a result they stop and "continue operating in their comfort zone".

2.3.4.2 Strategic planning as the role of school management team

Strategic planning forms a critical aspect of management and is the primary function of school management team (Thurlow, 2003). This aspect of management is constituted by the long-term plans of any organisation (Bush & Coleman, 2000). It is not confined to the principal but is distributed among those responsible for managing and leading a school (Bush & Coleman, 2000). Thus, "strategic planning is the usually exercised by the principal and the school management team working with the governing body" (Bush & Coleman, 2000, p.3). The argument that strategic planning is one of the critical functions of management is shared by different scholars (Hussey, 2000; Fiedler, 2002; Thurlow, 2003; van Westhuizen, 2003; Blackerby, 2003; Bryson, 2010). All these scholars are of the opinion that strategic planning is a recipe for running effective schools. Therefore, it should involve all managers of the schools in all departments. Bush (1995, p.11) asserts that "most HODs and principals are successful teachers who have credibility within the professional and value their background as practitioners". Thus, they should be included from initial stages of strategic planning and throughout the whole processes.

2.3.4.3 Middle management as strategist

In this study I focus on the HODs as the specialists who contour strategy implementation and who are therefore an important vehicle for school survival and for gaining competitive advantage (Mantere, 2008). I then, contribute to the literature that suggests that organisational performance is strongly influenced by what happens in the middle of the organisation (Floyd & Wooldridge, 2000; Leader, 2004; Barton & Ambrosini, 2013). The significance of focusing on the middle manager is that it allows the potential to advance an understanding of intra-organisational processes' underlying strategy formation in organisational change (Wooldridge, Schmid & Floyd, 2008). Being on the front line of change (Blandford, 1997; Barton & Ambrosini, 2013), the role of the middle manager is complex and challenging, yet one of strategic importance (Balogun, 2003; Balogun & Johnson, 2004). Middle managers become agents of change processes, but as employees, they are often the motivators of change (Barton & Ambrosini, 2013).

That is the reason why educational middle managers should be regarded as strategic leaders. This study revolves around three main theories, strategic planning in schools by West-Burnham (1994), Bryson model of strategic planning in public organisation and strategic leadership by Davies and Davies (2006). These models are discussed at length below. The focus is not only on what these models state but they are further used in Chapter Four to understand the roles of the HODs in curriculum management better.

2.3.5 Strategic management

Strategic management differs from day-to-day planning in that it is an “overall management” of the school (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006, p.85); it focuses mostly on the implementation of strategic plans. According to Bush and Coleman (2000, p.3), it can be distinguished from operational activities or management in two aspects, namely, the scope and timetable. In the scope, “strategy requires an overview of the organisation which encompasses all its activities. It is a holistic approach not confined to specific departments or subunits”. In terms of timetable, it requires comprehensive timescale. It is a long-term management not simply a response to current events” (Bush & Coleman, 2000, p.3). “Strategic management may be viewed as the appropriate and reasonable integration of strategic planning and implementation across an organisation in an on-going process to enhance the fulfilment of the vision and the mission. Strategic management embraces strategic planning and implementation” (Bryson, 2010, p.256b). It is also a framework to control the implementation of strategic plans for the pursuit of a vision. It has been noticed that other scholars (Bush & Coleman, 2000; Goldman, 2010) of strategic planning regard it as strategic management but in this study, strategic planning is considered as top echelon of strategic management with its processes. Defining it is an attempt to provide the reader with an understanding in order elucidate how these concepts integrate.

2.4. Haché’ (1999) Model of strategic planning

This type of model involves four stages of strategic planning. These set of stages involves preparatory stage, strategic choice (formulation stage of strategic planning), gathering of information analysis and system diagnostic, implementation and evaluation and control. This model forms part of the theoretical frameworks used to analyse and understand the role of the HODs in strategic planning. The stages as outlined below provide a clear process of understanding the level of the HODs’ involvement at each stage.

2.4.1. Preparatory Steps (Formulation stage)

This proposed strategic planning process can be enforced only after investigation and a 'series of discussion' (Bryson, 1988, p.74) among key stakeholders of the institutions regarding its feasibility and necessity has been concluded (Haché, 1999). According to Bryson (1988), these series of engagement should be periodic and focused on agreements on plans and planning processes and must be based on organisational innovations. The agreement should cover the purpose for the effort; the preferred steps in the process; the form and timing to report the role functions; membership of strategic committee and commitment of necessary resources to proceed with the effort (Bryson, 1988).

It must be understandable that the head of the institution often creates the image or a vision of what the organisation should be in future (Joubert, *et al*, 2008). Although, this vision might be expressed in immeasurable terms but it will act as a direction for the school. A team will only know what should be achieved and how to achieve it by the direction of the organisation as articulated in the vision and the mission statement (Yaverbaum & Sherman, 2008). So the vision "has to be shared from the beginning with the members of the organization and they must all be prepared to accept a new organizational culture into their everyday reality" (Haché, 1999, p.1). Yaverbaum and Sherman (2008) add that leaders can have a fully developed vision of where they need an organisation to go and still get nothing from it if they cannot communicate their vision to everyone else. Having a vision is more than wanting something but communicating it is more than telling (Yaverbaum & Sherman, 2008). When a leader does not communicate the vision the opposite of excitement and stimulation happens. Therefore, as part of preparatory stage, the leader of the organisation, the school principal in this case, must communicate the vision and the mission of the school with all middle managers and lower manager (teachers). The best way to perform this task, as argued in this study, is to ensure a collaborative approach to strategic planning. That is making sure that all members of the school are involved from the preparatory stage up to the last stage.

Subsequently, strategic planning involves an open commitment and prescribed timelines suggested by the principal, school management team, and other stakeholders in the school. The progress of and devotions to this vision "requires a plan for the future and active leadership on the part of the person in charge of the network in order to overcome resistance and to arrive at a common vision" (Haché, 1999, p.1). This first-hand vision generally implies completely transformed school, new direction, a change in the school culture and

modification of behaviours, values, beliefs and tendencies; in other words, “the adoption of a new paradigm” (Haché, 1999, p.2). It is through a communicated and inclusive planning that all stakeholders will see the need for culture and paradigm change. After preparatory stage has been made successful people should be tasked to perform different activities for the process to unfold smoothly. One important task which is the second stage of this model is gathering of information.

2.4.2 Gathering of Information, Analysis and Systemic Diagnostic

This process is considered the initial step that elucidates the internal strength and weaknesses of the organisation and opportunities and threats (SWOTs analysis) surrounding the setting. Bryson, (1988, p.75) has offered examples associated with internal analysis such as “political, economic, social and technological (PEST) trends and events, along with the nature and status of various stakeholder groups, such as the organisation’s customers, clients or users, and actual or potential competitors or collaborators”. The above-mentioned factors could act as a threat or create opportunities for the school. Johnson and Scholes (2005) indicates that is where analysis of current situation and environmental scanning or SWOTs analysis.

According to Haché (1999), there should be evidence of the existence of a planning committee which actually is indicative of the beginning of first formal step in the process of strategic planning. The stakeholders have to put much time meeting for the designing sessions and for deliberation before seeing consequences and should put much effort and time into implementing a programme of action (Haché, 1999). In the panel of stakeholders, schools should include representatives from diverse professional or officials who work in education as well as representatives from different community sectors who have a stake in the school, the stakeholders. It could be wise to involve any interested individual or volunteer from other organisations that have an interest in the education or with critical educational expertise (Burkhart & Reuss, 1993).

The preliminary work is demanding as the first meeting involves the descriptions of the final and the new vision and mission, as well as, a need to accomplish consensus concerning the beliefs and values that will validate the overall strategic plan. Reaching an agreement on a common vision is a demanding task for the planning of all staff. After environmental scanning has been done through information gathering, analysis and systematic diagnosis, a well-structured plans which are measurable should be formulated the implementation begins.

2.4.3 Implementation of the Strategy

The strategic plan consists of goals, programmes, policies, actions, decisions and allocation of resources that define the institution (Mintzberg, 1994). The resulting objectives make strategies measurable and effective; they are the basis for action development plans. It is a prerogative of any organisation to establish as many action plans as desired as long as these are linked to strategic planning processes and also if it is proper for the execution of the chosen strategies (Murgatroyd & Woudstra, 1990). In addition, Haché (1999) describes the importance of implementing strategies this way: “An action plan serves to determine the tasks, activities, responsibilities and timeline; these aspects are necessary for the realization of the strategies and the fixed objectives” (Haché, 1999, p. 2).

Commonly, different departments in a school can develop their own action plans for the whole year. These plans are inherited from strategic plans and they guarantee the execution of strategic plan. The development of action plans are considered as the responsibility of each department of the institution. “This exercise should not be an obstacle to an academic freedom, although some may see it as an intrusion since teaching can be subjected to productivity and economic profitability quotas” (Kent, & Wilkinson, 1991, p.34).

2.4.4 Evaluation and control of the strategy

Commitment and continuous monitoring by the management of the institution is required in the process of evaluation and control as from the beginning. Continuous action and constant evaluation is needed to identify the gaps between the fixed strategic goals and the existing achievements (Davies & Ellison, 2013). Where desired, achievement has strayed the institution should without waiting time make the necessary amends. The continuous tracking during application of plans enables “the immediate recognition of deviating situations and gives the opportunity for corrective action” (Haché, 1999, p.6). Appropriate evaluation and control enables individuals to be on track and be able to make changes, amendments or modification of plans where gap is inevitable. “On-going assessment is a key to establishing and reinforcing the kind of institutional shared vision needed to generate change in the desired direction as set out in the strategic plan (Nauffal, & Nasser, 2012, p.33).

Strategies cannot be formulated and implemented to achieve above average return without effective strategic leadership. Strategic planning is part of strategic management and

management is a key leadership task of school because its main intention is change and improvement (Middlewood & Lumby, 1998, p.105). According to Woods (2009, p.270), strategic history “holds strategic leaders accountable for the effectiveness of the organisation”. For the schools’ effectiveness, there is a necessity of strategic leadership that encompasses distinctive set of knowledge, skills and abilities (Grandstaff & Sorenson, 2009) for strategic implementation. Although Finkelstein (2009) argues that strategic leadership is tremendously challenging, but it is critical for leadership practice. This form of leadership is premised within the application of various leadership techniques to lead the organisation (Louw & Venter, 2008). Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson, (2007) contend that it is through the effective utilisation of strategic leadership that organisations are able to fruitfully use and benefit from implementing processes of strategic management. Such views are also shared by other scholars such as Hill and colleagues (2007).

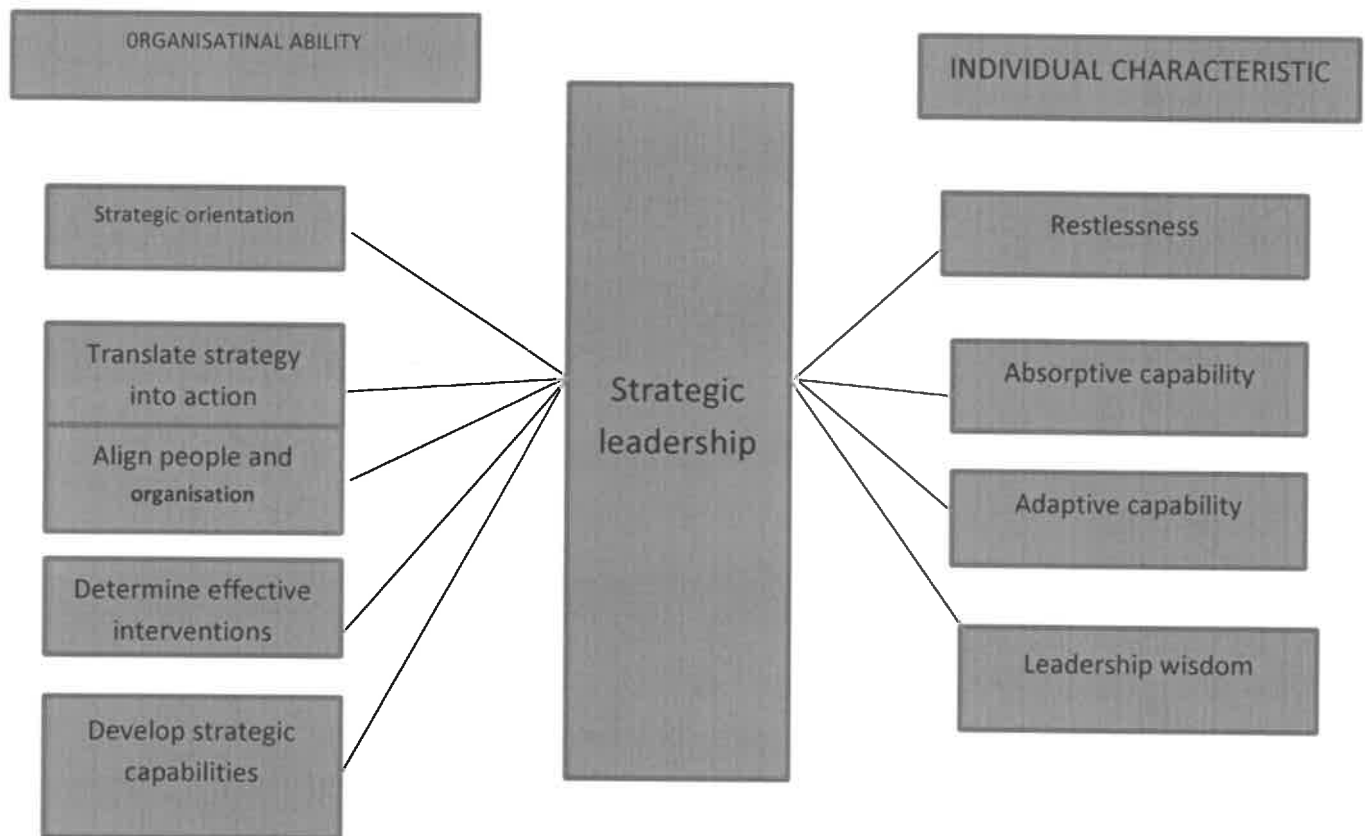
2.5 Strategic leadership

In order for the strategic plans to be executed there is a need for strategic leadership within the top management of the organisation. This is so because this leadership is accompanied by range of traits (Louw & Venter, 2008). Strategic leaders think strategically (Finkelstein, Hambrick, & Cannella, 2009); use suitable trait for the particular situation; they are able to use visionary and transformational leadership. These scholars also think that they are invitational in the sense that they use Ubuntu philosophy which can best be explained as the principals’ understanding that the school is what it is because of the people. Leadership practices guided by Ubuntu will then be driven by a sense of collective leadership (Louw & Venter, 2008, p.353).

