

The role of Departmental Heads in Leading Curriculum Monitoring in
Primary Schools: A study of *Jika iMfundo* Intervention

By

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SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with/ without my approval.

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I,, hereby declare that this dissertation is my work and does not contain any materials which have been submitted before for any degree in any institution.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my lovely sister Nozipho who is in heaven. Gone but not forgotten, I am where I am because of your contributions. The love you brought us with was so amazing, you are still in our hearts and no one will ever replace you in our lives. Thank you Donda.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore Departmental Heads' role in leading curriculum monitoring using the *Jika iMfundo* intervention. The study explored perspectives of three Departmental Heads' leading curriculum monitoring at three primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal province. The study intended to explore how departmental heads understand their roles in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools. Added to this, the study intended to understand the challenges departmental heads participating in *Jika iMfundo* face when monitoring teachers' work. The study was located appropriately within the interpretive paradigm that advocates changes in societal and educational structures and aims at practicality. Besides, the case study as a research method was used to understand the perspectives of the participants for the study. I generated data for the study using semi-structured interviews. The data were analysed using the thematic method of analysis. The study found that Departmental heads understanding of their role in curriculum monitoring included curriculum management and its coverage, conducting class visits, and ensuring the utilisation of teaching and learning time. The study also found that Departmental Heads leading curriculum monitoring using the *Jika iMfundo* intervention faced challenges such as unsatisfactory utilisation of teaching and learning time, resistance to change and incapacitation of departmental heads. However, they were able to surmount some of these challenges they encountered through their asset based approach to supplicating stakeholder intervention, scheduled meetings by Departmental heads and school management to tackling the challenges they encounter at the primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa.

Key words: Departmental Heads, curriculum monitoring, *Jika iMfundo*, leadership, and management

ABBREVIATIONS

DHs	Departmental Heads
DBE	Department of Basic education
SMT	Senior Management Team
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
JSTC	Junior Secondary Teacher's Certificate
HED	Higher Education Diploma
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
VPS	Vika Primary School
CPS	Curo Primary School
GPS	Gemini Primary School

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

This study explores the experiences of Departmental Heads (DHs) leading curriculum monitoring in primary schools using the *Jika iMfundo* intervention as context of the study. The official role of a Departmental Head (DH) is to engage in class teaching, be responsible for the effective functioning of the department, and organize relevant/related extra-curricular activities in order to ensure that the subject, learning area or phase, and the learner's education are promoted in a proper manner, according to the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document issued by South Africa's national Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2016). While the document states that DHs are expected to assist in the school's general management, their supervisory job is inextricably related to teaching and learning, which is the primary purpose of schools. In 2014 the provincial Department of Basic Education launched a pilot project called *Jika iMfundo*. *Jika iMfundo*, is an education intervention undertaken by the KZN-DoE in partnership with the PILO and with the support of the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT). The project was piloted in the Pinetown and King Cetshwayo Districts and has since then been introduced and implemented in all twelve districts and schools in KZN since 2018 (Mthiyane, Naidoo and Bertram, 2019). *Jika iMfundo* means 'to turn education around' in isiZulu, a South African language that is widely spoken in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The programme focused on increased curriculum coverage as a lever for improving learning outcomes. The main goal is that learners know more than half of the curriculum (Mthiyane, Naidoo and Bertram, 2019). *Jika iMfundo* is an extension of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and means to make the CAPS document more structured or clearer.

Thus, the DBE policy understands the DH as a teacher, a subject specialist and expert, a mentor of colleagues, and a person who plays a staff development and monitoring role. *Jika iMfundo*'s intervention with DHs is based on the premise that enhancing DHs' ability to perform their professional role and their ability to relate to teachers will build teachers' strengths, and, in turn, improve teaching and learning. The intervention sees DHs as being critical to building teachers' capacity to improve learning outcomes. *Jika iMfundo* identifies good practice behaviours for DHs as the following:

- Regularly checking teachers' coverage of the curriculum (curriculum tracking) and checking learners' work;

- Working with teachers to improve curriculum coverage, and
- Assisting teachers with problems related to curriculum coverage (Metcalf, 2018).

1.2. Statement of the problem

Some of the core duties and responsibilities of departmental heads relate to curriculum management. Departmental heads are tasked with leading and providing guidance with respect to the latest approaches in subjects, methods, techniques and evaluation procedures that are constantly evolving and changing in the education sector (RSA,1996). They are further tasked with controlling the work of educators within their departments (RSA,1996). The purpose of such close monitoring will ideally improve curriculum coverage and assist teachers with problems related to curriculum coverage. So, while the expectation is that departmental heads are to use the tracker as a monitoring tool to improve curriculum coverage as per stipulations mentioned above, such expectations are seldom met.

From my personal observation and experience, DHs seem to understand what should be done with respect to curriculum monitoring. However, the *Jika iMfundo* documents seem to pose an extra burden on them. DHs are key members of school management teams and have an important role to play in providing instructional leadership and being agents of change in their departments (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012). However, there is limited research on their role in curriculum support and monitoring in South Africa. Engels et al (2008) argue that the role of DHs includes mobilising teachers under their supervision and creating school-based communities of practice. This is in line with *Jika iMfundo*'s view on the role of DHs to provide school-based curriculum support by working with teachers, regularly checking their curriculum tracking, and assisting them with problems related to curriculum coverage through professional supportive conversations.

The DBE has acknowledged that content coverage, teacher performance, and lack of expertise of SMTs in monitoring and supporting teachers continue to be some of the challenges experienced in the education sector (Fourie, Grissel & Verster, 1990). According to Mthiyane, Naidoo and Bertram (2019)'s study, their findings show a range of different views on the extent to which *Jika iMfundo* enabled DHs to support their teachers to achieve curriculum coverage. From my personal observation in the context I work, the situation is contrary to the above study's findings. They also consider tracker as a one size fits all approach because curriculum can be covered but it is not guaranteed that all learners are able to keep up with the content

covered in class. The gap is that *Jika iMfundo* is only for the highfliers not for slow learners (Mthiyane, Naidoo & Bertram, 2019).

Further to this, the study has been limited to the fact that *Jika iMfundo* trackers do not take contextual challenges into consideration and departmental heads' ability to play a supportive and developmental role is constrained by the lack of time

1.3. Researcher positionality

In 2019 my teaching career changed as I was appointed acting DH for which I ended up attending the *Jika iMfundo* meeting held only for DHs in the district where I worked. It dawned on me that there was a dire need to explore the challenges that DHs face. Some of the challenges discussed by the DHs at the *Jika iMfundo* meeting were: insufficient time for supervision and monitoring of educators in their departments. The DHs complained that the administrative work was too demanding and there was less focus on the learner. Though policy clearly outlines what the DHs' functions are, I found that in practice the role of the DH was multi-dimensional outside what the policy stipulates to the extent that they may not fulfil all of them. The DBE has acknowledged that content coverage, teacher performance, and lack of expertise of SMTs in monitoring and supporting teachers continue to be some of the challenges experienced in the education sector (Fourie, Grissel & Verster, 1990). Through this study I intend to explore the role of DHs in leading curriculum monitoring in primary schools with an intervention of *Jika iMfundo*.

1.4. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows

1. To explore departmental heads understanding of their role in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools.
2. To understand the challenges of departmental heads participating in *Jika iMfundo* when monitoring teachers' work.
3. To understand what can be learnt from departmental heads' perspectives regarding curriculum monitoring in the *Jika iMfundo* intervention.

1.5. Research questions

1. How do departmental heads understand their role in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools?
2. What challenges do departmental heads participating in *Jika iMfundo* face when monitoring teachers' work?
3. What can be learnt from departmental heads' perspectives regarding curriculum monitoring in the *Jika iMfundo* intervention?

1.6. Significance of the study

The potential significance of the study is that it could be useful to all DHs working in similar contexts where they are expected to supervise post level-one teachers. Apart from that, the findings could also inform school principals about both management and delegation of duties to the DHs in such a way that they are properly managed. Findings could also help the departmental officials at circuit and district levels in designing relevant training programmes for school-based DHs.

The findings of the study can assist researchers in school leadership as well as SMTs to understand how to improve strategies of monitoring curriculum implementation in order to enhance teaching and learning and consequently learner performance. Findings may be useful in determining the successfulness or otherwise of this piloted project *Jika iMfundo*.

1.7. Definitions of key concepts

1.7.1. Jika iMfundo

Jika iMfundo means 'to turn education around' in isiZulu, a South African language that is widely spoken in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The programme was implemented in selected teaching districts and focused on increased curriculum coverage as a lever for improving learning outcomes. *Jika iMfundo* is an extension of CAPS and means to make the CAPS document more structured or clearer. *Jika iMfundo*, an intervention for systemic education change, has a particular focus on teachers' improvement in curriculum coverage. It was

developed by the Programme to Improve Learning Outcomes (PILO) working in partnership with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. It was implemented as a pilot project from 2015 to 2017 in two education districts, one largely rural (King Cetshwayo) and one more urban (Pinetown). One aspect of the *Jika imfundo* project is the training of School Management Teams (SMTs) which consist of principals, deputy principals, and DHs. All members of the SMTs are required to attend workshops on Management and leadership (Module 1); Effective curriculum supervision, building relationships to improve learning (Module 2); and Leading instruction in schools (Module 3).

1.7.2. Leadership

According to Glatthorn et al, (2018), leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve the purpose. The definition as provided by Jacobs and Jacques means that without purpose, there will not be effective leadership. Leadership is that process in which one person sets the purpose or direction for one or more other persons and gets them to move along together with him or her and with each other in that direction with competence and full commitment.

Bush, (2007) describes leadership as an influence of relationship among leaders and collaborators who intend significant changes that reflect their mutual purposes. Bamburg and Andrews, (1990) believe that leadership is the art of mobilising others to want to struggle for shared aspirations. Common themes of influence, change and leader-follower collaboration emerge from these and other definitions. Algahtani, (2014), for example, describes leadership as the capacity of a human community to share its future, and specifically to sustain the significant processes of change required to do so. Since the focus of this study is not to define what leadership is, the definitions provided here assist in helping in the understanding of leadership and how it functions in leading curriculum monitoring in school. Drawing from literature, I use the term, leadership as the way DHs communicate the vision and the mission of the school. They hold departmental meetings as the key to achieve these goals. DHs set the purpose and focus of managing teaching and learning. Communication and supervision by DHs assist in improving teaching and learning. DHs as leaders of learning play a significant role

1.7.3. Management

According to Bush, (2016) management refers to the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the work of the organisation's members and utilizing all available resources to

reach the desired goals of the organisation. The major elements in the definition of management are objectives, resources, people and processes. Management can be regarded as a process through which organisations objectives are achieved, by utilizing resources in a co-ordinated manner. Central to the process of management is human resource development within the organization (Hissom, 2009).

Management is also defined as the type of work, which encompasses a variety of manageable educational tasks that are implemented by an individual who is in authority, so as to promote educational training, (Heystek, and Terhoven, 2015). Lack of proper management means poor output, institutional failure and lack of accountability. According to Robinson (2010) management is a process that is used to achieve and accomplish organisational goals. Since every organisation has a target, the management approach adopted goes a long way in achieving the set goals of the organisation. I use this concept in my study because the DHs are expected to participate in general management of the school, their supervisory role is very closely linked to teaching and learning, which is the key function of schools.

1.7.4. Curriculum

Curriculum is defined in two ways: it is the entire range of experiences, both undirected and directed, concerned in unfolding the abilities of the individual and the series of consciously directed training experiences that a school uses for completing and perfecting the enfoldment (Sabastian et al., 2019). Sayed, (1997) further explains curriculum as planned and unplanned learning experiences that learners undergo while in a school setting. The definitions provided here assist in helping in the understanding of leadership and how it functions in leading curriculum monitoring in school. In this study curriculum is an important concept because the main aim of *Jika imfundo* is about curriculum coverage, which is monitored by DHs.

1.7.5. Curriculum monitoring

Monitoring is a process based on clear aims and is performed to assess the quality of work, to show which targets and standards are achieved and which are not, and to clarify where improvement is needed (Schimmoeller, 2010). Curriculum monitoring is a process of gathering information for evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum and ensuring that the intended, implemented and attained curricula are aligned. It also measures the extent to which the curriculum is commensurate with the diverse needs of all learners. Since my study is on curriculum monitoring, this concept will be useful.

1.7.6. Curriculum managers

According to Segoe and Bisschoff (2019), curriculum managers are those educators who have the responsibility for planning, directing and controlling work of other educators. In the South African context curriculum managers encompass both the School Management Team (SMT) including the DHs whose responsibility extends beyond their own classrooms to include supervision and/or advice to a group of classroom educators, usually within a specific subject area. Sim (2011) say the main areas of responsibility of curriculum managers are:- teaching the subject through the school; developing the curriculum including teaching and learning strategies; implementing school policy; supervising/ monitoring colleagues' work to ensure that policies are followed through; devising and monitoring learners' records; collaborating in whole school planning; devising and leading in-service training with departmental staff; and coordinating and overseeing marking in line with school policies. This concept is useful in my study because in order for effective implementation of the curriculum to take place there is a need for curriculum support, curriculum management and supervision. This is the responsibility of those members of the School Management Team (SMT) who are often referred to as curriculum managers.

1.8 Organisation of the study

Chapter One

This chapter provides the background, problem statement and the significance of the study. It also outlines four research questions that guided the study. The key concepts and organisation of research report are also provided.

Chapter Two

The chapter focuses on the understanding of Departmental Heads in the school context as well as the theoretical framework that underpin the study. The chapter also discusses the instructional leadership theory as a relevant theory to the study.

Chapter Three

The chapter provides a detailed account of the research design, methods and procedures that are followed in conducting the study. It also outlines research instruments that were used to elicit data for the study.

Chapter Four

This chapter presents and discusses data that was generated through individual interviews and document analysis. It deals with the analysis and interpretation of data generated.