Leaders who are invitational foster progress, respect, trust, carrying behaviour when communicating and showing high level of integrity and willingness to pursue the organisation’s achievement (Stanley, Junhke & Purkey, 2004). This implies that strategic leaders are good leaders. Davies (2003, p.303) confirms that “it is not always easy to distinguish between the characteristic of ‘good leadership’ to those of ‘strategic leadership’”. Davies and Davies (2006, 2004; Davies & Ellison, 2005) have established a list of significant individual characteristics that successful strategic leaders possessed. This list includes the following features: dissatisfaction or restlessness with the present; they have absorptive capacity; have adaptive capacity; and lastly, they have leadership wisdom. Davies, Allison

and Bowring-Carr (2005) developed the model of strategic leadership that includes both the above-mentioned individual characteristics and five main organisational characteristics associated with strategic leader. These are strategic orientation; translating strategy into action; enabling the staff to develop and deliver the strategy; determining effective intervention points; and developing strategic capabilities (Davies, *et al*, 2005, p.123). A model presented below provides a clear picture of what strategic leadership entails.

Davies Allison and Bowring-Carr’s (2005, p.16) Model of strategic leadership



2.5.1 Strategic leaders’ dissatisfaction or restlessness with the present

This dissatisfaction involves forward-looking and envisioning for the future of the organisation. Jarbandham (2012) explains this scenario as creative tension that develops when there is a clear vision of where he/she desires to be but facing the reality about his or her current situation. Strategic leaders survive the turbulent situation but have the ability to be restless for improvement and change for a better future.

2.5.2 Strategic leadership have absorptive capacity

Strategic leaders have the ability to prioritise their own strategic thinking and learning; the ability to create mental models to frame their own understanding and practice and powerful personal and professional network (Davies & Davies, 2006, p.131). According to Cohen and Levinthal (1990) absorptive capacity is the ability to absorb information and integrate it and apply that information to new situations. Therefore, it is imperative for strategic leaders to search for new information, assimilate it and apply it for future outcomes. Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond (2004) and Harris (2004) contend that strategic leadership survives in ambiguous, complex and information overloaded environment. Thus, leaders have the ability to learn and exchange information with others so as to drive the vision against all odds. Therefore, strategic leaders create an organisational context in which learning can occur (Davies, *et al.*, 2005, p.13).

2.5.3 Strategic leaders have adaptive capacity

The ability to transform can be called adaptive capacity (Gosling, Jones, Sutherland & Dijkstra, 2012). Strategic leaders are required to learn and should have the ability to learn; hence the notion of mastering chaos and issues of change and complexity, as well as the ability to seek other ways of doing things is central (Sanders, 1998). Davies *et al.* (2005, p.14) posit that “strategic leaders position themselves to take significant opportunities as they adapt to new information in a responsive and pro-active way”. Therefore, they can adjust and push new strategic commands for the school if they have “flexibility linked to a mind-set” (Davies, *et al.*, 2005, p.14) that invites, accepts and welcome change. This implies that leaders focus on improving the organisation in which they are in. The challenges which they encounter help them learn and then adapt but out of them find ways for a strategic direction.

2.5.4 Strategic leaders have leadership wisdom

Wisdom can be described as the ability to take the right decision at a right moment (Davies, *et al.* 2005). Davies and Davies (2006) speak at length about leaders with wisdom in their section of ‘strategic leadership’ in a book called ‘School leaders in the 21st century’. Drawing from the presentation done by Robert Sternberg (2002), they embrace the nature of wisdom addressed by Sternberg (2002). In that presentation, Sternberg (2002) posits that wisdom is about having successful intelligence; having the ability to balance interests; balancing time-frame, mind that has diverse values; application of emotional intelligent to the environment; using knowledge and be able to apply it for the good purpose. This presents a perceptive and

thought-provoking set of standards for leaders to establish in order to position strategic decisions with wisdom successfully. Viewing from the perspective of Sternberg (2002), it is easy to see that strategic leaders as having social intelligent, free of emotions, but are cautious with time-frames for the common good. Social intelligence embraces depth understanding of social context (Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2004; Davies, & Ellison, 2013). It includes the ability to notice and make distinctions among other individuals, particularly with reference to their mood, personal intentions and motivations (Bennett *et al.*, 2004). Thus, the main element of social intelligence includes the ability to detect emotions of one-self and that of others. This also involves the ability to invite involvement of other individuals and able to connect with them in a context of strategic planning development.

2.5.5 Strategic leaders have strategic orientation

This trait involves the ability to consider the long- term prospects about the future (Davies & Davies, 2006; Davies, *et al.*, 2005), sighting a bigger picture (Davies, *et al.*, 2005), as well as having thorough understanding of contextual setting of a school. Strategic orientation refers to the ability to link long-term vision to the daily operations at work place (Davies & Davies, 2006). To this end, Korac-Kakabadse (1998), suggests that strategic leaders need to be visionary leaders who are also transformational and transitional as well. Strategic orientation is, first and foremost, da forward looking in organisational setting; this creates an understanding of imaginable future goals which also includes strategic engagements and debates to get into most suitable decisions.

2.5.6 Strategic leaders translate strategy into action

Strategic leaders lead the development of an appropriate strategic plan and for the school and are able to deploy it into action by creating operational plans. This leadership involves leading with others (Davies & Davies, 2006). According to Davies and Davies (2005), strategic leaders are able to reflect back and articulate the existing features of the organisation, strategic framework and lead others to unpacking the future of the school and figure out future architectural processes. Many schools have difficulties of changing written plans into action (Davies, 2004) because leaders lack the ability to translate strategic plans into strategic action. Many leaders lack rich understanding of the essential stages leading to positive transformation and change implementation (Heracleous, 2000). I argue here that

doing strategic planning collaboratively could possibly ease the challenges that leaders may face in translating plans into actions.

For educational leaders to be successful at “creating effective schools where all stakeholders are highly involved in attainment of the school’s vision” (Ishaq & Kritsonis, 2009, p. 3), they should understand how to apply steps of strategic planning and be strategic leaders with action (Davies, 2004).

2.5.7 Enabling the staff to develop and deliver the strategy

According to Davies and Davies (2006), this is the ability to involve individuals and align their work to the future of the organisation. The main contribution in this aspect is the ability to motivate for commitment through shared vision and values (Bryson, 2011). The leader must have an ability to communicate with people. Leaders understand one-self and value other peoples. The values they hold allow them to nurture communication and development through distributed leadership. Kerts de Vries (1999) is of the view that this leadership enhances effective learning and teamwork in a sense that it is based on trust, “mutual protection and support. There is an open communication, strong sharing of common goals values and believes” (Bennett, Wise, Wood & Harvey, 2003, p.24). Based on this practice they distribute responsibilities, all staff become empowered and develop all necessary abilities in pursuit of the vision. It is a multiple guidance (Bennett, *et al.* 2003) that makes positive impact to the vision accomplishment of the organisation (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004; Harris, 2004; Harris, 2009). Based on this view, strategic leaders have distributed leadership quality that empowers people and improves the organisation.

2.5.8 Strategic leaders have the ability to determine effective interventions.

Strategic leaders have the ability to identify what needs to be changed, when and also what interventions need to be applied (Davies, *et al.*, 2005). The key here is “knowing not only what to do strategically but precisely when to intervene and change direction” (Davies, *et al.*, 2005, p.11).

2.6 Strategic planning in school context

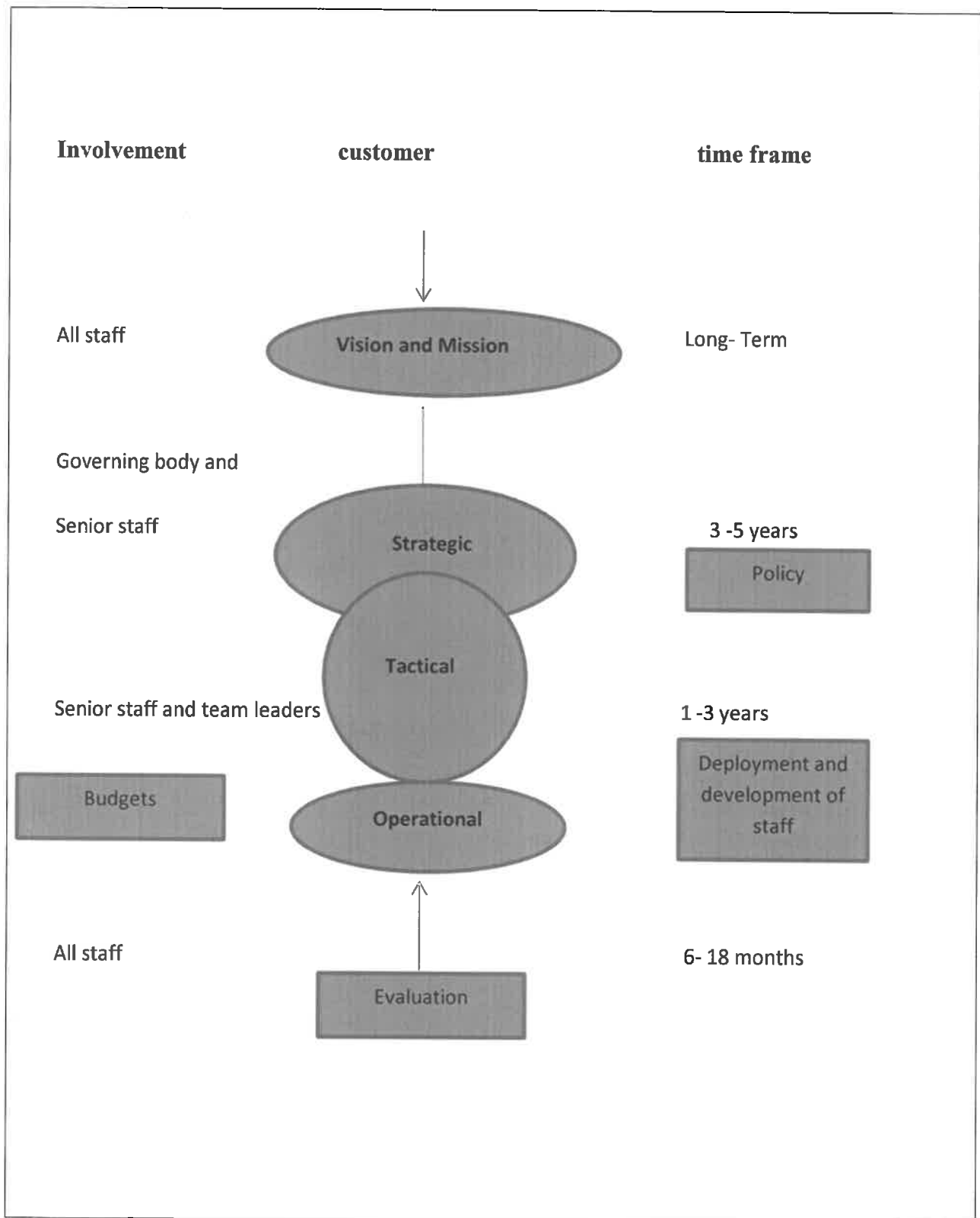
Strategic planning and involvement should not be viewed as divorced practice if the leader seeks positive results. As it has been demonstrated, strategic planning may not be properly implemented if top management develops it in isolation, without involving middle

management. Roberts (2006) finds this tendency sufficiently natural in some organisations since strategic planning is prioritised as a top management job. In addition there is no set framework for top managers to involve others (Roberts, 2006). Such tendencies in organisations seem to be oblivious to the view that people do not implement what they do not understand (Robert, 2006). In line with this view, West-Burnham (1994) proposes an explicit model suggesting that people need to be involved in the processes of strategic planning. This model can assist leaders with regard to whom to involve and at what stage of strategic planning should they be involved. This is critical because it puts emphasis on time frames and the level of significance of every individual at each level.

In the first stage strategic planning is driven by the vision and mission but both the vision and the plan must be shared and be owned by all staff involved in the process. However it is the long-term without specification on the timescale and when it is to be achieved. The customers will always be at the centre, and in this case, it is the learners of the school. The vision and mission influence them and they also influence it. The second stage is that of constituting the plans but before that, the analysis should also be conducted. In this stage of three to five-year timeframe, West-Burnham (1994) highlights that the appropriate staff would include school management team since planning is their primary responsibility. Not only should management be involved but community representatives as well. Once all members have consensus on the strategy, it has to be translated into policies which serve as sources for decision-making, consider annual budget, staffing and staff development. The next stage is tactical in that it involves development planning of three years, staff development, action planning on annual basis and contingency planning as well. The final step is that of short term planning which is regarded as operation stage where all staff members are involved and for six to twelve months of duration.

Looking at what the model proposes, calls for all managers, leaders of the school to be involved in the processes of strategic planning from the beginning up to the end. Where all staff members at any level are 'involved' in decisions taken by their superiors, peers or even subordinates, and all the motivators are brought into play (Everard, *et al.*, 2004). This is particularly the case where the decisions under discussion will affect the persons involved. Involvement should be the commitment to goals on which a sense of achievement depends. By involving the people we show them recognition and increase their sense of responsibility. Involvement can be differentiated into two parts and this is best shown on the diagram below.

West-Burnham's (1994,) Model of Strategic planning in school context



2.6.1 Leisure involvement

Psychologically, leisure involvement is defined as a state of motivation, stimulation or interest gaining, whether to a product an activity, or an object (Kyle & Chick, (2004). In support of Jung (2007) definition, leisure involvement has been defined as an unnoticeable state of motivation, encouragement or interest toward a leisure activity that is evoked by a particular situation, possesses drive features. Involvement signifies an internal state adjustment that reflects the quantity of arousal, interest or drive aroused by a particular motivations or condition that intercedes consumer behaviour Kyle and Chick (2004). Involvement according to Iwasaki and Havit (2004), espouses that experience of involvement falls within two general typologies: individual characteristics and social factors. “Individual characteristics include attitudes, values, motivation, needs, initial formation and preference, as well as behavioural experience. Social situational factors represent social support for significant others, situational incentives, social and cultural norms, interpersonal and structural constraints, and anticipation of social benefits” (Funk, Ringer, Moorman, 2004, p.39).

2.6.2 Involvement as an achievement needs

For every achievement of school goals, there is a need for involvement of key stakeholders. Schools cannot be single-handedly managed but there is a need for involvement of other role players for common direction. Myers (1991) in his book called “*Every employer is a manager*” highlights specific needs for achievement. He further argues that when a person is actively involved to a perceived goal, it is then that efforts are made towards the achievement of that goal, implementations of plans and control or the monitoring of the results. Pearce and Robinson (2009) suggest that, it is important to involve subordinates even in minor stages of strategic formulation in order to increase the chance of decisions and strategic plans’ acceptance by them. In that case, key stakeholders must be involved in the process. Furthermore, Pearce and Robinson (2009) emphasise that key stakeholders are the people who have the vital interest in the operations of the organisation.

Involvement and achievement in strategic management are intertwined. According to Everard, Morris and Wilson (2004), the critical and most important to the concept of achievement is the perception by the individual that when the goals are relevant for him or her, they are worth achieving. Irrelevant goals to the world of every individual may lead to the “results that do not guarantee a job” (Everard, *et al.* 2004, p.32).

2.6.3 Participation

Involvement is an umbrella term which subsumes participation and consultation (Fiedler, 2002). Participation according to Cooke and Kothari (2004) is characterised by consensus, unanimity and majority rule principle. Participation is always preferable and desirable by every member of the organisation. Fiedler (2002, p.53) states that it would be a mistake to see the involvement and participation of individuals as of little value more especially when doing strategic decision making.

2.7 Strategic planning and the involvement of HODs: The lessons from literature

The review of literature has indicated the importance of involvement in all the stages of strategic planning. Further to that, the kind of leadership required for successful strategic planning was established and it has been argued that leaders need to be strategic leaders. These leaders are able to invite others in their context and also to transform their schools into spaces for collaborative learning and actions. While literature has drawn more from the business perspective of strategic planning, through to the three models presented, the importance of the involvement of middle managers has been demonstrated. Reasons for the involvement and participation of the HODs include but not limited to ownership of goals and responsibility, commitment towards the implementation, monitoring and achievement of goals and motivation of staff members through giving them recognition.

It has also been found through literature that, lack of participation may results to individuals who feel and think commitment towards the achievement of goals offers no good results after the job has been done. Given all the above critical points about the involvement of individuals in the strategic planning the study further argues that the involvement of HODs is ideal in the achievement of goals since the literature has also proved that the process of planning cannot be conducted by top leaders in isolation. Through literature, it is acknowledged that there is lack of scholarship, particularly in South Africa, addressing how HODs experience their involvement and what leaders in the school context do to promote or discourage involvement of HODs in the strategic planning. As indicated in chapter this study tries to bridge the above noted gap.

2.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has reviewed literature on strategic planning in general and within the education context. The concept of strategic planning and other concepts related to it have been discussed critically with an aim to give different perspectives of what strategic planning is considered to be in different context. The discussion of these concepts was followed by a critical discussion of models underpinning this study and those models were then justified as to how they push for the involvement of HODs in the strategic planning and how they inform the study in general. After the above discussions, lessons drawn from literature are summarised and the purpose of this study as building from such lessons is re-iterated. The next chapter presents the discussion of the research design and methodological approaches employed to explore the experiences of the HODs in the strategic planning of their schools.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a review of related literature and a discussion of conceptual framework that informed this study. Concepts such as strategy, management and leadership as well as teamwork were discussed as these are critical when dealing with strategic management. This chapter then focuses on research design and methodology that was used in the study. It outlines the research design and the methodology that underpinned the methods used in generating the data. Relevant paradigm is discussed including its related aspects. Case study design is discussed; methods of generating data, sampling methods, analysis techniques, issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations are discussed. Limitations of the study and the study summary conclude the chapter.

3.2. Research paradigm

A paradigm is perceived by Guba and Lincoln (2013; 1994, pp.107-108) as a “set of basic beliefs which represent a world view for its holder and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts”. This study is located within the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivist perspective is rooted on the theory that human life can only be understood from inner person’s subjective experiences (Woodson, McQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005). Morrison (2012) and *Cohen et al.* (2011) suggest that every researcher should locate his or her study within a particular paradigm in order to advance it with the set of beliefs about the world. A paradigm navigates the process of investigation. It determines choice of methods and research instruments that are suitable for the study.

Having studied paradigms such as positivism, critical paradigm and interpretivist, it was clear to me that interpretivist was the most appropriate for this study. Since, this study intended to elicit the views of the head of department on how they experience, understand and interpret their involvement in strategic planning of the school. Unlike positivists which insists in what is called scientific research using quantitative data, the study of this nature which focuses on people beliefs and experiences cannot be studied (Vogt & Johnson, 2011) in a positivist way. In this study the focus is on co-creation (Henning, Hutter & Bailey, 2011) of meaning and

understanding the phenomenon from both the participants' point of view and within the environment in which they live. Within interpretivist paradigm, the researcher and the participants (HODs) interacted to create meanings (involvement in strategic management) within the context (school).

3.2.1 Ontology

Ontology is generally understood as a science that deals with fundamental questions regarding the nature of reality. In terms of interpretive paradigm, the main issue about the nature of real world is that what is viewed as real is socially grounded (Morrison, 2012; Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). In other words, there is no just one objective reality, but many realities according individuals. Mertens (1998) contends that diverse meanings can be attributed by different people on a similar issue. In terms of this ontological thinking, in exploring how different HODs make sense on their experiences regarding their involvement in strategic planning, there will be many realities about the same phenomenon.

3.2.2 Epistemology

Another tradition of interpretivism paradigm is that knowledge is socially constructed by those in the research process and that it is the duty of the researcher to understand the complex experiences from the participant's point of view. Mertens (1998) maintains that knowledge is socially constructed by those who form part of the research and that the researcher should be sensitive to the complex experience from the participants' perspective. Epistemology deals with the issue of the relationship between the world that is to be known and the knower or the researcher. In interpretive paradigm, human beings are regarded as part of reality, and therefore, reality is not something that exists out there to be discovered by research through objective methods. This epistemology is in line with the methods that are qualitative rather than quantitative.

3.2.3 Methodology

This study is rooted from interpretivism paradigm and successively opted for qualitative research. Qualitative research put attention to the 'meanings' of experiences by examining how humans define, interpret, describe and metaphorically make sense of such experiences (Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit; Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). In elaborating, Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p.391) highlight that "it is the way of thinking not a method" and emerge

as a result of natural ways of thinking (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Therefore, in line with these views of latter authors, I used qualitative research as methodological stance to answer the study's questions since the study seeks to find out about HODs' experiences based on their involvement in strategic management processes within the school setting. In addition, methodological views of qualitative research assisted me to acquire knowledge about how research participants define, interpret and describe the way they were involved and how that impacted to their experiences of daily life within the school context. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) contend that interpretivist researchers have a tendency to adopt methodological approach that are characterised by qualitative data generation methods such interviews and observations. Based on the idea expressed by Cohen *et al*, (2007), the study adopted the same methodological methods such as observations, interviews and document reviews which are widely used in qualitative studies (Robson, 2002; Coe, 2012,).

3.3 Case study

Cases study is about the set the circumstances, events, argument or rationale (Thomas, 2011). It is not good for generalisation because it is intended mainly to find the uniqueness of each case studied (Yin, 2003; Yin; 2005; Yin, 2009; Thomas, 2011; Rule & John, 2011) by investigating the particular features of each school. "Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied" (Stake, 2005, p.443.). It can be studied annalistically or holistically, culturally and by mixed methods but concentrating on a case (Stake, 2005). Cases may be single or multiple. Having the knowledge of what case study entails from above authors, I adopted a multiple case or "collective case studies" (Stake, 2005, p.445) because it is not interested to find out the results from one case but from various schools with diverse leadership styles and varying number of individuals within management structure. Stake (2005) concurs with the idea of investigating a phenomenon or population using multiple case studies if one is less interested in a single case.

3.4 Multiple case studies

This method was chosen to examine several schools to illustrate an "alternative approach by comparing and to provide insight into an issue" (Creswell, 2012, p. 465) and "they provide a good way of testing a method in a variety of setting" (Rule & John, 2011, p.2). They provided imperative criteria to identify the selection of study cases (Rule & John, 2011).

Multiple case studies allowed the researcher to balance an in-depth understanding of each case under investigation with the width understanding acquired through other cases in a form of sampling logic (Edmonds, & Kennedy, 2013). Similarly, Yin (2009, p. 54) agrees that “sampling logic” is appropriate for multiple cases if intended to find result relation or variations. Thus this study also attempted to compare, contrast and to find pattern from the data.

3.5 Methods of data production

There are two methods that were utilised to generate data for this study and these were semi-structured interviews and documents analysis. These methods are discussed in the following section.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

This study adopted semi-structured interviews in order to allow me to probe during the interview process. Dowson (2009); and Creswell (2012) Lichtman, (2013) describe the probes as a sub questions under question that are used to elicit detailed information and clarification. Such methods of questioning allowed the interviewee to expand on in each response while simultaneously providing more clarity for greater understanding. Moreover, this method enabled me to do a member-checking and confirm understanding what is meant by the participant.

One-on-one semi-structure interviews were conducted in order to enable the participant to speak freely and for the participant to share ideas and views comfortable (Creswell, 2012). Initially I had thought that focus group would also be an ideal method for this study. However, the challenge of differentiating various voices of the individuals during transcription stage (Creswell, 2012), dissuaded me from utilising this method. Apart from that, I also thought that it would be difficult to control interview discussions and therefore opted for one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted at a place and time of the participants’ choice.

3.5.2 Document analysis

Document analysis method was used as the value source of information for this qualitative research. According to Creswell (2012, p.223) “document consist of the public and private

record that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participants in the study". I used documents such as minutes of meetings, school strategic plan, action plans, grade plans or various departments plans kept in the school, annual plans, management plans and school development plans, school policy or other documents used by the schools as guidelines for the schools management plans. Other documents such as personal diaries or journals or desk calendars with specific dates of meetings were also used to solicit information that might be useful in providing clues about the nature and/or the extent of the involvement of the HODs in strategic planning in the schools. This document formed the "language and the words of the participants and it is a good source for text" (Creswell, 2012, p.223).