Chapter Five

This chapter contains the summary of the whole study, findings and recommendations.

1.9. Summary of chapter

So far, this chapter discussed the introduction and background to the study and foregrounds it with the problem statement as well as key research questions. The chapter also discussed the significance of the study and the researcher's positionality. Key concepts of the study was also discussed as well as organisation of the study. The chapter provided a general overview of the study highlighting key arguments as well as the context in which the current study aims to address. In the next chapter, the literature review will be discussed as follows.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter covered a brief introduction and background to the study, the problem statement, research questions, the researcher positionality, and clarification of key concepts. This chapter will include a review of important literature, both international and national, that links to a greater knowledge of my research work and how the literature enhances my contribution. The chapter examines trends and issues in leadership management, particularly as they relate to Departmental Heads (DHs), and presents and interrogates the perspectives of many researchers. The review of literature discussed literature on who a Departmental Head is as well as the roles and responsibilities of a DH. The understanding of who the Departmental Head in the school context enables for a fuller understanding how their roles in the school enables the successful implementation of the Jika iMfundo in the schools. Furthermore, the literature review also discusses the concepts of leadership and management and how these function in the school context. This is followed by the discussion on the theoretical frameworks including the instructional and distributed leadership theories.

2.2. Understanding Departmental Heads (DHs) in the school context

Departmental heads (DHs) are school-based educators who operate at post-level two and are responsible for curriculum monitoring and management in addition to teaching. They are employed under the EEA (Act 76 of 1998) and work at post-level two. According to Balkrishen & Mestry, DHs are also known as middle managers and curriculum coordinators in other countries (2016). In South Africa, DHs are members of the School Management Team (SMT), and they are the SMT's first in line. They oversee and monitor curriculum delivery on a daily basis to ensure that students receive an excellent education. Aubrey-Hopkins and James (2002, p.305) concur, noting that "the Departmental head's key managerial job has changed to include a leadership role to increase student learning." According to Babbie, "one of the most critical elements that determines student achievement in educational institutions is leadership" (2015, p.3). While good leadership in educational institutions is universally acknowledged, little is

known about which specific leadership responsibilities are most likely to promote instruction and student achievement (Agyarkoh, 2013).

Despite the fact that primary school departmental heads have existed since schools were separated into subject-specific departments, not much studies have researched on it. Department heads are needed and effective in a range of areas of the school and departmental structure as middle administrators in schools. They function as significant leaders in the school and act as liaisons between administration and departments. They play a crucial role in the administrative-teacher chain of command. "Departmental heads emerge as "middle managers" with financial, curricular, and personal obligations," according to Dalin (2005, p.153). The leadership of a department head can have an indirect impact on school improvement and student achievement (Allen and Wiles, 2016). However, there is a lacuna in the literature about the experiences of their leadership role in curriculum monitoring in the context of *Jika iMfundo* intervention, particularly in the schools I'm researching. Role ambiguity, pressure, and perplexity have also received little attention (Mthiyane, Bhengu, and Bayeni, 2014).

The research on departmental heads shows that the role lacks both a clear definition (Arends and Kilcher, 2010) and a clear job description, however, in South Africa there has been considerable research on this. The wide range of leadership roles makes it a difficult subject to research. Nonetheless, two critical questions provided in Chapter One (How do departmental heads understand their role in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools? *and* What are departmental heads' sense of the efficacy of the strategies they use in monitoring the curriculum using the *Jika iMfundo* model?) will drive the investigation of primary school departmental heads' experiences. It is imperative to remember that each primary school department, as well as each institution, will be distinct. Angelle et al., (2011), in support of a diverse school and department culture, contended that schools and departments will differ substantially due to two factors. The first concern is the impact of contextual factors on schools and departments, such as teacher background and beliefs, policy, school size, funding, and parental support. The internal school elements, such as the administrator's leadership style, ethos, goals, and vision, professional working relationships and structure, decision-making, communication, monitoring, and assessment, are the second concern. Furthermore, departmental heads must deal with teacher aversion to change as well as highly autonomous professionals who resist collaborative efforts (Babbie, 2015). All these factors contribute to the complexity and ambiguity of the primary school departmental head's function.

DHs, according to Witten and Makole (2018), have two primary responsibilities: leading and managing. Many department heads take on leadership roles to help or support their colleagues to further their own education (Vogel, 2018), and to increase student learning (Wajdi, 2017). Willis and Templeton (2017) considered the function of departmental head as requiring an educator to continue learning. While the leadership elements of their job are crucial, they conceal the true nature of the position and its obligations. Their job entails people and resource management, and it is sometimes overburdened with less important, more mundane activities that frustrate and stress out even the most effective department heads (Wills, 2019). Despite the advancement of the concept of teacher leadership, the evolution of the department head's job has not kept pace with the needs of their environment. The function has remained essentially bureaucratic and managerial since its establishment in the early twentieth century, leading to frustrations and isolation (Zuckerman, 2020). Managing a budget, ordering resources, timetabling, mediating between multiple parties, delivering information, and serving as a liaison between management and instructors are all part of the job description. These administrative responsibilities consume a large portion of the departmental heads' limited release time (Tobin, 2014). Despite the tensions that come with managing and leading, departmental heads have developed into important teacher leaders in their schools (Tingle et al, 2019).

According to Vikaraman et al (2018), the concept of departmental head is out of date and has to be replaced with a more effective teacher leadership paradigm that can represent the process of change in instructional practices and curricular activities. He went on to say that the new teacher leadership model should emphasize mentorship and coaching, professional development opportunities, school-level decision-making, and reflective inquiry, based on his analysis of the department head. "Teacher leadership involves inter-related areas of commitment and knowledge, including commitments of moral purpose and continuous learning, as well as knowledge of teaching and learning, educational environments, collegiality, and the change process," according to Wills (2019, p. 246). Tobin (2014), for example, underlined the necessity of distributed leadership and the transition to the establishment of a shared culture, shared values, and a unifying vision across the entire school. They also recommended that teacher leaders benefit from strong leadership, clear roles, trust, and an emphasis on collaboration and professional growth (Tobin, 2014).

2.3 The leadership roles of Departmental Heads in enhancing student academic achievement

Department heads are responsible for a wide range of tasks. However, for the purposes of this literature review, work will be divided into two categories: leadership and management. Clearly, the types of work that DHs conduct are intertwined. Some decisions are made on an individual basis, while others are made in a more collaborative manner. Nonetheless, there is a discrepancy in the literature regarding the time spent on administrative tasks, which fall under the category of managerial work, against the time spent on leadership roles. If we are to better grasp the nature of the departmental head's leadership function, we need more information about this gap. The major job of departmental heads, is to develop the capacity of individuals with whom they work and to encourage self-evaluation (Tran et al, 2018). Taylor and Moyane (2005, p.38) defined leadership capacity "as an organizational concept implying broad-based, skilful engagement in the activity of leadership that leads to sustained school improvement. As a result, different forms of departmental head's work foster capacity growth in their colleagues to varying degrees. Mentorship and collaborative efforts are examples of this. However, the reality of the job implies that a considerable amount of time is spent on administrative tasks, diminishing important time spent with colleagues and students.

Leadership work

The concept of leadership is one that has taken several dimensions. However, in simple terms, leadership includes the process of overseeing the entire activities of an institution through monitoring and supervision as well as the success of the institution. At school, when the departmental head lead a group of people is referred to as performing leadership work. Departmental heads, according to Tapala et al, (2020), are prominent professionals who serve as role models for their department employees and colleagues. Terhoven and Fataar (2018) expand on the concept of the department head as a leading professional by emphasizing the department's and students' teaching, learning, and achievement. Departmental heads must be up to date on curricular changes and must be more than just good teachers. They extol influence in the department and school (Spaul, 2013). Curriculum and/or instructional leaders are expected of departmental heads. The departmental head serves as a change agent in primary schools in this role. Department heads are critical for including teams and departments in innovations and policies that result in changes in teaching and learning; yet, due to the huge

size of schools and the arrangement of schools into subject specific groupings, this can be difficult (Spaul, 2013).

Furthermore, departmental heads, according to Tapala et al (2020), can lead change "provided they are empowered to be more than simple gofers attending to administrative detail" (p. 49). Departmental heads, in addition to fostering a sense of belonging in the department, also increase staff and student performance (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985) through improving teacher capacity and encouraging self-evaluation (Harmon, 2017). Nonetheless, departmental heads must grasp the nature of change (Hewitt, 2006) and be able to conceive "broader school management policies and how they can affect their department, even if there is no evidence that subject leaders are implementing any changes at the school level" (Hartas, 2010, p. 10).

Departmental heads can lead in a variety of ways and employ a variety of techniques. The regular departmental meeting is one strategy (Hall and Hall, 2004). The frequency of these departmental meetings varies by department, but they are mandatory in many instances around the world. Meetings are frequently called either on a monthly or "as-needed" basis when new initiatives, policies, or issues affecting the department develop. Departmental meetings are sometimes issue-focused and focus on school policies, while other, more productive meetings are driven by department and school goals and include staff development and group learning. Teachers are also protected by department heads from the plethora of details that fall into their laps as a result of school, district, and ministry policy. Writing and constructing curriculum (Hallinger and Heck, 1998), mentoring and coaching new and struggling teachers, and demonstrating creative, effective teaching tactics and procedures are all examples of leading (Hallinger, 2016). Leading committees both inside and beyond the department, as well as giving professional development to colleagues, are all examples of leadership.

Department heads also serve as a link between groups of people, bridging or brokering information. They are the route of communication between senior staff and teachers, and they clarify school and district policies for classroom instructors (Gumede and Biyase, 2016). (Govender, 2018). These examples of responsibilities are simply a handful of the types of leadership activities that department heads engage in. A more distributed style of leadership structure is required for department heads to have an impact on the entire school. The framework that most easily facilitates teacher leadership is distributed leadership, which is currently an extensively debated kind of leadership (Goodall, 2018). Department heads, on the

other hand, must be empowered and given the opportunity to participate in whole-school decision-making for it to be completely implemented (Gwija., 2016). The next step is for department heads to take an active role in school-wide decision-making. According to Esdras and Andala (2021), "there is sufficient evidence from the study to contend that middle managers are increasingly seeking a greater say in decision about the school" (p. 328) and that they want a more distributed form of leadership in their schools, based on their research of department heads in the UK. If distributed leadership in schools is to become even more prominent, teachers, department heads, and administrators will need to rethink their roles and take on responsibilities beyond their traditional responsibilities to improve the overall school (Ezugoh and Adesina, 2020). When department heads actively participate in a school with distributed leadership, they will have to exercise their leadership potential, which stems from their department and extends to the entire school. In this study, the leadership experiences of departmental heads in leading curriculum monitoring in primary schools using the *Jika iMfundo Intervention* will be explored and the various challenges they also encounter in leading curriculum monitoring. Added to this, by adopting the distribute leadership theory, my study seeks to investigate the extent to which the departmental heads in the study exercise such leadership.

Management work

Management is the ability of a leader or individual to effectively coordinate and ensure that the tasks and responsibilities assigned to him/her are effectively and efficiently discharges. Tasks that the department head completes on his or her own, with little or no assistance from colleagues, are common in management work. Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) investigated the role of middle managers and the types of tasks they accomplished. They discovered that the activities they accomplished were frequently completed individually and consisted primarily of mundane administration and crisis management, leaving little time for strategic thinking. These individual tasks or administrative responsibilities include managing and assigning department resources, such as ordering consumable items such as overhead sheets, pens, and pencils, as well as other supplies such as textbooks, printers, and computers (Cross et al., 2002). (Gabriel, 2015). There were no "explicit ties to teacher leadership" in the sorts of independent work identified in the literature. This is an issue that needs to be investigated more.

Department heads in the United Kingdom, according to Cumighud and Arevalo (2020), spend a significant amount of time on administrative and management responsibilities. When an issue with computers in their classrooms or offices emerges, department heads are increasingly being asked to handle their own equipment. Managing staff absences, timetabling, curriculum planning, producing teaching resources, and attending professional development sessions are all examples of administrative duties. Department heads are occasionally tasked with evaluating teachers or teacher candidates, though it should be noted that in Ontario, teacher evaluations are no longer under the purview of department heads. De Clercq (2007) also claimed that department heads in the United Kingdom must achieve administration and government performance standards while simultaneously teaching their own classes. This is becoming more apparent in Ontario, where department heads are feeling more pressure to enhance student achievement on standardized test scores. These administrative responsibilities take up a lot of time and divert department heads' attention away from their leadership roles and collaborative efforts. Schmidt's (2020) study of department heads indicated that "some department heads expressed frustration that their roles were managerial, bureaucratic and isolated," and they "expressed disappointment, disillusionment and frustration upon discovering that their headship positions were filled with "paperwork" and "meetings"-work that was "not with the kids" (p. 832).

Work with Colleagues

Tasks that the department head completes alongside colleagues are referred to as collaborative work. This may entail facilitation, but it is not a task in which the department head assumes direct leadership. Collegiality, cooperation, and cohesion are necessary components of collaborative activities and, as a result, of teacher leadership (Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner, 2017). In addition to these collaborative features, instructors who get specific and appropriate professional development geared toward higher quality teaching improve student performance. Borgs (2018) emphasized the importance of establishing a collaborative culture in their research on topic leaders in Wales, and this is repeated throughout the research. According to Cuban (1998), collaborative, collegial, and supportive environments will aid in the formation of a community of leaders and learners, which will contribute to school improvement and teacher development (Cutton., 2003).

In Cornock's (2011) study in Ontario, collaborative effort was critical to reforming secondary schools. In addition, Borgs argued that fostering a collaborative culture through the formation

of common norms, expectations, and routines is critical to influencing other teachers and working toward student achievement. Much of the work that department heads conduct within the department exemplifies collaborative work. The use of formal and informal communication, cooperative decision-making, policy creation, and the development and sharing of best practices are all examples of this effort. Working cohesively and collectively toward curricular endeavors as a community. Collaboratively developing departmental policies establishes clear expectations and guarantees consistently high standards of practice within the department (Borgs, 2018). Simple administrative chores, such as ordering new and appropriate books for certain grades, or more sophisticated ones, such as arranging professional development opportunities for a group of instructors, may be undertaken by teams.