The participants were asked to provide their personal diaries or journals or calendars with dates for the next coming meetings. These set of document provided me with evidence that they are involved and willing to be involved in strategic management activities of the school. This was done through Creswell's (2012) advice that personal documents provide the researcher with a rich source of information. Some documents were not part of my planned documents to be reviewed but were used to cross check what had been said (Boudah, 2011).

3.6 Selection of participating schools

The study adopted both purposive and convenience and sampling when selecting participant with certain characteristics suitable and rich for this study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Convenience selection is not like a random sampling (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). Therefore, I selected the HODs because they were people who are suitable for the study. Rule and John (2011, p. 63) argue that "it is often impossible for a case study researcher to consult everyone involve in a case". The same situation existed in this instance.

Three primary schools were purposively selected. The selection was purposive in the sense that only primary schools had been targeted for participation. The selection was also convenient in the sense that these schools were supposed to be easily accessible, particularly in terms of the distance between my work place and the schools. Since the focus of the study was on the HODs, two of them were selected from each participating school. School principals were also included for purposes of triangulation of participants and for obtaining a balanced view about what was going on in each school in relation to the involvement of the HODs in strategic planning.

3.7 The pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to check the appropriateness of the instruments. The other purpose of the pilot study was to clear complexity, ambiguities, redundancy and streamline or guide the questions according to the key research questions. This would be beneficial in ensuring the coverage all areas of the study and to eliminate the uncertainties. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, 2011) interviews should be clearly understood by the participants and questions have to be applicable to the experience, knowledge and expertise of participants.

The interview guide prepared for the participants (head of department) was tested by interviewing all heads of department of another school who would not form part of the main study. Before initiating the pilot study process, I requested the pilot participant through an informed consent where complete information was given about the topic and the reason for conducting a pilot study. After the piloting interview questionnaires, I was able to identify complexity, uncertainties and ambiguity of the questions. Thus, I reviewed the questions and used the ultimate version of the interview schedule for this study.

3.8 Data analysis

Qualitative content data analysis method was used to make sense of the data. The data that had been recorded in the audio recorder was first transcribed into the text format. The use of tape recorder for audio recording was preferred in order to capture the discussion *verbatim*. Rugg and Petre (2007) praise the use of tape record for accuracy and criticises the use of short hand transcripts when gathering data in natural language. Miles *et al.* (2014) define data analysis as consisting of three concurrently occurring data analysis procedures, and these are data reduction, data presented and the drawing of conclusions.

I conducted data reduction by combining similar responses from various participants so that a consolidated and focused response could be framed. From this, I was able to draw conclusions after compartmentalised the themes, patterns and potential conclusions. Subsequently, I established the relationships and contrast within these responses and generated patterns. Using interpretive paradigm within qualitative data content analysis was also done as I attempted to give meaning to the categories that were inductively arrived at.

3.9 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is crucial in assessing the worthiness of every qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). I used Guba and Lincoln (2013) framework of ensuring trustworthiness of the findings. To reach trustworthiness of the study, they recommend four criteria to be considered: credibility; transferability; dependability and confirmability.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility mainly means “confidence in the ‘truth’ of the findings as revealed through the participants” original data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.296) or a truth value (Boudah, 2011). Credibility is an answer to a question “how congruent are the findings with reality” (Shenton, 2004, p.65). Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Marshall and Rossman (2010) suggest three initial activities to strategise the study. These initial activities include prolonged engagement, persistent observations and triangulation. Boudah (2011) further adds peer debriefing, negative case analysis and member checking as the ways to increase credibility of qualitative research findings.

Member-checking during semi-structured interviews was done as Boudah (2011) acknowledges it as effective way to establish credibility. Cohen *et al.* (2011) asserts that member-checking enable the participants to check that what is said is true and has accurate interpretation. In addition peer debriefing was done where my colleague played devil advocate role as she inquired about every aspect of data collection and data analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.308) define peer debriefing as “the process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer a manner paralleling an analytic session and purpose of exploring aspect of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer’s mind”. This process assists the researcher in eliminating the areas of unknown biases (Boudah, 2011).

Over and above, credibility was enhanced were interpretation script of their voice and findings were returned to the participants for verification purposes before it was sent.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability demands that the findings have applicability in other contexts other than that of the situation in which the existing research is undertaken. For Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability refers to the extent to which the results of the research can be applied in similar contexts. However, Shenton (2004) argues that in qualitative research transferability is impossible since research project findings are from the small scale research. However,

Bassey (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that it is vital that sufficient thick description of the phenomenon under investigation is provided to allow readers to have a proper understanding of it, thereby enabling them to compare the instances of the phenomenon described in the research report with those that they have seen emerge in their situations. In this study, transferability was ensured detailing the information regarding the number of schools taking part in this study.

3.9.3 Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that there are close ties between credibility and dependability, arguing that, in practice, a demonstration of the former goes some distance in ensuring the latter. In order to directly address the issues dependability, they contend that the methods within the study should be reported in details, thereby allowing upcoming researchers to repeat the work, if probably the intention is to gain different results. The dependability of this study is gained through addressing in details the implementation of all processes including fieldwork practises and operations as well as the preliminary visits and selection of participant. In that manner, the readers of this study would establish understanding of the methods and their value.

3.9.4 Confirmability

The concept of confirmability is qualitative investigator's comparable concern to neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this case, steps need to be taken to help ensure as far as possible, that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). Miles *et al.* (2013) consider that a key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions. My main predisposition was that I knew some principals. Another issue of concern was that the educator participants were chosen by the principals. This could compromise objectivity. Nevertheless, I tried my best to ensure I do not impose my interpretation on what they were telling me by checking what they said and also confirming my interpretation by bouncing back my interpretation and asking them if my understanding is accurate. In that way, the accuracy of my findings was confirmed with them.

3.10 Ethical considerations

McNiff and Whitehead (2006) acknowledge four types of people who may be affected in the research but in different ways. These people includes study participants; collaborative colleagues; important friends, external validators and advisers; These scholar further state that the researcher must observe ethical principles and legal responsibilities to participants and other officials who are to be involved when conducting a study. Cohen *et al* (2011) validate that ethical practises are critical and eliminate problems that may during study setting and to protect the participant's right, autonomy. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) support by stating that, qualitative study method accompanied by ethical standard such as the participant's rights, confidentiality, mutual respect and anonymity. Therefore, a researcher ensures that these mentioned principles are observed and protected.

In observing ethical issues, firstly, I applied for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal ethics committee which permitted me to conduct my study. I then applied to various school principals requesting permission to conduct the study in their respective schools. In the letters I mentioned that the participants were the HODs, and also informed them about the purpose of the study. Other letters were written to the participants (HODs) requesting them to participate in the study and also to explain the purpose of the study. These letters also explicated that there were neither predictable direct benefits nor direct risks associated with their contributions and participation in this study. The participants were also made aware that their participation is voluntary and they are free to withdraw at any time should they desire to do so. Accompanying the letters were declaration forms which the participants signed and giving me their consent. I also guaranteed the participant's anonymity and confidentiality by using pseudonyms throughout the study. I did everything possible to protect the participants' privacy.

3.11 Limitations

The answers that I was sometimes getting were based on guess work. Some were even reluctant to say what strategic planning is all about. I had to include the personal observations and more unplanned document analysis to get into the credibility of the participants' answers. I have acknowledged that this study needed the researcher to race against time. I have anticipated that things might not be according to plan. For example a principal might deny me excess to school due to sensitiveness of the topic and HODs might also be hesitant to provide

information needed for this study. In addressing these limitations preliminary interviews were conducted prior to the study. I began by creating rapport with the participants in order to create trust. Barbie (2010) speaks at length about rapport and advises qualitative researchers to create it as a way to build trust with respondents. That was the advice I followed and it worked in this research.

3.12 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the design and methodology that was used in conducting the study. Issues of research paradigm, design, selection methods, methods of generating the data, methods to analyse the data, ensuring trustworthiness of the findings and ethical considerations are some of the issues that were comprehensively discussed in this chapter. The next chapter provides a detailed presentation and discussion of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research design and methodology used to explore the involvement of Heads of Department in strategic planning in three primary schools in the Pinetown district. In this chapter, data generated through semi-structured individual interviews and document analysis is presented and discussed. While still in this chapter, the literature and theoretical framework used in this study is then be employed in order to contextualise the emerging issues from data. The presentation and discussion of the data is done as initial analysis of the themes that attempt to give answers to the research question of this study which is: What are the HODs experiences with regard to their involvement in strategic planning?

Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) regard data presentation to be a process whereby the generated data is carefully exposed to, and streamlined into meaningful categories, patterns and themes. The themes that emerged from the semi interviews, observations and document review are the following:

- Participants' conceptualisation of strategic planning
- The involvement of HODs in strategic planning
- The areas of involvement
- Influences of HODs involvement in strategic planning on school daily operation
- What school leaders do to promote HODs' involvement in strategic planning

4.2 The participants' conceptualisation of strategic planning

In trying to understand how the participants understood strategic planning, the study shows that there are various meanings in terms of what strategic planning is all about from the researched participants' understandings. Each participant's view encompassed multiple meanings which suggest that strategic planning is a complex concept. Some participants were unsure of what strategic planning is all about. This somehow, indicates limited attention that is given by the schools to strategic planning. There were participants who felt that strategic planning is an umbrella plan of all activities of the school. Others found it hard to

differentiate between strategic planning and action plan. Others were reluctant to talk openly about their conceptualisation of strategic planning. It must be noted that each participant had more than one meaning. To explicitly present data, I therefore categorised meaning into four dominant sub-themes that emerged from the data. This was done as a way of indicating how each individual meaning overlaps from one theme to another when attempting to conceptualise strategic planning. As a result, these four dominated sub-theme were developed: strategic planning as part of day-to-day plans; strategic planning as umbrella plan and strategic planning as an action plan or plan of action.

4.2.1 Strategic planning as part of day-to-day plans

Strategic planning as understood by participants in the study appears to be a continuous and day-to-day activity which involves the making of decisions as to how school activities should unfold and what should be done continuously to achieve the daily plans of the school. The daily interactions between different stakeholders about school activities are based on and guided by the strategic plans of the school. The utterances by Nobel (one of the HODs) explain this better:

Strategic planning is not something that you can say is difficult. Whatever plans from the beginning towards the end of whatever activities that we do in the school or interacting with other stakeholders about school activities must be informed by the strategic plan (Nobel).

The first two lines interconnect strategic planning with the day-to-day plans. The participants simplified strategic planning as not something that is difficult, instead all activities that happen in the school are informed by strategic planning. The argument that all activities are informed by strategic planning is further confirmed by Nomusa (HOD) as she explains how strategic planning further informs teaching and learning as school activities.

There is planning done by subject committees; they form part of strategic planning, so they also come up with their plans and that may be for different grades (e.g. seven or particular grade or of the particular phase) and then we fit them into strategic plans also as part of strategic planning. The work of subject committees is related to teaching and learning but it cannot be done if not guided by strategic planning (Nomusa).

The above utterances provide an idea which was also confirmed by other participants that strategic planning serves to give the school an umbrella plan for other plans that take place in the school. The section below provides a detailed description of the participants' emerging understanding of strategic planning.

4.2.2 Strategic planning as an umbrella plan and a guide

Nobel was one of the participants that conceptualised strategic planning as umbrella plan. When explaining she stated that:

Strategic planning is the umbrella plan which covers all the areas of the school... curriculum is the part of strategic planning you cannot separate or divorces the curriculum planning from strategic planning since the strategic planning is an umbrella. Under this umbrella we have curriculum planning, extra curriculum planning and whatever activities or whatever subjects that are involved form part of strategic planning (Nobel).

In this extract, Nobel compiled all planning activities as mentioned above such as curriculum planning, extra curriculum planning and daily planning, as well as other activities as they are guided by strategic planning. The similar view was also shared by Nomusa when defining what strategic planning is all about. This is how she articulated her view:

It is an umbrella planning; the mother of all planning that take place in the school because it even includes the dates of the staff meeting to indicate when are we going to have staff meeting, phase meeting grade meeting, subject meeting, all is included... I think umbrella plan is strategic planning that is what I think because there are plans that are directed under it and in the school and there are so many plans (Nomusa).

Nomusa also incorporated all plans and placed them under one umbrella term which is strategic planning. Furthermore, she emphasised that it is the mother of all other plans and activities that happen in the school. The activities, that are represented by this kind of strategic planning, include the date of staff meetings, phase meeting, subject meeting and there are so many plans that occur in the school. This view is not far from that of Sara although she did not literally mention strategic planning as Umbrella plan. She had this to say:

According to my understanding strategic planning is whereby we come together and plan and that helps because as an HOD I don't have to impose ideas to the educator....At the end of the day we have something that guides us all on how we do our work, how we are going to teach and how learning is going to happen. Strategic management and curriculum management or planning goes together and we cannot do anything without strategic planning... (Sara).

Drawing from the views expressed above, strategic planning is understood to be any other planning where you sit down and plan. When proceeding with her descriptions, she conflates strategic management and curriculum management as if these processes are done together and that is when I probed for clarity if she considered curriculum planning to be part of strategic planning or it is another planning. She then elaborated:

Curriculum is not another planning but is part of the strategic planning; it is like you know when you are writing the test, which grade is having this test and what test may be. It is like when the Grade Fours are having a test or they have project or stuff like; so we need to know what is happening or else teachers would just get up one day and say since I didn't plan let me do projects (Sara).

I then probed further to get explicit information about her understanding by wanting to know if they did strategic planning as way of relating her knowledge and her practical experience. She then replied like this:

We do strategic planning in the school even though it is not a perfect or hundred percent but at least the plan is there. It is not always easy to come together for strategic planning because sometimes people make excuses, saying things like 'I won't be able to do this and that'. But it helps at the end of the day whereby we review our committee; our subject committees and we look at curriculum delivery and monitoring; we look at the needs for different grades and the needs of individual learner not the same and needs of the educators so with the strategic planning it gives us the guide. You start with the strategic planning then to curriculum planning and then monitoring and management to see that what have been planned is being implemented (Sara).

When looking at the above responses about how individuals conceptualise strategic planning it became evident that all the participants conceptualised strategic planning as Umbrella

planning in that it guides all the activities that happens in the school. Though I struggled to get what Sara was trying to say but you could notice that at the end she agreed with the others that strategic planning is an umbrella plan in the sense that all activities and other planning such as curriculum planning are informed by strategic planning. The above-mentioned view highlights that it is a guide that assists them to address the needs of the learners, educators and to review different committees which again are about the activities that are to take place within the school. Although participants viewed strategic planning as an umbrella plan and their guide, it was so surprising when reviewing their files to find out that there was no evidence of the vision and mission in their files and not in their offices as well. There was evidence of different management plans although these were not followed and in one of the participants, it was still in a draft form. They could not tell me about their school vision without actually reading them out. The only exception was Nobel. This raises some questions about whether or not, these plans indeed served as their umbrella plan that guided of their activities. My opinion is that one simple evidence for understanding and knowing the vision of the organisation is to be able to share it with other people.

Davis (2008) support the views of the participants as they argue that strategy planning should guide all plans that happen in the school. Furthermore, Lumby (1998) regards strategic planning done in colleges as central plan of all activities where all other plans are generated. It can be regarded as an umbrella plan in that sense. However, others view strategic planning as programme of action or plan of action.

4.2.3 Strategic planning as action plan or programme of action

The concepts of programme of action and plan of action kept on emerging from Sibeko and Nomusa though they were not from the same school. As has been stated, one participant had multiple meanings when trying to explain strategic planning. The same happened in the case of Nomusa when she hesitantly said “*I think that strategic planning is the umbrella plan*” so I repeated the question and said “I am interested to find out your understanding about strategic planning” and then she replied:

I understand that strategic planning refers to the programme of action; that is what I understand (Nomusa).

I then wanted to be sure if she was talking about strategic planning not about other plans. I then sought for clarification if it is the strategic planning that she is referring to when talking

about programme of action by asking what is involved in the programme of action. This is what she said:

*There are many programmes within the school; each and every programme has to be planned on how it could be done, so all the dimensions should make their own planning.... Even formal assessment is done in that way even the formal assessments have a plan that indicates when we are going to conduct formal assessment plan for the whole year. There are many planning even the IQMS we have to have an **action plan** indicating events from February up until September when are we doing the advocacy the work shopping the class visits the scores and everything like that...(Nomusa).*

Nomusa's understanding seemed to be overwhelmed with lots of ideas and plans that are done in the school. She mentions programme of action, umbrella planning of all activities including IQMS planning then action plan. In that view of action plan Nomusa's view was also supported by Damase (School Principal) when articulating his understanding of strategic planning, he then presented a detailed explanation:

*Strategic planning is the plan that helps the school to run smoothly. It is derived from the vision and the mission of the school. **It is the plan of action** where all the priorities, targets and the time frames are designed, it also covers the weaknesses the strength within the school. It also has goals in terms of the categories. For example you find that in our school we have goal one, two, three up until what our school needs. The way I understand strategic planning, it has four stages: There is analysis stage where we analyse what is happening at the moment we analyses the current situation in the school. Another stage of strategic planning is when we plan policies where we plan our activities; the other stage is implementation stage where those policies are implemented and the last stage is where we evaluate whether we have achieved those goals. When we evaluate we reflect on what we have planned for have achieve or not achieved. Strategic planning also involves day-to-day; month-to-month, years and years of activities that are to taking place in the school (Damase).*

Again so many ideas have come up from Damase. The first is that strategic planning begins from the vision and mission of the school; it is the plan of action but this kind of plan of action includes priorities, targets, goals, weakness, strength and it has time frames. He then mentions that it has four stages the first one being that of analysing, policy planning,

implementation and that of evaluation. At last she also mentions that it also involves day-to-day, month-to-month and then years-to-year activities of the school. Again it is a broad plan of which is what Nobel and Nomusa indicated. It must be noted that in my observations while Damase was responding to my some of questions he was perusing the strategic plan of his school trying to get some clues about something. However, the strategic plan was there in his office; the vision and mission statements were displayed in a two metres sheet. You could see it at a distance of six to ten metres away but this participant (also a principal) could not recognise it. This raises a lot of questions about this principal's familiarity with these documents and their contents.

In the literature section, Thurlow (2003) cautions that strategic planning can be very misleading if operational and action plans are brought to mind; hence there are totally different plans. This implies that operational plans and action plans should not at any time be viewed as strategic planning. Mintzberg (2000, p.38) suggests that "action is assumed to follow once strategies have been formulated". Thus strategic planning must be separated from operations but not from management (Mintzberg, 2000). The views from participants again contradict the literature and this presents several confusions as to whether what is regarded as strategic planning in schools is actually fits within a common understanding of what strategic planning is and what constitutes it. Despite the broad and multiple meanings given by participants to strategic planning, it also emerged in the study that strategic plans are just symbolic activities with no full commitments by school members to ensure that those plans are implemented and monitored.

4.2.4 Strategic planning as symbolic and misunderstood activity

There were participants at first who seemed to be reluctant to talk openly about their understanding of strategic planning. When Zena for instance, was asked if she understood strategic planning this was her response:

Not really, but I can think of something. I think strategic planning, like the word says itself; is to strategise things that are important and plan and work according to that (Zena).

Clearly, Zena was not the only one who displayed a limited understanding. Sara too at first shared a similar sentiment characterised uncertainty of what strategic planning is all about. This is how she finally responded:

Not exactly but little bit because I understand that strategic planning refers to the programme of action, that is what I understand (Sara).

The data provided by this participant seem to reveal limited conceptualisation of strategic planning. Some researchers even use development planning in the place of strategic planning as highlighted by Bell and Chan (2005). I then probed further seeking to know if she indeed understood what strategic planning is all about. I asked if they did development planning in their school as part of strategic planning and this was how she responded:

Yes, we do school development plan; we organise workshop and invite people of calibre to address us if we have something that we don't understand. We go out looking for information and we ask people who know more about specific things to come and address us here in our school. We ourselves organise workshops for other people because we do IQMS which is the process of developing teachers. We visit each other and we give ourselves marks; we advise each other if there is something that someone needs development in, for instance if someone is teaching long division; I am talking about Maths because I am teaching Math and so on (Zena).

This response is based on the development of people and not in planning. Mentioning the activities that they organise and how they assist each other in terms of addressing the teaching methodological challenges is not really strategic planning or even development planning. This view contradicts the documents that I reviewed. In the principal's office there was a strategic plan that was glossy when looking at it. There was a vision and mission statement hanged on the wall. Strategic planning is the long-term plan (West-Burnham, 1994; Mintzberg, 2000; Thurlow, 2003) for mapping desired future situation (West-Burnham, 1994) or future predictions (Fiedler, 2002).

When looking at the data presented you could notice that every individual perceived strategic planning in various ways. Nobel saw strategy as an umbrella term as well as management planning. Although, there are various studies that make no distinction between strategic planning and strategic management but not a single study reviewed for this research regarded strategic planning as management planning; instead strategic planning is regarded as part of strategic management (Hussey, 2000); it is management activity of the school (Thurlow, 2003), it is a management task (Sanchez & Heene, 2004) and management approach (Blackberby, 2003) or practise (Bryson, 2010). Nomusa agreed with the view that it is an umbrella plan. As a result, Bryson (2010, p. 259) emphasises that "significant improvement

in strategic planning will come when “it” is widely understood in its full richness as a managerial practise or set of practises and not as some kind of fairly rigid recipe for producing plans”. Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education (2009); Clarke (2007) asserts that management planning forms part of the curriculum management in that is the day-to-day management. Guided by this view, management planning is a day-to-day planning of the school but it is informed by strategic planning. Roberts (2006) warns that the failure of strategic planning might be caused by the management team who does not know or understand strategic planning. However, involving them might be a remedy in development better understanding of strategic planning.

4.3 Involvement of HOD in strategic planning of their schools

The findings presented to this study suggested that all participants (HODs) interviewed for this study in three schools have been involved in the strategic planning of their schools. To respond in the question that seeks HODs involvement in strategic planning. They all responded affirmatively. For instance, Nobel emphatically said, “*Definitely, I am involved in planning*”, while Nomusa responded “*I am involved but sometimes we have to delegate*”. Zena followed in similar lines when she said “*Yes, I am involved*”; Sara said the same “*We are involved*” and again, such a statement was repeated by Weza when she said “*All member of SMT are involved*”. All these extracts clearly show that the participants participated in what they believed was strategic planning in their respective schools.

These kinds of responses were also supported by their respective school principals and these principals went on to provide the reason for their involvement:

Yes, I said earlier on that everybody needs to own the vision; we need all of us to have one vision so, before they implement it, they need to own this, meaning that this programme needs to be owned by everybody (Sibeko).

Yes, HODs are the key of strategic implementation, so they need to be involved in the strategic planning from the beginning to the end. They need to own it otherwise, it will just be a fruitless exercise to do it without them (Masilo).

All the school management team including the HODs, deputy principal as well as the principal is involved and again all the educators are included even non educators are involved because they form part of the school. The School Governing Body is also

involved. The HODs are most people who are involved and who are making the strategic planning of our school in many ways (Damase).

The above extracts do not necessarily paint a positive picture about the involvement of the HODs in strategic planning. For instance, Masilo's articulation is not categorically clear about their involvement. The principal, in this instance, does not describe the existing scenario but talks about what should happen rather than what is happening. Nonetheless, the emerging picture indicates that overall, all HODs are involved and principals also are supporting this view. Lumby (1998) and Thurlow (2003) assert that strategic planning is the primary function of the SMT and the SGB. Therefore, their involvement is crucial (Early, 1998) since the strategic plans' execution process rest in their shoulders (Thompson, *et al.* 2010). Caldwell and Spinks (1989) Model of strategic planning emphasises the involvement of all staff members as crucial for the formulation of the vision and mission of the school.

4.4 Stages in which HODs are involved

As data indicated that all HODs agreed that they are involved, it was not enough to prove the extent to which they are involved. Therefore sub-themes were formulated to assess the level of their involvement such as formulation, strategic choice and execution phase as suggested as stages of strategic planning. The models presented in Chapter Two guided the data generation and analysis at this level.

4.4.1 Formulation of strategic plan

It must be noted above that all participants indicated that they get involved in strategic planning but when it comes to the extent of their involvement it transpired that they were not all involved in their vision formulation which is first phase of the strategic plan. I asked Nobel if she was involved in the vision crafting of her school and did not hesitate to say:

The vision is old as the age of the school, but is gets reviewed every year, before we start planning we look back on the things that need to be improved and which need to impact on our vision and our mission. So we review it every year; it is not only us that are doing it. It starts with the school governing body. Remember that the SGB has the teacher component and the teacher component and the SMT component; so they start there and come back to the SMT or sometimes start with the SMT because it needs to give the feedback because they are the managers of the school (Nobel).

Zena who teaches in the same school indicated that she is involved but gives no explanation as to how that pans out in practice: This is what she said:

We are involved in the vision; it is just that I cannot explain the way one wants (Zena).

This can be related to our earlier conversation where she stated that she does not understand strategic planning. I changed the approach and asked her if she does understand vision and mission. Instead of answering about her understanding she pointed to the wall next to the principal's office and said:

We have a vision and mission of our school; it is hung there at the office (Zena).

I interviewed the principal to get clarity on this matter and this is her response:

All HODs are involved in all stages of the strategic planning and there is nothing more I could tell you; trust them about to what they have told you they are my mouth (Masilo).