Department heads can use a variety of strategies to improve collaboration among colleagues. Cross-departmental collaboration is also possible. Through the creation of committees, providing release time, rearranging meetings, and staff development, one principal's collaborative effort discussed in Osterman's (2012) research encouraged staff to engage in cross-curricular endeavours by supporting those identified as moving in the "right" direction. Interdepartmental collaboration is also beneficial, according to Brown, Boyle, et al., (2000). Hannay and Denby (1994) discovered, however, that "the departmental middle management organization was unable to accomplish policy objectives that required cross-departmental coordination" (p. 346). According to Francis (2007), middle school leaders have little time to collaborate with other schools, share, and observe. Furthermore, according to Fleming (2014), multidisciplinary work frequently fails due to the drive of departmentalization.

2.3.1 The factors and conditions that impact Department Heads

Department heads work in a variety of settings, with varied conditions at times. Because each school is distinct, the working environment will be diverse as well. Every position has its own set of circumstances. "Four particular factors that play a part in creating this diversity: subject epistemology; departmental membership; the Subject Leader's individual competence and expertise; and the concept of teaching underpinning the Subject Leader's practice," according to Fitzgerald and Gunter (2006, p.307). External factors are examined first. The administration's leadership styles, the department head's emphasis on his or her work, the

school and department culture, access to resources, and the provision of release time are all examples of these (Glover and Miller, 1999)

Second, the internal conditions that affect department heads' work are explored, including details on the department head's personal abilities and limits, as well as the effects of role confusion, conflict, and ambiguity. Administration Leadership Approaches the leadership style of the school's administrative team is one of the most important variables influencing department heads' capacity to lead. This approach will set the tone for much of the department head's responsibilities. When an administrator employs a distributive leadership style, the department head can anticipate playing a role that extends beyond the department's boundaries. If alternative leadership methods are used, though, their function may be more traditional. According to Albashiry, Voogt, and Pieters, (2016), the department head in Welsh schools is influenced by the head teacher and senior management team. As a result of their own excessive workload, administrators may delegate responsibility to their department heads. Rather than controlling individuals to compensate for their overloaded work expectations, administrators should focus on "facilitating others' knowledge, talents, and expertise" (Brown, Boyle, et al., 2000, p. 9). Department heads were more effective when administrators decided to clearly identify and link department head responsibilities to people, not simply tasks, as well as give clear job descriptions (Mercer, Barker and Bird, 2010). Administrators must also acknowledge the accomplishments of department heads. Recognition can take the shape of a perceived prestige, incentive pay, or policymaking access (Glover et al., 1999). The leadership strategy has an impact on not just the department head's leadership function, but also the entire school culture.

Focus of Department Head's Work

The work's concentration differs widely from one department head to the next, as well as from one institution to the next. Work focus directs attention to the goal of their efforts. Department heads can work on projects that benefit the entire school, the department, an individual, themselves, or any combination of the above. As a result, the subject-specific department head's function is still uncertain and unclear. A departmental headship can come in a variety of shapes and sizes. They are usually subject specialized, such as the head of math or English, as previously indicated. They can, however, focus on a cross-curricular or school-wide aim. Head of Assessment and Evaluation, Literacy Lead Teacher, are examples of similar positions. Department heads who are responsible for a whole grade of pupils or pastoral headships such

as Head of Guidance are also possible. Department heads are increasingly being tasked with tasks that require a whole-school approach. Department heads take on additional responsibilities outside of their typical department area of duty to contribute to entire school decision-making as distributed leadership becomes more popular in schools. Data analysis of standardized test scores or the establishment of whole school policy are examples of whole school decision-making.

Gabriel (2015) studied whether department heads see their management job as including the entire school, rather than just their department, and whether they have meaningful access to decision-making across the board. They discovered that one person or a senior management team can no longer make decisions on their own, and Bennett (1999) noted that principals will not be able to make any changes without the help of middle managers (DHs). As a result, Gabriel (2015) argued that department heads are critical to the development of effective departments and, as a result, successful schools. Department heads have traditionally focused on their own areas of responsibility, such as subject-specific departments, and this remains their primary focus of work. They may accomplish activities that help define departmental policy on late students, missed assignments, and other challenges that teachers face daily (Gabriel, 2015). Alternatively, the duties could be focused on a single instructor in the department. Department heads may be working one-on-one with a new teacher to build his or her talents or with a struggling teacher to refine his or her skills, like mentoring and coaching. Department heads might also concentrate their efforts on students and parents by convening meetings with colleagues to resolve concerns (Glover and Miller, 1999).

Finally, department heads' attention may be drawn to themselves. Department heads need time alone to think about challenges, reflect, plan projects, create their own teachings, and strategy their moves in the educational political atmosphere. Subject-specific department heads concentrate on their departments' teaching and learning activities. They look at a range of data and academic results and make decisions based on that information; yet, for certain department heads who need to grasp data and how to evaluate it, this can be a struggle (Friedman, 2011). They create departmental handbooks and set departmental objectives (Anderson, & Nixon, 2010). Unfortunately, subject-specific foci may clash with departments that are cross-curricular or pastoral in nature.

School and Department Culture

The department head's capacity to lead and drive the school and department toward enhanced teaching and learning can be influenced by the school and department's culture. School culture, according to Borgs (2018), is both a key to reform and a hindrance to it. To progress toward change and improvement, an entire school culture of learning is required. Departmental organization comprises four basic elements, according to Basset (2012). The first parameter is the department's structural organizational configuration, which looks at how the departments are arranged and how responsibilities are distributed. The degree of social cohesion and collegiality inside the department is the second measure. Next, a department's standing or respect is important since it determines where the department sits in the school hierarchy. Finally, power and how it pervades the previous three factors, as well as what constitutes power in social contexts, is the final parameter. The discussion of the power imbalance between leaders and followers, as well as the techniques that leaders employ, as well as formal authority and informal influence, are all included in this final point. The varied limitations and intricacies of each department can have an impact on a department head's capacity to lead when dealing with a group of teachers. Department leaders will have a difficult time enacting change if their department is loosely organized, has low social cohesiveness and collegiality, is a lower rank department, and has a weak power structure.

Departmental Structures

Departmental structures differ from school structures in the same way as school structures do. Bouckaert and Kool (2018) distinguished the various types of departmental structures and discussed the consequences for departmental leadership. It is obvious from their discussion and Cohen, Manion, & Morrison's (2011) research that the departmental organization is made up of many different aspects. First and foremost, it is critical to recognize that the subject being taught has an impact on the management of department (Grootenboer, 2018). However, despite this initial overall concept, departmental organization must work around a variety of issues. Fleming (2014) argued that like school structures, department heads could build flatter structures in which leadership is more widely shared while generating greater ownership of change and, as a result, a more devoted team in the department. Grootenboer (2018) and Grubb & Flessa (2006) reinforce this argument by emphasizing the significance of democratic and evenly distributed leadership, as well as collaboration and support. Effective departments were studied by Friedman (2011), while ineffective departments were studied by Fullan (2015). Both

emphasize the significance of departmental policies. Departmental policies, for instance, should be designed collectively but should reflect whole-school policies while also allowing for some flexibility for teacher autonomy. Departmental documentation in the form of a complete departmental handbook is a quality-of-education and standards-raising project (Gurr, and Drysdale, 2012).

The use of departmental handbooks, according to Borg (2018) and Gabriel (2005), provides a framework and set of expectations for not just the department head but also the teachers within the department. Furthermore, effective departmental structures require effective communication through the use of meetings, memoranda, bulletins, notice boards, email, disseminated content, and informal conversation. Collegiality, involving parents as partners, focusing on student success (Gurr, and Drysdale, 2012), focusing on students, teaching, and learning (Harris, 2002), and sharing best practices are all crucial. A concentration on teaching and learning, according to Glover and Miller (1999), leads to increased leadership activities. Department decision-making is another facet of departmental structure. Departmental decision-making is advantageous for two reasons: (a) higher levels of participation and commitment to outcomes; and (b) a wider range of experience inputted (Booyse and Swanepoel, 2015). As a result, when moving toward a change, this engages instructors and brings together a diversity of ideas, ensuring that all voices in the department are heard. However, according to Brown, Boyle (1999), some teachers are hesitant to participate in decision-making processes and are resentful of the time commitment since they believe they have little effect.

Access to Resources

Access to necessary resources is critical to the success of a thriving department; nevertheless, access to resources varies in every department. Resources come in a variety of forms, with time and materials being the most valuable. Time is constantly mentioned as being necessary but in short supply for department heads to perform successfully (Glover and Miller, 1999). Some department heads have a limited or partial teaching schedule, while others are solely responsible for their department and do not teach, and yet others teach a full schedule in addition to their responsibilities. The responsibilities of department heads are evolving and extending as the function of department head evolves. A department head's responsibilities have expanded beyond his or her subject area to include initiatives across the entire school, placing a significant strain on his or her time (Glover and Miller, 1999). From time to time, department heads cite books, consumables, and technology resources as critical (Gabriel,

2015). Department heads and teachers equally value the physical structure of the school and department, as well as an equitable distribution of space. As departments increase or decline in size, their physical location within the school is adjusted in many institutions. This can have an impact on instructors' attitudes toward their jobs and departments, as well as their feelings of efficacy. Alternatively, a department can stay put in one place, resulting in a lack of cross-curricular contact among professors. Kaushik and Walsh, (2019) observed the tension that arose because of a "we versus them" mind-set that pervaded several schools and departments, resulting in a challenging work environment and a negative school culture. In addition, Gabriel (2015) emphasized the importance of department head credibility and confidence among colleagues. If there is trust, a department head can manage teachers' needs while also negotiating with them about their conditions, teaching schedules, locations, and resource availability, allowing for a balance between whole-school needs. Regardless, when there are philosophical disagreements and attitudes about education, difficulties will develop. A competent department head is one who can navigate the difficult terrain of equitable resource allocation within their department while maintaining a sense of collegiality and remaining focused on the school's goals and vision.

2.4 Leadership and management

2.4.1 Leadership

The South African government has passed progressive legislation to increase education quality and equity since 1994, when democracy was established. This was a result of South Africa's apartheid history. Two key legislations have given school administrators more power. Department Heads or school principals are responsible for professional leadership and management in growing conditions for enhanced teaching and learning, according to Section 16(3) of the South African Schools Act, (No. 84 of 1996) (Republic of South Africa, 1996), and Section 4 (2) of the Employment of Educators Act, (No. 76 of 1998) (Republic of South Africa, 1998).

Although the notion of leadership is broad and varied, three elements are critical. Leadership, according to Malinga (2016, p.3), is "a process in which one person exerts intentional influence over others to direct, shape, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization." Leadership is becoming more closely tied with values, as personal and professional principles are expected to take precedence (Mampane, 2017). Third, leadership is

frequently related with an organization's realistic, credible, and optimistic vision (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013). There are three managerial approaches, according to Donaldson (2007), to assure the school's operational effectiveness. To begin, planning and budgeting include establishing the systems, policies, processes, and timelines that will ensure efficiency. It also entails assessing the physical, financial, and human resource needs of the school (Crowther et al, 2002). Second, by organizing, staffing, and delegating, all stakeholders are aware of what is expected of them. Third, precise procedures for monitoring work progress and completion should be implemented in schools (Crowther et al., 2002).

Leadership is defined in this study as the procedures by which department heads (DHs) influence various stakeholders, such as teachers, students, and the community, in order to fulfil the school's vision of improving learning outcomes and school improvement. Management comprises making use of organizational resources (both human and material) in order to attain goals. Although these terms are not used interchangeably in this study, I consider leadership to be a subset of management.

2.4.2 Management

Words like efficiency, planning, paperwork, procedures, rules, policies, programs, control, and consistency come to mind when we think of management (Danielson, 2007, p. 141). Management, according to Fluckiger et al., (2015), is planning, organizing, leading, and managing the work of the organization's members while utilizing all available resources to achieve the organization's desired goals. Management may also be defined as the process of achieving an organization's goals through the coordinated use of resources. This procedure necessitates the development of human resources (Fullan, 2002).

Glover et al., (1998, p.292) defines management as "a sort of work that involves a variety of manageable educational duties, carried out by personnel whose authority is to promote education and training." It is an important part of any educational program, but the main purpose is to promote effective teaching and learning schools. Management should not be reserved for a select few; it is an activity in which all members of educational institutions participate (DoE, 1999).

2.4.3 Jika *iMfundo* and curriculum management

The KZN Department of Education (2008) describes curriculum management as encompassing planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This definition is in line with Goodall (2017) who describe curriculum management as consisting of four stages, namely planning, teaching, assessing and evaluating curriculum objectives. These definitions, however, do not provide specific information about what exactly is being planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated in the process of managing the curriculum. Grissom and Loeb (2011, p.75) do shed some light by identifying important school curriculum management variables that are linked to improved student outcomes. These include regulation of time; monitoring and support for planning delivery in relation to curriculum coverage; the procurement and management of books and stationery; and the quality of tests and monitoring of results.