While the school principal claimed that the HODs were involved in the formulation of the strategic plan, it became vivid to me that Nobel is claiming to be involved in strategic planning yet there were no clear evidence of such. Arguing that the vision is as old as the school is good enough to uncover what is not being said; it suggests a long period that has lapsed since the vision was crafted. This may be linked to the fact that the school always change its leadership for various reasons. This school has also undergone similar experiences. As result, the principal of that school was good as new with less than five years of experience in this position. According to Joubert, *et al* (2008), the principal must have a vision on where she or he wants the school to be and share that vision with all the stakeholder of the school. With that in mind, I was also expecting this to happen in this school with four years of leadership experience in that school. Instead, she followed the *status quo* of the vision that was set before her arrival.

Nomusa had as a similar experience of not being involved during vision crafting of her school because it was old. It is not difficult to conclude that the vision was old; the copy of the strategic plan that Nomusa gave me to view, was 10 years old; it was dated 2003. Nomusa declared that she was not even a member of SMT then when the vision was crafted. Implied here is the view that one has to belong to a particular category of staff such as membership of

the SMT to participate in strategic planning activities. This is what Nomusa said in this regard:

No, in fact I was not even the member of the SMT. I have not been involved in such an experience so far. The SGB meets with the principal and the principal and educator component usually come to us and then we start the programme of action (Nomusa).

Nomusa mentioned that she was not involved in the formulation of the vision and mission of the school. I then curiously wanted to explore who were involved in the vision of the school. I further probed if she was not the part of that SMT because she mentioned that she previously acted before being employed permanently. However, she was a staff member of this school. The discussion above provides a different view to that provided at the beginning where all HODs indicated that they were involved.

In contrast, Nomusa's principals indicated how the HODs were involved in drawing the school vision. This is what he said:

Everybody is involved; we sit down and we come up with shared vision and the shared goals. Everybody is given the platform to air his or her views and be hands-on and we normally review it now and again to check that we are on plan or maybe we have lost the primary aim of the strategic plan (Sibeko).

Sibeko presented what should happen but the data that emerged rose questions if what he was presenting was happening in this context as the views from different categories of participants presented two different pictures. In different contexts, Weza explained how they formulate strategic planning. This is how she explained:

We come together as a SMT members; then we look at our set goals we always view the goals of the previous year to see if we have things that we did not achieve that is the starting point and we set goals for the new year together (Weza).

Weza's view was further illuminated by Sara on how they formulated their school strategic plan. This is her view:

In drawing up the vision of the school, first of all we come together as the School management team and we come up with our opinions and brainstorm and then we go to the other staff members. Whatever, we have and whatever we have in mind the vision or a dream we just share it with the staff and they also bring up their opinion

and contribute so at the end of the day we do it together. So in that sense at the end of the day we all own (Sara).

Damase strengthened the explanations of both HODs to elucidate how the formulation phase of strategic planning took place in his school. He then elaborated:

When we plan a vision of the school, the HODs are ones that come up with substantive inputs and those inputs are transferred to outputs or activities that will take place in the school. The vision of the school without the HODs cannot be done in the proper way because they are the people who are at the floor level and who can see exactly the needs and the wants of the school (Damase).

Nobel indicated that the vision is old as a school and her school is more than thirty years and she has more than 16 years as an HOD in this school. This implies that the vision of this school is more than thirty years old. It is strange indeed and raises some questions about the HOD involvement in formulation of this strategic plan they have. Zena's inability to explain how they got involved may suggest the lack of planning in the school. This then shows could give credibility to the sentiments regarding the oldness of the vision and mission as indicated by another participant. The final stamp was made by their principal who did not reveal how they create their vision and mission of their school. Nevertheless, there was strategic plan document in their school. In my informal observations, I noted that the vision was there on the wall but in A4 paper. All plans were available; they were minutes of meetings that were held every Wednesday as SMT but there was no record of planning or long term plan. Both HODs' files had plans nonetheless; some were labelled 'drafts' of 2013. It must be noted that the study was conducted in November 2013. It may well be that they are beginning the process of revising those old strategic plans.

Knowing that the plan must be endorsed by the participants, I then reviewed strategic plan to find signatures of participants and of people who endorsed it but none was available. I then requested the principal to provide me with document to further review. She then complained about time being spent in her school. After all my explorations, data suggested that there is no evidence to show that strategic planning occurred in this school.

Literature points out that in some organisations managers outsource their strategic planning (Schmitt, 2007). I wondered if this might be the case of this school. Ehlers and Lazenby (2007) caution that strategic planning should not be expected to be successfully implemented

if not all parts of management were actively involved during its early stages. The adoption of plans from other schools or from the Department of Education may also add to the failure to implement the strategic planning in the school. In Sara and Weza's schools, the data suggest that they were involved during early stages and their principal validated that. The vision and mission was well presented. The files had minutes of regular meetings but not for planning. Strategic plan had no signatures that endorsed such strategic plans. I wondered if all members were involved or it was the project of just a few. Haché (1999) stipulates that creation of vision stimulates excitement but the opposite might happen if non-involvement during vision creation is evident in the organisation.

Nomusa's statement indicated that she was not involved but principal contradicted her by saying she was involved. Backing the view of Nomusa was the out-dated strategic plan document of 2003 and the principal was new in this school. West-Burnham (1994) Model considers this stage as the formulation of vision and mission whereby all staff members should be involved, mainly senior staff including middle management as strategist (Leader, 2004). Johnson and Scholes (1993) indicate that it is where the analysis of current situation and environmental scanning or SWOT analysis happens.

4.4.2 Tactic stage (planning and designing)

In this stage of development plans, action plans, operation plans and designing of policies take place. Not all participants were able to respond to this question because others indicated that they were not involved. However, Nobel seemed to be involved in all the mentioned levels. This is what she had to say:

Before we even do our strategic planning we make sure that we get strategic plan from the district which is given to us by the circuit and then we know that oh! On such and such a date there shall be workshops so that we can able to do our management plan to accommodate the workshops and things like that (Nobel).

I just wondered if Nobel was talking about action plan or management plan of the district because strategic plan is a document that maps desired future scenarios for organisations; it has goals and targets but action plans have time frames (Clarke, 2007). According to my experience the Pinetown District only provides schools with IQMS management plan which are based on the activeness of the ward manager. I then wanted to see the example of such plans but she indicated that she would look for me at some other time as she was

experiencing time constraints. Her colleague could not come up with clear response when asked about how they did strategic planning. The failure to provide the district plans as indicated showed that the participants could not provide evidence of what they were saying. While data presented above suggests that the HODs involvement did occur, further evidence seems to indicate that, in fact, their involvement was limited.

4.4.3 Execution Phase

Some participants appeared to have much information about execution phase but others seemed to be confused. However, Weza from the beginning seemed to have the experience of what she was talking about. When they were asked to explain how they were involved in strategic process, Weza had this to say:

So during our Phase meeting, at times we look at our strategic plans where we ask ourselves, are we still on the right track? Do we have problems that need to be changed or to be restructured? Sometimes there are things that need to be changed that were not in our plan so we need to be flexible (Weza).

Similar views were expressed by Sara when she said:

We review our strategic plan to see what needs to be improved and look at whatever things that we haven't done and achieved and we shift it to next year at least we have a target which indicates that by this time we should have achieved all these things (Sara).

Nobel supported the practice of acting independently when the HODs are at an implementation phase of the strategy. This is how she justified her position in this regard:

Rather than focusing on the usual and the common one of being a manager, I have to make sure that teachers adhere to their time tables; that they have to be developed in terms of teaching approaches. Besides that, teaching aids are a vital issue in the classroom. I make inputs as an HOD; we don't wait for the directive from senior level of management of the school; we do create things; we do give direction toward the correct strategy of the school (Nobel).

Nomusa confused strategic implementation roles with her day-to-day management role. She did not understand the distinction between strategic planning and day-to-day management activities. This is what she said regarding strategic plan implementation:

I monitor the submissions, monitor stock, stock taking the book or the resources that we have and the resources that we need and assessment. I monitor the assessment up to the end and we do the analysis (Nomusa).

Weza and Sara seemed to be involved from the beginning to the end of strategic process while Nobel is involved from tactical and implementation phase. However, Nomusa and Zena seemed not to be involved at all. This contradicts what the HODs' position which said that they were involved. The DoE (2002) warns that the involvement of the SMT in the initial stages is crucial since they are to translate vision into action. People who are involved become active and creative. This was evident when visiting the site where participants are located. Sara and Weza were very active in their respective departments, in administration, as well as, in their actual teaching. Their files showed the record of their monitoring activities; their grades plans, action plans, as well as development plans, were recorded in the files. Nobel was also more involved in the principal's office and had no class at that time. Zena and Nobel are both HODs but one (Zena) is also a class teacher.

4.5 HODs involvement and its importance on their daily operations

The data suggested that the involvement of HODs in strategic planning is significant and has positive influence on their daily operations. Most participants seemed to agree that the HODs are involved in the implementation phase and that they must be involved for effective day-to-day management operations. These were the responses from some of the participants:

My involvement is crucial as I have mentioned early that the HODs are the one who filter through information from the SMT to the educators. The HODs have been given a mandate to plan within their respective departments. For instance, I am with the languages department. In the languages department we can't do anything; we can't say we are going to do this if it does not impact on the strategic planning so I mean the HODs are the main people that make things happen in term of the strategic planning (Nobel).

Similar sentiments were shared by other participants when they were asked whether their involvement as HODs influenced their management or not and this is what they had to say:

Without my involvement there would be no management; so I must be involved because if I am not involved I cannot know what I can do or cannot do; I can't even

tell educators what they can do if I am not involved so my involvement is very important (Zena).

It does influence me because as a person, first of all, it calls for me to reflect on it, visiting it and to ensure that it is implemented though as a leader I have to lead by example; so I have to be there; I also don't lead by words; by giving the example by doing things by involving myself in the things that are happening in the school so that I will keep on reminding them and check if I we are still on the right track (Weza).

My involvement is very important; it helps me at the end of the day to look at how we are implementing the whole structure of the strategic planning because, as an HOD, I need to check if are we on the right track (Sara).

Principals expressed similar views when it comes to the involvement of the HODs in strategic planning and its importance for daily operations. This is what he said:

I do see that they are involved and that it has influence in the daily activities that are taking place in the school because they are the ones who motivate at all times that the teachers should do their work in terms of pushing the vision and the mission of the school; their involvement is also very important because the circulars that come from the Department of Education before they are sent to the teachers, they go through the HODs (Damase).

However, not all participants shared that view. Nomusa for instance, views strategic planning as having both negative and positive influence. This is what she said:

It does influence me partly positively and partly negatively because I play dual roles; as an HOD I have to do these management duties while at the same time I have to do my work as the class teacher (Nomusa).

In the previous extracts, Nobel expressed the view that she is a relevant stakeholder that fast tracks strategic planning and if she is not actively involved, the school could die in terms of progress, development and management. Zena emphasised that she should be involved at all costs, and stresses that without her involvement there will be no effective management. Adding to that view is Weza and Sara who found it hard to manage without reflecting on strategic plans in which they took part during its formulation. While the involvement has had positive influence, it also has negative influence and this view was expressed by Nomusa and

complained about being overloaded from different dimensions of her management. Harris (2009) recommends the use of distributed leadership because schools cannot be led by a single individual but all members must be involved. Mintzberg (2000) also maintains that it is possible for those who are using the strategy for individual-benefit not to contribute positively to the organisation, and thus argues for distribution of leadership.

4.6 Leadership approaches that enhance HODs involvement

It must be noted that “leadership equates with influences” (Harris, 2009, p.33) and this is not associated with positional power like management. Instead, other people, without formal positions can be productive where the leaders’ potential is limited. The findings suggest the mixture of leadership styles that were displayed by school principals that were researched. This is what Sara had to say about her leader:

The way I view him is that he is using more than one leadership style; he is a democratic leader and transformational leader but there are instances where he exercises autocratic leadership because at the end of the day, he is the one who is accountable for whatever that is happening in the school.

I then probed to find out what she meant by democratic and transformational leaders. She then produced a detailed response that explains what democratic and transformational leadership entails, at least in her own view. This is what she said:

He is democratic in the sense that he involves us; he involves the SMT members in whatever is happening we come together; we discuss things together; we brainstorm together and at the end of the day, we agree on what we are going to do. It therefore becomes our thing not “his”. I would also say he is a transformational leader because he guide us to change because there are lot of things that are changing; so we have to go according to the time; he doesn't want to be left behind, so there is the lot transformation that is happening in the department of education that need to be happening in our school, in our lives and the lives of the learners (Sara).

The similar view was supported by Weza who emphasised what was presented by Sara. She believed that her principal was a democratic leader. This is what she said:

I will say my leader is the mixture; he is democratic, but sometimes, he is autocratic. He uses different styles from one situation to the other; he uses visionary leadership; in fact we are using different kinds of leadership (Weza).

To further validate what Sara and Weza had said I then asked the kind of leadership that he displayed in promoting HODs involvement. This is what Damase (a principal) had to say:

I am a transformational leader because I always want to see change in the school; the leadership that I like is distributive leadership style where information is distributed among all the members in terms of running the school (Damase).

Although, he did not mention democratic leadership but similar pattern was noted when mentioning more than one type of leadership approaches that work for him. In different context, the pattern was observed when Sibeko describe the kind of leader that he is:

It terms of my leadership I can simple say I have little bit of this little bit of that (Mixture of leadership)..... when we talk of policies, these need not to be discussed; they should be implemented. As a principal you need to make sure that it is implemented and it must be implemented, so autocratic somehow will come in (Sibeko).

The pattern is evident when Sibeko talked about little bit of this and little bit of that which he clarified as all leadership approaches are important depending on the situation. Nomusa sustained what Sibeko's argument by saying:

He is transparent; he has good communication skills... he keeps us updated most of the time. He wants all the people to be in the same level of development and the same level of knowledge (Nomusa).

When looking at data presented above, most participants seem to believe that a mixture of leadership approaches sustained the involvement of HODs in strategic planning. The literature suggests collective leadership or distributed leadership as more appropriate for staff involvement (Harris, 2009,). For instance, Harris (2009) proposes distributed leadership as it equates with different leadership practices through interaction rather than individual practice. He asserts that "it is a model of leadership that implies broad-based involvement in the leadership practice" (Harris, 2009, p. 38). In the context of my observations, some HODs were much involved than others in the school activities. When I had to interview Nomusa she

was very busy in the office. Sometimes acting as a principal when the principal is not around and having office keys although the Deputy Principal was there but she was 'thee' most actively involved person in the office administration. I had also noticed the same behaviour in other schools where the other HODs worked. Their involvement ranged from very high involvement to very low levels. For instance, Nobel was the most involved person of them all while Zena was not involved at all.

4.7 Leadership practices that promote involvement of HODs

The findings suggest three dominant sub-themes that leaders do. For instance, they delegate responsibilities; they are good communicators and are approachable, and they lead through collaboration. These aspects are then discussed in the section below.

4.7.1 Delegating the responsibility

Participants were asked about what leaders do to promote their involvement and this they had these views to say:

He leads by delegation; he does delegation. He delegates some duties If there is an urgent issue to be addressed he calls us for a briefing before we go to the class he keep us updated with all the issue that are within the school if he need something to be tackle in the office sometime the parent came with his or her concern sometimes he does want to chair meeting in most cases he delegate (Nomusa).

The type of leadership that we have does not hold the cards to the chest; wherever there is something that he has to do and wherever there is a delegation that needs to be done, he delegates. In addition, he has a good strategic plan which we exercise (Nobel).

The delegation of duties is one of the approaches that are recommended to promote involvement of all stakeholders in the running of the school. For strategic planning this may be very helpful in ensuring that plans are implemented and that there is efficiency in the schools. Delegation of duties also ensures leading from behind which will promote ownership of the schools by others in collaboration with the school principal.

4.7.2 Good communicators and approachable

Communication has appeared to be another important aspect that ensures that all stakeholders are involved in the running of the school or other educational programmes (Myende, 2013). In his study, Myende (2013) posits that communication appears to be the key for the promotion of stakeholder involvement in the school activities. The same was found in this study, and this is what some participants had to say in this regard:

She cannot do anything without us. She tells us everything, everything, finances, departmental work, circulars sometime; I heard about teachers complaining about their principals that their principal hides information; our principal does not do that (Zena).

.....informed even amount of money that he is going to use or that will be used he explain to us the income and expenditure he explains all that (Nomusa).

He is an inviting somebody, you know why I am saying that; his office is not the kind of office where you say I need to see the principal, then you speak to the secretary and ask that you need to see the principal; if you want to see the principal you just knock (knocking on the table) if he is alone you come in no appointment no appointment, not that he lacks planning or programming he just needs fluidity, you understand what I mean (Nobel).

She is an open book what you see is what you get really; there is nothing more than I can say about her; she is everything (Zena).

Being a good communicator and being approachable has helped to enhance the involvement of the HODs in the strategic planning of their schools and this then confirms Myende's (2013) view that communication is the key to ensuring involvement. Drawing from the perspective that leadership is about exerting influence one can argue here that communication is the key to influence HODs to be involved in the strategic plans of the school. Communication also ensured that principals could lead through collaboration.

4.7.3 Leading through collaboration

As shown in the previous sections, leading through collaboration also appeared to be happening and was facilitated by effective communication in the schools. In this regard, Nobel explains how leadership occurred in her school:

In the institution like this you cannot isolate one leader from another if you have strategic planning as I have answered earlier that it is a collaborative work so it means everyone is involved in strategic planning and is part of it (Nobel).

The data shows that principals in this study had attributes that are appropriate for promoting the involvement of HODs but not all were desired by strategic planning theorist. Strategic planning theorists desire strategic leadership with a vision for desired future of the organisation (Bush & Coleman, 2003). Only one participant indicated that his principal is a dreamer but could not explain this further. Although principals need to be visionary leaders, they also need to be invitational leaders in order to be able to foster collaboration, progress and involvement. Disinviting approaches by leaders discourage progress, and show a “lack of respect and valuing, and work against collaborative and active participation” (Stanely, 2006, p. 28).

4.8 Chapter summary

The involvement of the HODs in strategic planning in the studied schools is not clear as different participants tell different stories and experiences. This is because strategic plans did not indicate which members were involved in strategic planning. However, most participant claim that they were involved in the process of strategic planning but document showed no clear evidence to support this. What has also come out strongly from the data is that the HODs did not have a clear understanding of what strategic planning is all about. This could explain why some HODs could not provide precise explanations about the exact activities that they were doing in the name of strategic planning. The next chapter presents the findings and recommendations for this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and analysed data that was produced through individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis. This chapter presents findings that are drawn from the generated data and also makes recommendations. The research questions are used to present the findings of this study. After the findings are presented, recommendations for involving HODs in strategic planning and those directed on further research are presented. The next sub-section offers an overview of the whole study.

5.2 Study summary

The study is divided into five chapters and each chapter addresses a particular aspect of this study as outlined below:

Chapter One

This chapter introduces the study by presenting the background and the rationale, research design and methods used in this study. It also offers the motivation for undertaking the study which explores the experiences of the HODs regarding their involvement in strategic planning processes. Further, the chapter presents the objectives, the purpose and the significance of the study. It also highlights the type of literature and the theoretical framework that is used in this study. The rest of the chapter briefly outlines the research questions, defines the key concepts for the study and the summary of the chapter.

Chapter Two

This chapter starts off by discussing the synopsis of the study. It then presents and discusses the literature reviewed which focused on both international and South African studies on strategic planning and strategic management. The theoretical framework underpinning this study consists of two models. These models are, West-Burnham's (1994) Model of strategic planning in the school context and Davies and Davies's (2006) Model of strategic leadership. Both models were deemed relevant and useful for highlighting the need for engaging organisational stakeholders in strategic processes.

Chapter Three

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology that was used in generating the data used in answering research questions. This chapter focused on six main areas related to the research design for this study. These areas are paradigmatic positioning; description of the research design and methodology; data production and research tools; description of population targeted or sampling procedure, ethical issues and lastly, the limitations of this study.

Chapter Four

This chapter is the presentation, interpretation and discussion of the data generated. The study explored the experiences of the HODs with regard to their involvement in strategic planning in their respective primary schools. The following sub-questions were the basis upon which this study hinged. Therefore these questions are used as the basis of the presentation of the findings of the study.

5.3 Findings of the study

As indicated in the previous section, the research questions are used as headings under which the discussion of the findings is done. These research questions are as follows:

- What do HODs understand about strategic planning?
- How does their involvement influence their understanding or lack thereof in their schools' strategic planning?
- To what extent are these HODs involved in their schools' strategic planning?
- What influences does the involvement of heads of department in strategic planning have in their daily management roles?
- How does leaders in their schools promote or does hinder their involvement

5.3.1 What do HODs understand about strategic planning?

The findings of this study demonstrated that there is confusion between strategic planning and operational activities, as well as the actions plans among the six participants in the study. Four of the six participants clearly declared their misunderstanding of strategic planning. For example, Noble defines strategic planning as “the umbrella plan which covers all the areas of the school because it also includes the dates of the staff meeting, indicating when are we

going to have a staff meeting, phase meeting, grade meeting, and subject meeting. She further added that “all in all, it is a management planning” (Nobel). The above quotation is a representative of the views of all the five other participants’ misunderstanding of strategic planning.

From the above, it can be concluded that most of the participants confused the term strategic planning with operational plans. For instance, Nomusa refers to strategic planning as involving “whatever activities that we do in the school” (Nomusa). This proves misinterpretation of action and process. Similarly, Nobel considered strategic planning as all activities planned at different levels or departments that fit into the strategic planning of their school. She further stated that “it even includes the dates of the staff meeting to indicate when we are going to have staff meeting, phase meeting, grade meeting, and subject meeting” (Nomusa). Sara asserts that this type of planning is a guide to know when “you are writing the test, which grade is having this test and what test may be” (Sara). It is evident that the participants did not understand what strategic plan entails. The above extracts contradict how various scholars define strategic planning. The generic view from various scholars is that strategic planning entails long term features and future projection (Davies, 1998); long-term achievement (Mintzberg, 2000; Al-Zboon & Hassan, 2012; Najaf Abadi, Najaf Abadi & Sotalni, 2012). While it cannot be disputed that operational plans and action plans are formulated from strategic plans, it should be noted that strategic planning cannot be limited to annual plans that each teacher and each department in the school should develop. These annual plans should be formulated and aligned with strategic objectives as formulated during strategic planning. It is assumed that the HODs’ conceptualisation of strategic planning may be influenced by the extent of their involvement in this kind of planning and a result I was relevant establish if such relationship existed.

5.3.2 How does HODs understanding influence their involvement or lack thereof in their schools’ strategic planning?

I sought to answer the above question from two standpoints. Firstly, through the literature review wherein it was extrapolated that unless the HODs understand themselves as agents of change (Leader, 2004; Kupers, *et al.*, 2013) and motivators of change, their role in influencing the functioning or performance of the school in terms of strategic planning will remain bleak. For a detailed discussion of this, refer to for example to the section (**Section 2.2.4.7 of Chapter Two**). Secondly, I have also attempted to answer the question through the empirical research. In this latter category, participants seemed to conceptualise the *status quo*

of their day-to-day activities as constituting strategic planning, which influence their level of involvement. Drawing from their understanding one infers that the HODs merely relate strategic planning to their everyday operational duties. That alone influences their involvement due to their level of conceptualisation. Only if they could understand that they are not performing their strategic functions when they are involved in day-to-day planning process, then you could realise that they are not involved in it. On the other hand, their views may suggest that strategic planning does not occur in their schools. This conclusion emanates from the fact that when observing the school principals' offices and also reviewing their documents, endorsement of strategic plans were not found and sometimes only the vision and mission statements were found and were displayed in their offices. This then suggests that strategic planning in these studied schools hardly happens and if it does the involvement of HODs maybe questionable.

The above is further justified by their responses when asked if they were involved in strategic planning. All HODs agreed by saying, "Definitely, I am involved in planning" (Nobel). "I am involved but sometimes we have to delegate" (Nomusa); "Yes, I am involved" (Zena); "We are involved" (Sara); "All members of SMT are involved" (Weza). However, on probing questions, it later emerged that, in effect, what they were involved in was operational planning which occurs after strategic plans have been put in place.

Based on the above evidence, this proves that the HODs are comfortable and satisfied by the way in which they are involved in performing their roles. They do not have knowledge of any roles besides what they understand. As a result of this (mis)understanding, the HODs see no need to be restless in wanting to be involved. In that regard, the lack of their involvement is determined by the way they understand strategic planning.

5.3.3 To what extent do these HODs get involved in their schools' strategic planning?

The findings show that HODs claim to be involved in strategic planning of their schools, yet evidence gives contradictory picture. This is nowhere clearer than when a check into documentary analysis of their school minutes reveal that there is hardly any meeting of strategic planning. In two of the three schools, strategic planning was old, out-dated and gathered moss in the shelves. As I have stated above, when I asked one HOD if she was part of the vision formulation, her response was that, "the vision is as old as the age of the school" (Nobel). This response implies that this HOD was not part of the vision formulation. Another participant in the same school speaks of "we are involved in the vision; it is just that I cannot

explain the way one wants” (Zena). Another participant was even more blatant when she said that “no, in fact I was not even the member of the SMT. I have not been involved in such an experience so far (Nomusa).” In addition, another participant said “before we even do our strategic planning we must make sure that we get strategic plan from the district which is given to us by the circuit and then we know that oh! On such and such a date there shall be workshops... (Nobel)”. From the above responses of HODs, one can clearly confirm that they are not involved in strategic planning to any significant level. This is even revealed in the last mentioned scenario from Nobel’s perspective. In the course of this study, I also found that the Department of Education at district level, does not distribute strategic planning documents for use by the individual schools. The district only offers the IQMS management plans. That literature, for instance, Ishaq and Kritsonis (2009), stipulate that most leaders fail the important task of involving stakeholders in strategic planning. Such failure was reminiscent of the participants in this study. While the HODs claim that they get involved in the strategic planning in their schools, their understanding, and unavailability of evidence from documents review give a picture that the HODs hardly get involved in the strategic planning. What needs to be noted though is that this cannot fully confirm that HODs are not involved but it may also indicate that strategic planning is not conducted in the participating schools.