Curriculum management is defined by Brodsky (2008) as a process that is based on four points: (1) it involves the identification and establishment of goals, (2) it requires the formulation of a process to guide educational and instructional specialists (teachers) towards the attainment of the mentioned goals, (3) it is the establishment of managerial techniques to assist in the implementation of the identified process, (4) it includes constant evaluation and re-evaluation of the validity of the identified goal, process and management techniques. However, Mthiyane, Bhengu and Bayeni (2014) posits that curriculum management includes planning, developing, monitoring and reviewing the educational programme of the school to ensure a match with school goals and appropriate allocation of resources. Furthermore, Heng and Marsh (2009) emphasise that curriculum management is about managing systems and procedures as well as people to ensure productive teaching and learning and to promote increased levels of learner achievement. According to the Department of Education (2008), curriculum management encapsulates planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Javadi (2014) observes that in the last two decades, enormous pressure has been placed on the field of education to deliver improved student performance. In the United States in particular, the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2000 arrived with accountability measures and hefty demands on managing curriculum for effective teaching and learning. The trend in the last decade has been the linkage of specified management processes to the curriculum and the focus on instructional leadership (Grubb and Flessa, 2006).

School principals are often challenged by the diverse roles which they have to play as managers of schools. It is important to note that leadership in curriculum management is not only confined to the principal, however it is also delegated to the School Management Team (Deputy Principals, Heads of Departments) and teachers tasked with the academic programme of the school. This can only happen in an environment that promotes distributed school leadership and in a school system where everybody assumes collective responsibility. The school principal is however a key figure around which much of the school's activities revolve, and therefore to a great extent s/he determines the school's success or failure with regards to the management of the curriculum. As an educational leader, he/she should lead the curriculum management function.

The school principal together with his/her school management team (SMT), has a crucial role to play in managing the school. The principal has diverse duties to perform. According to Javadi (2014, p.6) the role of the principal deals amongst other things with budgeting, maintaining the school buildings and grounds, improving the instructional programme, working with staff to identify a vision and mission for the school, and building a close relationship with the community.

School leadership is also responsible for the management of resources to support effective curriculum delivery. Inadequate textbook, furniture, laboratories, and classrooms may contribute to poor learner performance, particularly since the teacher may often be the only source of information for students, who do not have resources for their independent study. The use of the learning resources can also be a challenge to teachers who are unqualified and under-qualified because they have weak content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge and the resources would be misused without serving their purpose of enhancing learning.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is made up of two theories. The theories are instructional leadership and distributed leadership are used to describe these concepts. These concepts are addressed in greater depth below:

2.5. Instructional Leadership theory

There are two types of instructional leadership: one is narrow, and the other is broad (Manasseh, 2016). Instructional leadership is defined as acts that are directly relevant to teaching and learning, such as performing classroom observations, in the restricted sense. This was a popular way of thinking about instructional leadership in the 1980s, and it was mostly implemented in small, low-income urban elementary schools (Hallinger, 2003; Meyer, 2014). All leadership actions that indirectly affect student learning, such as school culture and timetabling procedures, are included in the broad definition of instructional leadership. These could be considered leadership qualities that have an impact on the quality of curriculum and education provided to students. This framework recognizes that DHs as instructional leaders have a positive impact on students' learning, but that this impact is mediated (Goldring and Greenfield, 2002; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000). Hallinger and Murphy created a comprehensive model of instructional leadership (1985, 1986). The instructional leadership construct, according to this model, has three major dimensions: defining the school's mission, administering the instructional program, and promoting a positive school-learning climate. These dimensions are divided into ten instructional leadership functions, which are as follows: (1) framing the school's goals; (2) communicating the school's goals; (3) curriculum coordination; (4) supervising and evaluating instruction; (5) student progress monitoring; (6) instructional time protection; (7) providing incentives for teachers; (8) providing incentives for learning; (9) promoting professional development; and (10) maintaining high visibility.

The first two tasks, identifying the school's mission and framing and expressing the school's goals, are merged into the first broad dimension. The department Head's involvement in defining and articulating a clear school vision with a focus on better student learning is highlighted in these two leadership practices. This dimension was created to highlight the principal's responsibility for collectively developing a suitably context-based vision, ensuring that all school stakeholders are aware of the vision, and ensuring that teaching and learning procedures are aligned with the vision.

The second component consists of three leadership tasks: supervising and evaluating education, curriculum coordination, and student progress monitoring. This dimension presupposes the principal's participation in supervising, monitoring, and assessing school-based instruction and curriculum activities. In the current model, principals' roles are recognized as crucial leadership responsibilities.

Protecting instructional time, fostering professional development, maintaining high visibility, giving rewards for instructors, and offering incentives for learning are all part of the third dimension. This dimension has a greater reach and goal than the two previous dimensions. This dimension's leadership functions are thought to be very influential principal practices. This component emphasizes the necessity of establishing and maintaining a school atmosphere that encourages teachers' professional development while also supporting teaching and learning activities.

Among existing instructional leadership models, the model provided above is thought to be the most thoroughly evaluated (Leithwood et al, 1997). Until 2005, this model had been used in over 110 empirical research (Hallinger, 2005, p. 227). Although several different models of instructional leadership have been presented (Gronn, 2003), they all recognized three primary features that are like those established by Hallinger and Murphy (1985, 1986). According to current research, instructional leadership does not necessitate the principal being a model or exemplary teacher, but DHs must be able to create the organizational conditions necessary to build pedagogical capacity, expand opportunities for innovation, supply and allocate resources, provide instructional direction, and support to teachers, and enable teachers to assume in charge of their classrooms. Moreover, related literature says schools, where quality teaching and learning were strong, are demonstrated by instructional leadership, developing school mission and goals, coordinating, and monitoring curriculum, promoting a climate for learning and motivation. As a professional teacher in one of the secondary schools and an emerging researcher, I believe instructional leadership is a relevant theory for this study because of the focus of the study

2.5.1 Instructional leadership and school effectiveness

There is substantial evidence that a great instructional leader is a vital feature of a successful school (Erlandson, 1993; Hallinger and Heck, 1996). “The principal [and department heads] is the key to a good school,” writes Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989). The school principal and the DHs' collaborative efforts determine the educational program's excellence. They are the primary reason why instructors develop or are stifled in their careers. The most powerful component in determining school climate is the involvement of the principal and department

heads. I'll show you a good principal if you show me a good school” (p.64). The school effectiveness research reinforces these statements as substantiated in the review below.

The studies of Covert (2006) and Christie et al (2007) on educational opportunity found that socioeconomic circumstances and family background were crucial in determining a student's success in school, while school attributes had little to no effect on student achievement. This pessimistic view of education didn't explain why some schools in low-income areas were achieving high levels of success.

Educators and other educational scholars believed that the school and its qualities affected pupils' ability to achieve high levels of accomplishment. This hypothesis sparked school effectiveness research, with the goal of determining which elements under the school's control contributed to high student accomplishment independent of socioeconomic status or family background. Covert (2006) and Christie et al (2007) findings are clearly opposed by Weber's (2008) studies of four effective inner-city schools.

Weber described an effective school as one that can educate both impoverished and middle-class children. On standardized norm-referenced assessments, all four schools scored higher than the national average. His findings identified seven factors that were critical to the schools' effectiveness: strong leadership, with the principal having a significant influence in setting the tone of the school, high expectations for students, an orderly and quiet environment, an emphasis on reading skills and phonic awareness, frequent skill evaluation to guide instruction, additional reading personnel, and individualization. In a study conducted by Bolam and Turner (1999), some schools were observed and interviewed to differentiate between effective and ineffective schools. The results showed the below:

The results of the studied showed that the effective schools:

- emphasized obtaining specified reading and mathematics goals and objectives.
- held the belief that all students could learn regardless of factors outside of the school's control.
- set high academic expectations for all students.
- had higher levels of efficacy in teaching the basic reading and mathematics skills.
- directed more time to the acquisition of reading and mathematics.
- embraced the school and state accountability assessment programs; and

- had a principal that exhibited behaviors of an instructional leader. He was more assertive, provided an orderly and serious atmosphere, and assessed the school's progress toward academic goals.

These results showed that there were considerable differences between schools that succeeded, despite socioeconomic or family background factors.

Instructional Leadership and Teaching & Learning

In-depth studies of teachers' views of school DH qualities that influence classroom instruction have found that instructional leadership behaviours favourably influence classroom instruction (Brown and Rutherford, 1998). Bolam and Turner (1999) found that when instructional leaders monitor and provide feedback on the teaching and learning process, there were increases in teacher reflection and reflectively informed instructional behaviours, greater variety in teaching strategies, more response to student diversity, and lessons were prepared and planned. Teachers also reported that motivation, satisfaction, confidence, and a sense of security were all improved.

Teachers and classroom practice were negatively affected by DHs or Teacher-leaders who did not monitor and provide feedback on the teaching and learning process (Bolam and Turner, 1999). Teachers who worked with non-instructional leaders felt abandoned, frustrated, and ineffective, as well as a lack of trust and respect for the principal, motivation, and self-efficacy. Leaders who engage in behaviours such as informing staff about current trends and issues, encouraging attendance at workshops, seminars, and conferences, building a culture of collaboration and learning, promoting coaching, using inquiry to drive staff development, setting professional growth goals with teachers, and providing resources, in particular, foster teacher innovation in the use of a variety of methods, materials, and resources. As a result, greater student accomplishment is more likely (Stols, 2013).

Goal setting, according to Lieberman (1995), is an excellent technique to boost motivation and performance. Goals, they believe, raise attention to the work at hand, increase effort spent on goal-relevant tasks, promote persistence in achieving the goal, and increase the development of methods to attain the objective. Even in loosely tied organizations like public schools, this is true. According to Lipton & Wellman (2007), instructional leaders' frequent communication of school goals increases accountability, a sense of personal ownership, and instructional improvements. Organizational frameworks that guide the school toward a single focus are

provided by principals or DHs who develop and communicate shared goals with teachers. This widespread attention on academic press has an impact on teachers' classroom actions, resulting in more effective schools (Smith and Piele, 1997; Blasé & Blasé, 1998, 1999). The instructional leadership theory is relevant for this study because it will assist me in understanding how DH heads experience curriculum monitoring using the Jika Mfundo as context. Since monitoring is an important instrument of instruction leadership to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and success of an institution, it becomes an imperative for understanding the DHs in this study.

2.6 Distributed leadership theory and student learning outcomes

The relationship between distributed leadership and student learning outcomes is a contentious topic. Some writers have suggested that attempting to understand this link is pointless. They argue that looking for normative linkages between specific leadership distribution patterns and student achievement outcomes is unlikely to produce unambiguous practice guidelines (Anderson et al., 2010, p.135). Others have suggested that decentralizing leadership is only useful if the quality of leadership activities aids teachers in “delivering more effective education to their students” (Bambi, 2012, p.220).

In light of these viewpoints, Morrisey (2000) and Mitchell (2000) suggest that any investigation into the relationship between distributed leadership and student learning outcomes will only be desired and achievable if the leadership literature is more intimately linked to the educational literature. It is proposed that integrating leadership practice research to learning practice will help us answer the question of whether and how different patterns or configurations of distributed leadership contribute to student learning outcomes.

There have previously been a number of research looking into the link between distributed leadership and learning outcomes. Two studies in particular provide a good place to start when it comes to highlighting what we know about distributed leadership and student learning outcomes. Both the first and second studies, conducted by Leithwood et al (2006) in Canada and Lieberman (1995) in Tasmania, focus on this relationship as part of a much larger empirical research.

According to the findings of the Leithwood, Mascall & Strauss (2009) study, giving teachers a higher share of leadership responsibilities improves teacher effectiveness and student involvement. They also point out that, after accounting for home family context, teacher leadership has a considerably greater impact on student involvement than administrator leadership. Little (1990) research has also confirmed the essential processes by which more distributed forms of leadership improve student learning outcomes. Their research found that when leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community and teachers are empowered in areas that matter to them, student results are more likely to improve.

Other, smaller scale research have also found a link between distributed leadership and improved student learning results. In an English study of teacher leadership, researchers discovered a link between teacher involvement in decision-making and student motivation and self-efficacy (Harding, 2019). This study looked at the link between teacher involvement in school decision-making and a variety of student outcomes. These data suggest that distributed leadership and student involvement go hand in hand. Furthermore, both teacher and student morale improved as teachers felt more included and active in school decision-making. The “Distributed Leadership Study” (Locke, 2003) is without a doubt the most comprehensive study on distributed leadership in schools to date.

Through an in-depth research of leadership practice, a four-year longitudinal study, supported by the National Science Foundation and the Spencer Foundation, aimed to make the "black box" of leadership practice more transparent. The study's primary premise is that distributed leadership is best understood as distributed practice that spans the social and situational contexts of the school. The work of instructional improvement involved numerous leaders, according to this study, which focused on 13 elementary schools in Chicago. It also underlined how knowing the interplay between diverse leaders is critical to understanding leadership practice. The school, rather than the individual leader, appears to be the most relevant unit for thinking about the development of leadership skills, according to this study. It was also mentioned that intervening to improve school leadership may not be best accomplished by focusing on a single official leader, but rather by influencing the practices of several leaders. This is important in this study as the work of the Department Heads (DHs) is a product of distributed leadership through the principal. The marriage of the instructional leadership and distributed leadership theory will assist me in understanding when leadership sources are

distributed throughout the school community and teachers are empowered in areas that matter to them with improvements in terms of curriculum and students' success.

2.7. Summary of chapter

This chapter discussed the review of literature and the theoretical framework that underpin the study. In the first section there was a review of literature surrounding the Departmental Heads, the roles of DHs in enhancing academic achievement; and the section two of the review looked at leadership management, instructional leadership practices of DHs. The chapter also discussed the *Jika iMfundo* and curriculum management. Thereafter the theoretical framework, made up of instructional leadership theory and the distributed leadership theory was presented. These concepts framed my understanding of DHs perspectives on leading curriculum using the *Jika iMfundo* intervention. The next chapter will focus on the research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the review of literature discussed the concepts of Departmental heads (DHs) and their role in teaching and learning in primary schools. The chapter discussed among other things the conceptual frameworks for the study and a conclusion. In this chapter, attention is paid in addressing the research methodologies that have been developed to enable the researcher to obtain data for the study. The research methodology aims to guide the researcher by acting as a navigator to enable the researcher to reach his/her anticipated destination. The research paradigm, research approach, data generation method and data analysis method which were deemed appropriate for the purpose of the study are identified and discussed. Lastly, the issue of trustworthiness, ethical consideration and limitations are discussed

3.2. Research Paradigm

Prior to embarking on a study, it is important for the researcher to choose the paradigm within which the study is located. Barth (2001) defines a paradigm as the fundamental model or frame of reference which is used to organize observation and reasoning. As such it will not answer important questions, but it may help in the search for answers. Denzin and Lincoln (2013), define paradigm as human constructions which indicates where the researcher is coming from so as to construct meaning embedded in the data.

I have adopted the interpretivist paradigm to guide the research action and the outcomes of my study. Charmaz (2006) regard the interpretivist paradigm as the paradigm that aims at improving social world and how people make meaning of their specific actions and how they make sense of their worlds. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) share a similar view that the interpretive paradigm is utilised to comprehend the subjective world of human experience. This study, therefore, leans towards the interpretive paradigm, as it explores the role of DHs in leading curriculum monitoring in primary schools with an intervention of *Jika iMfundo*. It explores their personal views, observations and responses in understanding their learning experiences when using the *Jika iMfundo* toolkit to support and monitor teachers. The study also explores the challenges that DHs face when monitoring curriculum using the *Jika iMfundo* intervention. Lambert (2002) contends: “Knowledge is comprised of multiple sets of

interpretations that are part of the social and cultural context in which it occurs”. There is a reasonable expectation that the DHs would have different interpretations when comparing the period before and after the use of the *Jika iMfundo* toolkit. The question would also be whether the intervention of *Jika iMfundo* does contribute to improvement in curriculum coverage.

3.3. Research Approach

A qualitative research approach is used in this study. The aim of this qualitative research is to explore the strategies used by departmental heads in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate, as it helps the researcher to explore and understand how the participants make sense of their context and content. This study is in line with the approach as to how DHs of selected schools understand the role of curriculum monitoring following the *Jika iMfundo* intervention. I find it appropriate to employ qualitative method as this explores data in the form of words rather than in quantities (Mayorwetz, 2008). A qualitative approach is distinguished by its ability to represent the views and perspectives of participants as emphasis is placed on hearing their voices (Murphy, 2005).

In using the qualitative research approach, limitations in this study were revealed. The size of the identified sample is limited as the data findings cannot be generalised to the greater population. Although the sample size is small, the amount of data to be obtained will be copious which may prove challenging when analysing it. The interviews will be transcribed *verbatim* which is time consuming and arduous; however, it will be done meticulously which, in itself can prove to be challenging. Although the process of transcription is time consuming, it gives a clear illustration of what took place during the interview; it helps in understanding the emotions of the participants regarding the topic as well as their thought process.

3.4. Research Methodology

A research methodology is a system used to answer research questions. It provides guidance and illustrates the steps taken by researchers in the collection of data (Osterman, 2012). The type of methodology used in a study is determined by the research questions. In this study the research questions called for data collection methods that allowed interaction between the researcher and the participants.

The case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation and meaning for those involved. A “case” may refer to an individual, an event, a social activity, group, organisation or institution (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2013). It could be a descriptive, explanatory or exploratory form of research inquiry. For the purposes of this research, using DHs as participants who are directed by the leadership at the school for curriculum management and monitoring has rendered the study genuine (Hallinger, 2000). Furthermore, direct conversation with selected participants in their environment, provides a hands-on first-hand experience. However, Gusky (1996) argue that it is inappropriate to conceptualise case study as a method, methodology or research design. Researchers, such as Merriam and Tisdell (2016), believe that because results are intrinsically bound research cannot be conducted successfully using a case-study. The case is DH who are in primary schools and who are using *Jika iMfundo*. A case study methodology is appropriate for this study because I was able to gain understanding on the role of DHs in leading curriculum monitoring in primary schools.

3.5. Research Population

3.5.1. Sampling

Dalin (2005) explains that sampling is the selection of a subsection to be included in a study. Sampling in qualitative research usually takes a purposive direction. According to Gronn (1999), qualitative sampling is done to provide a rich insight into the experiences of individuals. Different methods are used in qualitative research, such as convenient, purposive and snowballing sampling. Purposive sampling is different in that it is used when the researcher has specific criteria in mind when choosing participants; it is non-random and the criteria defining participants is set by the researcher (Ghamwari, 2010).

Purposive sampling is relevant in this study because all the participants have the knowledge and participate in *Jika iMfundo*. This study has used purposive sampling because the school falls into the category of the ‘early adopters’ and are active participants in the *Jika iMfundo* campaign. Glaser (1994) state that in purposive sampling the researcher identifies participants based on the information that they have which relate to the study. The school is purposively chosen because of its accessibility and experience of the participants. Departmental heads can give specific information on monitoring in-class teaching and learning activities as well as challenges associated with it, if any (Bush and Glover, 2005). The table below shows the details of the participants purposively selected for this study

Name of participant	Gender	Qualifications	Department led	Years of teaching experience at the school	Years as a Departmental Head
Mr Mthembu (VPS)	Male	Bachelor of science, PGCE	Intermediate Phase	15	9
Miss Zinhle (CPS)	Female	STD, ACE, Hons and Master's in Education	Foundation phase	14	7
Miss Samantha (GPS)	Female	JSTC, HED, SED, ACE, Hons in education	Intermediate and Senior phase	14	6

3.6. Data generation method

There is one method that is used to generate qualitative data to assist in addressing the research questions. Thus, semi-structured interviews are conducted in order to allow the researcher to ask questions which are pre-planned and cater for unforeseen circumstances that may require unplanned follow-up questions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). As such, semi-structured individual interviews are conducted on departmental heads to generate in-depth data of participants' own perspectives of monitoring teaching and learning (Bailey, 2000). Data was generated in a period of two months. Each interview took forty to forty-five minutes. Appointments with the participants were arranged after school so that it will not interfere with their teaching time. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The data generated was analysed through content analysis. According to Busher et al, (2007) content analysis is defined as a systematic, replicable technique for processing many words of

text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding. I used the interview transcripts to analyse data.

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Qualitative researchers conduct face-to-face interaction with a selected number of participants. Semi-structured interviews are the main methods of data collection. Creswell (1998, p.104) describes interviews as: “Open response questions to obtain participants’ opinions and reactions – how individuals experience their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives”. An interpretive paradigm is associated with data analysis, in a qualitative approach, involving the categorisation of findings. This approach is useful because it accommodates a deeper understanding of the learning experiences happening in the real world of the management of teaching and learning. It is expected that the participants can easily relate their daily experiences of supporting, supervising and monitoring teachers’ work.

I conducted the interview in a face-to-face meeting between the researcher and the participant. In this study, the semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow the participants to share their experiences of using the toolkit when monitoring and supporting teachers. Literature provides many advantages and disadvantages of interviews. Amongst the advantages Chen & Chang (2006) indicates are: flexibility, better response rate, observed non-verbal behaviour, no element of cheating and that completeness is assured. Conversely, the disadvantages include that interviews are; time-consuming, costly, biased, less anonymous, and dependent on timing and environment.

I gave participants the opportunity to express their views freely and openly, and also to share their experiences in using the *Jika iMfundo* toolkit.

An interview schedule was prepared to guide the process and elicit rich data. The schedule is also useful in that it maximises the use of limited time and helps to generate a focused engagement. Open-ended questions were used, which are defined by Cohen, et al. (2007) as questions that put a minimum hurdle on the responses and the manner of expression while providing a frame of reference to the discussion.

The use of tape recordings was negotiated with the participants to facilitate accurate collection and storage of data. Adey (2000) argue that while tape recordings are normally useful, they miss out on capturing body language, and some participants may be intimidated by them. The researcher strived to meet the quality criteria and prepared short questions that allowed for long

responses and follow up questions that could be used to clarify answers, where necessary. Cohen, et al. (2007) cite the subjectivity of the researcher as a disadvantage of the semi-structured interview, as a method of data collection. While the literature indicates that semi-structured interviews is a method that allows the researcher to probe and encourage the participant, it also applauds it for permitting the participant to add to or amend the responses (Cohen, et al., 2007).

3.7. Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed *verbatim* from the audio-recordings. The process of transcribing of the data is defined by Creswell (2014) as a process of converting the audio-recordings into text. In this study the process was strong and took many hours to complete. During the transcription of the recordings the schools and the participants were coded by means of pseudonyms.

3.8. Issues of trustworthiness

Ackerman & Mackenzie (2006) define trustworthiness as the soundness of research in relation to its appropriateness and the integrity of its final results. Trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is used to support the argument that the findings are ‘worth paying attention to’. Creswell *et al.* (2017) maintain that the quality of the data in a qualitative study is measured by its credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. The above four issues are discussed in detailed in the following paragraphs.

3.8.1. Credibility

Credibility comprises the truthfulness of the data collected in the research study. According to Adduci et al (1990), credibility refers to the accurateness of the documentation, the reliability of the producer of the document, and the freedom of errors. Similarly, Bassett & Robson (2017) states that credibility is about ensuring that the instruments used to measure results are trustworthy and credible. To ensure that the findings were credible, I had to ensure that I do not coerce the participants and that they know what the study is all about and also that they know everything about their rights.

3.8.2. Transferability

Transferability is used by the readers of the research study. It is a level at which the readers can apply the current research to their contexts. According to Cohen et al. (2002), transferability is the point to which results of the search can be generalised to a wide-ranging population. Generalisation of the results from this study could not be transferred to other contexts. Data presented in this study is not stagnant and it may change as the context changes; it also changes from departmental head to departmental head. To ensure that the findings were transferable, I gave a detailed or thick description of the methods and all other steps that I took during the course of the study.

3.8.3. Dependability

Bennet et al (2007) defines dependability as “the stability of findings over time”. It is concerned with the consistency of the research findings. According to Birky et al (2006), dependability is the extent to which a piece of work can obtain similar results if the work was repeated in the same context with same methods. Shenton (2004) suggests that the researcher should use an “overlapping method” to ensure dependability. To ensure dependability in this study I described the stages that gave these results of this study for the next researchers to find similar results. I used similar interview schedule for all the participants in the study. The interviews done in the two secondary schools had the same questions to ensure consistency of the findings and dependability, which suggested that the findings are reliable.

3.8.4. Confirmability

According to Shenton (2004), confirmability is the concern of the researcher in a qualitative study about the objectivity of the study. Further on confirmability, Shenton (2004) argues that the results of the study must be based on experiences and ideas of the participants, instead of the predilection of the researcher. I tried to eradicate any act of bias in the study, I went through the generated data, reflecting several times just to ensure that I am not biased in any form. In addition, when the transcripts had been done, I gave each participant a copy so that they could

confirm if what I had written down was a true reflection of what transpired during our discussions.

3.9. Ethical issues

Ethics is concerned with moral issues. I made sure that I adhered to the highest ethical standards of conducting qualitative research. Glaser & Strauss (1997) avers that there are different ethics for different professions. Guba (1998) mentions that research ethics refers to “the moral dimensions of researching; our decisions about what is right and wrong while engaged in research”. Qualitative research involves sharing information of the participants with the researcher. The researcher needs to gain trust from the participants throughout the stages involved in the research. Creswell (2012) maintains that ethical issues involve respect of the participants, informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, protection of the participants against any harm and caring. For purposes of this study, I obtained the ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The provincial Department of Education granted me permission to conduct the study in the selected schools. Permission to conduct research in the two secondary schools were granted by the principals of the sampled schools. I visited the schools to discuss with the participants the procedures of the research. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any stage during the research process. After they had agreed to participate, I gave each one of them a declaration of informed consent forms to sign and they all signed. In addition, I assured them that whatever they told me would remain between us and that nobody would know the content of our conversations. Therefore, strict confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed.

3.10. Limitations

Hallinger & Murphy (1995) suggest that limitations are factors that influence the outcomes of the research which are outside of the control of the researcher. The main limitation was that the study was conducted in two secondary schools only. The second limitation experienced during the research was the unwillingness of schools to participate in the study which resulted in the initial time allocated for data collection to be significantly reduced. A further limitation relates to the lack of interest shown by some of the participants when I explained to them that

there would be no remuneration for the interview conducted. Other limitations are the disturbances during the interviews due to unforeseen circumstances.

3.11. Summary of chapter

This chapter presented the research design and methodology that were utilised in the study. The discussions of the research paradigm and research approach were presented. It discussed that a case study was a preferred methodology for this study. A detailed discussion of the data generation method and how data was analysed and provided was detailed. Purposive sampling was chosen as the method of sampling of the participants. This chapter also provided a discussion of the ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of the study. The next chapter deals with the data presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a discussion on the research design and methodology that informed the research process of this study. Among other things, the chapter discussed the method that was used to generate data. This chapter presents and discusses data that was elicited from three departmental heads at three primary schools in a township in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. The aims were to explore departmental heads' understanding of their role in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools, to understand the challenges they faced when monitoring teachers' work and to understand what can be learnt from their perspectives regarding curriculum monitoring in the *Jika iMfundo* intervention. For the purpose of reminding the reader I present the research questions below;

1. How do departmental heads understand their role in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools?
2. What challenges do departmental heads participating in *Jika iMfundo* face when monitoring teachers' work?
3. What can be learnt from departmental heads' perspectives regarding curriculum monitoring in the *Jika iMfundo* intervention?

During the interviews, participants were freed to express themselves as it is normally the case with qualitative enquiry. Probes were made to clarify some issues and to redirect discussion to the focus of the study. *Pseudonyms* are used to protect the school and departmental heads' identities, and these are Mr Mthembu, Vika Primary School (VPS), Miss Zinhle, Curo Primary School (CPS), and Miss Samantha, Gemini Primary School (GPS). In presenting the data, verbatim quotes are used to ensure that the 'voices' of the participants remain pristine. The literature and theories (instructional and distributed leadership theories) discussed in chapter two will be applied in discussing data. The chapter unfolds starting with profiling of the participants then followed by a discussion on the themes. The first main theme is based on the role of Departmental Heads in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools. The second theme is on the challenges departmental heads faced in participating in *Jika iMfundo* when monitoring teachers' work and lastly departmental heads' perspectives in mitigating the challenges regarding curriculum monitoring in the *Jika iMfundo*

intervention. The data for the analysis are structured according to the research questions for the purpose of clarity.

4.2. Profiling the participants

As already highlighted above, the study generated data from three participants at three primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. These participants shared their perspectives as Departmental Heads (DHs) in monitoring curriculum using the *Jika iMfundo* intervention. For anonymity reasons, these participants, and the schools in which they serve are identified through pseudonyms as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Profile of participants

Name of participant	Gender	Qualifications	Department led	Years of teaching experience at the school	Years as a Departmental Head
Mr Mthembu (VPS)	Male	Bachelor of science, PGCE	Intermediate Phase	15	9
Miss Zinhle (CPS)	Female	STD, ACE, Hons and Master's in Education	Foundation phase	14	7
Miss Samantha (GPS)	Female	JSTC, HED, SED, ACE, Hons in education	Intermediate and Senior phase	14	6

ACE: Advanced Certificate in Education

JSTC: Junior Secondary Teacher's Certificate

HED: Higher Education Diploma

PGCE: Postgraduate Certificate in Education

4.2.1 Mr Mthembu (VPS)

Mr Mthembu (DH 1) was a 39-year-old male at Vika Primary School (VPS) and had been teaching for 15 years. He held a Bachelor of Science with a major in Mathematics and Physical Science. During his fourteen years (14yrs) of teaching, he taught mathematics for 10 years of his teaching career. He was a departmental head and still taught Mathematics to Grades 5 and Grade 6 learners. He had 9 years' experience as DH for Intermediate phase. Mr Mthembu was selected as a participant because of his vast experience as a teacher who understands how teaching and learning has evolved and the consequent introduction of the Jika project. The department that Mr Mthembu headed had 11 educators

4.2.2 Miss Zinhle (CPS)

Miss Zinhle was the second participant interviewed as a departmental head (DH 2). She was a 49-year-old female at Curo Primary School (CPS) with a teaching experience of 14 years. Her professional qualifications included a Primary Teachers Diploma (PTD). She had been a DH for 7 years in the Foundation phase department. Miss Zinhle was selected as a participant because of her vast experience as a teacher who understands how teaching and learning has evolved and the consequent introduction of the Jika project. The department she headed had 9 educators.

4.2.3 Miss Samantha (GPS)

The third participant was a 36-year-old female at Gemini Primary School (GPS) who had been teaching for 14 years. She has qualifications in Junior Secondary Teacher's Certificate (JSTC) majoring in Geography and English. She had been teaching English for the last 14 years. She had been a DH for 6years in Intermediate and Senior phase department. The department she headed had 13 educators.

4.3. Departmental heads' understanding of their role in monitoring curriculum using the *Jika iMfundo* intervention

The participating DHs at these schools identified roles such as (a) curriculum management and its coverage (b) conducting class visits and (c) ensuring the utilisation of teaching and learning time. These roles are discussed as sub-themes. These roles understandably overlap. In this section, DHs understanding of their role in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* is provided. This is discussed in detail below.

4.3.1.1 Curriculum management and its coverage

The focus of this theme was on departmental heads' ability and efforts to effectively manage and cover the curriculum designed for teaching and learning at the primary schools. Curriculum is led and managed by instructional leaders, who also supervise and monitor instruction (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). According to Mthiyane, Naidoo, and Bertram (2019), the *Jika iMfundo* helped in clarifying the role of SMTs (in this case DHs) in curriculum management, making it easier for them to identify areas where educators needed additional development. Curriculum coverage when rightly monitored by DHs for its diligent implementation leads to school effectiveness since it gives learners improved learning chances. This is because, curriculum no matter how good it is if not monitored and covered sufficiently cannot guarantee learner success and effective performance (De Clerg, Shalem, & Nkambule, 2018).

All the three participants, Mr Mthembu, Miss Zinhle, and Miss Samantha reported that they understood that the *Jika iMfundo*'s focus was on curriculum coverage which entails the ability of DHs to ensure that the content was delivered effectively when due using *Jika iMfundo*. *Jika iMfundo* was introduced on the premise that DHs must monitor curriculum implementation and its coverage to improve learning outcomes (Christie, 2018).

The participants recognized that the *Jika iMfundo*'s primary goal was to cover the entire curriculum by ensuring that the contents of the curriculum are taught properly as planned according to the academic calendar of the school. The following voices show the participants' sentiments on this theme.

Mr Mthembu had this to say

...educators were given curriculum trackers to help them keep track of the curriculum's coverage, gauge their progress, and come up with methods and

techniques for making up space if they fall behind. As a DH I ensure that effective use of the curriculum trackers to monitor how the curriculum is taught and covered for effective teaching and learning in the school.

In probing further on this, I sought to understand more from Mr Mthembu how the introduction of the curriculum tracker functioned in curriculum management and coverage, he explained further that,

Monitoring curriculum has become very useful in the Jika intervention project as it ensures that the process of teaching and learning is monitored to ensure effectiveness as well as performance progress of learners. When I talk about curriculum monitoring, I mean regulation of time; monitoring and support for planning delivery in relation to curriculum coverage; the procurement and management of books and stationery; and the quality of tests and monitoring of results. It also serves as a follow-up method that ensures that content areas are not left behind but effectively and efficiently covered.

However, Miss Zinhle was of the view that

The departmental heads are responsible in the context of the Jika intervention to keep an eye on teachers' work to make sure they are covering the curriculum as required. They do this by ensuring that they employ the equipment that Jika iMfundo officials gave them.

As noted in Miss Zinhle's response, the *Jika imFundo* introduced effective learning equipment such as the Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) which it used to measure learners' academic progress. This tool is assessment-based and adapts based on a learner's previous answers. While the assessments are short, the adaptation in real-time provides a great picture of where the student is at. Another equipment is the curriculum-based measurement (CBS) which is used to measure student development in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. This progress monitoring tool uses very short assessments to track students' progression over time.

Miss Samantha also had this to say

... Once in a quarter of the session, I check up on teachers in my department work. We are currently using the tools such as the computer adaptive test, curriculum-based measurement which we learned through

Jika iMfundo to monitor instructors' work. We've even modified additional tools so that they can be used in areas other than math, science, and technology.

What I understand from the participants' responses above is that, Departmental heads at these schools performed similar functions in their settings by ensuring that the curriculum that has been designed and handed to them is covered effectively. Mr Mthembu reported that curriculum trackers assisted him to monitor curriculum coverage. Miss Zinhle in her response mentioned that the equipment which the *Jika iMfundo* gave them assisted in monitoring curriculum. Such equipment as the Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) and curriculum-based measurement functioned in facilitating the implementation of curriculum management and its coverage. The literature in this study affirms that, DHs should be involved fundamentally as discussed above in curriculum management and coverage. Naicker, Myende, & Ncokwana (2020) observed that if teachers are properly nurtured and their leadership and teaching skills are developed, they are likely to contribute to school improvement and cultivate a school culture that is conducive to successful learning. Adding a corollary, "one of the most important elements that influences student accomplishment in educational institutions is leadership" (Graham-Jolly, 2012, p.25). According to the instructional leadership theory, instructional leaders create a school vision that includes high standards for teachers and students (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, Robinson, 2010). The goal is to increase learning outcomes through high-quality teaching and learning. In the South African context, Grant (2008, p. 88) supports that DHs work collaboratively with all stakeholders towards a shared and dynamic vision of their school within a culture of fairness, inclusion, mutual respect and trust. This subtheme demonstrates that, the DHs understood their roles in the context of the *Jika* project through the application of various *Jika* apparatuses to ensure that curriculum is monitored and effectively covered.

4.3.1.2 Conducting Class Visits

This sub-theme on conducting class visits as part of the roles of DHs overlaps with the previously discussed sub-theme on curriculum monitoring and coverage. This is so because, in the process of class visits, DHs are able to evaluate if educators cover the curriculum assigned to them when monitoring teaching and learning. According to Borg (2018), class visits are typically used to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction in order to determine how to enhance the relationship between the teacher and the students. Class visits provide "valuable

information regarding teachers' actual classroom performance," according to Alshehri (2019, p. 58). This suggests that through class visits, the DHs, and educators can learn about the areas in which they need to develop or improve. Mr Mthembu, the DH at Vika Primary School, had this to say:

As a DH at this school, I need to create a procedure in which educators will routinely report to me on their findings in terms of class visits and activities provided to learners. Class visits are essential to me as a DH because it enables me to have a practical encounter of how educators under my department teach and to observe any loophole that may arise in the process of teaching and learning. It also enables me assess the level of student's participation in class activities and how learning materials are utilised for effective teaching and learning.

In probing further on the response from Mr Mthembu, I sought to understand the place of class visits in the Jika project and whether there was equipment that assisted DHs in performing the role. However, Mr Mthembu explained that class visits were able to assist them as DHs to have first-hand information of what happens in the classroom as well as the challenges educators encounter in the process of teaching and learning. It also provided valuable information for them to be able to make informed decisions on aspects of the curriculum that required more attention and the strategies that could be employed to manoeuvre some of the challenges. This is what Mr Mthembu had to say:

Although we do not have equipment from Jika regarding class visits because class visits mean that as a DH I have to pay practical visits to the classroom once in a while. It could be twice a week or even once a week as the case may be to enable me have real time contact with both the educators and the learners. Such visits are what give me the needed data to use for future improvements. Let me emphasise that I do not make absolute decisions after class visits but most times I still discuss with my educators on areas that that needs improvements. By doing this, I am able to have a more realistic decision to make moving forward.

On the same matter, Miss Zinhle had this to say:

I conduct classroom observations in which I observe educators as they interact with learners. I then provide them with feedback on how to

improve their teaching and learning activities. Department heads offer reports on their observations of educators under their supervision in the classroom.

I sought to understand more from Miss Zinhle and asked her how often she conducted class visits and whether she felt such visits impacted positively on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. In response she had this to say:

As a DH I pay regular visits to the class at least once a week since I have thirteen teachers under me. Such regular visits assist me in monitoring teaching and learning and also getting to understand the learners needs and areas that require particular attention. For example, class visits enable me to see subject areas that require further teaching and learning aids to assist both the educators and the learners.

Miss Samantha, departmental head of Gemini Primary School saw class visits as a process of observing and reporting the progress of the department and the challenges for the purpose of enhancing quality teaching and learning. She commented that:

Since the pass rate of the school is very important, it is imperative that as a departmental head, I note areas that the department is doing well and/not doing well and report this to the school management. However, since there is no success without challenges, I also ensure that these challenges are reported for optimal improvement of quality in teaching and learning at the school.

Probing further, I sought to know whether she conducted class visits just for the purpose of reporting matters as alluded to by Miss Samantha. However, Miss Samantha clarified this when she said that:

I did not mean it to come out that way. Of course, class visits are not majorly for reporting matters, it goes beyond just reporting but engaging with both educators and learners on ways that teaching skills can be enhanced. Added to this, class visits also enables me as a DH to understand the needs of the learners in terms of resources that can enhance their understanding of the content of lessons.

From the participants' responses above, it can be deduced that the DHs were integral in ensuring that effective teaching and learning took place. The DH Miss Zinhle noted that as a Departmental Head, class visits provided an opportunity for them to not only interact with educators and learners but to also understand their needs in terms of resources such as teaching aids. All the DHs concurred that frequent class visits ensured that teaching and learning was effectively and efficiently achieved by making sure that the right contents is taught as and when due and that they were able to understand the challenges that educators encountered in the process of teaching and learning. Mr Mthembu, Miss Zinhle and Miss Samantha all asserted the imperativeness of class visits as a strategy that empowered DHs to understand the teaching and learning activities and their appropriateness to the learners. Where there was need for improvements, this was observed, discussed and acted upon for the purpose of enhanced teaching and learning. From literature, Departmental Heads should also serve as link between groups of people, bridging and brokering information. Gumede & Biyase (2016) observed that in practice, mentoring new teachers brings to the table issues of concern that require action for quality improvement at the schools. Thus, in the discussion of the theme, the departmental heads are seen establishing communication by conducting class visits at the primary schools. According to the instructional leadership theory, Hallinger and Murphy (2010) provided one of the models of leadership as communicating the school's goals which include communicating the progress of the department activities.

4.3.1.3 Ensuring the utilisation of teaching and learning time

In this sub-theme, the DHs shared their views on their role in ensuring the utilisation of teaching and learning time as one of their fundamental functions. School success is determined by how well the school prepares, organizes, and implements the curriculum, as well as the scope of the curriculum content (Hervie & Winful, 2018).). According to the latter authors, the school curriculum begins on the first day of the school year, hence time is a valuable resource that must be used wisely to guarantee that the curriculum is adequately covered. According to Mulenga and Lubasi (2019), the amount of time learners spend on learning activities has a significant impact on their academic success.

All three participants, Mr Mthembu (VPS), Miss Zinhle (GPS) and Miss Samantha (CPS) avowed that Jika iMfundo took into consideration that the main existence of schools was for

learners to learn and for educators to teach and DHs were at the front line to ensure the utilization of time. Mr Mthembu of VPS asserted:

I can say that Jika iMfundo is a useful intervention because it came from an angle that was saying that an educator must be on task on time. As a DH part of my responsibilities is to ensure that educators show up on time for teaching and learning. If an educator does not show up on time, it means that part of the learning period will be lost and this may hinder the educator to complete the lesson as well as the activities planned for that particular period. In fact, time is of the essence in this profession because it brings about discipline on the part of the educators and learners, so ensuring this is of utmost importance to us as departmental heads.

What came out of Mr Mthembu's response is that ensuring the utilisation of teaching and learning time also brings about discipline among educators and learners. While educators were encouraged to keep to time in terms of showing up early for classes, this in turn also ensured that learners showed up on time to be ready for teaching and learning to effectively take place.

Miss Zinhle of CPS had this to say:

As a DH at this school, I also need to get information on punctuality of educators to school and to classrooms. Punctuality is very important when it comes to teaching and learning because it encompasses everything that we do. Punctuality ensures that time is not lost and all activities are tailored towards making sure that all learning times are adhered to and completed on time.

However, I sought to understand from Miss Zinhle if educators at the school were provided with the necessary infrastructure that guaranteed their punctuality at the school such as transportation. In her response, she had this to say:

I don't think that any infrastructure is needed to ensure educators punctuality but rather the conscious efforts by educators to ensure that they prepare early and come to work on time. Thus, I think is part of what they signed for before becoming educators in the school. My duty is to ensure that they keep to time both in coming to school and to classes.

Miss Samantha, Departmental Head at Gemini Primary School shared her sentiments that she ensured that teaching and learning time was well utilised by educators. She said that,

I regularly include a component on punctuality and respecting teaching periods in our staff meetings. I always emphasize the importance of teachers being there both physically and psychologically for learners

In probing further, I sought to understand from Miss Samantha what she meant by “being there both physically and psychologically”. She explained that, teaching and learning did not only include the physical presence of educators in class but that they also responded to the psychological needs of learners. Ensuring teaching and learning time only gives educators the space to also ascertain what learners are confronted with and how they can respond to such. Miss Samantha in her words said that:

The Jika iMfundo mandates the use of curriculum trackers to increase accountability especially the accountability of time. If educators and learners are accountable for their utilisation of time in the school, there would be possibilities that all task, duties, values and attitudes will be inculcated. Lack of time management means that there would be less time for other activities which is not the best.

From the responses above and the discussion thereof, the participants concurred that instructional time should always be preserved and punctuality ensured as an important aspect of classroom teaching and learning. According to Mulenga and Lubasi (2019), learning time should give students the chance to pick up important and necessary knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for their daily life. This means that every second should be considered; hence, the time-on-task policy. This implies that every school day should be devoted to learning-related activities; as a result, teachers should be in the classroom instructing, and learners should be in the classroom learning. The *Jika iMfundo* mandated the use of curriculum trackers to increase accountability for effective use of teaching time and expedite curriculum coverage (Witten and Makole, 2018). One of the duties that instructional leaders should carry out under the third component of instructional leadership, which is fostering a positive school learning atmosphere, is safeguarding teaching and learning time (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

4.3.3 The challenges Departmental Heads faced in participating in *Jika iMfundo* when monitoring teachers' work

Three subthemes are covered in this discussion: (a) unsatisfactory utilisation of teaching and learning time; (b) resistance to change; and (c) incapacitation of departmental heads. These subthemes are discussed in detail below.

4.3.3.1 Unsatisfactory utilisation of teaching and learning time

Time management has been discussed in the previous section as important in teaching and learning. However, in this sub-theme, the departmental heads expressed that, unsatisfactory utilisation of teaching and learning time on the part of the learners was part of the challenge they encountered in teaching and learning. The departmental heads at these schools reported lack of time management on the part of learners because of the setting in which the schools are located. According to the DHs the three primary schools are located in the township setting where most of the learners found it difficult to show up early in school and by extension in class. This they averred was due to the fact that some of them were faced with the problem of logistics in transportation thus making most of the learners walk to school. In the process of walking to school, they possibly got distracted on their way to school thus affecting the teaching and learning time. Mr Mthembu had this to say:

The main causes of underperformance are tardiness and learner absenteeism. The majority of our students come to school on foot for more than five kilometres. The area's unemployment rate is surprisingly high, and numerous parents lament their inability to pay for transportation. Since there is no government intervention regarding transportation in this setting, we encounter the problem of either late coming or absenteeism which affects how teaching and learning is managed.

Miss Zinhle of CPS said that:

Some students share housing with their partners, boyfriends, or girlfriends. Surprisingly, their parents don't appear to be having a problem with it or to be embarrassed about it. They openly discuss these problems. It represents a particular way of life.

Probing further, I sought to understand from Miss Zinhle how sharing accommodation with partners' affected time management in school. Miss Zinhle explained that, when learners live with partners especially intimate partners at a younger age, they lack the self-discipline because of lack of parental guidance to ensure that they wake up on time and prepare for school. In her words Miss Zinhle added:

The township setting provides us with similar stories that challenge learners responsibility to time and how this affects their attitude to school and their class activities. As DHs we have been trying over the years to control this seeming attitude of learners but most times we find ourselves working in circles to address this fundamental challenge. Most times you find that educators are on time and ready to teach but the class is scanty and incomplete because of the learners late coming attitude.

Miss Samantha also said that:

The environment has an impact on some learners. For instance, students are expected to be proactive in trying to catch up since schools were closed for lockdown and the adjustment after, but with our learners, we drag them to class. Many students appear to have given up hope.

I can deduce that the conditions at these schools and in the communities also contributed to decreasing teacher and student morale, which resulted in an unsatisfactory use of teaching and learning time. According to Lange (2000), many students come from homes where several members of the family are illiterate and come from remote locations where students must travel far to get to and from school. They also experience social inequality and poverty (Leedy & Ormrod, 2011).

4.3.3.2 Resistance to change

The difficulty Mr. Mthembu of VPS, Miss Zinhle of CPS, and Miss Samantha of GPS faced on a daily basis was that certain teachers appeared to be opposed to any kind of transformation. They were hesitant to completely adopt Jika iMfundo's intervention because they were not prepared or willing to make changes; instead, they would rather carry on as normal. Implementation of the Jika iMfundo curriculum intervention seem difficult because the DHs are mostly comfortable operating on the normal programme. Every time they led a programme,

they encountered opposition. Despite their best efforts to urge educators to comply, some plainly and purposefully refused. Regarding the execution of the Jika iMfundo intervention, there was no consistency in what educators utilised and implemented. Mr Mthembu of VPS said that:

... Although I can't say that the Jika iMfundo intervention is being carried out exactly as it ought to be, it is being carried out in some form. The program has been finished, and now it is up to the schools to put it into practice. Then, it depends on the people.

Miss Zinhle of CPS also shared her sentiment that:

Some teachers are opposed to classroom visits. I was overjoyed when Jika iMfundo was established because I believed it would provide an opportunity for educators to collaborate on enhancing curriculum delivery methodologies. Some educators and DHs at my school enthusiastically encourage class visits and report on their findings. Some people assume that class visits are only used for evaluation purposes. They permit such activities exclusively for Quality Management Systems (QMS) purposes. Their unwillingness to adapt to change is a barrier to better learner outcomes.

Miss Samantha of GPS had this to say

... some educators do not take professional conversation meetings seriously

I can deduce that some of the educators at these three institutions viewed transition negatively, rather than as something that could help them improve professionally. According to Nadim and Singh (2019), change and transformation necessitate self-discovery and progress. It is necessary to recognize what is truly relevant and supportive to their common vision of a desirable future, as well as to attend to their advancement and development.

4.3.3.3 Incapacitation of DHs

All participants reported that they spent more time on their roles as subject educators than on curriculum leadership and management. The intervention cannot be implemented effectively unless it is properly supervised. Mr Mthembu of VPS stated that

As department head, I teach grade twelve, thus I don't have time for all Jika iMfundo materials and equipment. In fact, numerous department heads stated that they had opted to discontinue utilizing Jika iMfundo devices due to the time required for paperwork.

Miss Zinhle of CPS reported that

Jika iMfundo implementation is slow among us department heads; I recently discovered that many of us do not grasp how Jika iMfundo materials and tools work. The educators are covertly stating that their departmental head baffles them when it comes to implementing the Jika iMfundo intervention, resulting in a lack of consistency in what educators do.)

On the other hand, Miss Samantha of GPS had this to say:

As a department head, we are short on one-on-one discussions with subject educators. That is where I believe we fall short. It is common for people to expect us to know everything. I've realized that we tend to be reactive rather than proactive.

It may be deduced that the departmental heads found it challenging to lead the implementation of Jika iMfundo intervention at the school. Govender (2018) claims that the Jika iMfundo's implementation was flawed due to a lack of adequate substantial support for classroom practice and advice in enacting the necessary changes.

4.3.4 Departmental heads' perspectives in mitigating the challenges encountered in monitoring Jika iMfundo intervention.

The following section presents the perspectives of Departmental Heads in mitigating the challenges encountered in curriculum monitoring using the Jika iMfundo intervention. In the previous section, a discussion on the challenges encountered by DHs was uncovered. This section focuses on uncovering some of the ways in which the challenges can be mitigated. Thus, asset based approach to supplicating stakeholder intervention, and Scheduled meetings will be discussed as subthemes in this section.

4.3.4.1 Asset based approach to supplicating stakeholder intervention

To make sure that the schools receive a lot of assistance from many stakeholders in order to overcome the difficulties that the schools face when implementing the Jika iMfundo such as resistance to change and incapacitation of the DHs. The Departmental head, Mr Mthembu had this to say

...to address some of the challenge that we encounter as DHs, we occasionally meet the entire staff to discuss the problems and potential solutions. We also speak with the other nearby schools if necessary. We employ technology to look for more information as well. Additionally, we ask the topic advisors for their assistance; they are helpful. In order to overcome those issues that we are unable to solve, we collaborate with successful neighbouring schools.

Miss Zinhle of shared her sentiment that

I take care to extend a warm welcome to any stakeholder who visits the school to offer assistance. Additionally, I have informed the Department of Education that because my school is underperforming, I require the subject advisers to visit more frequently.

On the other hand, Miss Samantha of said that

My concern is on administrative work. It is time consuming as I have to check all tools and recordings. It doesn't end with checking and monitoring, but also to assist educators individually, monitoring their progress in implementing interventions and also to track learners progress by analysing their results.

The department heads at the primary schools appear to be aware of the need for assistance in utilizing community resources to overcome some obstacles they have while implementing the Jika iMfundo curriculum intervention. This is also supported by literature. "The premise of the asset-based approach is that rural and township school improvement is possible and sustainable when local community members are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort" (Msila, 2018, p.37). The asset-based strategy, according to Msila (2018, p. 28), "sustains educational programmes and generates social networks and social capital." The asset-

based strategy keeps the programmes going because participants have a sense of ownership in the programs since they invest their abilities and potential in them. They also feel proud of having developed the programs and cannot let them die on their own.

4.3.4.2 Scheduled Meetings

The school Departmental heads sit in meetings to mitigate the challenges that they encounter in the implementation of Jika iMfundo. Their scheduled meetings ensure that a healthy discussion occurs with educators and parents regarding what affects them. Mr Mthembu had the following to say:

As the department head, it is my responsibility to ensure that we have a productive working relationship with educators. Once or twice a week, there are staff meetings where I share my preferences for the kinds of people I want to work with.

At CPS, Miss Zinhle also had this to say

Also have meetings with parents one on one as parental involvement is part of the interventions we have as a school. All these concerns require a lot of time.

On the other hand, Miss Samantha of GPS share her sentiment that

I also try to work systematically where I plan the dates on which other SMT members give reports on curriculum coverage where they show me the tools that they use in monitoring curriculum. We were supplied with curriculum monitoring tools by Department of education officials as well as by Jika iMfundo officials.

One participant supports meetings, both in large groups with the entire staff and in smaller groups where he meets with one or more department heads. There, they talk about important issues and debate possible solutions to the problems they run into while putting the Jika iMfundo intervention into practice. “Workplace meetings take place for many reasons. DHs and educators meet to talk about problems, develop solutions, generate ideas, reach consensus, and make decisions. But in addition to the outcomes, they are intended to achieve, meetings are also sites for many other institutional phenomena, including sense making, leadership

influence, relationship building, team dynamics, conflict, and the shaping of employee attitudes” (Meier, 2011, p.549)

4.4. Summary of chapter

This chapter has presented Departmental Heads understanding of their role in monitoring curriculum using the *Jika iMfundo* model including the challenges and the practices they adopt to address the challenges they encounter at the selected primary schools. The narratives of Departmental Heads revealed their understanding of their roles in monitoring curriculum, their challenges and the practices they adopt in using the *Jika iMfundo* at the primary schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and discussed the data. Among other things, the study explored the role of Departmental Heads in monitoring curriculum using the *Jika iMfundo* intervention. Three departmental heads from three primary schools participated in the study. Three broad themes emerged from data and these themes were then used to present the discussion. These themes were Departmental Heads understanding of their role in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools, challenges of departmental heads participating in *Jika iMfundo* when monitoring teachers' work, and departmental heads' perspectives in mitigating the challenges regarding curriculum monitoring in the *Jika iMfundo* intervention. In this chapter, I present the summary of the study, the conclusions drawn from the data, and the recommendations.

5.2 Summary of the study

As I indicated in the chapter one of this study, the dissertation is divided into five chapters. In chapter one, I began the study by presenting the general orientation of the study which covered the background of the study. The background of the study demonstrated the imperativeness of the study which drew from the study's rationale. The research questions driving the study were also articulated. The literature in chapter one revealed that, even as DHs seem to understand what should be done with respect to curriculum monitoring, the *Jika iMfundo* documents seem to pose an extra burden on them. The DBE acknowledged that content coverage, teacher performance, and lack of expertise of SMTs in monitoring and supporting teachers continue to be some of the challenges experienced in the education sector. However, I argue through my personal experience that the DHs consider curriculum trackers as a one size fits all approach because curriculum can be covered but it is not guaranteed that all learners are able to keep up with the content covered in class.

In Chapter Two, I reviewed both national and international scholarly literature, focusing on several issues relating to Departmental heads roles in the school context. From the literature reviewed, prominent issues emerged such as understanding Departmental Heads in the school

context, the leadership roles of Department Heads in enhancing student academic achievement, factors and conditions that impact DHs. The chapter also discussed the instructional and distributed leadership as the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. I then proceeded to thoroughly discuss the study's methodology and research design in Chapter Three. I utilised a case study as the methodology for my qualitative research design. The primary technique for gathering information from the selected DHs at the primary school was semi-structured interviews.

In Chapter 4, the conclusions drawn from the data collected from the three participants were presented and discussed. Three major themes and subthemes emerged from the data analysis process which were used to organise the findings. The themes I discussed are (a) the role of Departmental Heads in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools (b) the challenges departmental heads faced in participating in *Jika iMfundo* when monitoring teachers' work and (c) departmental heads' perspectives in mitigating the challenges regarding curriculum monitoring in the *Jika iMfundo* intervention.

The first theme had three subthemes which are (i) curriculum management and its coverage (ii) conducting class visits and (iii) ensuring the utilisation of teaching and learning time. I discussed the second major theme under three subthemes which are (i) unsatisfactory utilisation of teaching and learning time (ii) resistance to change and (iii) incapacitation of DHs. The third major theme was also discussed under subthemes which are (i) asset based approach to supplicating stakeholder intervention, and (ii) Scheduled meetings.

In Chapter Five, I present the summary of the study, the conclusions made and the recommendations drawn from the conclusions. The key research questions are used to present the findings. Given the findings presented in Chapter Four, conclusions are drawn in Chapter Five, and these are discussed using the critical questions.

5.3 Conclusions drawn from the discussion

In the next section, I present the conclusions drawn from the data discussed in the study. These conclusions are linked to the three research questions. Below the research questions are presented to remind readers:

1. How do departmental heads understand their role in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention in primary schools?
2. What challenges do departmental heads participating in *Jika iMfundo* face when monitoring teachers' work?
3. What can be learnt from departmental heads' perspectives regarding curriculum monitoring in the *Jika iMfundo* intervention?

Three main themes with sub-themes emerged from the data which were discussed. The findings here will be drawn from the themes that emerged from data.

5.3.1 Departmental Heads understanding of leadership for quality teaching and learning

The study shows that the departmental heads understanding of their role included curriculum management and its coverage, conducting class visits, and ensuring the utilisation of teaching and learning time. Although the departmental heads understanding of the roles was similar and also multifaceted, each of them had unique approaches in their various department where they head such as curriculum management and its coverage, conducting class visits and ensuring the utilisation of teaching and learning time. Therefore, curriculum management and its coverage emerged as the number one of the departmental heads understanding of their role in leading curriculum monitoring using *Jika iMfundo* intervention. These DHs monitored the curriculum by using curriculum trackers. According to the DHs, they used equipment such as the Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) and curriculum-based measurement which functioned in facilitating the implementation of curriculum management and its coverage. The study found that the departmental heads also conducted regular class visits that enabled them to evaluate if educators cover the curriculum assigned to them when monitoring teaching and learning. According to Borg (2018), class visits are typically used to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction in order to determine how to enhance the relationship between the teacher and the students. The type of role the DHs played validates the instructional and distributed leadership which are theories that underpinned the study. The data that I presented showed that the DHs understood their roles in monitoring curriculum which was enhanced by the provision of trackers using *Jika iMfundo* intervention which contributed to effective teaching and learning thus enhancing success at the school.

5.3.2 The challenges Departmental Heads faced in participating in Jika iMfundo when monitoring teachers' work

The study explored the challenges encountered by DHs participating in *Jika iMfundo* when monitoring teachers' work. The DHs reported challenges such as unsatisfactory utilisation of teaching and learning time, resistance to change, and incapacitation of departmental heads. Firstly, the departmental heads identified inadequate utilisation of teaching and learning time due to late coming of learners to school due to transportation challenges. The departmental heads at the schools reported lack of time management on the part of learners because of the setting in which the schools are located. According to the DHs the three primary schools are located in the township setting where most of the learners found it difficult to show up early in school and by extension in class. Secondly, the study found out that some of the DHs appeared to be opposed to any kind of transformation. They were hesitant to completely adopt *Jika iMfundo's* intervention because they were not prepared or willing to make changes; instead, they would rather carry on as normal. Implementation of the *Jika iMfundo* curriculum intervention seemed difficult because the DHs were mostly comfortable operating on the normal programme. Lastly, the study found that, the *Jika iMfundo's* implementation was flawed at the school due to inadequate stakeholder support at the school and lack of proper guidance in enacting the necessary changes that *Jika iMfundo* brought to bear.

5.3.3 Departmental heads' perspectives on mitigating the challenges encountered in monitoring Jika iMfundo intervention

The study established that the Departmental Heads faced multi-faceted challenges. However, despite the challenges, the DHs shared their perspectives on how they attempted to mitigate the challenges. Firstly, the study found that, the departmental heads at the primary schools appeared to be aware of the need for assistance in utilizing community resources like road, water and social support to overcome some obstacles they faced while implementing the *Jika iMfundo* curriculum intervention. The asset-based approach was found to be a strategy used by the DHs to sustain educational programmes and generate social networks. The asset-based strategy seemed to keep the programmes going because participants had a sense of ownership in the programmes since they invested their abilities and potential in them. Added to this, the study found that, DHs and educators met to talk about problems, develop solutions, generate ideas, reach consensus, and make decisions. This approach helped in understanding the things

that are required for an effective implementation of *Jika iMfundo*. The impact of mitigating these challenges would enable the DHs perform their roles effectively thus enabling effective teaching and learning at the schools.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the generated data, I make the following recommendations. The recommendations are directed to two groupings: Department of Education and to Researchers.

5.4.1 Recommendation One: To the Department of Education

First, the study found among other things that Department heads perform multifaceted roles in monitoring curriculum using *Jika iMfundo* intervention at the selected primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal province. Departmental heads also become curriculum watchdogs so as to sustain and maintain quality of teaching and learning. I, therefore, recommend that the Department of Education should invest in providing quality infrastructure, encouraging private investors to also invest in supporting with material resources needed to enhance the effective implementation of the *Jika iMfundo* programme in primary schools. Following this, support that will respond to the contextual realities of each institution should be made available.

5.4.2 Recommendation Two: To the participating school

It would be important for the participating schools to seek external support from stakeholders and the Department of Education to organise workshops and seminars regularly. These seminars will assist DHs in broadening their understanding of the *Jika iMfundo* project and also ask relevant questions that would enhance their effective teaching and learning activities in the process of implementing the *Jika* intervention project in the school.

5.4.3 Recommendation Three: To Researchers

It would be very interesting to explore the perspectives of Departmental heads outside the location of this study but also extend to Departmental heads in rural areas on how they are able to utilise the necessary infrastructure towards the implementation of *Jika iMfundo* programme. Departmental heads are not only teachers, but they are curriculum implementers, and they have experience in the school. Surely, they can make interesting contributions that can impact positively in the improvement of the primary schools. I recommend the provision of resources at secondary schools to enhance effective implementation of *Jika iMfundo* for the purpose of academic excellence.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the summary and conclusions of the study. It provided the introduction to the chapter. The summary of the study was provided highlighting the context of each of the four chapters. This was followed with the conclusions drawn from the findings from each of the research questions of the study. The chapter concluded with recommendations to the Department of Education and Recommendation to researchers.

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APPENDIX 'A'

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SECTION A

1. Can you share your Knowledge on what is Jika iMfundo intervention?
2. How long have you been teaching in this school using jika imfundo model?
3. Tell me about your experience in Teaching using the Jika iMfundo interventions in the classroom.
4. What are the demanding situations you experience during using the Jika Imfundo in the primary context?
5. Does the curriculum advisor support you in terms of curriculum?
6. How do you feel general about Jika imfundo?

Section B

1. How long have you been using Jika imfundo in this school?
2. How effective is Jika Imfundo in curriculum intervention of this school?
3. Which teaching approach in your classroom?
4. What problems have you encountered in using the Jika iMfundo model for curriculum monitoring of this school?
5. Do you think Jika iMfundo is effective in the education of a learner?

Section C

1. What type of challenges do you encounter using Jika iMfundo when monitoring teachers work.

2. How have you as the teacher tried to address the challenges you encounter using Jika imfundo in teacher's work?
3. What successes have you had in surmounting the challenges you face in monitoring curriculum using Jika imfundo?

SECTION D

1. Do you have any concern regarding curriculum monitoring using Jika imfundo?
2. What do you think are some of the interventions to be made regarding Jika imfundo?
3. Has Jika imfundo intervention been a success in your school?
4. What are the successes that have been recorded using Jika imfundo intervention?
5. Do you have any other information you want to add regarding curriculum monitoring using Jika imfundo?

APPENDIX 'B'

GATEKEEPER'S CONSENT LETTER



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
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Ref.:2/4/8/41153

Miss.SB.Dlamini

STANGER
4450

Dear Miss Dlamini

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"THE ROLE OF DEPARTMENTAL HEADS IN LEADING CURRICULUM MONITORING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF JIKA IMFUNDO INTERVENTION"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 10 October 2022 to 31 August 2025.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

ILEMBE DISTRICT

Mr GN Ngcobo
Head of Department: Education
Date: 13 October 2022

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

APPENDIX 'C'

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION



Leadership and Management Cluster,
School of Education,
College of Humanities,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Edgewood Campus, KwaZulu Natal
Date

Dear Student/Teacher/Departmental Head/Parent/Learner

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER Departmental Heads

My name is Dlamini Samukelisiwe I am a **Master of Education (M.Ed) (qualification which is being studied towards)** student from the Leadership and Management Cluster, School of Education, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting the research titled **“The role of Departmental Heads in Leading Curriculum Monitoring in Primary Schools: A case study of the Jika iMfundo intervention”**.

The official role of a Departmental Head (DH) is to engage in class teaching, be responsible for the effective functioning of the department, and organize relevant/related extra-curricular activities in order to ensure that the subject, learning area or phase, and the learner's education are promoted in a proper manner, according to the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document issued by South Africa's national Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2016).

In view of the foregoing, I intend to explore the experiences of Departmental heads in leading curriculum monitoring in primary schools using the *Jika Imfundo Intervention* as context of the study.

You are invited to please participate in the study because you are a Departmental Head involved in the leadership of the school. You have been identified through consultation with the management of the school as one of the Departmental Head in the school.

To gather the information, I am interested in requesting you to participate in this project by reflecting critically on your experiences and how it has shaped your leadership for curriculum monitoring using the Jika iMfundo intervention at the school. I will also ask you some questions during an individual interview, each of 30 minutes to one-hour duration.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I assure that there will be strict adherence to the Covid-19 regulations. Social distance shall be maintained during the interview process as well as sanitizing of hands and wearing of mask. The interview will be tape recorded for the purpose of transcription and your anonymity will be maintained in the study.

Your consent will enable this study to get ethical approval by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Please note that:

- Your participation is voluntary. If you do not participate you **will not be penalized** in any way. There is no disadvantage to your work and your career if you choose not to participate. No marks will be deducted from your project if you decline to participate.
- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion. Strict anonymity will be maintained and any information you provide will be treated with high confidentiality.
- Individual interview will be granted along with document review that support the interview process (1 of each) will last for about 30 minutes to 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be in the form of interview transcripts and completed portfolios, and will be stored in secure storage and destroyed by shredding after 5 years. Digitally recorded data will be deleted after five years.

- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action. You are free to withdraw from the research anytime you choose not to proceed and you will not be penalized.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are **no financial** benefits involved. However, it is expected that you will gain insight into the leadership experiences of Departmental Heads for curriculum monitoring. The potential benefit is that; the project will assist other Departmental Heads to understand the leadership perspectives using the Jika iMfundo intervention.

Thank you

Yours faithfully

Samukesilisiwe Dlamini

My contact details are as follows:

Email: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

My supervisor is Professor Chikoko, he is a lecturer in the leadership and management cluster, School of Education, College of Humanities, Edgewood Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal

You may also contact the Research Office at:

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics

Govan Mbeki Centre

Tel +27312604557

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for reading this document about this research.

APPENDIX ‘D’

PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the study entitled “The role of Departmental Heads in Leading Curriculum Monitoring in Primary Schools: A case study of the Jika iMfundo intervention” by Samukelisiwe Dlamini. I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (add these again if appropriate).

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

I voluntarily give permission for the interviews to be audio-recorded.

My identity will not be disclosed and pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at [REDACTED] email: dlaminisamke80@gmail.com

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher, then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

- I am willing to be part of the garden project and interviews. I am also willing to allow recording by the following equipment, and the use of other data:

Digital audio recording of interv	Willing	Not willing
Use of portfolio of evidence		
Use of reflective diary		

.....

Name of Participant

.....

Signature of Participant

.....

Date

APPENDIX 'E'

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



28 March 2023

Samukelisiwe Bongekile Dlamini (219094256)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear SB Dlamini,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00005353/2023

Project title: The role of departmental heads in leading curriculum monitoring in primary schools: A case study of Jika Imfundo intervention

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 14 March 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

This approval is valid until 28 March 2024.

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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

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

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX 'F'

CERTIFICATE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

Ipat Educational Consultancy and Editing Services

CERTIFICATE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

CELL NO.: [REDACTED], +2 [REDACTED]

2 ALLISLEA, 73 JOSIAH GUMEDE STR, PINETOWN, 3610, SOUTH AFRICA



DECLARATION

This is to certify that I have English Language edited the dissertation:

The role of Departmental Heads in Leading Curriculum Monitoring in Primary Schools: A case study of *Jika iMfundo* Intervention

Candidate: **S Dlamini**



DISCLAIMER

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

DIRECTOR: Dr Tertsea J Ikoye, BA (BSU), MA (Ibadan), MSS (UKZN), PhD (UKZN), TITC Business English, Two-term Post-Doctoral Scholar UKZN, Academic Assessor, Stadio School of Multiuniversity, South Africa

APPENDIX 'G'

TURNITIN

Dissertation

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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