5.3.4 What influences does the involvement of heads of department in strategic planning have in their daily management roles?

In answering this question, I applied my personal informal observations and document analysis. The literature suggests that when HODs are involved in strategic decision-making, there tends to be a proper functioning of the school; they tend to be committed and motivated to manage the school strategy (Fiedler, 2002; Leader, 2004). One HOD confirms this view by saying “without my involvement there would be no management, so I must be involved because if I am not involved, I will not be able to know what I can do as an HOD” (Zena). But the contradiction was noted when analysing the year plan of this HOD in October 2013; it was still in a draft state. During the interviews, in seeking to understand if she would be willing to be involved in a more substantive manner than before, she exclaimed, “No I am tired now. I am 29 years in the service, I am tired now, very tired, I don’t want anything, I am tired very tired” (Zena). The above citation of an HOD of a school which has no proof of a strategic planning reveals that this school will continue lagging behind in terms of service

delivery. In a related case, but from a totally different school, Nomusa proves that her non-involvement influences her daily management when she says, “I would have been enthusiastic, creative and innovative and I would have felt that I am part and parcel of the school”. This implies that since she is not involved, she is the opposite of the latter statement. It may be concluded therefore that in the case where HODs are involved, their work as HODs is done with energy and motivation and they do believe that more can be achieved through their involvement. Seeing that some HODs claimed to be involved and others claimed to be less involved, it was necessary to establish how school principals in these three schools promoted involvement of HODs. The next section deals specifically with this issue.

5.3.5 How do leaders in their schools promote or hinder their involvement in strategic planning?

The findings suggest that in all three schools that participated in the study, leaders do promote the involvement of HODs, however, not in strategic planning but in other forms of planning in the schools. This conclusion is based on the fact that the HODs did not mention any strategic process that they were involved in; instead they mentioned action plans and activities. When the HODs were asked if available leadership in their schools promoted their involvement, their responses were varied. One said, “She tells us everything, everything, finances, departmental work” (Zena). Another one states that, “he keeps us informed even about the amount of money that he is going to use or that will be used he explain to us the income and expenditure he explains all that. He is transparent and has good communication skills... he keeps us updated most of the time” (Nomusa). Yet again another one shares how he “does not hold his cards in his chest; she delegate duties” (Nobel). In a related statement, Weza said that their principal, “Is a person who likes us to lead by example but I wouldn’t call him a laissez faire. We lead as a team”. Indeed the leaders that these schools have promoted involvement of HODs in their daily management. It was difficult to establish whether school principals promoted involvement in strategic planning or involvement in other activities of the school. However, drawing from the responses of the HODs, it is clear that involvement was promoted through the delegation of responsibilities, communication of school matter with all SMT members; leading the school in a transparent manner and being approachable to other members of the SMT. Given the above findings, below I make three different recommendations.

5.4 Recommendations

I make three recommendations in this last section of the study. The first one is directed at the Department of Education. The other one is directed to the schools, including school principals. The third one is for further research.

5.4.1 Recommendations directed to the Department of Education

Based on the findings presented with regard to the HODs' understanding of strategic planning, there appears to be a need for the development of HODs and school principals on how to formulate strategic planning. The HODs must also be developed to know and understand their roles in strategic planning in order for them to be positioned to play their roles in schools effectively. To this end, close supervision, monitoring and assistance are needed in the development of school strategic planning and districts officials should form part of the major stakeholders in this drive. This will ensure that all major stakeholders are involved. Strategic planning should be regarded as primary role for the schools towards the achievement of effective teaching and learning more especially in this turbulent change that South Africa is going through and must be a priority of the department not only to see but to know how it is formulated.

5.4.2 Recommendation directed at the schools

There is need for strategic planning in schools which should be spearheaded by the HODs and other line managers. Principal should understand that strategic planning is a process that needs collaborative thinking and not individual work. Having strategic planning in their offices could not solve the problem for underperforming learners if the stakeholders do not undertake this project to their hands and be hands-on in the implementation. Having glossy document for submission to the district office is meaningless and does not leave the footprint for the leaders to be proud about. Thus, it is recommended that strategic plans should not remain on paper but strong control measures are needed in order to guarantee their implementation.

5.4.3 Recommendation directed at the researchers

There is a need for further research focusing on the practicability of strategic planning within the school context given the fact that strategic planning is a borrowed practice from business practices.

5.5 Chapter summary

This study explored the experiences of the HODs in relation to their involvement in strategic planning in the three schools of Pinetown District. The study sought to investigate how the HODs understood strategic planning and how their understanding influenced their involvement or lack thereof in the strategic planning. Furthermore, the study wanted to establish how the involvement of the HODs in the strategic planning influenced the way they carried their duties as HODs and how the school principals promoted their involvement in the strategic planning.

It emerged during the data generation phase that the HODs confused their involvement in their daily management roles with that of strategic planning. Considering that there is a huge misinterpretation on what is understood as strategic planning. Noting that many confuse their activities with strategy, it will help schools to be innovative when they do have a strategic planning and involve the HODs. The study used qualitative approach to answer the experiences of the HODs and multiple cases of three schools were used for this study. National and international literature was also reviewed with a view to fully comprehending the problem picture for this particular study and provided the need for strategic planning in our schools since is surrounded by turbulence changes.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.

P407 Pasadena gardens
KwaMashu
4310
31 July 2013

The Head of Department
Department of Education
Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3200

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOLS OF PINETOWN DISTRICT

I am Promise Fikile Ngcobo registered as a Masters student in the school of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus in the current academic year. I humbly request that you grant me permission to undertake research in three primary schools of Pinetown District under Mafukuzela-Gandhi circuit during September and October 2013.

The dissertation would entail undertaking research in the area of school management that are heads of department and principals and principals. My topic is:

Exploring the involvement of head of department in strategic management in primary schools.

The objective of the study is to develop a better understanding as to how practical is the involvement of head of department in schools and how is it influencing school effectiveness. This involved researching school during instructional time in order to do observations while conducting the interviews with participants and attending their meetings for data collection. I hope that the results from this study will benefit education in terms of identifying areas that need attention. Moreover, it would be another way to find out whether the Department of Education strategic planning reaches its implementation level or not.

If you have any concern about the study, please contact my supervisor whose contact details are provided below.

Thank you for giving attention to my request.

Yours faithfully

P.F. Ngcobo

(Student no. 210551414)

Tel. No: 072-2447324

E-mail: ngcobofiki@gmail.com

SUPERVISOR'S DETAILS

Doctor T.T. Bhengu

Educational Leadership Management and Policy

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood

Tel. No: 0839475321

APPENDIX B



P 407 Pasadena gardens
KwaMashu
4360
07 May 2013

Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR YOUR SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATION IN MY RESEARCH PROJECT

I am Promise Fikile Ngcobo, a student currently enrolled for a Master's Degree in Education Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to do a partial dissertation as part of my studies. My research will focus on: *Exploring the involvement of head of department in strategic planning in their schools*. Strategic planning in schools is an emerging concept of research in South Africa and it needs to be built upon and I believe that it has an influential role toward school effectiveness. In the choice of this school in particular, it because I have identified successful school which displays strong leadership at certain levels within the school. I would very much like to conduct research focus on head of department in your school, and work particularly with two departmental heads that are willing to participate collaboratively with me to extend the constraints of our knowledge on this concept. This research would also analysis documents such as minutes, strategic planning, vision and mission of the school and other related documents. Please note that there is no way that this study can evaluates the performance or competence of your teachers. The intention of the study is not to judge but contribute in knowledge acquisition. The identities of schools participated and of all who contributed in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as specified by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to defend the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or detrimental consequences to themselves. In this regard, participants will be asked to complete a consent form. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me at 0722447324 or at ngcobofiki@gmail.com. You may also contact my supervisor Dr Thulani Thamsanqa Bhengu 0839475321 or at ttbhengu@ukzn.ac.za.

Yours faithfully Promise Ngcobo

Signature _____

APPENDIX C



P 407 Pasadena gardens
KwaMashu
4360
07 May 2013

Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN MY RESEARCH PROJECT

I am Promise Fikile Ngcobo, presently enrolled for a Master's Degree in Education Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to do a partial dissertation as part of my studies. My research will focus on: *Exploring the involvement of head of department in strategic planning in three primary schools*. I will be conducting interviews and review some documents.

This research will provide participants with an opportunity to air their experiences with regard to their involvement in strategic planning process of their school. You are kindly requested to participate in this research project. I also seek your permission to interviews you and tape record our discussion. The information gathered will be treated with confidentiality for the study only and your anonymity will be ensured. Participant is voluntary and you could withdraw at any point you wish to do so. There are neither foreseeable direct benefits nor direct risks associated with your participation in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact me at 0722447324 or at ngcobofiki@gmail.com. You may also contact my supervisor Dr Thulani Thamsanqa Bhengu 0839475321 or at ttbhengu@ukzn.ac.za.

Yours faithfully

Promise Ngcobo (210551414)

Signature _____

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

1. What is your understanding about strategic planning?
2. Does strategic planning happen in your school?
3. Are HODs involved in the crafting of strategic planning?
4. Do you regard the involvement of HODs as crucial in their daily management roles?
5. To what extent is the involvement of HODs in strategic planning of your school?
- 5.1 Are HODs involved from the formulation to implementation phase of strategic planning?
6. What leadership attributes do you think is promoting or hinder the involvement of HODs in strategic planning?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

1. Does planning happen in your school?
 - What kind of planning is that?
 - Who is involved in that planning?
2. Have you heard of strategic planning?
 - Does it take place in your school?
3. What do you understand about strategic planning?
 - What do you think should be done in strategic planning?
 - Who is involved for that particular planning? Are you involved?
4. To what extent is your involvement? Are you involved in the decision-making from the vision to the implementation process?
 - Do you think head of department should be involved in strategic planning?
5. How your involvement in strategic planning influences your daily management of teaching and learning?
6. How does school manager do to promote or hinder the involvement of head of department in strategic planning?

APPENDIX F

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

1. The following documents will be reviewed in each school:
 - Minutes of various meetings for any planning undertaken in the school.
 - Strategic plan in each school.
 - Other long-term plan regarded as strategic plan.
 - National or provincial Department of Education strategic plans.
 - Annual plans, grade plans including diaries that indicate dates for meetings.
 - Documental analysis will be also determined by the interviews as the way to verify what has been said



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

Faculty of Education

I (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research to be undertaken. I am willing for my school to be a research school.

Signature of Principal Date 12.05.2013



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL

Faculty of Education

I (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research to be undertaken. I am willing for my school to be a research school.

Signature of Principal
95-45-273

Date 08/05/13

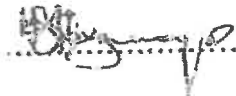
I, (Full names of participant)

hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this letter fully and I do / do not consent to participate in the study by P.F. Ngcobo entitled Exploring the involvement of Head of Department in strategic management. I am also fully aware that I have a right to withdraw from the study at any point should I wish to do so.



Signature

I, ^F..... (Full names of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this letter fully and I do / do not consent to participate in the study by P.F. Ngcobo entitled Exploring the involvement of Head of Department in strategic management. I am also fully aware that I have a right to withdraw from the study at any point should I wish to do so.

.....

Signature

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this letter fully and I do / do not consent to participate in the study by P.F. Ngcobo entitled Strategic planning in schools: Exploring the head of departments' perceptions in their involvement. I am also fully that I have a right to withdraw from the study at any point should I wish to do


.....

Signature

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I, (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this letter fully and I do / do not consent to participate in the study by P.F. Ngcobo entitled **Strategic planning in schools: Exploring the head of departments' perceptions in their involvement**. I am also fully aware that I have a right to withdraw from the study at any point should I wish to do so.

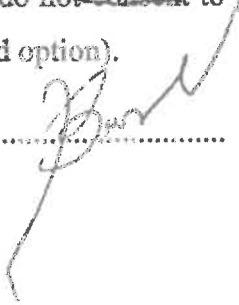
Thabo
.....

Signature

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PILOT SESSION FOR THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I / hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the focus of the research study. The researcher has fully explained to me the purpose and nature of the study. She has also given me opportunity to ask questions when I needed clarity on issues pertaining to the study. I am fully aware that participation in the pilot study is voluntary. I have understood everything that has been explained by the researcher to me.

I consent/ ~~do not consent~~ to participate in the pilot session of the interview. (Place a tick on the selected option).

Signature:

Date: