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KWAZULU-NATAL

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**School-University partnership's contribution in rural teacher development:
Experiences of teachers**

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Supervisor: Prof. P.E. Myende

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the Discipline of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy.

College of Humanities, School of Education

Pietermaritzburg Campus


June 2023

DECLARATION

DECLARATION

I, Nelisiwe Nonkululeko Mswane, declare that:

- i. This research report titled; School-University partnership's contribution in rural teacher development: Experiences of teachers, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- ii. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university or institution of higher learning.
- iii. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signed: 

N.N. Mswane

Date: 29.06.2023

STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation has been submitted with/~~without~~ my approval.



Supervisor: Prof. P.E. Myende

29 /06 /2023

Date

ETHICAL CLEARANCE



15 June 2023

Nelisiwe Nonkululeko Mswane (217080523)
School Of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear NN Mswane,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001154/2020

Project title: The role of school-university partnership in promoting rural schools teacher empowerment: A case of three schools in Bergville.

Amended title: School-university partnership's contribution in rural teacher development: Experiences of teachers

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 05 June 2023 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an 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.

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

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
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INSPIRING GREATNESS

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late father Kakwa Walter Mswane who would have been proud of this achievement, as he believed in education as the key to success that will empower the black child. Thank you Dad for your encouragement towards my education with my siblings, even in your absence we still remember your words. Thank you for loving us and making sure that we got proper education. May your beautiful soul continue to rest in peace. You will always have a special place in my heart.

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To my daughter, Luthandolwamantungwa Khumalo you are my pride and inspiration. Thank you baby for understanding your mother’s situation when spending more time on my books. This is what Mommy was fighting to achieve, please expand on it.

My heartfelt gratitude to Mthambisi Khumalo, thank you so much “Donda”. You supported and persuaded me not to quit when I felt depressed during my studies. You inspired me to strive for excellence “Ume Njalo Donda”.

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ABSTRACT

The achievement of quality teaching and learning in rural schools depends to a large extent on the quality of teachers. This study aimed to investigate rural school teachers' experiences of the contribution of school-university partnerships to teacher development. It sought to find from teachers' perspectives the strategies that can be used and what contributions the Department of Education, school leaders and universities can make to strengthen and sustain teacher development through school-university partnership in rural schools. To generate data, this study adopted an interpretative paradigm and qualitative approach, using a case study methodology. Data was generated using semi-structured interviews that were conducted with all the participants. A total of seven teachers from two rural schools in one District of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal participated in the study. The selection of these teachers was purposive and convenient, based on the premise that they were participating in school-university partnership programmes. The study found that the contribution of teachers to school-university partnerships in rural schoolteacher development is well understood. The role that has been played by school-university partnership (SUP) programmes made a huge contribution to rural school teachers' development by equipping them with skills and knowledge to perform better in the profession. It was also revealed that despite numerous challenges, rural school teachers are working under, through SUP programmes teachers are able to establish different strategies that assist them to deal with the challenges of rural school settings. The study further revealed that what enhances these partnerships, is the role played by school and universities' management and leadership.

Keywords: School-university partnership, rural teacher development, social learning theory

ABBREVIATIONS

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
COP	Communities of Practice
DCES	Deputy Chief Education Specialist
DH	Departmental Head
DoE	Department of Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILT	Individual Learning Theory
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RTD	Rural Teacher Development
SGB	School Governing Body
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SMTs	School Management Teams
SUPs	School-University Partnerships

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The dissertation presents the findings of an investigation of the experiences of teachers regarding the contributions of school-university partnerships in rural teacher development. As this study explores the experiences of teachers, it aims to establish, from the teachers' experiences, the effectiveness of school-university partnerships as an approach to rural teacher development. Given the aim of this study, this chapter presents the introduction to the study. In this chapter, I further present the problem statement, the rationale and the purpose of the study. Further, this chapter presents the key research questions for the study. Towards the end of this chapter, I briefly clarify the key concepts used in the study and outline the organisation of the dissertation.

1.2 Background to the Study

Rural teacher development (RTD) has become a challenge because of the realities of rural schools that are located in remote and underdeveloped areas (Hlalele, 2012). As a result, it is difficult to reach rural schools and provide the required support for teacher development (Little, 2014). RTD is further disadvantaged by poor technological infrastructure and a lack of basic services in rural areas (Emma, 2014). The lack of teacher development in rural schools has become the cause of rural schools' underperformance and poor quality of teaching and learning (Hlalele, 2012). Du Plessis (2014) argues that some rural schools are not easy to reach for the purposes of school needs evaluation and other departmental services required by the school. Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) and Hlalele (2012) attest to the realities of rural schools as the main factor that impedes rural teacher development programmes.

Programmes of RTD are further disturbed in rural schools by the lack of parental involvement and support (Nhlumayo, 2016). RTD programmes require good collaboration between the school and parents in order for parents to support the school (Nhlumayo, 2016). Parental involvement in the programmes of the school affords

parents an opportunity to assist the school to raise funds with which the school can improve its infrastructure (Mestry, 2019). Rural schools are exposed to multi-grade teaching as they lack proper infrastructure (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Therefore, socio-economic factors such as poverty and unemployment affect parents in rural schools and have an influence in improving teacher development and rural schools performance (Khumalo, 2019). The RTD programmes that have poor support from parents in rural schools hinder the provision of quality education in communities serviced by such schools (Little, 2014). Therefore, it is empirically significant for the Department of Education to encourage schools and parents to work cooperatively with universities to develop strategies through school-university partnership (SUP) programmes that can improve RTD and teacher working conditions in rural schools (Little, 2014).

Apart from mitigating RTD problems, school-university partnership (SUP) programmes may assist rural schools to alleviate the challenges of poor quality teaching and learning in rural schools (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). SUP programmes in rural schools have a responsibility to improve the involvement of parents in the education of their children (Nhlumayo, 2016). Improved parental involvement and participation in properly planning rural teacher development programmes may create a better opportunity for teacher and learner learning (Little, 2014). The lack of improved RTD in rural schools exposes the existing gap in the provision of quality teaching and learning between rural and urban schools (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Therefore, promoting rural teacher development through SUPs in rural schools can motivate rural school teachers to develop themselves in order to work effectively despite the challenges (Emma, 2014).

RTD remains significant in the teaching profession regardless of the challenges faced by teachers in rural schools (Boylan, 2010). According to Boylan (2010) RTD is a process of engaging a teacher in a programme of enhancement of professional practice for the purpose of achieving improved teacher performance that meets learners' needs. Harmon, et. al. (2007) further confirm teacher development as the most important part of teachers' professional life. Harmon, et. al. (2007) attest that teacher development has an impact on teachers' positive attitude and behaviour. Further to that, teacher development helps

teachers to integrate theory with practice (Boylan, 2010). Teacher development improves teacher expertise in the area of professional practice, allowing the teacher to understand his/her role as a teacher in the classroom situation (Mutumeri and Chetty, 2011). The desire to teach is the main motivator for the teacher to become involved in teacher development (Boylan, 2010). Teacher development helps teachers to think critically or reflect critically about their teaching (Mutumeri and Chetty, 2011). As a result, teacher development encourages teachers to change their beliefs and habits when it comes to teacher-learner contact and learner development in class (Goodpaster, et al., 2012). SUP is one of the most important programmes to enhance RTD in a school (Matthes, 2010). Further to that, SUP as a programme can equip teachers with the skills and knowledge they need in order to deal with classroom challenges successfully (Matthes, 2010).

Research in RTD has revealed that SUP creates opportunities that support teachers' professional growth (Janis, et al., 2019). Janis et al. (2019) support the relationship of schools and universities as it can lead to successful teacher professional development, informed by school renewal and transformation. According to Boylan (2010) SUP helps to facilitate teacher development programmes that prepare teachers for improved teacher practice in class. SUPs can further assist rural school teachers to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with issues of under-resourced classrooms (Janis, et. al., 2019). SUP enhances teachers' effective teaching for an improved teacher professional practice (Steyn, 2017). Abdullahi (2011) affirms the success of learners relies on appropriately trained and motivated teachers. SUP remains the key-contributing factor to a holistic RTD (Emma, 2014). In rural schools, SUP is a possible turnaround strategy that can improve teacher performance and accelerate school transformation (Janis, et. al., 2019).

Ralph (2003) speaks about SUP as a successful RTD programme. Therefore, RTD through school-university partnership can assist rural schools to find feasible solutions to improve the professional practice of teachers (Harmon, et al., 2007). Rural teacher development through SUP may seek actions that can address the unique context and conditions in rural schools (Harmon, et al., 2007). Schools and universities, through

partnership, should collaborate and assist rural school teachers to improve their professional practice (Robinson, 2008). SUP as a teacher empowerment programme in rural schools may promote social justice in terms of the quality of education offered (Khumalo, 2019). Through SUP teachers may gain the confidence they desire.

It is against this background that the study sought to establish teachers' experiences of the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural teacher development.

1.3 Problem Statement

According to Segedin (2011) the most recommended teacher development programme is SUP, particularly for rural schools. Therefore, rural schools have to create good working relationships with universities so that there is proper communication of the need for rural school teachers' development (Segedin, 2011). This can become possible if there is a clear teacher professional development programme in rural schools because SUP has a significant role to play in the rural school community (Betlem, et. al., 2018). The important role of SUP in rural schools is to advance teacher empowerment programmes aimed at improving teachers' and learners' skills and knowledge (Barley and Beesley, 2007).

Literature (Segedin, 2011; Barley & Beesley, 2007 and Gardiner, 2008) on teacher development contends that there is not enough knowledge regarding the experiences of teachers on the contribution of SUP to RTD. In this study, I research the partnerships between two rural schools in Bergville, the DoE Othukela District and a number of universities in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal and one university from the Gauteng Province. SUP in rural schools continues to remain unused as a teacher development programme (Segedin, 2011). The problem of undermining SUP programmes for rural teacher development causes a failure of RTD programmes that could otherwise address issues of rural teachers and the frustrations they are faced with in rural school teaching (Gardiner, 2008). Those frustrations include multi-grading, poor infrastructure and a lack of resources (Gardiner, 2008).

Khumalo (2019) argues that a gap exists in teacher capacity development between pre-service and in-service trainings. During pre-service training, universities do not consider the significance of preparing teachers for the reality of teaching in rural schools (Boyland, 2010). Further to that, Khumalo (2019) contends that during in-service training the DoE concentrates on orientation workshops instead of grooming teachers to meet the challenges of rural schools. In this regard, it is SUPs that can contribute to improving the capacity of rural school teachers and help them to take control of their own practice (Boyland, 2010). Literature (Boyland, 2010; Segedin, 2011; and Khumalo, 2019) remains convincing that SUP is significant as a rural school teacher empowerment programme. Through SUP the effectiveness of rural school teachers may improve and it can assist them to apply a positive mind-set in achieving quality education in rural schools (Segedin, 2011).

After a considered assessment of various studies on the experiences of rural school teachers and the contribution of school-university partnerships in teacher development, it is identified that teachers in rural schools still lack the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with issues of rural school teaching (Segedin, 2011). As a result, this impedes the empowerment role of the school in relation to the rural community it serves (Segedin, 2011). Segedin (2011) asserts that the impact of SUPs in schools contributes to the improvement of teacher knowledge, professional growth and decision-making. It also promotes teamwork, school transformation and collaborative working relations within a school (Letloenyane and Loyiso, 2015). Further to that, Letloenyane and Loyiso (2015), assert that SUPs create opportunities for teachers to improve their skills and knowledge for improved teaching and learning to take place. Through SUPs teachers gain experience in engaging critically on their career development (Segedin, 2011). In this regard, both schools and universities contribute to educational change for rural school teachers.

1.4 Rationale

I am a teacher working in a rural school with an enrolment of more than 500. I teach in a context of overcrowded classrooms where each class has more than 50 learners. Classes are overcrowded because of the lack of classroom infrastructure in the school. Our

experience as teachers in this school is that we work under difficult situations where there is lack of basic services and community support. My interest in conducting this study is informed by my experience of SUP taking place where a friend of mine is teaching. I also learned that there were schools in the Bergville Circuit of Othukela District that are involved in a successful school-university partnership. However, in this project there are partnerships of schools with the universities in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal and Braamfontein, Gauteng. The partnership I experienced motivated me to pursue the study. The partnership had a good impact and it improved rural teachers' practice regardless of the difficult conditions they encountered.

Initially, the partnership aimed at teacher development by assisting and capacitating rural school teachers with skills and knowledge. This teacher development programme came into being because rural school teachers were observed not to be participating in a well-coordinated professional development programme. Therefore, the whole purpose was to empower teachers to develop new skills and knowledge that could help them meet the demands of rural school teaching.

My interest in conducting this study emanates from my experience as a rural school teacher with first-hand experience about the challenges of rural school teaching coupled with my observations regarding the collaboration of schools and universities to improve rural teacher development programmes. The collaboration between schools and the university affords teachers in remote rural schools an opportunity to learn about different strategies and skills they may apply for effective teacher-learner contact in class (Doe, et. al., 2006). Further, it affords rural school teachers an opportunity to learn about modern technology to facilitate teaching and learning in class (Doe, et. al., 2006). Such school-university partnerships contribute to a markedly improved value of education and can assist in grooming the child in rural areas. This study aims to establish the experiences of teachers regarding the contribution of school-university partnership in rural teacher development.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The study explores the teachers' experiences regarding SUPs contribution to rural teacher development. The study looks at the teachers' views of what the SUP contributions to rural teacher development (RTD) should be, how the studied SUP contributes to RTD and how the contribution of the current SUP to RTD can be enhanced.

1.6 Key Research Question

The study was guided by the following key research question:

Main Question:

- What are the teachers' experiences regarding the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural teacher development?

Sub-questions:

- What are teachers' understandings of the contribution of school-university partnerships in the development of rural school teachers?
- How do school-university partnerships contribute to the development of rural school teachers?
- How can the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural school teacher development be enhanced?

The following are the objectives of this study:

- To explore teachers' understandings of the contribution of school-university partnerships in the development of rural school teachers.
- To establish the contribution of school-university partnership to the development of rural school teachers.
- To investigate factors that enhances the contribution of school-university partnership to rural teacher development.

1.7 Clarification of Key Concepts

There are four key concepts in this study. These concepts are partnership, school-university partnership, teacher development and rural schools. Key concepts are briefly explained below to give sense to how they will be used throughout the study.

1.7.1 Partnership

The concept 'partnership' is adopted from the business model (Myende, 2012). The concept 'partnership' is defined as a contractual relationship/arrangement where two or more people, but not more than twenty share responsibilities (Myende, 2012). Janis et al. (2019) define 'partnership' as a consciously designed collaborative agreement between different organisations/people working together to achieve a common/mutual objective. Hickey, et. al. (2019) further define 'partnership' as a relationship or agreement entered into between two or more institutions with a common purpose to develop a turnaround strategy for the underperforming institution(s) to improve and become effective. Partnership in this study is used to refer to the relationship that exists between two rural secondary schools and one of the Universities in KwaZulu-Natal, another University in Gauteng Province, South Africa. The partnership between these entities is purposively aimed at developing teacher skills and improving knowledge for teachers to meet the challenges of rural school teaching.

1.7.2 School-university partnership

A 'partnership' between schools and universities is described as a formal agreement or collaboration aimed at strategising to provide professional teacher development and support for inexperienced teachers (Bradly, 2002). Wang and Wong (2017) explain a school-university partnership as a formal educational relationship that exists between the individual school/a number of schools and a specific university for the purpose of achieving improved teacher and learner performance. SUP is a fundamental link between school(s) concerned and a specific university and it help to strengthen teacher education reform (Burton and Greher, 2007). SUP is further explained as a cross-institutional learning systems between school(s) and the university wherein knowledge is acquired, disseminated and created among all parties involved (Fenwick, 2007). Hickey et al. (2019), in the leveraging of university partnerships, advance the idea that campus leaders have a big influence and through strong interpersonal skills bring people together. Similarly, by being change agents they help SUPs to develop turnaround strategies that improve teaching and learning in schools. Studies have recognised the importance of SUPs and are encouraging teacher development in such partnership (Wang & Wong, 2017). In this study, a school-university partnership programme is used to re-educate

teachers with skills and knowledge they require to bring about change in their professional careers.

1.7.3 Teacher development

Mitchell (2013) explains teacher development as a process whereby an individual teacher acquires or enhances skills, knowledge and attitudes for improved classroom practice. Further to that, Mitchell (2013) asserts that teacher development requires teacher participation in activities aimed at advancing new skills, knowledge and values that better their practice. Avalos (2011) articulates teacher development as teacher learning, which means that teachers learn how to learn and transform their knowledge into practice for the benefit of learners in the classroom. Darling-Harmond, et. al. (2017) define teacher development as a structured professional learning that results in a change in teacher practice and improvement in student learning outcomes. In this study, rural school teacher development is considered as an important tool that helps boost teachers' professionalism and promotes increased teaching skills in order to meet the evolving challenges of rural school teaching.

1.7.4 Rural School

Du Plessis and Mestry (2019), explain a rural school as a school located outside the urban environment. Similarly, a rural school is referred to as a school found in a geographical area located outside of towns or big cities (Hlalele, 2012). Hlalele (2012) defines rural as a concept based on geographical location and economic activities that impact in the growth and improvement of services in the area where the school is located. Hlalele (2012) articulates that those rural geographical areas, are areas that are generally remote and underdeveloped. Nkambule, et. al. (2011) have a congruent view of the definition of a rural school as a school found in rural territory that is fringe, distant and remote. According to Nkambule et al. (2011) most rural schools lack basic infrastructure like water, electricity and roads. According to Hlalele (2012) rural schools have features of underdeveloped infrastructure and where people walk long hours to access social services and amenities. Therefore, in this study, rural schools are defined as schools located in rural areas of low socio-economic activity and poor infrastructure.

1.8 Organisation of Chapters

Chapter 1

Chapter one presents the orientation and background to the study, the problem statement, the rationale and the purpose of the study. It further explains, the objectives of the study and outlines the critical research questions and briefly clarifies the key concepts of this study. Finally, the chapter outlines the organisation of this study.

Chapter 2

Chapter two presents a literature review drawing from both local and international studies on school-university partnerships. Also, this chapter develops a theoretical framework, which is social learning theory that informs the analysis of the teachers' experiences in this study, which is social learning theory.

Chapter 3

Chapter three discusses the research design and methodological choices that were followed to conduct the study. The discussion covers the research paradigm, research approach, research method, sampling method, profiling of participants, data generation, data analysis method, trustworthiness of data and ethical issues. In this chapter, I also reflect on my experiences of conducting this study.

Chapter 4

Chapter four of this study presents the data and its interpretation. This chapter consequently uses the literature and theoretical framework to understand and evaluate the meaning of the data in relation to existing research.

Chapter 5

Chapter five concludes the study. This chapter summarises the study by restating the research questions. From the questions, I make conclusions and develop recommendations for practice of school-university partnerships, policy and further research.

1.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I introduced the study and presented the overarching background to the study. In the background I presented the nature of rural schools and challenges facing them. I further looked at the quality of education in rural schools and the need to improve teaching and learning. Beyond that, I discussed the challenges that affect teaching and learning in rural schools and the need to engage in a programme of teacher development through school-university partnerships. I further discussed the problem statement of this study. Lastly, I outlined the structure of how the reporting of this study will be organised. Chapter two of this study will look at a literature review and the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Chapter one above presents the introduction and background of the study. This chapter presents a literature review and the theoretical framework underpinning this study. It discusses in detail the concepts of school-university partnership and teacher development. As I present the literature review, I expand on teachers' experiences of the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural teacher development. I further discuss teachers' understanding of the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural teacher development. In concluding the review, I discuss the school-university partnership as a rural school teacher development programme. I conclude this chapter by presenting the theoretical framework underpinning this study, which is the social learning theory.

2.1.1 Conceptualising School-University Partnerships

Wang and Wong (2017) define a school-university partnership (SUP) as a formal educational relationship that exists between the individual school/a number of schools and a specific university for the purpose of achieving improved teacher and learner performance. Conner (2010) further defines a SUP as a mutual relationship between the university and the school in which a collaborative partnership is formed with the aim of supporting teachers' continuous development. Furthermore, Bradly (2002) describes partnerships between schools and universities as fostering collaboration in the development programmes to support and afford inexperienced teachers the professional development they require. In the literature (Wang & Wong, 2017; Commer, 2010 and Bradly, 2002) on SUPs, there is no explicit review on how this collaboration should be formed and nurtured in order to sustain it. The different types of SUPs and the variety of their focus confirm the wide spectrum of activities in which they may be involved as they embrace the broad relationship between schools and universities (Bradly, 2002).

Notwithstanding the different types of SUP focus, the partnership between schools and universities places more interest on widening the participation of schools in the

partnership programme (Handscomb, et. al., 2014). Additionally, the partnership promotes a lively relationship between faculties of education and schools involved in partnership programme (Handscomb, et. al., 2014). The different types of SUP focus include initial teacher education, continuing professional development and consultancy and collaborative research (Handscomb, et. al., 2014).

2.1.2 Initial Teacher Education

In the initial teacher education focus, the dynamic relationship with the university is formed by the government and schools (Handscomb, et. al., 2014). These partnerships are the outcome of what traditionally happens in universities and they require an amicable debate, an objective allocation of responsibilities and undivided cooperation with those who have developed different institutional contexts to universities (Allen, et. al., 2012). This favours cooperation around teacher skilling and development, and emphasises rural teacher professional development (Allen, et. al., 2012).

2.1.3 Continuing Teacher Professional Development

There has been a long history of working relations between university, education departments and schools on continuing teacher professional development (Handscomb, et. al., 2014). SUPs in this regard offer schools an opportunity that expands teacher professional development for improved teacher practice (Onno & Ferreira, 2010). The argument supporting the effectiveness of continuing teacher professional development is that it should focus on school needs, be under the stewardship of the school, focus on the classroom and relate to improved teaching and learning in the school (Sione & Lumpe, 2014).

2.2. Consultancy and Collaborative Research

The fundamental issue about consultancy and collaborative research related to teacher skills development within SUPs is the stance contemplated towards favouring research, enquiry and knowledge (Handscomb, et. al., 2014). The teacher development programme in this regard is linked to the respective university and the school culture and the dynamics of power and control within partnerships (Avalos, 2011).

In the last two or more decades, creating and fostering of SUPs has become a key educational development goal for teacher development and needs to be promoted (Halasz, 2016). According Halasz (2016) SUPs help teachers to share teacher professional knowledge. As teachers share professional knowledge in SUPs it helps them to bridge gaps and build new knowledge between teacher practice and theory (Gilles, et. al., 2009).

There are various changes that are presented by SUPs programmes in the professional development of teachers in order to improve teaching and learning in schools (Goodlad, 1996). These changes have made the creation and the development of SUPs a major strategic field when it comes to educational development, teacher education and educational research (Gilles, et. al., 2009).

Furthermore, the school-university partnership concept has become prominent, as it is formidable in teacher development (Mutemeri and Chetty, 2011). Mutemeri and Chetty (2011), hold the view that conceptually SUPs create good relationship between schools and universities in order to attain an improved teacher development programme. In this study, the SUP concept is considered useful for underperforming rural schools that need to improve teacher development to meet the challenges of rural school teaching (Mutemeri & Chetty, 2011). School-university partnerships need to be established and sustained as on-going relationships that aim to improve teacher performance (Allen, et. al., 2012). The purpose of SUP programmes especially in rural schools is to support teacher development and improve learning (Allen, et. al., 2012).

2.3 Teacher Development

Teacher development is a process; it involves teacher up skilling, learning and evolving within the profession (Barron, et. al., 2015). Mitchell (2013) explains teacher development as a process whereby individuals improve skills, knowledge and attitudes for better practice during teacher-learner contact. Mitchell (2013) argues that the quality of learners' education depends on the quality of the teacher. According to Avidov-Ungar

(2016) teacher professional development is the constant development of knowledge and teacher professional skills throughout the career life of the individual teacher in education. Further to that, Mitchell (2013) insists that teacher development requires teachers participating in activities aimed at advancing new skills, knowledge and values that better their teaching practice. On the other hand, Villegas-Remers (2003) defines teacher development as an exposure of a teacher to professional growth to gain increased experience and examine his or her teaching systematically. Sione and Lumpe (2014) in their argument on teachers' understanding of teacher development in order to be effective, contend that it should be a high quality, sustainable, intensified, on-going process. It should be classroom based and foster collective responsibility.

Furthermore, teacher development includes teacher learning therefore, it is this learning that encourages teachers to transform knowledge into practice for the benefit of learners (Avalos, 2011). Avalos (2011) further notes that teacher development is a complex process that requires collaborative participation and individual or collective teacher involvement in the programme. Guskey (2003) suggests that such a perspective regards teacher development as being underpinned by several characteristics for high quality teacher development that include: a content-focused, extended, collaborative, part of daily work characterised by coherent and integrated continuity and inquiry-based and teacher-driven characteristics. By implementing these characteristics when engaging with teacher development they can enhance students' and teachers' opportunities to learn (Guskey, 2003).

Rural teacher experiences of teacher development pose different challenges that hinder effective development opportunities (Singh, 2011 and Mpahla & Okeke, 2015). Moloi (2002) suggest that teachers must be engaged in lifelong learning to be able to meet new challenges. School-university partnerships support continuous teacher professional development to keep teachers up-to-date with current issues in teaching and learning (Barley & Beesley, 2007). Part of the challenge that hinders effective teacher development in schools is the difficulty of providing effective professional development for teachers (Barron, et. al., 2015). Teachers' experiences of successful SUP programmes

affirm the difficulty of providing effective professional teacher development as the main factor that impedes the success of high-performing and high-needs rural schools (Barley & Beesley, 2007). The difficulties met by SUPs to provide effective professional teacher development results in poor participation of teachers in the development programme (Darling-Hammond, et. al., 2017).

2.3.1 Elements of Effective Rural Teacher Development

Having elaborated on teacher development and its implications for improving teaching and learning, I want to further zoom in to elements of effective rural teacher development. These are elements that create enthusiasm for rural school teachers to participate effectively in their programmes of development (Barley & Beesley, 2007). RTD programmes improve teachers' skills and knowledge to deal with challenges of rural school teaching (Barron, et. al., 2015). Those elements include teachers' involvement in the programme of development, consideration of teachers' professional development needs and encouraging positive teacher working relationships (Darling-Hammond, et. al., 2017).

2.3.2 Teachers' Involvement in the Programme Development

The supporting factor that effectively contributes to SUPs in rural school teacher development is the collaborative culture (Pitsoe & Maila, 2012). Teachers expect to be involved in the planning of their development programme (Pitsoe & Maila, 2012). Pitsoe and Maila (2012) allude to teachers' experience of proper planning of a teacher development programme as it encourages a good working relationship between teachers and their programme facilitators. Literature (Pitsoe and Maila, 2012 & Mpahla and Okeke, 2015) on rural school teacher development proves that teachers need to be afforded an opportunity to participate in decision-making about their development strategies. Teachers' involvement in planning their development programme can enhance their experiences of the contribution of SUPs in rural school teacher development (Mpahla & Okeke, 2015). In this regard, teachers make new meanings and create new possibilities in their profession. When teachers' voices are heard, Pitsoe and Maila (2012) refer to this as a bottom-up approach in circles of education. Pitsoe and

Maila (2012) contend that teachers, as the ones who work closely with the learners deserve a properly planned capacity development programme. As a result, teachers know where they need to be developed in order to meet rural teaching demands. Further to that, teachers' involvement can be seen as the motivational tool that increases and releases their energy; responsibility and initiative, resulting in greater commitment to the job and increased job satisfaction (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Therefore, in rural schools it is important that teachers become part of planning sessions (Pitsoe & Maila, 2012).

2.3.3 Consideration of Teachers' Professional Development Needs

Teachers' professional development that is not based on teachers needs for development has the potential to become ineffective (Bayar, 2014). Teachers' professional development is arguably based on their specific basic needs and those are: searching for ways to improve teachers' knowledge, and better methods of enhancing learners' performance in class (Avidov-Ungar, 2016). Teachers view these two specific basic needs as most important in order for them to improve their work in the classroom (Lucilio, 2009). Lucilio (2009) argues that when administrators plan teacher development programmes, teachers want to be asked what they need in order to improve student learning. When teacher professional development programmes are conducted, teachers need training on content-specific experiences and how to use them in the classroom to improve student achievement (Guskey, 2000). Moreover, teachers need professional development programmes that provide them with concrete, content-specific material, and instructional strategies they can put into practice in the classroom (Lee, 2005). Teachers want to be part of the planning, designing, development, implementation, and delivery of professional development programmes (Avidov-Ungar, 2016). Teachers need to be afforded the opportunity to attend workshops, to help plan them, and to be presenters to their colleagues (Avidov-Ungar, 2016). Literature (Avidov-Ungar, 2016; Lee, 2005; Bayar, 2014 and Lucilio, 2009) on teachers' needs for teacher development confirms that teachers learn better from other teachers who are working in the same classroom situation as they are. Similarly, teachers need to be afforded an opportunity to participate fully in their professional development programmes where the release time is specific, teaching schedules are adjusted to suit such trainings, and dealing with all other creative solutions

can help teachers alleviate the issue of time constraints (Bayar, 2014).

2.3.4 Encouraging Positive Teacher Working Relations

Steyn (2010) encourages collective teacher working relations in rural schools as it assists teachers to meet the teaching and learning demands of rural school teaching. SUPs encourage teacher-working relations that create better learning opportunities for learners in rural schools (Jovanova-Mitkovska, 2010). In this regard, teachers are encouraged to work in teams as this maintains support for each other. In SUPs, the experience of teachers confirms that working together motivates teachers to achieve good results and promote their skills (Myende and Bhengu, 2015). Ngala and Odebero (2010) support the notion of teachers' participation in teacher development through SUPs as it increases their effectiveness and assists them to deal with the reality of the challenges they face in rural schools teaching.

2.4 Challenges of Teacher Development

There are a number of factors that hinder progress in teacher development in rural schools. Working in rural schools results in the following factors that hinder the effectiveness of teacher professional development programmes: leadership, difficult working conditions, systematic challenges, poorly designed teacher development programmes, lack of collaboration and active teacher participation, and school culture.

2.4.1 Leadership

School leadership has the role of influencing teachers in a school to participate actively in teacher professional development programmes (Harris, 2013). The major role of the school principal is to grow teacher confidence, to improve teacher-learning capacity and to build leadership capacity amongst the teachers through teacher professional development programmes in the school (Harris, 2013). The effective school principal that is able to attain the above increases student achievement in the school. Poor school leadership becomes a hindering factor for teacher professional development as it creates teacher dissatisfaction (Du Plessis, 2017). Dissatisfied teachers perform poorly and do not like to participate in school activities including teacher professional development (Du Plessis, 2017). Teachers who are dissatisfied about their work become demotivated and

fail to plan appropriately for their class activities, including planning for their development programmes (Harris, 2013). Effective teacher professional development takes place when the school leadership fully supports teachers in their professional growth (Barrett & Breyer, 2014). School leadership has various administrative roles to play in order to appropriately plan and manage teacher professional development programmes in a school (Harris, 2013). When school leadership becomes a hindering factor for successful teacher professional development programmes, the following administrative processes for the programme do not take place: applying for the approval of teacher development programme from the Department authorities, communicating the programme to the community, proper planning for the lost time during teacher development programme, and motivating teachers to participate actively in their own development programme (Bush & Glover, 2014). Both school leadership and governance have to support teacher development programmes in a school and it requires strong leadership skills from the principal to coordinate the programme and convene all school structures to understand the significance of teacher development programmes (Harris, 2013).

2.4.2 Difficult Working Conditions

Teachers working in rural schools are faced with various difficult working conditions in their school environment (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). The Department of Education (DoE) creates difficult working conditions that affect teaching and learning in schools and hinder effective teacher development programmes (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). The difficult working conditions includes: unsatisfactory remuneration, overcrowded classrooms, sexual harassment in schools, lack of teachers respect by school leaders, violence within and outside school premises and the lack of teaching and learning materials (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Brownell, et. al., 2018). These are conditions that reflect the most pervasive hindering factors for teacher professional development in rural schools (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). These difficult working conditions are demotivating to teachers and affect teachers negatively (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). They affect teachers' dignity resulting in teachers lacking a strong professional identity and the will to participate vibrantly in their own professional growth (Khumalo and Mji,

2014). These conditions affect teachers' efficacy that results in teachers developing compromised confidence as they lose the desire to take part in their professional development programmes (Khumalo and Mji, 2014). The difficult working conditions affect teachers' professionalism and teachers opt to look for other job opportunities and see no need for professional development (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019).

2.4.3 Systematic Challenges

The education system in South Africa is characterised by challenges that affect effective teacher professional development (Burns, 2015). Those challenges include poor school leadership, limited administrative capacity, inadequate budget and a lack of qualified personnel (Smith & Riley, 2012). Most rural schools lack qualified personnel who can help teachers to master the teaching content (Khumalo and Mji, 2014). These schools are associated with demotivated teachers who are not willing to develop and improve their professional skills (Khumalo and Mji, 2014). Such schools lack systems and incentives to encourage and help teachers improve their practice (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Systematic challenges are hindering factors for teacher professional development that demotivate and demoralise teachers (Smith & Riley, 2012).

2.4.4 Poorly Designed Teacher Development Programmes

Poorly designed teacher professional development programmes have become a serious hindering factor for effective teacher development (Brownell, et. al., 2018). These programmes are the cause of the lack of access to quality professional development (Smith & Riley, 2012). Poorly designed teacher development programmes always reflect budget constraints, a lack of qualified facilitators, volatility and logistical challenges (Smith & Riley, 2012). Such teacher development programmes are designed and carried out by facilitators who have no teaching experience in general and no teaching experience in rural schools in particular (Khumalo and Mji, 2014). Teachers perceive poorly designed teacher development programmes as being of low quality and completely irrelevant and as a result lose interest in attending (Brownell, et. al., 2018).

2.4.5 Lack of Collaboration and Active Participation

During teacher professional development participants that come from different fields or subjects of practice, interrupt collaboration and active participation (Burns, 2015). A lack of collaboration and active participation has become a hindering factor for effective teacher development programmes (Burns, 2015). When teachers lack collaboration, they fail to attend workshops or meetings for teacher development (Berrett & Breyer, 2014). Most of the time workshops or meetings for teacher development in situations that lack collaboration are characterised by poor preparation (Berrett & Breyer, 2014). In situations when there is a lack of collaborations, teachers become demoralised and fail to attend workshops because they feel that they have a high workload and must remain at school to cover the work (Berrett & Breyer, 2014).

2.4.6 School Culture

School organisational culture reflects the values, norms, beliefs, assumptions, and mindsets that inform the behavior of teachers in performing their duties in a school (Lutifyana and Sugito, 2019). Avalos (2011) argues that when teachers in a school view the school culture as negative, they develop a negative attitude towards their own professional growth. Therefore, a negative school culture becomes a hindering factor for teacher professional development in a school (Avalos, 2011). Guskey (2000) argues that teachers work well with a high school culture whereas a low school culture is characterised by underperformance. In a low school culture, teachers lack cooperation and trust (Lutifyana and Sugito, 2019). In a low school culture, the development of education and learning becomes impossible and teachers have a very low morale (Guskey, 2002). Mitchel (2015) describes a school with a low school culture as having its staff lacking in common objectives. This indirectly affects teacher and staff development in a school (Guskey, 2002).

2.5 Contribution of School-University Partnerships to Rural Teacher Development

The following section discusses factors that influence the contribution of school-university partnerships to an effective rural teacher development programme. These factors include: the use of information and communication technology (ICT), teacher

recruitment and retention strategies, community participation and recognition of teachers' roles.

2.5.1 The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The 21st century skills development strategy in developing countries has increased the expectation that teachers should take advantage of the emerging use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teacher professional development (Gilakjani, 2013). ICT partnership programmes contribute effectively in supporting learners and teacher learning. School-university partnerships may contribute to rural school development by implementing programmes that equip schools with technology infrastructure (Mollenkopf, 2009). Moreover, universities involved in partnerships can contribute to teacher development by providing trainings for both teachers and learners on the use of technology infrastructure (Gilakjani, 2013). This may help teachers to gain new skills and the knowledge necessary for rural school practice. ICT can also promote the use of technology by learners from rural schools to gain access to universities using the available online programmes (Avidov-Ungar, 2018). Further to that, rural school teachers can use ICT to research information that will increase their knowledge and ability to deliver lessons effectively in class (Gilakjani, 2013). In this regard, rural school leadership should develop a strategy to upgrade rural schools and provide them with Internet infrastructure (Gilakjani, 2013). Research emphasises that school leaders should encourage the use of ICT as part of school culture and it must be sustained to be effective (Avidov-Ungar, 2014). Teachers in rural schools perceive ICT as a useful strategy for successful teaching and learning. As a result, most rural school teachers support teacher development programmes on ICT and other related new models of engaging a child (Gilakajani, 2013). The partnership between schools and a university should be able to address teachers' needs and the demands of rural school practice.

2.5.2 Teacher recruitment, support and retention

The procedure of recruiting, preparing and managing teachers in rural areas is an important factor that contributes to improving the teaching conditions in rural schools

(Tran, Smith, & Fox, 2018). Education authorities need to develop effective strategies that will be used to recruit teachers who will work in rural areas (Rutenberg, 2010). Literature (Handal, Watson, Petocz & Maher, 2013) on rural school retention strategies continues to recommend rural school packages (incentives) as a viable means to retain rural school teachers. The current system in education treats educators equally and has a similar demand for achieving a 100% pass for all students, including rural school students (Rutenberg, 2010). The challenges of rural school teaching and issues of specific training to deal with rural school practices are not considered by the system (Adedeji, & Olaniyan, 2011). Even teacher development programmes supported by the DoE have become a one size fits all, which is impossible with rural school teachers (Rutenberg, 2010). SUPs are a mitigating factor that can assist in rural school teacher development programmes by attending to their training needs (Avidov-Ungar, 2014). Literature (Avidov-Ungar, 2014; Bazemore-Bertrand, Quast & Green, 2019) on SUPs continues to recommend that schools foster partnerships with universities of choice. The experiences of teachers who have participated in this kind of partnership recommends the approach as an effective programme in teacher professional development (Avidov-Ungar, 2014).

2.5.3 Community participation and recognition of teachers' roles

The high rate of illiteracy in rural communities impedes vibrant community participation in school activities and teacher development (Naicker, 2011). Community members are unable to participate effectively in policy formulation that supports teacher development programmes because they lack an understanding of school policies (Naicker, 2011). It is therefore, imperative that the school improves community participation in the activities of the school as the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, as amended, stipulates (Du Plessis, 2019). The commonly known avenue of community involvement in school activities is through the School Governing Body (SGB), ensuring that various significant roles are played by the community in the life of the school (Du Plessis, 2019). Programmes of teacher development through SUPs need to include parental education in order to alleviate the high rate of illiteracy in rural areas (Naicker, 2011). Parents need to be informed about and consent to the days that teachers will use to attend development programmes facilitated through SUPs (Ndlovu, 2011). A coherent community serviced

by a school has an opportunity to turn an ineffective school into a best performing school (Naicker, 2011). Through the effective contribution of SUPs in rural teacher development, and community involvement in the programme, it is possible to create good working relations between teachers and the community. Working relations between the school and the community should aim at sharpening the skills and intellectual ability of a child (Nhlumayo, 2016). As a result, both the school and the community benefit from the school-university partnership as partnership of purpose (Ndlovu, 2011). Such school-university partnerships should be inviting to the community and be able to extend their services and business to assist the community serviced by the school (Naicker, 2011). The purpose of a school-university partnership will have been achieved if the partnership is able to bring new innovative ideas that can improve the economic life of the community serviced by the school (Ndlovu, 2011). Also, it encourages a sense of well-being, good attendance, a positive attitude towards school, homework readiness and effective time spent on homework, motivation, and educational aspirations (Willems & Gonzalez-De Hass, 2012).

2.5.4 Characteristics of an Effective School-University Partnership Programme

The characteristics of an effective school-university partnership programme are discussed in this section. The discussion includes: skills gained by teachers involved in partnership programmes, effective school leadership, maintaining learner discipline, and teacher development programmes.

2.5.4.1 Skills Gained by Teachers Involved in Partnership Programmes

School-university partnership has become a popular teacher support programme characterised by various skills and knowledge gained through the programme. In a successful partnership programme, teachers, school management teams and the school governing body all have major roles to play in creating a successful school. A successful school embrace the support of the school community, learners and teachers with a will to improve school performance. School-university partnerships contribute to rural school teacher development by affording teachers various opportunities to gain skills and knowledge as they participate in the programme (Tran, et. al., 2018). Partnership programmes mitigate the prevailing view that initial teacher education programmes

foreground theory but neglect the demands of practice aligned to the needs of the school (Gravett, et. al., 2019). Similarly, partnerships alleviate the challenge that most teachers raise - that there is disconnect between university-based teacher education and the complex world of classroom teaching (Gravett, et. al., 2019). The fundamental objective of a partnership programme is to prepare teachers to gain the necessary skills they need in order to teach effectively and successfully in their areas of specialisation (Tran, et. al., 2018). Partnership programmes should always display mutual benefit. Pennefather (2008) confirms the mutual benefit from partnership programmes and further mentions that teachers become aware that their knowledge and experience represents valuable input to the training of learners. A successful school-university partnership programme means that teachers and learners have the potential to engage in mutual learning (Pennefather, 2008). Literature alludes to various skills gained by teachers involved in partnership programmes such as financial planning skills, negotiation skills, problem solving skills, computer skills, and teaching skills that help teachers to deal with challenges of rural school teaching (Hickey, et. al., 2019). Partnership programmes expose teachers to the use of computers for improved teaching and learning in rural schools (Bhalla, 2013). The use of technological devices to improve teaching and learning in rural schools marks the significance of introducing both teachers and learners to the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) which determines the ICT future in rural communities (Bhalla, 2013). Teachers do not only gain computer skills with e-teaching and learning in schools but it also affords teachers much time to engage and respond to learners' queries instead of spending time writing notes on the board (Barrera-Osorio and Linden, 2009). Therefore, rural schools are compelled to improve their technological infrastructure to save information used in a school for easy reference and extraction in future from the school archives (Voogt & McKenney, 2017 and Barrera-Osorio & Linden, 2009). Therefore, the use of technology and skills gained by teachers involved in school-university partnerships and possible inter-school teaching using experienced and qualified teachers through virtual classes, improves rural teacher development (Voogt & McKenney, 2017).

Furthermore, the use of technology by rural schools involved in partnership programmes as a contributory factor in school development, demands highly skilled school leaders to

manage and lead rural schools (Khobo, 2015). These are school leaders who are prepared to play a major role in improving the socio-economic conditions in rural societies (Khobo, 2015). According to Hallinger and Heck (2016) school leaders are centres of influence in schools and therefore have a role to continue affording teachers and the community opportunities to participate in school-university partnership programmes. However, Hallinger and Heck (2016) commends SUPs as programmes that may make an effective contribution to rural schools in order for them to attain their goals as set out in the school vision and mission statement. This concurs with the notion that partnership programmes assist rural school leaders to influence the future and culture of the school. Hallinger and Heck (2016) support the idea that rural schools too, should start planning achievable goals that are budget aligned. Mpolokeng (2011) in writing about the success of SUPs in rural communities commends teachers who improve rural communities through such programmes.

2.5.4.2 Effective School Leadership

Effective schools are the outcomes of effective school leadership that aims to contribute positively in improving schools infrastructurally, academically and professionally (Hickey, et. al., 2019). This is possible through effective school leadership that has influence over many characteristics of high performing schools (Hickey, et. al., 2019). Through SUPs school leaders may support teachers and develop a positive school culture (Meyer, 2010). A positive school culture, influenced by school leadership has the potential of producing high student achievement (Meyer, 2010). In this situation teachers and learners want to be in school; there is a feeling of support, good teachers are retained and there is an environment that is conducive for learning (Hickey, et. al., 2019). Here the improved school leadership style that is transformational in nature motivates teachers and revives the spirit of hard work (Wenger, 1998). In rural schools of this nature, the school leaders have to display good leadership in order to improve the school performance (Meyer, 2010).

SUPs have a good contribution to make in reviving the deteriorating school culture because of poor school performance and teacher incapacity (MacNeil, et. al., 2009). According to MacNeil, et. al. (2009) the significance of school culture is experienced in

the day-to-day operations of the school in order for it to attain its vision and mission. Therefore, in a revived school culture, teachers are encouraged by an improved leadership style to become committed to work (Rautiola, 2009). Rautiola (2009) suggests that an improved school culture creates an inviting school environment for all stakeholders (i.e. teachers, learners, parents, business community, the DoE, etc.) in the school. As a result, the school leader who changes the approach, language and strategies to lead the school, impacts positively on the school culture and leadership style (Rautiola, 2009). A progressive school leader who has become part of a partnership programme sees the need to provide proper school leadership that instils a good school culture that adopt progressive leadership styles (Rautiola, 2009).

Moreover, SUP programmes help school principals to gain skills to develop an inclusive approach for parents, teachers and learners, to nurture and motivate them for their full participation in the school activities (Bush, 2003). In this regard the school management team (SMT) has a significant role to play in promoting a positive school culture of teaching and learning (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). The SMT has an obligation to support teachers with all the necessary resources that may be required for successful teaching and learning to take place (Duma, et. al., 2011). Literature (Duma, et. al., 2011) confirms that the participation of SGBs in the affairs of the school that involves among other things planning, organising, leading, supervising, policy making, decision making, controlling and coordinating, which are some of the management duties of the school governance structures, improves hope and support for rural school teachers. As a result, teachers need this support as they agree that working in a rural school setting is difficult (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). Therefore, they require support from the community to continue striving for improved school performance (Duma, et. al., 2011). In any school, the SMT has a duty to develop, support and equip staff with skills and knowledge that will make them perform their duties better (Ntsoane, 2017). Nwangwa and Omotere (2013) cite the duties of the SMT in a school to include raising funds for the school in order to have resources to fund the implementation of the curriculum, to assist the school governing body in developing school policies for a conducive teaching and learning environment and to maintain the school infrastructure using the available resources.

2.5.4.3 Maintain Learner Discipline

The main objective of a positive school culture is to maintain discipline in school and in the classroom. Most rural schools have a challenge of students who are lacking the motivation to learn as well as the ability to concentrate and maintain self-discipline (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). Therefore, SUPs may contribute positively to teacher development as the literature confirms. A SUP has to address the various causes of reluctance to attend school by rural school learners that include: poor school infrastructure, a lack of basic school services and poverty in the community served by the school (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). Therefore, school leaders have a significant role in rebuilding the school with an effective school culture that bring back hope to the school community and restores the culture of teaching and learning in the school (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). Lessons that are presented using technology, raise learners' enthusiasm to learn (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). I concur with Lethoko, et. al. (2001) who suggest that when learners value learning they attend their classes in full because they perceive there is a lot to be gained. Therefore, teachers involved in a partnership programme commend the programme as it makes their life easier in class and it help them to maintain learner discipline and restore a culture of teaching and learning (Lethoko, et. al., 2001).

However, teachers on their own find it difficult to restore the school culture of teaching and learning but need the support of SMTs and the SGBs (Sebopetsa, et. al., 2015). In any school, properly formulated policies play a powerful role in creating an effective school (Murphy, et. al., 1982). The school policies that create a conducive environment for teaching and learning assist in restoring the culture of teaching and learning (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). The inclusion of SMTs and SGBs in partnership programmes may assist rural schools to attain holistic school development (Sebopetsa, et. al., 2015). An enabling leadership style creates an inviting environment for teachers, parents and learners in the school (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). As a result, everybody owns everything that is happening in the school and it helps to maintain discipline and the culture of teaching and learning (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). Teachers improve school performance as they continue to appreciate learner discipline in the school (Lethoko, et. al., 2001).

2.5.4.4 Teacher Development Programmes Improve Professionalism

School-university partnership programmes contribute to rural school teacher development by improving teaching skills and content knowledge in teachers' subjects of specialisation (Barley & Beesley, 2007). The diverse learning platforms afford teachers an opportunity to face the challenges of rural school teaching (Barley & Beesley, 2007). Partnerships motivate teachers involved in the programme to register for various formal qualifications that help them to improve their skills and knowledge (Barley & Beesley, 2007). Literature confirms that most teachers attend partnership development programmes with the expectation that their classroom-based challenges will be solved (Barley & Beesley, 2007). The exposure of teachers to partnership development programmes helps teachers to develop a sense of putting the interest of the school first (Bartholomew & Sandholtz, 2009). Bartholomew and Sandholtz (2009), when writing about partnership programmers, argue that they encourage rural school teachers to rise above the calling of professional teachers and serve the community with diligence and honesty. Therefore, rural school teachers have to be committed to working hard to transform the rural community through educative teaching (Bartholomew & Sandholtz, 2009).

2.6 Factors Enhancing School-University Partnership Contributions to Rural Teacher Development

The following factors enhance the contribution of school-university partnerships in rural school teacher professional development: commitment of school leaders to partnerships, commitment of teachers to professional development, parental and business people's involvement in sustainable partnerships, and effective communication between the institutions in partnership (Polly, Reinke, & Putnam, 2019).

2.6.1 Commitment of school leaders to partnership

The influence of school leadership in enhancing the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural school teacher development promotes a collaborative culture (Carter, et. al., 2018). It further enables teachers' professional growth and opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge. It should start from school leaders' knowledge and

understanding of the impact SUPs may have and adopting this as the culture of the school (Brady, 2002). Edmonds (1982) through his landmark research on effective schools defined a good school as a school involved in SUPs. Such a good school is characterised by strong leadership, a climate of safety and order, a commitment to monitoring progress, high expectations for teachers and learners, and a focus on teaching important skills (Edmond, 1982). Transformational school leaders' influence in the contribution of school-university partnerships fosters change opportunities for teachers (Bush, 2007). Therefore, a transformational school leader must make changes that increase organisational efficacy and performance. Leaders of schools appreciating SUPs employ changes that foster higher aims and expectations for the organisation as it results in improved organisational performance (Brady, 2002). Rural school leaders supporting school-university partnerships encourage teachers to accept responsibility for their own professional development and to engage effectively in advancing their skills and knowledge.

2.6.2 Commitment of teachers to professional development

Mart (2013) explains a committed teacher as a teacher who feels the call to teach and senses teaching as profoundly meaningful for his or her life. Literature (Crosswell & Elliot, 2004) confirms a strong connection between teacher commitment and the very intimate element of passion for the work of teaching. Mart (2013) further defines passion as a strong inclination or desire towards an activity that one likes and finds important and in which one invests time and energy. However, the commitment and passion of rural teachers is driven by dilemmas and potentials of young people who come into class every day (Mart, 2013). As a result, passionate rural school teachers know that it is their role to encourage students for active learning (Crosswell & Elliot, 2004). Committed teachers promote students' intellectual and moral development (Crosswell & Elliot, 2004). Therefore, teachers with passion engage in SUPs with commitment, and work with enthusiasm to develop professionally (Berry, 2012). Through dedication and commitment rural school teachers embrace the contribution of SUPs for their professional development (Bazemore-Bertrand, et. al., 2019). As the dedication, commitment and passion increases teachers begin to believe in the importance of their jobs (Berry, 2012). In rural schools with successful SUP programmes, teachers show a commitment to school

as well as to their profession (McGee, 2001). Rural school teachers' commitment to the school manifests itself in identifying with the school, feeling like a part of the school and being loyal to school (Berry, 2012). According to McGee (2001), having strongly committed teachers being part of school-university partnerships enhances the contribution of the partnership, allowing them to rethink practice, experiment and expand the knowledge base of the profession. In this regard, everyone participates and contributes to the development of improved teaching and learning in the school.

2.6.3 Parental and business people's involvement in sustainable partnerships

The involvement of parents and business people in the school life contributes immensely to the effective implementation of a school-university partnership (Ndlovu, 2011). In rural schools, parent and business peoples' involvement is regarded as a powerful tool that ensures an enhanced contribution to the success of the programmes of the school (Ndlovu, 2011). In a successful SUP programme parents and business people, as motivated members of the school community, participate vibrantly in helping the school to achieve its goals (Berry, 2012). Therefore, having motivated stakeholders (in the form of parents and business people) supporting SUPs in rural schools, it influences the success of school goals (Berry, 2012). Research has shown that, creating a strong collaboration between school and community members can establish a synergistic connection that enhances a learning organisation (Gichohi, 2015).

2.6.4 Effective communication between institutions in partnership

Effective communication is a complex activity used to transmit the desired knowledge, information, facts, etc. into the mind of the receiver to get a positive, expected response (Sonkhed, 2016). Communication is effective when the receiver understands the meaning to give positive feedback (Sonkhed, 2016). Effective communication is more than just the exchange of information; it is about understanding the intention behind the information (Steyn & Van Niekerk, 2002). Therefore, effective communication enhances the contribution of school-university partnerships for rural school teacher development.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The theory that models this study is Wenger's (1998) Social Learning Theory.

2.7.1 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory (SLT) within communities of practice (COP) is a theory of learning processes and social behaviour (Wenger, 1998). It proposes that new knowledge and skills are acquired by learning cooperatively from others (Wenger, 1998). SLT is recognised as one of the Cognitive Dominant Behaviourist Theories since it has some qualities that project behaviourist theories as well as some cognitive qualities (Eyyam, et. al., 2016). According to SLT, learning can be realised by means of learning from others' activities and behaviours (Deaton, 2015). In social learning theory amassing knowledge becomes a habit and a culture of daily experiences (Korthagen, 2010). In SLT learning is the involvement in social processes that insists on both issues of knowing and issues of natural essence of improving knowledge (Stewart, 2021). Social learning theory combines both the epistemology and ontology of learning (Eames & Cates, 2011). SLT contemplates respectively the issues of evolution of human knowledge and socialisation and the issue of people discovering their natural being and existence in the evolving world (Hill, et. al., 2009). This is the issue that emphasises self-efficacy for individuals (Watson, 2013). In the social environment of human existence, rural school teachers require professional development that improves their morale to teach effectively, with confidence and positive self-efficacy (Zepeda, et. al., 2014). In social learning theory socialisation and learning are inseparable processes (Eyyam, et. al., 2016). This is socialisation through training and education to develop one's mind to behave better with an understanding of factors affecting the environment of practice (Brandi & Elkajaer, 2012).

Social learning theory is different when compared to individual learning theory (ILT) (Kagoda, 2020). Individual learning theory (ILT) informs the learning organisation whereas social learning theory informs learning by participation in the learning community of the particular organisation (Eames & Cates, 2011). In ILT the focus is on learning as a process to develop the capacity to deal with self-emotions as opposed to obtaining and processing information and knowledge (Kagoda, 2020). Literature (Deaton, 2015; Mintzes, et. al., 2013 and Kagoda, 2020) on social learning theory confirms SLT builds on the critique of individual learning theory. A social learning theoretical

perspective postulates learning as something found everywhere and which is part of human culture and the performance of daily duties (Deaton, 2015). In ordinary circumstances it is difficult to avoid learning as learning is not by choice (Mintzes, et. al., 2013).

In social learning theory professional learning is through participation (Watson, 2013). Learning cannot be narrowed to occur in an individual being but is a process of vibrant part-taking and interaction (Zepeda, et. al, 2014). Learning in SLT happens among and with the involvement of other people and implies transformed thinking as compared to mere thought of mind (Eames & Cates, 2011). In SLT learning is described through participation patterns of individual members of the institution where learning takes place (Stewart, 2021). In social learning theory learning is part of human behaviour and participation in the Communities of Practice (COP) that constitute an organisation (Korthagen, 2010). In this organisation the issue in the centre of learning is to create a skilled education practitioner (Korthagen, 2010). Learning is a matter of identity development and socialisation (Deaton, 2015). In social learning theory knowledge becomes the vital means of learning the technique and the outcome of taking part in organisational practices (Mintzes, et. al., 2013). In SLT learning is about developing the ability to account why things happen and the kind of person an individual must become in order to depict a skilled education practitioner in a specific organisation (Eames & Cates, 2011). In social learning theory, to know is the capacity to reflect on issues and the ability to apply skills to respond to interactions with people, artifacts and activities (Zepeda, et. al., 2014).

In SLT language is used to advance ideas that promote learning (Stewart, 2021). Language is the base of learning and it encompasses the vital part in the process of learning when learning is regarded as the outcome of people socialising in a work environment or culture (Korthagen, 2010). Social learning theory insists on naturality, spontaneity, collaborative action on issues, and conversations that make sense and here learning is of a dispensed and tentative essence (Zepeda, et.al. 2014). Learning is a process of moving into uncharted waters to face the challenges (Deaton, 2015). Learning is like a drive into the sphere of finding new knowledge and it helps the person's mind to

rise like the phoenix from the ashes instead of being passive and following an already paved path (Eames & Cates, 2011). Watson (2013), further articulates the technique of learning and conceptualisation of individual knowledge through observations. According to Watson (2013) learning through monitoring other teachers' work is considered an important technique in teacher development. In this study, rural teacher development through SUPs is considered a school COP that affords teachers an opportunity to share skills with the purpose of improving teacher performance in rural schools (Sigh, 2011). Wenger (1998) further developed SLT to expand from communities of practice to a theory of learning that deals with the development of possible required skills in all staff members through self-development and exposure to continuous staff development. When teachers participate in teacher professional development programmes, they engage in a self-regulatory process that is referred to as self-efficacy (Watson, 2013). Self-efficacy includes effective elements such as self-confidence, self-inspiration and the desire to innovate (Watson, 2013). Self-efficacy is highly inclined towards optimistic teaching practices and student attainment (Watson, 2013).

Furthermore, for Wenger (1998) SLT emphasises individual development with a purpose to improve self-confidence through knowledge. SLT emphasises teacher learning as a lived experience in teachers' continuous professional development (Singh, 2011). Adams (2010) confirms SLT as a theory focusing on learning as a form of active and social practice. Horsburgh and Ippolito (2018) emphasise teachers' motivation as it encourages them to participate vibrantly in their professional development programmes. This motivation happens via reinforcement and it is proposed in three different types i.e. direct reinforcement, victorious reinforcement and self-reinforcement (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018). Horsburgh and Ippolito (2018) insist that teachers need to be present when they are involved in their own development in order for their participation to be legitimised and legitimacy comes from being given a specific role to play. Therefore, in SLT Watson (2013) articulates the need for teachers to be actively involved in their professional development programme as this helps those with less confidence to learn from others through doing and observing. In their findings, Horsburgh and Ippolito (2018) established that teachers learn better when they observe a behaviour that is aligned to their views and that is called aligned values.

Wenger (1998) frames learning as central in teachers' participation in COPs and the school. Therefore, learning is about being in the social world instead of coming to know about it. SLT proposes that the relationship that exists between the social and institutional structures in the organisation, informs the direction of learning in that particular institution (Watson, 2013). The position of SLT is that the complexity and diversity of the COP in which teachers participate is not a challenge but an enriching aspect of life (Adams, 2010). In this regard, a SUP as a teacher development programme presents itself as a programme to enhance rural school teachers' skills and knowledge to deal with challenges of rural teaching (Adams, 2010). SLT advances the notion that teachers are confronted with dilemmas and contradictions that motivate them to continue learning (Morley, 2016). In this study SUPs as a teacher development programmes are seen as a macro social learning practice of the school community. Here the school community is engaging in a special kind of behaviour that aims to improve their skills and knowledge so that their teaching practice is enhanced. In this theory it is the learning adopted by the school that is studied, and here the learning is teacher development through SUPs (Hargreaves, 2011). Hargreaves (2011) notes that the core unit of analysis in SLT is the learning instead of the individuals who learn from each other. Steyn (2014) asserts that learning can be enhanced through teacher continuous professional development, which results in improved teacher performance. Improved teacher performance bears results in improved learner performance (Steyn, 2014). SLT is proposed as offering a broader conceptualisation of the social practice of the school when it comes to teacher development (Hargreaves, 2011).

The drastic reviews in SLT that informs rural teacher development has made an impact in the culture of teaching and learning in rural schools (Brandt & Elkjaer, 2012). This study applies these ideas empirically to advance the behavioural change of teachers in a rural school.

This study found that SLT is relevant as it advances the principle of school change through learning. SLT believes that people learn from each other through influence and continuous observation. In this study, SUPs are studied as a source of influence for teacher development and school change to improved school performance. As I learn the

experiences of teachers in the contribution of SUPs to rural school teacher development in the same vein I want to establish the role of school leaders in engaging teachers to participate vibrantly in the programme. Both ideas in my understanding are addressed by SLT to achieve a better performing rural school regardless of the challenges of rural school teaching as mentioned above. I therefore considered SLT for framing this study to address its basic objectives as mentioned in chapter one of the report.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses two important parts of the study i.e. the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework. In the discussion the key concepts that guide this study of school-university partnerships and teacher development were unpacked. Literature revealed that all stakeholders involved in teacher development i.e. DoE, school leadership and universities have an obligation to work jointly to improve the effectiveness of SUP programmes. SUPs equip rural school teachers with the skills and knowledge to deal with challenges of working in rural schools. This chapter further looked at SLT as a theory underpinning the study. SLT frames this study in order to present the experiences of teachers and the contribution of SUPs to rural teacher development. The following chapter, which is chapter three, presents the research design and methodology of this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presents the literature reviewed on the topic and the theoretical framework that informs the study. The objective of Chapter 3 is to describe the research design and methodology used in this study. The chapter highlights a complete and in-depth review of the research paradigm, approach, design, methodology, and methods used to gather data. It further articulates the sampling method that was used to produce data for the study. Moreover, it describes the technique used to analyse the generated data. This chapter concludes by discussing the trustworthiness of the study and considers issues of ethics and limitations of the study.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is the position a researcher adopts to explain the world in which the researcher believes in and intends to live in and provides meaning about how the researcher interprets data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Khaldi, 2017). Bertram and Christiansen (2014), postulate that a research paradigm is about the techniques employed by the researcher to formulate distinct methods of knowing. Khaldi (2017) confirms that when research operates within a paradigm it becomes feasible to determine the choices including the kind of questions to ask during data collection interviews, things that the researcher may observe and investigate and the manner in which data can be collected and interpreted. The theoretical paradigm of this study is interpretivism (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Interpretivism in this study is used as an epistemological premise. In interpretivism, knowledge is grounded in our experiences, is constructed socially and arises from people's interactions with each other (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In interpretivism, interpretations are based on peoples' beliefs and understandings concerning the situation under research (Creswell, 2014). Interpretivists favour the idea that knowledge is illustrative and relates to the circumstances and individuals that raised it (Merriam, 2009). In interpretivism there is no explicit view that has entitlement over another and no definitive explanation (Hiller, 2016). Guba and Lincoln (1994) believe

that in this paradigm the reality is never single, nor is there one truth that concerns the social world but truth is a set of what is real. This study sought to understand the experiences of rural school teachers of the contribution of school-university partnerships to teacher development. Therefore, I will discover realities through participants' views, their own background and experiences. In order to gain multiple truths I interviewed a departmental official, principals, departmental heads and teachers from two different rural schools to obtain data.

3.3 Research Approach

This study uses a qualitative approach. Vincze (2013); Gerring (2017) and Moriaty (2011) attest that studies using a qualitative approach do not generalise; they rather deliver a brilliant study context that creates an understanding of human involvement through thoroughly studying a specific case. In qualitative research textual, verbal or visual data are systematically collected, organised, described and interpreted (Msweli, 2011). In qualitative research phenomena are studied in their genuine environment that seeks to forge logic or analyse situations in terms of the sense they bring to people (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Creswell (2014) further explains qualitative research as a technique of investigating and understanding the meaning that individuals or a number of people believe exists in a social or human situation. In qualitative research, the researcher becomes the instrument and participants become individuals that contribute to data interpretation and analysis (Msweli, 2011). Qualitative research allows the researcher to ask probing questions to the participants (Msweli, 2011). In this regard, the researcher understands the participants' feelings through data that participants divulge in the form of responses (Mouton, 2011). In a qualitative approach participants divulge views, understandings and meanings about the phenomenon under study (Mouton, 2011). Qualitative research is used purposefully in this study. It is utilised to investigate the complex phenomenon of the experiences of rural school teachers of the contribution of school-university partnerships in rural teacher development.

3.4 Research Design

Research methodology is a coherent method used by the researcher to study how the research will be conducted scientifically (Kothari, 2004). When scientifically conducting a study the researcher describes, explains and predicts the phenomenon (Kothari, 2004). A case study within a phenomenon is a scientific inquiry that investigates a contemporary situation within its real life (Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) further describes the foundations of a quality case study as a carefully selected delimited case. In case study research, the investigations are detailed and consider a period of time to collect data about a phenomena (Njie & Asimiran, 2014). Data are collected within the phenomenon's context with the purpose of providing analysis of the context and processes that elucidate the conceptual issues under study (Njie & Asimiran, 2014). Further to that, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) confirm that case studies depict a clear feeling of being in a particular situation. The case in this study is two rural schools on the outskirts of the province of KZN and the focus of the case is the experiences of rural school teachers of the contribution of school-university partnerships to teacher development.

Njie and Asimiran (2014) explain the case as the phrase that refers to a phenomenon, a system or institution, a person or even an element of analysis. Yin (2003) articulates that a case study is used in situations where the focus of the study basically answers the "how" or "why" questions and as a researcher I do not exploit participants in the study, rather the focus covers the contextual conditions considered relevant to the phenomenon. The focus of this study is to gain insight into the experiences of rural school teachers of the contribution of SUPs to teacher development with the purpose of improving teaching and learning in rural schools. Yin (2013) further explains that case studies strive to elucidate reasons why certain issues occur in a specific way in order to generalise and anticipate perceptions of similar cases from a single example. Further, he alludes to why an in-depth inquiry should to be conducted so that there is an extensive account of the phenomenon under study (Cohen et al., 2018). In this study the Department of Education in Othukela District and two rural schools were used to conduct the study and data generated gave enough information in relation to the literature reviewed about the phenomenon in the South African rural school context.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling is a system used by the person conducting the research to systematically choose a proportionally smaller number of representative individuals from a pre-determined population to be used as source of data for observation or investigation to attain the objectives of the study being conducted (Sharma, 2017). Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) explain a sample as the portion of the population from which sampling is selected. Alvi (2016) further explains a sample as a group of proportionally small number of the population nominated for the objective of conducting an investigation. This study used purposive and convenience sampling methods to gather information with the objective of responding to the questions framing this study (Kothari, 2004).

Purposive sampling is the plan by which a specific setting, individuals or circumstances are deliberately nominated in order to provide significant data that cannot be attained from other choices (Taherdoost, 2016). Sharma (2017) further explains purposive sampling as a sampling method that displays a set of sampling techniques that depend on researcher's discretion when it comes to the selection of the population to be studied. Participants in this study were purposefully selected, based on their various roles in their schools and in the Department of Education and their participation in SUP programmes (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In purposeful sampling the characteristics of the population to be studied determines the sample to be nominated for the study in order to achieve its objectives (Suri, 2011).

In convenience sampling participants are selected systematically, the choice being informed by their availability and accessibility to take part in the study (Taherdoost, 2016). The most favoured sampling method amongst students conducting research is the convenience sampling method because of its nature of easy access to participants of the study and it is inexpensive (Taherdoost, 2016). Convenience sampling is a distinct method of determining a sample for research but it does not afford participants an equal opportunity of being nominated but is informed by their convenient availability to participate in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). According to Alvi (2016) convenience sampling becomes user friendly when the targeted population is described

on a wider scope. Alvi (2016) further says that participants of convenience sampling are identified based on their ease and convenience of reaching them for the purpose of the study.

I engaged the Deputy Chief Education Specialist (DCES) in Teacher Development from the DoE in Othukela District about the schools that were involved in teacher development through partnership programmes with universities. He assisted me to identify those schools from his list of rural schools that were involved in rural teacher development programmes. He also agreed to become a participant of my study. I went to those schools to engage the principals about the topic I was researching and requested them and their teachers to become participants of my study. Through the help of school principals in those schools I identified and approached possible teachers to become participants in this study. I started engagements with teachers who were purposefully identified and they agreed to become participants in my study (Sharma, 2017).

The two schools and the DoE Othukela District that were selected as sites for conducting this study were selected purposefully. The purposeful selection of two schools was based on their location as rural schools and their participation in school-university partnership programmes with various universities in KwaZulu-Natal. The DoE Othukela District was selected, as it is the initiator of these partnership programmes with rural schools. In the Department there is a Teacher Development Section that specialises in creating these partnerships between schools and universities. Teachers within the schools were selected to participate in the study based on their availability to be accessed and on their teaching experience. These teachers were engaged in various teacher development programmes initiated by the KZN Department of Education in partnership with various universities in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng Province. The Departmental official was selected to participate in this study because he specialises in teacher development and has experience of coordinating partnership programmes in the District. The purpose of the partnerships was to improve teacher performance and classroom practice in rural schools regardless of their challenges, which were mainly over-crowded classrooms, poor infrastructure and lack of resources (Mpahla & Okeke, 2015).

3.6 Data Generation Methods

Data generation in a qualitative study comprises of activities that involve the focusing on, searching for, selecting, noting, capturing data and extracting data using different techniques (Goldkuhl, 2019). The semi-structured interviews method used to collect data for this study is discussed in detail below.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

This study used semi-structured interviews to generate data. All seven participants in this study participated in interviews that were semi-structured. Rule and John (2011) define semi-structured interview as the type of interview that allow a researcher to construct pre-anticipated questions that may help to initiate the dialogue and generate further possible questions that may lead the discussion during the interview session. Semi-structured interviews are a simple conversation that takes place between the researcher and the participant with the purpose of generating data on the study (Fylan, 2005). Semi-structured interviews comprise a group of open-ended questions that permit the voluntary and in-depth response to questions raised in the interview (Boumbusch, 2010). The design of semi-structured interviews is such that it ascertains subjective answers from the individuals participating in research, based on their experience of the phenomenon (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). The strategy of applying semi-structured interviews as a method to generate data encapsulates various phases that include the construction of the interview guide, leading the interviews and analysing and interpreting the interview data (Boumbusch, 2010).

I planned properly and arranged interview sessions with those teachers. On the day of the interviews, we sat and engaged each other and that helped me to gather data through recordings that I later transcribed. I conducted semi-structured interviews to generate data from the primary sources that were participants of this study (Kothari, 2004). Further to that, Mouton (2011) attests that, in semi-structured interviews probing and clarification of issues during the interview is allowed where necessary and or when required.

To generate data for this study I physically interviewed participants individually. Principals, departmental heads and teachers of two rural schools as participants of this study were interviewed individually and privately in the office space that was allocated by the school principals in their schools. It was a convenient and comfortable place to conduct the interviews. To interview participants individually and privately helped me to maintain the confidentiality of the study. Each participant was interviewed for about 45 to 60 minutes. One of the participants of this study was a Department official. The Department official was interviewed privately in his office. The interview took 63 minutes to complete. All teachers, departmental heads and principals were interviewed twice and follow-ups were made to seek clarity. In the first interview it was discovered that there was not enough data in terms of responses to questions that were asked. In the second interview I was also cautious in terms of raising the probing questions to ensure enough data was generated to answer questions for the study. The Department official was interviewed once and was able to give an extensive amount of data to complete the report for this study. I built a positive relationship with participants, which helped me to get through to my participants easily and at their convenient time considering their work schedule in the day. During interviews I took brief notes and it assisted me to properly lead the discussions. Moreover, those brief notes helped me to develop my probing questions. Using those probing questions, I was able to gather as much information as possible on each research question. I used code switching from English to IsiZulu where clarity was required to ensure the participant heard the question and that helped to strengthen the course of my discussions and more data was delivered. Thereafter, data generated from participants' interviews was used to establish the experiences of rural school teachers on the contribution of SUPs in their development. Through exploring rural school teachers' experiences, I had to examine the contribution of SUPs in RTD and further explore the factors enhancing the contribution of SUPs to rural teacher development. In order to ensure that all data was captured correctly for the purpose of analysing and reporting I used quality instruments to save and transcribe data generated. I audio-recorded the interviews to capture each participant's view from our discussion meetings and transcribed the responses (Kothari, 2004; & Ackermann, 2014).

3.7 Data Analysis

This study used a thematic analysis process to analyse data. Thematic analysis is a data analysis method for identifying and analysing patterns of meanings in a qualitative data set (Braun, Clarke and Hayfield, 2015; & Joffe 2012). Thematic analysis involves systematic collecting, organising, and processing of raw data to extract valuable information with an aim to learn rather than to anticipate data in terms of participants' interpretation (Ott & Longnecker, 2015). Braun and Clarke (2012) further explain thematic analysis as a technique for strategically recognising, organising and presenting insight into patterns of themes across a set of data. On the other hand, Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, (2017) explain thematic analysis in simple terms as a technique for recognising themes in a qualitative data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis is a theoretically flexible method because the search for, and examination of patterning across language does not require adherence to any particular theory of language or explanatory meaning framework for human beings' experiences or practices. Thematic analysis works with a wide range of research questions that include people's experiences to questions that present and construct a particular phenomenon (Cohen, Newsome & Morrison, 2011).

After listening to audio recordings several times and confirming the transcriptions of data I had, I started to analyse data using the thematic analysis method. I began this process of thematic analysis by listening to each audio recording of the interviews I had with the participants. After listening to audio, I managed to develop a written copy of the verbatim-transcribed data. Stuckey (2014) asserts that transcribing data gathered from the audio text is step number one of analysing data. It further affords the researcher an opportune time to create a sense about data. This was followed by thematic analysis. I used thematic analysis to analyse data that was transcribed (Goba & Lincoln, 1994). After a thorough study of the data, I applied thematic analysis to recognised themes and patterns (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). I used thematic analysis, basing it on six steps of thematic analysis. Step 1 – I familiarised myself with data by reading through transcribed data over and over again until I understood it. Step 2 – I assigned preliminary codes to data in order to describe the content. Step 3 – I searched for patterns or themes

in the codes across all the different interviews. Step 4 - I reviewed themes after reading and understanding the data. Step 5 – I defined and named themes. Finally, in step 6 – I produced a report from the transcribed data combining it with the literature-reviewed in chapter 2 (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun, Clarke & Hayfield, 2015; Cohen, Newsome & Morrison, 2011).

3.8 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues in research refer to the moral principles that guide the researcher's behaviour when conducting the research (Head, 2020). Marshall and Batten (2003) further explain ethical issues as a set of principles that guide the research design and practices. Miller, Birch, Marthiner & Jessop (2012) stress the importance of ethics as it concerns the morality of human conduct when conducting a study. Every research study must be conducted with strict, honest, acceptable and justifiable behaviour (Ramrathan, Grange & Shawa, 2017). Leading professional bodies, organisations and institutions in conducting research studies usually prescribe guidelines and principles that researchers must follow before, during and after the research project (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). To commence this study, I applied for Ethical Clearance from the UKZN Research Committee, and it was approved, (a copy of the approval letter is attached on page iv). An application for approval to conduct a study within the DoE using its schools and resources was also approved, (a copy of the approval letter is attached as Annexure C). Further, I applied to the Principals of the two sample schools used in this study for permission to conduct a study using the teachers and resources, the approval letters from the two schools are attached as Annexures A and B. I also asked for permission from participants directly to become part of my study by giving them informed consent forms, which are also attached in Appendix E. This study observed and respected the following ethical principles of participants.

It was guaranteed to the respondents that the information gathered through the research interviews would be confidential and used to realise the objectives of this study. Participants' real names would not be revealed, as I would use pseudonym. Participants were assured of the safekeeping of their information and that such information was not

going to be divulged for any personal humiliation of individuals in the future. Further, I conducted this study in a conducive environment for research interviews to take place. Therefore, this study circumvented any physical or psychological damage to the research respondents. I further informed participants that they were free to withdraw their participation in the study if there was a feeling of discomfort emanating from any source, regardless of the initial assurance that initial participation was voluntary and free (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Marshall & Batten, 2003); confidentiality, privacy, voluntary participation, permission, harm and termination (Marshall & Batten, 2003).

3.9 Trustworthiness of The Study

I needed to ensure that this study was faithful and reliable with its scientific findings, avoiding being biased with the opinions as I presented them (Brink, 1993). Lincoln and Guba (1985) foreground trustworthiness in research as it demands displaying credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Stahl and King (2020) further expanded on the necessity for researchers to apply trustworthiness in a qualitative study. A cautious researcher habitually familiarises him or herself with the below to assure the integrity of the research.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is described as the credence bestowed on the integrity of the findings of a study (Anney, 2013). Credibility in the research is established if the facts amassed, as the findings of the research constitute credible information taken from research participants' original data and is the accurate elucidation of the participants' original opinions (Anney, 2013). In order to engage my research respondents regarding the nature and objectives of the study, I used a formal session. In the engagements with the research respondents, I revealed the purpose of the research at hand and the aims the study wanted to achieve. I continuously engaged the participants in this study for them to acquire a deep grasp of the purpose and to develop a good relationship of trust with the respondents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data was not collected from a friendship perspective but I afforded myself ample time to observe research respondents and to learn from their behaviour as well. Anney (2013) supports the researcher developing a trust relationship with research respondents

as it gives the respondents an opportunity to engage freely in the study, and willingly provide reliable and relevant information for successful research.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability can be described as the degree to which the findings of the study can be transferred to other contexts with other participants. Usually, research respondents become reserved in their first-time interview sessions and less likely to divulge the information that may be expected. In order to contain the above risk and maintain the authenticity of the data provided by participants to this research, I interviewed the respondents twice. It assisted me to confirm the authenticity of data. I continuously engaged the participants for the purpose of confirming their relationship to the information provided during the research interviews.

3.9.3 Dependability

According to Stahl and King (2020) the outcomes of the study have to retain firmness over time. This means that in the research the outcomes, interpretations, conclusions and recommendations must be completely assessed. It can help to guarantee that the research outcomes, interpretations, conclusions and recommendations are substantiated by data gathered from the participants of the study (Stahl & King, 2020). According to Lincon and Guba (1985) inquiry audit is the technique to establish dependability in the study. Lincon and Guba (1985) postulate that the purpose of an inquiry audit is to help measure the authenticity of the study. It further establishes if the findings, interpretations, conclusions and recommendations of the research are supported by the data obtained from participants of the study and if the same exercise was conducted again, to find out the trustworthiness.

3.9.4 Confirmability

According to Anney (2013) confirmability is the degree to which the research findings are confirmed by other researchers. In order to enhance confirmability in this research, the study needed an unambiguous research process that provides the requisite features for the reader, confirming that a similar reader would have reached the same conclusions

from this study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). I confirmed the outcomes of this study with the participants prior to my arriving at conclusions about the findings (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In this regard, I was cautious of becoming biased in the study and I continued to avoid the temptation to impose my personal views on the study (Brink, 1993).

3.10 Limitations of the Study

This research was limited because it focused on the Department of Education in Othukela District and two rural schools of the same District in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), so the findings cannot be generalised to all schools or rural schools and Districts of KZN. I made sure that this study circumvented generalisations as I involved many respondents who had a clear grasp of the objectives of this study. According to Vincze (2013) technical generalisation is the type of generalisation whereby the researcher attempts to develop a link of the outcomes of the specific research from a certain case. This research circumvented such generalisation as I continued to refer to the literature reviewed when presenting the discussions. Furthermore, in this research I referred to the respondents' views to engage with the outcomes of this research. Technical generalisation was further avoided by this study as I decided to select a specific sample of respondents for this study as alluded to earlier (Vincze, 2013).

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter explains the research design and methodology that informed the study. In the research design I drew a clear picture of the research paradigm, approach and methodology that informed this study. In covering the research method I explained the method of generating data by discussing methods of selecting participants, methods of data generation used to collect data in the study and finally I described the method of data analysis. In concluding the chapter I discussed ethical issues, issues of trustworthiness and limitations to the research. The next chapter discusses the outcomes of this study based on the data generated and techniques of analysing data. Here, I align the reviewed literature and the views of the respondents to determine the outcomes of this study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In chapter 3 I presented a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology that was used to conduct this study. In this chapter I analyse the data, and present and discuss the findings. This chapter draws findings from the data generated through semi-structured interviews. Generally, the findings discuss the experiences of rural school teachers on the contribution of school-university partnerships in rural teacher development. In my discussion I firstly profile the research sites and participants; and secondly present and discuss the findings. Findings are presented and discussed thematically as they emerged from data. In line with the aims of this study, the findings are presented according to the following themes:

- a) Teachers' understandings of the contribution of school-university partnerships to the development of rural school teachers,
- b) The contribution of school-university partnerships to the development of rural school teachers and
- c) The factors enhancing the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural school teachers' development.

4.2 Profiling the research participants and sites

This section gives the details of the research participants and sites.

4.2.1 The research participants

Table 4.1 provides the detailed demographic information of the seven participants and sites, listed in the order in which they were interviewed.

Table 4.1

Schools	Participants	Gender	C/P	YoE	Qualifications
KZN DoE	Mr Ndlovu	M	DCES	21 years	BEd. Hons

School A	Mrs Z. Dube	F	Principal	13 years	BEd. Hons
School A	Mr S. Khulu	M	DH	18 years	NPDE+ACE
School A	Ms G. Hadebe	F	Teacher	10 years	BEd Hons
School B	Mr T. Malinga	M	Principal	19 years	BEd. Hons
School B	Mr M. Sibiyi	M	DH	9 years	BEd. Degree
School B	Mr D. Jobe	M	Teacher	8 years	BEd Degree

Keys: C/P = Current Position, YoE = Years of Experience, F = Female, M = Male, BEd = Bachelor Of Education, Hons = Honours, NPDE = National Professional Diploma in Education, ACE = Advanced Certificate in Education, DH = Departmental Head, KZN DoE = KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, DCES = Deputy Chief Education Specialist.

The table above summarises the participants who took part in the semi-structured interviews of this study. Three participants from School A have been involved in a school-university partnership programme with one of the universities in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The other three participants from School B were involved in a school-university partnership with one university in Gauteng Province. The Department official led the partnership programmes of various rural schools with three universities in KwaZulu-Natal. The KZN DoE, the rural schools and the universities were involved in partnership programmes that aimed at assisting rural schools to afford rural school teachers an opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in order to be able to deal with the challenges of rural school teaching. The Department introduced two programmes that the above participants were involved in, which are: Gema Champion project and Funza Lushaka. These participants were appropriately experienced to provide information for this study as they participated in the above-mentioned programmes.

4.2.2 The Project “Gema Champion Project”

The project name “Gema Champion Project” was initiated by the Department of Education working together with various Universities in KwaZulu-Natal to give educational support to underperforming rural schools. The Teacher Development Section at Othukela District Education Department saw the need to assist under-performing schools especially on scarce skills subjects, which are Mathematics and Physical Science. The project aimed to capacitate and support rural school teachers in enhancing the quality

of Physical Sciences and Mathematics teaching and learning in rural schools. Gema Champion Project is a computerised programme installed in all poor-performing rural schools in Mathematics and Physical Sciences in the Othukela District. The two rural schools that formed part of this study had Gema Champion Project programmes installed. In this project they built a complete computer lab that contains programmed computers with Mathematics and Physical Sciences lessons and teaching notes. Teachers use overhead projectors to present lessons.

4.2.3 Funza Lushaka Project

This project is called Funza Lushaka. In this project the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Department of Education is in partnership with three universities in KwaZulu-Natal. This project is meant to recruit Physical Sciences and Mathematics teachers for rural schools. The KZN DoE gives financial support to young people of KZN who intend to study Education as a profession and specialise in Physical Sciences and or Mathematics and who are prepared to go and serve as teachers in rural schools. The KZN DoE signs formal agreements with students for financial support and to agree to serve in rural schools for a specific period of time without moving either by promotion or application for transfer. After the teacher has served the required number of years as per the agreement, the teacher is allowed to move to a school of own choice by any official means as proclaimed by the KZN DoE. The objective of the project is to add to the pool of qualified Physical Sciences and Mathematics teachers in the province.

4.3 Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study were organised and presented under the following key research issue: The experiences of teachers regarding the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural school teacher development. The following key questions formed the main themes of this study:

- What are teachers' understandings of the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural school teacher development?
- How do school-university partnership contribute to the development of rural school teachers?

- How can the contribution of school-university partnership to rural teachers development be enhanced?

4.3.1 TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS CONTRIBUTIONS TO RURAL SCHOOL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

This theme sought to comprehend teachers' understandings of the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural school teacher development. After analysing data from all participants two sub-themes emerged for discussion in this theme. Those sub-themes are: teachers' skills, and teaching and learning content.

4.3.1.1 Teachers' Skills

When teachers were responding to interview questions used to generate data, a significant understanding was created that rural school teachers consider school-university partnership programmes significant for their professional development. This is learned from the conversations in the interviews and there are various reasons that they state which create hope for improved teachers' skills through professional development, acquired from partnership programmes. One participant **Mr Ndlovu**, a Teacher Development Specialist, spoke about teachers lacking skills to teach. The subjects that were observed as most compromised were Science, Mathematics and Accounting. **Mr Ndlovu**, the Department official, said:

As the District we identified that our rural schools have a problem of lack of necessary skills to teach Science and Mathematics in our schools. The lack of skills required us as the Department to capacitate our teachers with teaching skills in compromised subjects. The most compromised subjects are Science, Mathematics and Accounting...

The above utterance creates an understanding that there is lack of necessary skills to teach scarce skills subjects in rural schools. Muremela, et. al. (2020) in their work on challenges of retaining qualified scarce skills subject teachers in rural secondary schools articulate scarce skills subjects to be Science, Mathematics and Accounting. Though there are various contributing factors to a lack of teaching skills for scarce skills subjects, the underlying factor is that teachers with relevant skills in these subjects are reluctant to

go and work in rural schools. The experience of **Mr Ndlovu** indicates that the reluctance of teachers to work in rural schools results in a poor quality of teaching and learning in those schools. **Mr Ndlovu** further said:

What we have learnt as the Department is that qualified teachers are very reluctant to go and work in rural schools with poor infrastructure, overcrowded and multi-graded classrooms that are difficult to work...

According to **Mr Ndlovu**, experienced qualified teachers are reluctant to work in rural schools. Teachers become reluctant because in rural schools there is poor infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and multi-grading. Therefore, the Department intervened and developed a partnership programme to assist rural schools that lacked qualified teachers. The programme was two fold. Firstly, it was about recruiting teachers to universities in KZN to study and major in scarce skills subjects and secondly it was about exposing in-service teachers to professional development programmes to improve their teaching skills in the scarce skills subjects in particular. **Mr Ndlovu** further said:

After we have identified as the Department that there is a problem of Science and Mathematics teachers we started a partnership programme on teachers' skills development through which we recruited qualified teachers in those subjects especially in rural schools. Teachers who are in-service and not properly qualified to teach Science and Mathematics we took them for courses in universities we are in partnership with so that they become qualified and teach better...

Mr Ndlovu, the Department Official confirms the problem that rural schools lack teachers with skills to teach Science and Mathematics. Therefore, the Department initiated a partnership programme in teachers' skills development. The in-service teachers had to improve their skills by attending university courses through school-university partnership programmes. It helped teachers to become qualified and teach better in Science and Mathematics. **Mr Ndlovu** further said:

I will cite an example of a programme that is Department and Universities based partnership. It is meant to produce more Science and Mathematics teachers. The programme is called Funza Lushaka. In that programme the Department of Education is in partnership with three universities. This programme is meant to develop rural school teachers in order to improve skills and knowledge to deal with teaching challenges of Science and Mathematics in rural schools and recruitment as it aims to

recruit Science and Mathematics teachers because there is a shortage of teachers in those subjects...

Therefore, the Department, through school-university partnership programmes intervened in order to improve teachers' skills and the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools. As this programme unfolds it assists rural schools to gain qualified teachers with improved skills in Science and Mathematics teaching. The Departmental official suggests that this partnership programme encourages qualified teachers in Science and Mathematics to work in rural schools. Further, they work in those schools for a specific period of time without moving either by transfer or promotion. **Mr Ndlovu** again said:

We developed a programme to recruit Science and Mathematics teachers and encouraged them to go and work in rural schools that we have identified as the Department. With teachers that we have recruited into this programme we sign an agreement whereby they promise to go and teach in rural schools that we have identified. Again in the same agreement we agree on the term that they have to teach in those schools without moving into other schools either by promotion or application for transfers...

According to **Mr Ndlovu**, the Department signs agreements with teachers recruited through the partnership programme. Part of the agreement compels teachers recruited through partnership programme to spend a specific period of time in schools identified by the Department. This kind of partnership helps the Department and rural schools to deal with challenges of the poor quality of teaching and learning caused by a lack of teachers' skills. Those challenges, amongst others include: the lack of quality qualified teachers in rural schools, understaffed rural schools because rural schools have low enrolments, poor school infrastructure in terms of classroom development, overcrowded classrooms and multi-grading (Muremela, et. al., 2020). Social learning theory (SLT) postulates that teachers require professional development that improves morale to teach effectively with confidence, and have positive self-efficacy (Zepeda, et. al., 2014). Social learning theory suggests that through participative learning, rural teacher development (RTD) becomes effective and teaching and learning in rural schools is improved. Rural school teachers need to be capacitated through school-university partnership programmes to acquire new skills and knowledge and in SLT this is defined as a socialisation process through

training and education to develop one's mind to behave better with an understanding of the factors affecting the environment of practice (Brandi & Elkajaer, 2012).

Mr Ndlovu maintains that school-university partnerships contribute meaningfully in mitigating the challenges of poor quality teaching and learning in rural schools by exposing teachers to professional development programmes that improve their teaching skills. The objective of teacher development according to Villegas-Remers (2003) is to expose teachers to professional growth for the purpose of gaining increased experience and examining their teaching practice systematically. In a social learning theoretical perspective teacher development is something that should happen every day and be part of everyday life and work of teachers (Deaton, 2015). In my view school-university partnerships for rural school teacher development programmes advanced by the Department of Education should aim to cover all rural school teachers, even those who are in the system. It makes teachers acknowledge that school-university partnership programmes enable them to explore new adventures for their development (Steyn, 2008). I further suggest that apart from being a programme used for the recruitment of qualified teachers in Physical Sciences and Mathematics, Funza Lushaka should also train already qualified teachers to become specialised in Physical Sciences and Mathematics. This concurs with the notion that teacher development supports continuous development to keep teachers up to date with current issues in teaching and learning (Barley and Beesley, 2007). Social learning theory advances the thinking that learning builds a skilled practitioner (Korthagen, 2010). Therefore, I think that the DoE should facilitate on-going partnership programmes to capacitate rural school teachers to deal with challenges of rural school teaching. Goodlad (1993) recognises the importance of schools and universities entering into on-going partnerships because the purpose of developing an individual cannot be a once off event, it requires a continuous process of evaluation. Mitchell (2013) further insists that teacher development requires the commitment of teachers participating in activities aimed at advancing new skills, knowledge and values that better their teaching practice.

Participants in this study further alluded to various other school-university partnership programmes that were either facilitated by the private sector or the DoE. According to the understanding of participants, those programmes were initiatives to improve the skills and knowledge of rural school principals and teachers. **Mr M Sibiya**, the principal, said:

The partnership that our school was having it was with the so called RAU. The partnership involved an independent stakeholder and that was Mlambo-Ngcuka Foundation. They were the funders of the project. When the project was introduced it aimed at assisting to improve management and leadership skills of principals working in rural schools...

Mr Sibiya referred to a school-university partnership programme that aimed to improve school management and leadership skills for rural schools principals. Through improving management and leadership skills, indirectly it was designed to assist the school to improve teaching and learning through improved teacher skills. The principal has a responsibility to expose teachers to professional development programmes and properly manage them. Exposing teachers to professional development programmes requires resources to be invested in teaching standards designed to improve teacher preparation and the quality of educational outcomes as a result of teacher development in rural schools (Betlem, et. al., 2018). When teachers engage in professional development programmes they are afforded an opportunity to share skills with the purpose to improving performance (Singh, 2011). Teachers' participation in teacher professional development programmes assists them to engage in a self-regulatory process that is referred to as self-efficacy (Watson, 2013). Self-efficacy reflects capacities and underlying skills and it also incorporates effective components such as confidence, motivation and willingness to innovate (Watson, 2013).

Mr Khulu agrees with **Mr Sibiya** on improving management and leadership skills for school managers through partnership programmes. According to **Mr Khulu** this is a professional development programme that helps to improve the capacity of school managers. This is a type of school-university partnership programme focusing on building the capacity of school management in various functions that may help the school improve teaching and learning. **Mr S Khulu**, the Departmental Head, said:

the school had a partnership and the partnership it had was between the school, Old Mutual and the one University in KZN . The purpose of the partnership was to assist most particularly the SMT members in terms of school management. Capacity development was particularly on leadership, management, and financial management in school.

This partnership targeted School Management Teams (SMTs) of rural schools with the objective of improving management and leadership skills for rural school principals. In essence SMTs have a significant role in planning and managing teacher professional development programmes for the school, hence the need to capacitate them.

I think partnership programmes have identified the important role of the SMT in a school in ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place. This affirms the significant role that school leadership must assume to promote teacher development in communities of practice, thereby maintaining successful school-university partnerships (Mutemeri & Chetty, 2011). Adams (2010) postulates, from a SLT perspective, that the complexity and diversity of the community of practice in which teachers participate to acquire new skills and knowledge is not a challenge but an enriching aspect of life. Learning from the above discussion, SMTs deserve capacity building in school financial management to improve the ability to fairly distribute the school revenue and report appropriately on the use of school financial resources (Mestry, 2019). This may help to alleviate stress caused by a lack of resources and poor infrastructure in rural schools (Marwan, et. al., 2012). In my understanding, school financial resources help the school to achieve its objectives of effective teaching and learning.

Another issue that emerged from the discussions during interviews was that of improving teachers' skills in Science and Mathematics through the Gema Champion Project. Gema Champion project was the partnership programme between the universities in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal and KZN Department of Education and various rural schools in the province. **Mr M Sibiya**, a departmental head, said:

We were identified as one school that was to be involved in Gema Champion Project. We were identified because we were an under performing school. This was a partnership programme between the

school, Department of Education and the Universities of KZN and it was going to assist us to improve in Science and Mathematics teaching.

In this project the Department aims to assist rural school teachers of Science and Mathematics with necessary skills in the subjects. A school was identified to become part of the partnership programme because it was underperforming in Science and Mathematics. **Mr M Sibiya** further said:

Our school was installed programmed computers with Science and Mathematics lessons. Learners watch videos of Lecturers explaining and the teachers in class just explain where learners did not understand or want clarity...

The partnership programme in this project aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning by introducing programmed teaching and learning content. Beyond improving teachers' skills, the programme targets learners directly by encouraging learning from recorded presentations for intense content understanding.

Drawing on the deliberations with participants in this study it is assumed that the objective of this partnership programme was to deliver quality teaching and learning of Physical Sciences and Mathematics in rural schools. This view concurs with Wang and Wong (2017) when they explain that the purpose of school-university partnership is to achieve improved teacher and learner performance. Therefore, school-university partnership programmes mitigate the socio-economic situation of rural schools that are characterised by a lack of financial resources to support effective teaching and learning (Joyce, 2014). I suggest that such school-university partnership programmes do not focus on scarce skills subjects only but include other subjects offered at the school. Mestry (2008) suggests that school-based teacher development programmes need to take place on site in order to accommodate everyone. I see learners studying scarce skills subjects being advantaged while others are disadvantaged in this opportunity.

4.3.1.2 Teaching and Learning

The purpose of teacher professional development is to achieve improved teaching and learning in every classroom. Improved teaching and learning, according to the

understanding of teachers is facilitated through intense school-university partnership programmes. **Mr Ndlovu** said:

...partnership should aim at increasing the number of teachers in Science and Mathematics most particularly in rural schools as this programme is aimed for improved teaching of Science and Mathematics in such schools, encourage rural school teachers to make an informed choices when choosing courses for development...

School-university partnerships are understood to help increase the number of teachers who are qualified to teach Science and Mathematics in rural schools. This is indeed a programme that can assist rural schools to improve the quality of teaching in Science and Mathematics. Further, the data emphasises that partnerships should encourage teachers to make informed choices when choosing courses for teacher development as this helps them to access financial support from the Department. In my view, the excerpt above further characterises the school-university partnership as a programme aimed at improving teaching and learning in rural schools. This partnership programme may assist rural schools to mitigate the negative experiences of rural schools teachers aiming to improve their qualifications, which includes the challenges of transport to access universities and sourcing financial support to fund their studies (Mollenkopf, 2009). Therefore, young people interested in education as their profession should exploit the opportunities offered through school-university partnership programmes.

The principal of school B commended the role of the partnership programme in which his school was involved. **Mr T Malinga** said:

the role of partnership and its intention was to develop me as a Principal of the rural school in terms of how to handle the core curricular issues and moreover that how to be a charismatic leader other than to be an autocratic leader...

In this programme, the partnership aimed at developing the school principal. This was intended to improve the capacity of the school principal to handle or deal with school management and leadership issues. Further, it was designed to help the school principal develop a democratic strategy to address the issues of the school. In my observation, a school-university partnership programme is a mitigating factor that can assist rural school teacher development by attending to the training needs of school teachers and leaders

(Avidov-Ungar, 2014). Therefore, I assume that a partnership should develop the school principal and teachers to help them understand the significance of keeping the school a conducive environment for teaching and learning. Especially for school leaders, partnership programmes encourage them to understand that there is a theory of learning and social behaviour, which proposes that new knowledge, and skills can be acquired by learning cooperatively from others (Wenger, 1998). It is, therefore, imperative to note that the procedure of recruiting, preparing and managing teachers in rural areas is an important factor that contributes to improving the teaching conditions of rural schools (Tran, et. al., 2018). If both the school principal and the teachers in the rural school achieve this it would assist the rural school to improve its culture of teaching and learning.

Another participant **Mrs Z Dube** speaks positively about the partnership that involved the school. **Mrs Z Dube** said:

I appreciate our partnership and think that it should promote a good relationship between the school community and business people around the school and have a potential to support the school.

According to Ndlovu (2011) a school-university partnership should invite the community to participate and be able to extend its services and business to assist the community served by the school. Therefore, the purpose of a school-university partnership would have been achieved if the partnership was able to bring new innovative ideas that could improve the economic life of the community serviced by the school (Ndlovu, 2011). I concur that a partnership should promote a good relationship between the school community and business people around the school. The good relationship between the school community and its business people may improve financial support or sponsorship to the school. As the school improves in raising funds it further ameliorates the required learner/teacher support resources that may boost teaching and learning in the school. It is significant that the school, through these partnership programmes, secure a lasting collaboration and relationship for support with the community and business people.

A teacher participant applauds partnership programmes and the role they play in improving teaching and learning in rural schools. **Mr M Sibiyi** said:

I think the role of partnership was to assist most particularly the rural school teachers and school management teams in terms of handling difficult issues that arise within the space or the environment of rural school teaching...

Issues of rural school teaching are difficult and pose challenges for rural school teachers. Therefore, both the school management teams and teachers in rural schools need assistance to improve leadership and teaching and learning. **Mr M Sibiyi** further said:

In rural school teaching there are various challenges that exist, one it is the lack of funds to support teaching and learning. If there are not enough funds in your school, that can assist the school to acquire the necessary equipment and learner teacher support material, the infrastructure etc. in a school for effective teaching and learning to take place then it becomes a problem...

The problem of a lack of school funds impedes teaching and learning in rural schools. Therefore, partnerships should address such issues so that rural schools are able to acquire learner/teacher support materials for effective teaching and learning to take place. The role of a partnership is to assist the school management team to develop skills and knowledge to engage in activities like fundraising, safekeeping of school resources and the maintenance of school infrastructure.

My deduction from the extract above is that a lack of funds to acquire teacher and learner support materials causes challenges for improving teaching and learning in the school. Therefore, school-university partnership programmes have to ascertain the improvement needs of teachers and leaders to invent strategies to mitigate the challenges of a shortage of funds in rural schools. Bush (2003) assumes that transformational school leaders focus on the commitment and capacity of organisational members to develop their institutions. This notion supports the importance of school leaders improving their leadership and administrative skills in order to be able to improve the school performance.

Having a different view was **Mr D Jobe** who complained about partnerships, suggesting they do not give teachers enough support on teacher development systems installed in their schools. **Mr D Jobe**, a teacher said:

They must train us thoroughly and give us more support in familiarising with the system they have installed for us. But we feel that what they are doing is not enough...

Partnerships must provide teachers with proper and thorough training on programme systems installed in their schools, allowing the teachers to improve teaching and learning. There is a strong feeling that the training teachers receive on programmes of teacher development is not enough. **Mr D Jobe** further said:

They must visit us and teach the learners as part of practical modelling the programme of teacher development; this is when we'll talk about the effective partnership of the school and these outside organisations...

Universities in partnership with schools should visit teachers in their schools for the purpose of modelling the programme of teacher development, using learners for practical demonstrations. In rural schools, school-university partnership programmes should capacitate both teachers and learners in the changing world (Onno and Ferreira, 2010). Practical modelling of the programme of teacher development depicts effective partnership.

Miss G Hadebe, when arguing on the role of school-university partnership said:

In my understanding the partnership should assist us as a school to attain our dream of having an improved school with improved teaching and learning. It should bring programmes like meetings, workshops, and trainings and create lively relationship between the school and the university. It should also introduce the school to other sponsors that are prepared to assist the school with various resources required by the school...

Rural school teachers understand the role of partnership to be that of assisting the school to attain its dream of an improved school with improved teaching and learning. Teachers have gained great hope from partnership programmes that can develop a turnaround strategy for the school to develop and improve its infrastructure and resources. In my

understanding partnership programmes like workshops, meetings and trainings should take place at school level, in order to create a good relationship between the school and the university. Therefore, the strong argument that emanates from the experiences of rural school teachers is that school university partnerships should support the professional learning of all stakeholders in a school (Allen, et. al., 2012). Further to that, partnerships should introduce the school to sponsors that can support the school financially. **Miss G Hadebe** said:

Moreover, that it should expose us as teachers to teacher development programmes that promote the school in entirety and encourage learners to love learning. It should assist the school to develop a clear programme of including parents in the education of their children...

Drawing from this extract, partnerships should expose teachers to holistic school development and encourage learners to learn. In fact, it is stakeholders that are expected to benefit from partnerships especially teachers, because most rural school teachers do not have easy access to university programmes (Allen, et. al., 2012). The role of partnerships should be to assist the school to develop a teacher development programme that emphasises parental inclusion in the learning of their children. **Miss G Hadebe** further said:

Again, it should promote community inclusion in the programmes of the school that concentrate much on teacher development as this can assist teachers to develop necessary skills and knowledge required to solve some of the challenges of teaching in rural schools...

Myende (2012) commends the effective contribution of school-university partnerships to rural school teacher development, and community involvement in the programme, as it creates good working relations between teachers and the community. Therefore, school-university partnerships should aim to promote community inclusion in the programmes of the school as this may encourage parents to take charge of their school and protect it from various destructive activities like vandalism and that may improve teaching and learning in the school. Goodlad (1993) and Thorkildsen (1996) suggest a collaborative school-university partnership programme that promotes teacher development and further contributes to the effectiveness of all stakeholders in the school. Community support for the school may assist rural school teachers to deal with the challenges of rural school

teaching. The working relations between the school and the community should aim at sharpening the skills and intellectual abilities of children (Nhlumayo, 2016). **Mr D Jobe** said:

It should assist the school to improve its resources for teaching and learning and develop an independent teacher who is able to research and find new solutions to the current problems facing rural schools...

The role of a partnership programme should be to assist a school to improve its resources for effective teaching and learning to take place. It can help to mitigate the multiple challenges rural schools face in providing effective development opportunities for teachers (Singh, 2011; Mpahla and Okeke, 2015). This can help the school to find solutions to the current challenges of rural school teaching. **Mr D Jobe** added:

This partnership must discourage from teachers the thinking that they must find work in urban schools. It must assist teachers to gain access to tertiary institutions regardless of the remote environment of rural school in which teachers are operating...

Teachers believe that working in urban schools is convenient. Partnerships need to discourage such negative thinking from teachers in general. This may improve the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools. Most importantly, rural school teachers have to improve their skills and knowledge therefore it is important for partnerships to assist rural school teachers to gain access to tertiary institutions regardless of the remote areas in which they live and work (Singh, 2011). **Mr S Khulu** further commented on the role of a partnership and said:

It must motivate rural school teachers to produce results of the same quality as schools in developed areas and should help teachers to develop alternatives of corporal punishment as parents promote it in rural schools...

Partnerships have the potential to motivate rural school teachers to produce quality results similar to those achieved in developed schools. It is a role of partnerships that should help rural school teachers to learn and develop progressive alternatives to corporal punishment as in most rural school parents still seems to support it (Singh, 2011).

4.3.2 SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL SCHOOL TEACHERS

On the theme of school-university partnerships' contribution to the development of rural school teachers, there are four sub-themes that emerged. Those sub-themes are: school performance, teacher development, integrating technology to education and school culture.

4.3.2.1 School Performance

Mrs Z Dube articulates the issue of school performance in Matric results as a leading contribution as the school engages in school-university partnerships. School-university partnership helped the school to improve performance thereby exposing teachers to capacity building programmes in terms of subject content. Additionally, the school teachers needed the ability to deal with the challenges of multi-grade classes which require special skills for preparation and teaching. **Mrs Z Dube** said:

Again, our school was poorly performing in school matric results. Partnership has helped us to improve school performance thereby exposing us as teachers to content workshops. Mostly our teachers were also developed in terms of capability to deal with issues of multi-graded classrooms...

The lack of classroom infrastructure and insufficient teacher numbers in rural schools leads to schools engaging in multi-grading (Joyce, 2014). Multi-grading impedes successful quality teaching and learning and impacts badly on school performance. This rural school principal shows an understanding that school-university partnership programmes improve rural school teachers' capacity to be able to deal with issues of multi-grading as a particular challenge for rural school teaching. It is certain that school-university partnership programmes improve the whole school but a great need is to develop creative skills with rural school teachers to allow them to develop the resources required to facilitate quality teaching and learning. **Mrs Z Dube** further said:

As a teacher and school principal I gained various skills. Those skills include an ability to work in a multi-graded classroom, parental involvement to learners work at school, community involvement to the issues of the school, problem solving skills, etc. through workshops and courses that we attend and it improved our school performance...

Mrs Z Dube as a teacher and school principal agrees that school-university partnership programmes help teachers to gain new skills. Those skills include working with multi-grade classes, parental involvement in learners' work, community involvement in school issues and development; and problem solving skills. These are skills required by rural school teachers to deal with the challenges of rural school teaching. Ngala and Odebere (2010) attest to teachers' participation in teacher development through school-university partnership as it increases teachers' effectiveness and assists them to deal with the reality of the challenges they face in rural school teaching. In my opinion it may help both parties involved in a partnership to formally learn and know each other so that they develop together a concise programme for school and teacher development. Further, it may assist universities to equip rural school teachers with skills that may help them resolve the real classroom issues.

Another participant commends school-university partnerships that may improve the school in various ways with strategies that need to be employed by both parties involved in a partnership. Through developing school vision and mission statements, schools are able to refine the goals they aim to attain in the specific community served by the school. **Mr M Sibiya** articulates the significance of a school-university partnership that has assisted the school to attain its dream or vision of having an improved school through teaching and learning and infrastructure development. **Mr M Sibiya** said:

...partnership assisted us as school to attain our dream of having an improved school with improved teaching and learning. As teachers we attended programmes like meetings, workshops, and trainings where we learn different strategies to solve school based issues that impedes school performance. Again partnership introduced the school to other sponsors that are prepared to assist the school with various resources required by the school...

Therefore, teachers are exposed to various workshops and trainings to build their capacity. Teachers with improved capacities of teaching and strategy development will improve the school performance in one way or the other. The purpose of teacher development is to deal successfully with issues that impede school performance. School-university partnership programmes, according to the understanding of teachers, have a

responsibility to assist schools to gain access to sponsorship that may help to improve school infrastructure. It has various significant roles to play in the life of the school thereby assisting the school to attain its dreams and become an improved school with improved teaching and learning (Mestry, 2015). The role of a partnership programme should therefore promote the school in its entirety, and encourage learners to learn.

4.3.2.2 Teacher Development

Mr Ndlovu views teachers as continuous learners who need to develop new skills and knowledge about current educational issues. Therefore, teachers need to be supported by teacher development programmes such as school-university partnerships. These programmes prepare teachers for work and play a meaningful role in improving teaching and learning in the school. **Mr Ndlovu** said:

Teachers as continuous learners they need to be supported with follow up development programmes that prepares them for work in which they would play a meaningful role and improve teaching and learning and school performance. Teachers rather commend courses that come with the Department because to them they seem to be more relevant to their needs...

According to **Mr Ndlovu** teachers value teacher development programmes that are recommended by the Department. These teacher development programmes are relevant and address the teachers' need to develop skills and knowledge to deal with the challenges of rural school teaching. Such school-university partnerships help teachers to be appointed as specialised teachers. They improve teaching and learning and school performance in rural schools (Polly, Reinke & Putnam, 2019).

Mr T Malinga shared a similar view with **Mr Ndlovu** in emphasising the significance of rural school teachers development and said:

Then in terms of whether I need what is said to be further development, one may say only the sky is the limit. Yes, I'm a life long learner kind of a principal. Even now, I'm still studying in such a way that after obtaining that certificate, I have got other three degrees that I obtained after that Advanced Certificate...

The rural school principal appreciates the achievements attained through the partnership programme and he is still prepared to continue studying. Guskey (2003) suggests that teacher development, as underpinned by several characteristics for high quality teacher development, must be content-focused, part of daily work and teacher driven. Therefore, the school principal sees himself as a lifelong learner who may never stop if an opportunity is still available. This suggests that rural school teachers may improve teaching, learning and school performance if they continue to be engaged in such teacher development programmes. **Mrs Z Dube** said:

School-university partnership raise teachers' enthusiasm to teach here in rural schools regardless of the situation and challenges of multi-grading, poor parental involvement in learning, etc....

In this regard the rural school principal commends school-university partnerships that raise teachers' enthusiasm to teach, especially in the difficult situation of rural schools. According to the principal there are various challenges in rural school teaching that impede teaching and learning. Those challenges include multi-grading and poor parental involvement and therefore, rural school teachers need to be encouraged to improve teaching and learning, and performance in their schools. Literature on school-university partnerships argues that further study is required to find out how to provide effective professional development for rural school teachers that evokes the skills and innovation to teach (Darling-Hammond, et. al., 2017). Rural school teachers are encouraged to take part in partnership programmes that afford them opportunities offered by universities involved in partnerships. This could afford rural school teachers an opportunity to gain new skills and knowledge through formal qualifications. **Mr S Khulu** said:

When teachers involved in partnership acquire qualifications from universities they are in partnership with, teachers develop the required confidence to teach. Teacher qualifications gained through partnership programmes help in boosting our morale as rural school teachers. It motivates us to perform better even though we are teaching in rural schools...

Teacher professional development, apart from giving teachers qualifications, builds teacher confidence. According to **Mr Khulu** teacher professional development boosts

teachers' morale and motivate teachers to perform better even though working in a rural school setting. Singh (2011) recognises the value of teacher qualifications acquired through teacher professional development programmes as they boosts teacher morale and motivates teachers to excel even though they work in rural schools. **Mr M Sibiya** said:

I think in terms of rural school teacher development, the partnership should, one promote teacher development that equip teachers with skills and knowledge they need in order to be able to teach and deal with challenges of rural school teaching. As teachers participating in partnership programme we have formally enrolled at the university for Advance Certificate in Education (ACE). Teachers enrolled in different fields of specialisation for ACE certificate. It is helping us as teachers to learn new skills and strategies to work in difficult situations like here in rural school like ours...

Mr Sibiya postulates that school-university partnerships promote teacher professional development. The partnership programmes must equip rural school teachers with the skills and knowledge they require to work positively in improving rural communities. Therefore, through partnership programmes teachers learn new skills and strategies to work in the difficult environment of rural schools that have few resources and poor infrastructure. Teachers are encouraged through partnership programme to enrol for formal teaching qualifications, and this help them to gain new skills and knowledge. **Miss G Hadebe** said:

School-university partnership is assisting to train us as teachers. It has helped us to identify the skills and knowledge that are lacking in our school and we were encouraged to enroll for university qualifications. Both school teachers and school management team, are enrolled for further studies on qualifications that may help us improve our skills and knowledge...

Teachers appreciate partnership programmes, as they help them to identify skills that are lacking in the school that might lead to poor school performance. Moreover, they encourage teachers to learn and acquire new skills through formal training. Teachers, through partnership programmes are trained in relevant skills that are lacking at school. In this regard both teachers and the school management team are assisted through a

partnership programme to develop the skills and knowledge that may help the school to perform better.

Rural school leaders have the role of supporting teacher professional development for rural school teachers through school-university partnership programmes. Such teacher development programmes develop teacher professionalism in rural school teachers' practice. The success of school-university partnerships to attain effective teacher professional development depends on a properly planned and managed partnership programme. **Mr Ndlovu** said:

Rural school leaders have a role to instil the sense of professional development to their school teachers. School-university partnership if applied properly and planned accordingly this programme can change the entire professional approach in a school...

Mr Ndlovu believes teacher development through partnership programmes can change the entire professional approach in a school. The role of rural school leaders is to instil teacher professional development with rural school teachers. In order to foster teacher professional development in rural schools, I concur with Avalos (2011) who argues that teacher development is a complex process, therefore it requires collaborative participation and collective teacher involvement in partnership programmes. **Mrs Z Dube** said:

These partnerships, when it is done to promote teacher development, it creates a sense that says it is able to develop a professional teacher or professionalism amongst teachers of our school...

School-university partnerships designed for teacher development and professionalism create a huge, positive impact in terms of rural school development and positive community change. **Mrs Z Dube** further said:

These teachers are being developed and these teachers are rural school teachers that see the need to assist rural communities in order for rural communities to improve socially, educationally and economically and grow in the economic space within the country, South Africa...

Teachers that engage in school-university partnership programmes become developed professionally. Rural school teachers according **Mrs Dube** are teachers who have realised the need to assist in developing rural areas through education. I agree with the notion that partnership programmes develop and elevate teacher professionalism. Barron, Tracy, Howell and Kaminski (2015) attest to the difficulty of providing effective professional development for teachers who experience the distinct challenges facing rural schools. Beyond the difficulty of training teachers to deal with challenges of rural school teaching, teachers are developed to see the need to assist rural communities (Singh, 2011). Quality education in rural communities creates social stability and affords communities an opportunity to participate actively in their own economy (Barron, Tracy, Howell and Kaminski, 2015).

School-university partnership programmes have become convenient rural school teacher development programmes that prepare teachers to be ready to work. Partnership programmes mitigate the prevailing view that initial teacher education foregrounds theory neglects the practical demands aligned to the needs of schools (Gravett, et. al., 2019). I think that teachers develop the ability and gain skills and knowledge to engage in teaching and learning through partnership programmes facilitated by either the private sector or the Department of Education. When teachers were asked about the skills gained when they were part of partnership programmes, teachers mentioned various levels of skill and knowledge that improved their practice in classroom activities. **Mr Ndlovu** said:

This partnership, which we are in with these different universities, it has helped us a lot as a teacher development department because once we identify teachers who need development we send them to these universities. When they come back in most cases they come back trained and ready to go to the field. We allocate mentors for the first three months who are going to take them through with all the support they would need...

I commend the Department of Education in its initiative to identify teachers who lack skills and knowledge in certain critical subjects. The most appreciated effort sends those teachers for development to universities with which the Department is in partnership. It alleviates the challenge cited by teachers that there is a disconnect between university-

based teacher education and the complex world of classroom teaching (Gravett, et. al., 2019). This partnership programme prepares teachers to gain the necessary skills they require in order to teach effectively and successfully in their areas of specialisation (Tran, et. al., 2018). It is amazing that the Department further attaches mentors to those teachers so that they are able to maintain the required standard of performance. Therefore, I commend the partnership model that exists between the Department of Education, rural schools and Universities, as it has become an impressively successful way to improve teaching and learning in rural schools. The improving of learners' results in rural schools confirms the success of a partnership programme. **Mr Ndlovu** further said:

Again, after having attended or exposed to school-university partnership development programmes teachers are assisted as you see them slowly improving their results at school. Therefore I would say it is assisting in the sense because now you are seeing the results of those schools that are participating in the school-university partnership programmes improving...

My interpretation of the extract above is that rural school teachers who are engaged in partnership programme gain skills to deliver quality teaching to their learners. In this regard school-university partnerships have made a massive contribution towards improved rural schools that deliver quality education. This is observed with improved school results in rural schools. This is confirmed by Pennefather (2008) who stresses the significance of mutual benefits from the partnership programmes. Pennefather (2008) further mentions that teachers become aware that their knowledge and experience represents valuable input to the training of learners. Teachers, through exposure to school-university partnership programmes gain various other skills that are imperative in the process of transforming a school into a successful learning environment. A successful school-university partnership programme means that teachers and learners have the potential to engage in mutual learning (Pennefather, 2008). Teachers gained new skills like school financial planning, negotiation skills, problem solving skills, computer skills, and teaching skills that help them to deal with the challenges of rural school teaching (Hickey, et. al., 2019). **Mr T Malinga** said:

As the school principal this partnership helped me to develop financial planning skills, I also developed good negotiation skills. Moreover, that I can tell now that I developed the so

called problem solving skills through workshops and seminars that this partnership has exposed me to and it made me understand the frustrations that my teachers are faced with in every day practice...

As teachers acquire various skills through partnership programmes, school leaders learn to understand the frustrations of teachers as they work in rural school setting. This alludes to the significance of school leaders as centres of influence in affording teachers the opportunities to participate in partnership programmes (Hallinger and Heck, 2016). **Mr T Malinga** further said:

I have learnt through this partnership to set achievable goals and to understand that school finances should be budgeted to attain such set goals...

According to **Mr Malinga** partnerships in teacher professional development help to develop planning and financial management skills of the school principal. I concur with the idea that effective school vision and mission statements are paramount for school success. The goals that the school aims to attain are contained in the mission statement of the school and it determines the future and culture of the school (Hallinger and Heck, 2016). This means that it is imperative for school leaders to possess the appropriate planning skills. It begins with planning achievable goals and tallying the budget of the school with such goals in order to attain the set goals (Hallinger and Heck, 2016). This is one of the most important skills attained by teachers involved in partnership programme.

Other teachers gained good administration skills through partnership programmes. They also improved in community relations. (Mpolokeng, 2011). **Mr S Khulu** said:

...what I gained most in this partnership were the instances of a proper school financial management and administration. By so saying I mean from the setting of budget to the development of the audit reports in the school that is also reporting to the structures within the school that is the school governing body and reporting about the school financials to the department...

School financial management has become a problem for most school managers. It has made a number of schools fail to achieve their goals. It is important for school managers to gain administrative and school financial management skills that inform proper

financial reporting to school structures. This avoids teachers becoming involved in corrupt activities when it comes to the use of school funds (Mpolokeng, 2011).

Partnership programmes expose rural teachers to workshops, seminars and studying for formal qualifications. Learning from diverse programmes helps rural school teachers to improve their teaching skills and content knowledge in their subjects of specialisation (Barley & Beesley, 2007). **Mrs Z Dube** said:

This partnership has exposed teachers to development programmes through workshops, seminars, studying, etc. Workshops are facilitated by lectures from the university and include other schools that the university is in partnership with.

Partnerships expose teachers to various knowledge acquisition platforms. These diverse learning platforms afford rural teachers an opportunity to address their challenges of rural school teaching (Barley & Beesley, 2007). **Mrs Z Dube** proves to us that through workshops or seminars different rural school teachers' needs are addressed, allowing them to improve the school performance.

Teachers in partnership programmes are motivated to register for various formal qualifications that can help improve their skills and knowledge (Barley & Beesley, 2007).

Miss G Hadebe said:

As teachers who were exposed to these workshops facilitated by the partnership we were encouraged to enrolled for Advance Certificate Education in Education Leadership Management and Policy Development, which was in a form of ACE and those who could afford to continue doing post graduate Degree were encouraged to do so...

Partnership teacher development programmes afford rural school teachers an opportunity to improve their qualifications. As teachers improve their qualifications it further places them in a better space to contest for promotion positions in the sector. This could be recommended as an incentive and retention strategy. It may assist to retain qualified quality teachers in rural schools that can help improve teaching and learning. **Mr D Jobe** said:

In workshops we get an opportunity to engage directly with our tutors and ask questions about what we attempted to do in our schools after attending workshops when we tried to apply knowledge we gained...

The notion above suggests that teachers attend partnership teacher development programmes with expectations that their classroom-based challenges will be solved.

When participants were asked about the contribution of school-university partnership programmes to rural school teacher development, one of the prominent issues that was raised by teachers is that partnerships expose them to opportunities for teacher development and support programmes. This becomes evident as there are various teacher support projects initiated by the Department to assist rural schools to improve teaching and learning in their schools. **Mr Ndlovu** said:

Yes it does contribute a lot because our teachers they engage closely to the lecturers from these universities we are partnering with. As teacher development it is our responsibility to assist all the teachers especially the ones from rural school because our rural schools before the initiation of school-university partnership, the schools were not producing the best results in terms of Matric...

The input above confirms that affording teachers an opportunity to engage closely with lecturers involved in partnerships assist teachers to develop solutions to the challenges of rural school teaching. The extract above reinforces the notion that school-university partnerships help teachers to improve school performance especially in rural schools. This emphasises the need for teacher development programmes. According to the participants in this study, SUP exposes rural school teachers to various technology-based education support programmes that are aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools (Barley and Beesley, 2007; & Khobo, 2015). One of the well-known and highly appreciated projects is the Gema Champion Project that was initiated and facilitated by the Department of Education in rural schools that were underperforming in Science and Mathematics. Teachers appreciate the programme as it supplies all the necessary material and equipment to be used to improve teaching and learning. **Mr D Jobe** said:

Each chapter we're doing according to our ATP education for grade 10 to 12 in Maths and Science. It also has videos, tools and simplified material, all those things, which will make any education or learning and teaching to be easy. Now we were called just to be workshopped how to use this devices or tools...

Learning from the words of the teacher in the excerpt above, the Gema Champion Project supplies teachers with all teaching materials and equipment that may be required to facilitate a successful Science and Mathematics lesson. It covers Grades 10 to 12. Teachers are thoroughly trained to use the equipment and materials. **Mr D Jobe** further said:

But the project, which was specifically with my school, was Gema Champion Projects. We were identified as one of the schools that were going to work with Gema Champion Project. Computers were installed in the science lab. We're having 30 computers. They supply everything. The computers, the documents, for the better teaching content in Science and Maths in Grade 10 to 12...

ICT support programmes assists teachers with skills and knowledge to improve school performance in scarce skills subjects (Voogt & McKenney, 2017). According to **Mr D Jobe** these support programmes are designed to construct Science and computer laboratories in rural schools. **Miss G Hadebe** appreciated the support programme and said:

They built a complete Computer Lab. They brought computers into the school that are programmed with Maths and Science. So that is user friendly to us as Maths and Science teachers in the school. We take learners into the Lab and make them open the program from computers. We use computers and projectors to do teaching...

Through improved school infrastructure, rural schools develop the capacity to deliver quality teaching and learning using technological equipment. The support that come with partnership projects in rural schools help teachers to mitigate the challenges of poor school infrastructure (Voogt & McKenney, 2017).

4.3.2.3 Integrating Technology into Education

Teachers involved in partnership programmes acquired skills of computer literacy and use computers for improved teaching and learning (Bhalla, 2013). **Mr M Sibiya** said:

I personally, through this partnership I've gained the following; how to utilise/use a computer because now as an educator, now we talking about 4th industrial revolution no more need as an educator to write on the board...

Teachers gain computer literacy skills through partnership programmes, which is important in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). My observation concludes that the use of computers to facilitate teaching and learning affords teachers new opportunities to facilitate e-teaching and learning (Bhalla, 2013). It further reduces the use of paper and chalk. It supports friendly and environmentally clean classrooms (Bhalla, 2013). It affords teachers much time to engage and respond to learners' queries instead of spending time writing notes on the board (Barrera-Osorio & Linden, 2009). Therefore, partnerships integrate technology into new forms of teaching and learning in rural schools with improved school infrastructure. The schools have to improve further their technological infrastructure to save the information used at school for easy future reference from the school archives (Barrera-Osorio & Linden, 2009). **Mr D Jobe** said:

You would use the computer and TV set like device to do presentations. In this regard rural school teachers were developed in the ability to use the technology equipment to teach and also to be able to teach Technology as a subject in a similar way like in urban schools...

Partnership programmes help rural school teachers to gain skills of using modern methods of facilitating teaching and learning. These new skills improve the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools to match urban schools. The integration of technology in facilitating teaching and learning in rural schools also helps rural teachers to request assistance from highly experienced teachers who could be able to teach without coming to that particular school but through Zoom or virtual teaching (Khobo, 2015).

Another participant acknowledged ICT programmes as they assist in community inclusion in the activities of the school and improve teaching and learning. **Mr T Malinga** said:

...when I came back from the university I was attending, I introduced a computer class in school as you can see there. There are computers and instead of computers being used by learners only, members of the community that are in possession of Grade 12 certificates and don't have something to do they come and use computers here at school for job applications and etc....

The school principal learned through a partnership programme to include parents and other community members, using ICT equipment in the form of computers. At the current juncture, 21st century skills development strategies in developing countries have increased the expectations that teachers and the community take advantage of the emerging use of ICT to support the community and teachers' professional development (Gilakjan, 2013). According to the principal, computers were donated to the school for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. Instead of those computers being used by learners only, the principal decided to also allow community members to have access and use school computers for various needs. This created security for computers because the community uses them and may not allow them to be stolen. **Mr T Malinga** said:

...the computers were donated through assistance by Mlambo-Ngcuka Foundation. We were also taught how to communicate with companies instead of waiting for the Department. We also have got wi-fi, donated by Vodacom...

Both the computers and wi-fi were donated to the school. Mellonkopf (2009) suggest that school-university partnership programmes must contribute to rural school development by implementing programmes that equip schools with technological infrastructure. The school principal learned good communication skills from a partnership programme. I commend partnership programmes as they assist rural schools to improve the school infrastructure. According to Avidov-Ungar (2018) ICT can also promote the use of technology by learners from rural schools to gain access to universities, using the available online programmes. Besides this infrastructure assisting learners in the school, it may also help the whole community surrounding the school to create a sense of belonging to the community. Avidov-Ungar (2014) emphasises that school leaders should

encourage the use of ICT as part of school culture and it must be sustained to be effective. Additionally, the teacher was grateful for ICT educational support programmes as they improve teaching and learning in rural schools. **Mr D Jobe** said:

Gema Champion Project is the computerised Science and Mathematics programme that is used to teach Science and Mathematics in schools, most especially rural schools that are underperforming in the subjects. Here, they install programmed computer with Science and Mathematics lessons, which teachers use for teaching purpose. This programme is brought to schools by the Department to assist in improving results and it assists rural schools to improve their performance in Science and Mathematics.

ICT educational support programmes were introduced into rural schools by the Department of Education in partnership with various universities for the purpose of improving the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics. This is a support programme for teachers. According to the participants this educational support programme is installed more specifically in underperforming schools to improve the school performance in Science and Mathematics. **Mr D Jobe** further stated:

This programme is introducing rural schools to use e-learning. In this programme you just open computers and smart board and teach using that only...

It has been shown that rural school teachers value the ICT educational support programme as it introduces rural schools to modern means of teaching using technological devices. Teachers in rural schools perceive ICT as a useful strategy for successful teaching and learning (Gilakjan, 2013). Therefore, I suggest that rural schools should work towards improved school infrastructure to accommodate or house all the technology-designed devices for teaching and learning. This programme introduced the use of computers and smart boards and discontinued chalkboard and chalk in some rural schools where it has been installed. I perceive this as a huge improvement in the teaching and learning space. **Miss G Hadebe** emphasised:

It makes the work easier for both the teacher and the learner but it is just that it is you as a teacher who has to understand as to how are you going to use the programme to address that particular sub topic and make the learner to better understand it...

This ICT support programme makes it easier for teachers to conduct effective teaching and learning. I suggest that teachers be thoroughly trained in using or mastering the use of the programme. **Mr S Khulu** expressed the opinion:

I think this program challenges teachers themselves that they must develop themselves in order to be able possess necessary skills and knowledge to use this program and that is self-development. That self-development can help a teacher to know and understand how to explain the videos that are contained in the program. You will know what each of the items mean. You must be able to relate the theory from the book into practice, which appears in a video. It can help learners to learn more practically...

However, in as much as the programme is good for rural school teachers, it requires teacher development with computer skills. Otherwise, the programme might challenge teachers and fail to yield the expected results of improved teaching and learning in rural schools.

Partnership capacity building programmes assist rural school teachers to improve their teaching of content. Teacher development programmes expose rural teachers to content based workshops. These workshops and training opportunities improve teachers' skills and knowledge in their subjects of specialisation. **Mrs Z Dube** articulated:

Our teachers are attending such capacity building workshops and most of these workshops are based on teaching content, lesson planning and lesson assessment and part of these workshops cover reporting. I support teachers in this regard as we transport them to these workshops as a school, we plan these programmes together with the university and we are getting support also to improve our infrastructure as a school...

It is appreciated that schools support their teachers to attend these partnership capacity building workshops. Such programmes are key in helping teachers to improve their teaching of content. Similarly, they assist teachers to develop different methods of assessing learners' work. This helps rural school teachers to devise new strategies to equip learners with the knowledge required for their final assessment which determines learners' progression at the end of the academic year.

Beside the fact that partnership support programmes help teachers to gain new computer literacy skills, teachers are also exposed to new teaching content and materials. It therefore assists rural schools teachers to deliver an improved quality of teaching to their learners. **Mr M Sibiya** said:

I've gained something and also the teachers in my department like the material that we are using from Gema Champion Project computers, in each chapter teaching and assessment activities are there and also having educational videos. Now it also gives us various ways to teach learners...

Through skills gained from partnerships teachers learn various approaches to deliver quality teaching. Further, learners' acquisition of knowledge is highly improved through the use of concrete methods made available via videos and other sophisticated means of transferring knowledge.

Rural school teachers continue to appreciate partnership programmes as they assist them to improve in their teaching skills and dealing with challenges of rural school teaching.

Mr D Jobe said:

Let me start with content of these workshops it is concise in terms of solving our classroom problems. Our tutors develop content that is classroom based. It is able to integrate content with our learners' classroom challenges and assisting us to develop lesson plans that are based at learners level and it gives the knowledge and skills we require and hoped for. It is also able to address our expectations because we want to be able to teach in the most challenging situation of rural schools where there are challenges of multi-grading and poor infrastructure...

The standard of programmes facilitated through partnerships is good and meets most of the requirements of properly planned and successful workshops. Teachers appreciate the content of workshops, which is classroom-based and addresses the needs of both teachers and learners. Similarly, workshop content capacitates teachers to deal with the challenges of rural school teaching as indicated earlier: multi-grading, overcrowded classrooms and poor school infrastructure. It addresses teachers' objectives and expectations. Therefore, partnership programmes have a positive contribution to rural school teachers' development.

Educational support programmes as part of partnership programmes assist rural school teachers to improve performance and school results. **Miss G Hadebe** articulated it as follows:

But if I can look at the programme as a programme brought by the Department to rural underperforming schools to assist in improving results and how it can assist the rural school teachers to improve in their performance. All I can say this program has become a great help for rural school teachers. It further boost their confidence to teach in rural school setting where most of the required teacher learner support materials are scarce...

Partnership educational support programmes also help teachers to improve in their confidence to teach. It encourages teachers to perform better regardless of the limited resources that rural schools have.

4.3.2.4 School Culture

The school goals are captured in the school vision and mission statement that presents the school culture (Meyer, 2010). The Department intervenes with a number of support and partnership programmes in rural schools to secure a positive school culture, improve teaching and learning, and improve the school leadership style. Therefore, exposing the school leaders and teachers to various capacity building programmes through partnership programmes contributes significantly to school development, as observed in improved school leadership style and culture. **Mr Ndlovu** opined:

I think rural school teachers do not see the need of working hard in the same way as urban school teachers. The belief in most rural schools is that parents do not have an understanding of the role of the school in the community and most parents are illiterate. Therefore the resources that we invest in those schools as a Department do not give much of the desired results in terms achieving the school goals and that is why we come up with follow-up programmes for teachers development...

The good leadership styles practiced by rural school leaders motivates teachers and make them see the need to perform better at schools. As the culture of teaching and learning deteriorates in rural schools, teachers are not motivated to work hard instead they do their work for the purpose of compliance (MacNeil, Prater & Busch, 2009). School-university partnerships in rural schools transform the school culture to be better and improve the

school leadership style (Meyer, 2010). The school culture means the day-to-day operations of the school, in order for the school to attain its vision and mission (MacNeil, et. al., 2009). In a school engulfed by poor performance the school culture usually deteriorates and needs to be revived (MacNeil, et. al., 2009). An improved school leadership style that is transformational in nature motivates teachers and revives the spirit of hard work (Wenger, 1998).

The leadership style in the school determines the level of enthusiasm displayed by teachers (Rautiola, 2009). **Mrs Z Dube** said:

In fact teachers must wish to be at school instead of being at home that is if they are provided with good leadership style...

According to the notion expressed above, teachers are encouraged by strong school leadership to become committed to work. Therefore, I see it as significant for school leaders to participate with honesty and vibrancy to capacity building through partnership programmes. **Mr T Malinga** said:

Therefore as a school principal and enforcing the school culture I believe in school rules and regulations. As a principal to achieve that you must be prepared to work together with teachers in order to make the institution an inviting environment...

It is important for school leaders to work cooperatively with teachers. This strengthens the school culture and creates an inviting school environment for all stakeholders in the school (Rautiola, 2009). **Mr T Malinga** further said:

They just call me the school leader and to me it makes things very simple, it makes me to be approachable, it makes me to be friendly even to my learners and to the parents. Another thing that happened to me is the change of language. My language changed from how I communicate with teachers, the SMT, it changed completely...

My deduction from the excerpt above is that participating in partnership development programmes transforms school leaders to adopt new progressive ways and strategies to lead the school. The school leader changes the approach, language and strategies to lead the school. Obviously, all the above changes impact positively on the school culture and

leadership style (Rautiola, 2009). It further motivates the entire school community to become part of school improvement and development. **Mr T Malinga** said:

I use to tell myself that I am right and I am the only person who has to tell teachers but attending the training programme at RAU I changed and I am now a good listener, sometimes I allow people to tell me what to do and how to do things...

According to the participant above, partnership programmes transform rural school leaders, helping them to see the need to provide proper school leadership that instils a good school culture and adopts a progressive leadership style. In my view this encourages teachers to perform better and continue to work to improve rural schools. Learners also appreciate the leadership of the school and learn. In one-way or another the culture of teaching and learning in the school is restored (Rautiola, 2009).

It is evident that rural school teachers are faced with challenges of learners lacking motivation to learn, showing little ability to concentrate in class and lacking self-discipline (Lethoko, Heystek, & Maree, 2001). To deal with issues of learners' reluctance to attend classes, partnership programmes developed computer-programmed lessons (Rautiola, 2009). The main cause of reluctance to attend school by rural school learners is poor school infrastructure, lack of school basic services, and poverty in the community served by the school (Lethoko, Heystek, & Maree, 2001). These programmes restore the school culture of teaching and learning. Moreover, partnership programmes assist schools to develop learner/teacher support infrastructure like laboratories and it raises the enthusiasm to learn. When teachers become more effective in their classrooms learners enjoys learning. I therefore concur with the idea that rural school teachers have to learn new strategies to mitigate the challenge of a lack of resources in rural schools. **Mr Ndlovu** said:

To restore the culture of teaching and learning partnership programmes developed computer programmed lessons and are presented using overhead projectors. Teachers explain here and there for learners. It has proved to be so more effective. The University in partnership also developed a laboratory for the school so that whatever they learn as presentations are able to do it practical monitored by the teacher. We also have winter

programme that covers the teaching of highly challenging concepts to the learners...

Partnership support programmes expose teachers to various content-based programmes that assist teachers to improve in lesson facilitation and assessment. Teachers are again assisted through partnership programmes to deal with challenging concepts in their subjects. Therefore, teachers involved in this partnership commend the programme as it makes their life easier in class and it helps them to restore the culture of teaching and learning in the school (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). Teachers on their own cannot work hard to restore the culture of teaching and learning but need the support of the School Management Team and the School Governing Body (Sebopetsa, et. al., 2015). I therefore support the notion of the monitoring of teachers' work and having proper school policies. The SMT in a school has a duty to support teachers and motivate them to work. Properly formulated policies play an important role in creating an effective school (Murphy, et. al., 1982). School policies that create a conducive environment for teaching and learning to take place in a school assist the school to restore the culture of teaching and learning (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). **Mr Ndlovu** further stated:

...but also there are management and leadership programmes that we provide. Like, for example, most of the things that are happening in schools you find that the schools have a problem of the teachers infightings because they have a human relations problem or sometimes the school policies are weak to support teaching and learning in the school. In cases like these we also train both the SMT and the SGB on what is expected from them to keep the school going and effective...

The inclusion of School Management Teams (SMTs) and School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in partnership programmes aims to achieve holistic school development (Sebopetsa, et. al., 2015). In my view this may assist with the effective monitoring of teachers and learners' schoolwork and the effective governance of the school.

A rural school principal who was exposed to the partnership programme changed his attitude and leadership approach. He felt that this would help to create harmony in the school environment and motivate teachers to work hard. As the leadership style adopted

by a school principal encourages teachers to work hard, it further assists the school to restore the culture of teaching and learning (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). **Mr T Malinga** said:

They just call me the school leader and to me it makes things very simple, it makes me to be approachable, it makes me to be friendly even to my learners and to the parents. Another thing that happened to me is the change of language. My language changed from how I communicate with teachers, the SMT, and SGB, it changed completely...

Learning from the extract above the rural school principal values the leadership style he adopted. The principal's leadership style is enabling and creates an inviting environment for subordinates, parents and learners in the school (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). I am of the view that the leadership approach practiced by the school principal helps to allow the participation of the whole school community in the issues of the school. As a result, everybody owns everything that happens in the school and that helps to maintain the school culture of teaching and learning (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). The school principal benefits after being exposed to a partnership development programme that improves the communication strategy in the school. In this harmonious environment teachers become motivated and perform better.

Having a similar view with the above **Mrs Z Dube** articulated:

This partnership taught me that every individual teacher at school is unique and has his/her own needs and role to play in the success of the school. It helped me to think the school leadership in a different way that is motivational and able to restore the school culture of teaching and learning...

The school principal learnt through school-university partnership that individual teachers in a school need attention. I suggest that giving an individual teacher the necessary support helps teachers to play a vital positive role in the school and improve school performance. Teachers improve school performance as they continue to appreciate the culture of teaching and learning in the school (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). **Mrs Z Dube** further said:

When I think about activities of our school I now think beyond the school itself in terms of maintaining the school culture of teaching and learning but consider that there are parents,

teachers and learners of this school that I have to nurture, motivate and make them fully participate in the school activities...

The school principal is observed being curious about maintaining the improved culture of teaching and learning in the school (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). Through partnership programmes principals gain skills to develop an inclusive approach for parents, teachers and learners to nurture and motivate them for their full participation in school activities. Data revealed that promoting the school culture of teaching and learning has to be instilled in all stakeholders in the school. The SMT has to play a massive role in enhancing the culture of teaching and learning in a rural school (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). I therefore, think that the SMT, teachers and parents have to work together to bring about change in such a school. In the discussion with **Mr D Jobe** it emerged that:

Gema program develops positive attitude to me. I now know different programmes and how they should be taught to learners so that it is easier for them to understand. Gema is helping us as rural school teachers in a big deal...

The teacher support programme motivates teachers as it creates a positive attitude to improve teaching and learning in the school (Lethoko, et. al., 2001). Therefore rural school teachers commend the programme as it is helpful and assists them to improve school performance.

The school principal, after being exposed to the partnership realises the need to put all his effort into improving the school performance. **Mr M Malinga** said:

...first all you must have that sense of belonging to that particular institution. The school it must come first in everything that the teacher is doing because it is having young innocent Africans' lives and they are here in your hand...

In my view the school principal trusts that teachers may develop a sense of belonging to the school. According to the school principal teachers must develop a sense of putting the interests of the school first in everything they do in a school (Bartholomew, & Sandholtz, 2009). It therefore means that teachers have to work hard to improve school performance thereby delivering quality teaching and learning. A conducive work environment for teaching and learning to take place invokes the will to perform better. These programmes

encourage rural school teachers to rise above the calling of professional teaching and serve the community with diligence and honesty (Bartholomew, & Sandholtz, 2009).

Mrs Z Dube has a congruent view and she said:

Moreover that you see if teachers are working in an environment that is conducive for teaching and learning to take place they perform better. They become motivated and motivated people perform better and people who perform better they give out good results because they always think about the interest of the school first...

Learning from the above extract the rural school principal appreciates the commitment of rural school teachers to work hard and transform a rural community through educative teaching (Bartholomew, & Sandholtz, 2009). The school principal strongly commends the teachers' commitment to improving school performance because they have put the interest of the school first.

Moreover, there is an important role that is played by the school governing body in the life of the rural school in order to attain the school goals. Apart from governance, it has to support teachers with all the necessary resources that may be required for successful teaching and learning to take place (Duma, et. al., 2011). **Miss G Hadebe** said:

The school governing body is of great assistance to the school. They make us, as teachers feel wanted by the school and making a difference in the society. The interest of the school is in their hearts you see that from dedication and support they give the school. That feels good with us as teachers working in a remote environment like this...

The data suggests that the support received by rural school teachers from the school governing body confirms that they have an interest in the education of their children. It is evident from the dedication and commitment the SGB has to the school.

Similarly, rural school teachers realise the significance of supporting each other if they want to be successful in their practice. Teachers agree that working in rural school settings is difficult; therefore they require support from the community to continue striving for improved school performance (Duma, et. al., 2011). Further to that, **Mr M Sibiya** commented:

The environment under which we work is very difficult as rural school teachers we need support from the community we are serving and amongst each other. So both the school management and the SGB need to support us in fact they need to think about the school first and give us support we need in order to teach their children effectively...

Literature confirms that the participation of a school governing body in the school affairs involves among other things: planning, organising, leading, supervising, policy-making, decision-making, controlling, and coordinating, which are some of the governance duties of the school governance structures (Duma, et. al., 2011). In all planning that takes place at school, teachers feel that it is important for the school management team (SMT) and the school governing body (SGB) to put the interest of the school first. According to teachers both the SMT and SGB have a vital role to play in order to develop a successful rural school. If teachers have the support of the SMT and SGB it helps them to teach effectively.

School Management Teams (SMTs) have never been able to organise teacher development programmes on their own. Most of the time when the SMTs organise teacher development programmes they work cooperatively with universities with which they are in partnership. **Mr S Khulu** said:

As part of the SMT in our school, we never organised teacher development programs on our own. Whatever that we have organised as SMT we did it together in the partnership and reason for such is because we couldn't afford to organise programmes on our own...

Rural schools organise teacher development programmes through partnerships because they lack the funding to do it on their own. Therefore, it means that rural school financial constraints impede schools from organising teacher development programmes independently and they need universities in partnership for support. Partnerships have to raise funds to organise rural school teacher development programmes. Further, this emphasises the significant need for partnerships with universities in order to support them with financial resources. **Mr M Sibiyi** said:

Now that we are in partnership with this university the SMT at school use funds organised through this partnership to plan and organise workshops, seminars and meetings...

In some other rural schools, teacher development programmes are organised using funds organised through partnership programmes. The teacher development programmes that require financial support are workshops, seminars and meetings.

It is important that teacher development programmes address the needs of rural school teachers. It helps to solve rural school teachers' classroom based challenges. As a result, rural school teachers are able to improve their skills and school performance. **Miss G Hadebe** said:

Our programmes are based on what we identified as the needs of the school after the evaluation of school performance and there are workshops that were run by an NGO that was invited into the school through this partnership...

This teacher commends the collaboration of the university with a rural school as it assists the schools to identify teachers' needs for development. Rural schools identify their needs after a thorough school performance evaluation has been conducted. Some of the rural school teacher development programmes like workshop are facilitated by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Such partnership programmes are run on the school premises. This minimises the costs of running such development programmes.

The school management teams in rural schools are observed to be dependent on school-university partnership programmes in order to be able to perform their duties. In my understanding this could reflect inability to perform their management duties. According to the participants SMTs in rural schools are unable to raise funds to support teacher development programmes. The inability of SMTs to raise funds in rural schools is caused by the fact that rural schools are located in poverty stricken rural areas. Therefore, rural school SMTs find it difficult to perform their duties of improving school infrastructure and improving teachers' skills and knowledge for the purpose of increased teaching and learning.

In any school the school management team has a duty to develop, support and equip staff with skills and knowledge that will make them perform their duties better (Ntsoane, 2017). Nwangwa and Omotere (2013) include in the duties of the SMT fund raising for the school in order to have resources to manage the implementation of the curriculum, to assist the school governing body in developing school policies for a conducive teaching and learning environment, and to maintain the school infrastructure using the available resources. The school management team has to manage the role of the school in the society it serves (Nwangwa & Omotere, 2013). The research findings reveal that current school managers find it difficult to meet the new managerial expectations that are brought about by a transforming educational environment (Ntsoane, 2017). The way forward therefore, is to retrain school management teams not only on curriculum implementation but also in other areas that affect their performance as school managers. (Nwangwa & Omotere, 2013).

4.3.3 ENHANCING THE CONTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR RURAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

The third question that participants of this study were asked, was about factors enhancing the contribution of school-university partnerships for rural teacher development. Findings from the participants elicited four sub-themes. Those sub-themes are: rural school teacher incentives, collaborative partnership, school leadership roles and follow-up programmes. The discussion below covers the four sub-themes in details as they emerged from the data.

4.3.3.1 Rural School Teacher Incentives

When participants were asked about a means to enhance the contribution of school university partnership programmes to rural teacher development, participants agreed on the importance of rural incentives. Rural incentives may encourage teachers to remain in rural schools regardless of the challenges of rural school teaching. **Mr Ndlovu** said:

There was something called rural incentives that were proposed long time ago but it was not implemented. Those who came up with that idea they were hoping to attract more experienced teachers to work in rural schools. If as the Department we can implement and provide incentives to

rural schools I think we can get more experienced teachers who will be eager to work in rural schools...

The Department official who participated in the study is concerned about a strategy to keep experienced teachers working in rural schools. According to the Department official this may help the Department to increase the pool of experienced, qualified teachers in rural areas. As a result, these teachers have the potential to change the lives of rural school learners and the community at large. Armstrong (2014) confirms the fact that it was teachers' trade unions that proposed the implementation of rural teacher incentives as a possible strategy which might attract qualified, experienced teachers to work in rural schools. The attraction of experienced, qualified teachers in rural schools was likely to improve and enhance teaching and learning.

Sharing a congruent view, **Miss G Hadebe** added the issue of awarding rural teachers with professional qualifications as part of enhancing a programme of rural school teacher development. **Miss G Hadebe** said:

I think the issue of incentives can encourage teachers to be part of the programme, if the university that is participating in the partnership can award teachers with professional qualification and bursaries to further their studies...

Participants support the view that rural teachers appreciate incentives as a strategy to attract experienced and qualified teachers to work in rural schools. Rural school teachers assume that this strategy may help to keep experienced and qualified teachers working in rural schools. Further to that, **Mr T Malinga** said:

Above I talked to or I alluded to the issue of incentives, which I think incentives are important. They are important in a sense that as part of your retention strategy, by rural schools, to keep teachers in rural schools and avoid losing them. It should be incentives that are appealing to educators, and that would make rural school teaching inviting other than now being seen as means of getting paid every month...

The participant above reaffirms the importance of incentives as a strategy to retain teachers in rural schools. **Mrs Z Dube** said:

...may be they would need to come with an idea of incentives around this issue. As rural school teachers get those incentives, then it can motivate

them to opt to go to rural schools and work there because of the incentives that are there...

Mrs Z Dube recommends incentives as means that can attract teachers to come and work in rural schools.

Mr D Jobe said:

From my point of view, universities should encourage rural school teachers to develop their skills and knowledge by registering in the same university to do developmental courses to improve their specialisation...

I concur with the participant and add that a teacher should be a life-long learner, therefore universities involved in partnerships should encourage rural school teachers to enrol in the same institutions to further their studies. It may motivate teachers to participate vibrantly in partnership programmes.

4.3.3.2 Collaborative Partnerships

Having learnt from the participants' views, it emerged that school-university partnerships should form collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders for the success of such programmes. **Mr Ndlovu** said:

...when that is done partnership should also assist rural schools to engage other Departments, for instance, if there is no electricity in the school, that the Municipality is engaged through this partnership, to supply electricity in the school and the school must be assisted to afford that electricity and pay for it every month as a service that is rendered by the Municipality. Partnership should also assist the school to engage Department of Transport if there is no road, Department of public works if the infrastructure of the school is in poor condition, et cetera...

It has shown that in order for schools to have proper infrastructure the Department of Education has to work with other Departments. The norms and standards for school funding are not enough to fund everything in the school, especially rural schools that have very low enrolments. A rural school teacher emphasised the issue of collaboration with other stakeholders in improving both the school infrastructure and performance. According to the teacher, this collaboration may assist teachers in rural schools with the support required in order to attain quality teaching and learning. **Mr S Khulu** said:

...we need the SMT and the parents that will make sure that there is effective teaching and learning in schools thereby forming part of the partnership programmes. This will motivate parents to engage directly with universities or any organisation the school is involved with in partnership. If there is that kind of progress involving parents our partnership would be enhanced in one way or the other...

Collaborative partnerships should be extended to involve parents. Myende (2012) commends parental involvement in school-university partnerships as part of the programme for rural school teacher development as this may create good working relations between teachers and the community. These relations should aim at sharpening the skills and intellectual ability of a child (Nhlumayo, 2016).

Having a congruent view with the above, **Mr D Jobe** said:

We need to collaborate in partnership with parents in order to improve the communication with learners' parents so that our learners are able to do homework and other works of the school...

Research has shown that, creating a strong collaboration between the school and the community can establish a synergy that enhances learning in a school (Gichohi, 2015). I am convinced that collaboration between the school in partnership and parents or the community served by the school may enhance school-university partnership programmes in that environment.

4.3.3.3 School Leadership Role

When the participants were engaged about the role of school leadership in enhancing rural teacher development, they raised a number of issues associated with the leadership role. **Mr Ndlovu** said:

...the school leadership in a school has an important role to improve the school infrastructure and performance. Therefore there is a need to design a partnership programme that focuses on school leadership development. It helps them with handling and administration of school finances and budgeting, school planning, etc....

The Departmental official confirmed the school leadership role in developing both the school infrastructure and improving the performance. Therefore, it is important to realise the need for involving school leadership in rural school teacher development through

school-university partnerships. The official supports a partnership programme designed to assist rural school leaders. This may help to enhance school-university partnership programmes in rural schools. Therefore, school leadership in partnership programmes has the role of promoting teacher development thereby maintaining a successful school-university partnership (Mutemeri & Chetty, 2011). According to Mutemeri and Chetty (2011) educational leaders have a responsibility to give support to teachers and help them increase their interest to become part of teacher development programmes. This kind of leaders appears to practice transformational leadership as such leaders have an effect on teachers' motivation to learn and on their willingness to change their practices (Bush, 2005). Moreover, transformational leaders have an impact on teachers' professional development and mobilise their learning by inviting different programmes like SUP to take place in their schools (Bush, 2007).

Having a similar view with the above **Mr S Khulu** said:

In order to enhance partnership programmes school leaders in the school-university partnership should encourage teachers to participate positively in the teacher development programmes organised by this partnership...

This teacher realises the need to enhance school-university partnership programmes in a rural school. The teacher emphasises the role of school leadership in enhancing the SUP programme in the school. School leaders have a position of influence in a school. Also, all school planning, either administrative or governance related depends on the school leadership. The influence of school leaders should be to enhance SUPs in rural schools and promote a collaborative culture (Carter, et. al., 2018). Therefore, it begins with school leaders understanding the greater purpose of SUP programmes in the school and their impact on the school culture (Brady, 2002). I think having a progressive school leader who understands that teachers have to be exposed to development programmes increases rural school teachers' will to see the need to participate fully in such programmes.

A rural school teacher advanced the view that teachers in rural schools require support in order to maximise SUP programmes in rural schools. **Miss G Hadebe** said:

...in order to enhance teacher development in this partnership, I think what is most required is support. More support I think is required. So

when I say more support, I mean, these people from school principal to district director, they should ensure that they support the program of rural teacher development, they should ensure that they support the Universities or Institutions of higher learning that aims to engage in partnership with schools...

Here the participant is advancing the view that school leadership support may maximise rural school teacher development through school-university partnership. Edmonds (1982), through his landmark research on effective schools defined a good school as a school involved in SUPs. Such a good school is characterised by strong leadership, a climate of safety and order, a commitment to monitoring progress, high expectations for teachers and learners, and a focus on teaching important skills (Edmond, 1982).

Learning from participants' views it became clear that leadership motivation for rural school teachers enhances teacher development through school-university partnership. In my view rural school teachers, in order to participate vibrantly in school-university partnership programmes, need motivation by their school leadership. Taking part in such teacher development programmes assists rural school teachers to improve their skills and knowledge. **Mr Ndlovu** said:

The school principals we have a role of motivating our teachers to become part of school-university partnership programmes. Motivating teachers to become part of the school-university partnership programme will enhance the programme. ...

Mr M Sibiya shared a similar view, with the above participant and said:

I want to say school leaders should play a motivational role to enhance this partnership, they should encourage teachers to see the need to maintain this partnership...

Both participants are advancing the idea that school leaders have the role of motivating rural school teachers to participate in school-university partnership teacher development programmes. According to the participants this is how SUP programmes may be enhanced in rural schools to improve teaching and learning. Similarly, school principals need to become part of teacher development programmes as a means to motivate teachers and lead by example. Morley (2016) further advances the notion that rural school teachers are confronted with dilemmas and contradictions. Rural school teachers require

motivation in order to continue learning and improving their teaching experience (Morley, 2016). Preston (2017), when arguing for leadership roles, attests that strong leadership improves the motivation, morale and job performance of staff members and that is what is required by rural school teachers in order to remain active in partnership programmes. Menon (2016) confirms the significance of school leadership roles in motivating teachers to become part of partnership development programmes as leaders contribute to the willingness of teachers to learn and to seek continuous updates on their knowledge about various aspect of daily practice.

Improving school leadership and management skills may enhance the contribution of school-university partnerships for rural school teacher development. Rural school leaders have a responsibility to participate in partnership programmes in order for them to learn new skills and knowledge to transform schools through their improved leadership and management skills. **Mr T Malinga** said:

As the school principal involved in partnership programme, it taught me that every individual teacher at school is unique and has his/her own needs. It helped me to adopt a different leadership style, now I'm able to involve various stakeholders in planning and management of the school...

Here the school principal learned new leadership and management skills through a partnership programme. This helped the rural school principal to adopt a new leadership and management style to lead and manage the issues of the school. According to my view, teachers enjoy working in a harmonious environment and it encourages them to excel in their work. Therefore, the improved leadership and management skills to deal amicably, harmoniously and successfully with the affairs of the school enhance the partnership programme within the school.

Agreeing with the above, **Mrs Z Dube** stated:

...it was able to distinguish for us as SMT members between the so called leadership in a school and the so called management in the school...

When the school principal is able to distinguish between the two different roles of leadership and management in the school, it means a significant improvement in the application of such skills in the affairs of the school. Equipping rural principals with

skills and knowledge serves as an inspiration for school improvement through effective leadership (Segedin, 2011). Deduced from the theory framing this study, Wenger (1998) substantiates the advantages of school leaders acquiring new skills as they enhance partnership development programmes as the theory of learning process and social behaviour proposes that new knowledge and skills can be acquired by learning cooperatively from others.

4.3.3.4 Follow-Up Programmes

In order to enhance a school-university partnership as a programme for rural school teacher development, participants agree that there should be on-going training of teachers by developing follow-up programmes. These follow-up programmes may assist rural school teachers and the universities involved in partnership to assess the follow-up needs of the school in terms of further training required to improve rural school performance.

Mr T Malinga said:

...the university with which we are in partnership should create follow up programmes and transform the school into a research site. It will help motivate teachers, keep them learning and develop new skills and knowledge. They should help our schools to set achievable goals using the follow up programmes...

The participant feels that universities need to create follow-up teacher training programmes in order to enhance partnerships. The purpose of follow-up programmes would be to assess the impact of partnerships on rural school teachers and school performance. Encouraging follow-up teacher development programmes may turn rural schools into research sites for improved teaching and learning (Pennefather, 2008). Again, these follow-up programmes may help rural schools to master the setting of achievable goals. **Mr D Jobe** said:

The university in our partnership is like a mentor to us now. Therefore, they must continue to assist us using follow up programmes and assist us to get university qualifications...

When I draw from the extract above there is a strong feeling that universities enhance partnerships as they become mentors of rural schools involved in partnerships. Pennefather (2008) alludes to encouraging problem-based learning and group-based

tasks. I think these are phenomena that create an environment of enabling rural schools to identify their partnership needs. I concur with the idea that as this learning takes place between rural schools and universities it enhances the partnership programme. The continuation of problem-based learning encourages follow-up programmes that help teachers to attain university qualifications, if properly planned and arranged in the partnership programme (Pennefather, 2008). Enhancing partnership programmes help universities to attain their objective of the development of partnerships with rural schools. Through partnership programmes universities enhance the quality of teachers' skills and knowledge in order to make them more responsive to the challenges of rural school teaching.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and analysed data collected through semi-structured interviews. The chapter further analysed such data through reference to the literature review and presented views based on each theme and sub-theme discussed. Discussions were based on experiences of rural school teachers regarding the contribution of school-university partnerships in rural teacher development as the main theme. From participants' data it transpired that rural school teachers have an explicit understandings of the contribution of school-university partnership programmes to teacher development. Further to that, the discussion confirmed that school-university partnerships in rural schools are an immense contributing factor that has an impact on rural school teachers' development with skills and knowledge to deal with challenges of rural school settings. The next chapter of this study (chapter 5), will discuss the summary of the findings, draw main conclusions and make recommendations emanating from the study and suggest implications for further study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter four above presented the presentation of findings and discussion, using literature reviewed, theoretical framework and quotations of participants' responds. This chapter draw conclusions based on the findings and discussions of data and literature reviewed. This study drew on the experiences of rural school teachers, reflecting on the effectiveness of school-university partnerships as an approach to rural teacher development. In order to establish the above, this study explored the understanding of teachers about school-university partnerships and their contribution to teacher development, and possible factors that might enhance it. Given the objectives stated above, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the study, make recommendations and discuss implications for further study.

5.2 Summary of the Study

Chapter one covered the background and orientation to the study. I further, gave my views on the problem statement and rationale of the study. I also explained the significance of the study and its potential to afford clarity on the experiences of teachers regarding the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural teacher development. Further to that, I alluded to the purpose of the study and expanded on the critical questions leading this study. Chapter one also clarified the key concepts in the study to ensure the uniform understanding of those terms when reading this research and finally mentioned the delimitations of the study. This chapter also provided a brief overview of all chapters of this study.

Chapter two gave a literature review and a theoretical framework of this study. In this chapter there are two sections that is sections A and B. Section A discussed literature reviewed on the conceptualisation of school-university partnerships and rural teacher development. Section B discussed the theoretical framework that underpins this study. The model I used is Wenger's (1998) Social Learning Theory that originated from Lave

and Wenger (1991) and which Wenger further developed. I employed social learning theory to gain insight into how the experiences of teachers of the contribution of school-university partnerships in rural teacher development can be properly managed, implemented and enhanced to improve both rural school and teacher performance. The objective in this regard was to determine the efficacy of the programmes in improving rural teacher development by providing necessary skills and knowledge.

Chapter three provided an account of the research design and methodology used in the study. In this chapter I justified the choice of the interpretivism as a paradigm owing to my intention to gain an in-depth understanding from participants of the study about the experiences of teachers regarding the contribution of school-university partnership to rural teacher development, and the opportunities for rural school teachers that comes with partnership programmes. I wanted to further establish the contribution of partnership programmes to rural teacher development. This was designed to inform me whether school-university partnership programmes are able to achieve rural school teacher development and enhance its contribution to rural teachers' practice. I explained the method I used to generate data namely; semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with one Departmental official; two rural school principals; and four rural school teachers from rural school A and B. A rationale was provided as to why I choose to use purposive sampling to generate data. I gave a brief explanation of how I went about analysing the data generated. In this chapter I included issues like ethics and the trustworthiness of the study. In order to comply with sound ethical practice in conducting research, I sought permission from the Department of Education and two rural schools i.e. School A and B to have access to the schools and the teachers who were participants in this study. Permission letters and consent forms were given to participants. This chapter concluded by revealing the limitations of the study.

Chapter four presented the data and findings and discussions thereof. In this chapter I used critical questions as an organising framework to present data. I first conducted verbatim transcription of data collected from participants. After that I used thematic analysis to familiarise myself with data and identify themes that led the discussion of the

findings. For each critical question I presented data under each theme that emerged from an inductive analysis of the data. While I was presenting and discussing findings, I continued to quote verbatim from the participants as confirmation of my discussions. When discussing each theme, I blended the discussion with my own views and the literature reviewed to confirm the findings of this study.

5.3 Summary of Findings

In summarising the findings of this study, I will restate the research questions to demonstrate how each question was answered. The questions of this study were:

Main Question:

- What are the experiences of teachers regarding the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural teacher development?

Sub-questions:

- What are teachers' understandings of the contribution of school-university partnerships to the development of rural school teachers?
- How do school-university partnerships contribute to the development of rural school teachers?
- How can the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural teacher development be enhanced?

Here below is the detailed summary of the study's findings, based on these questions and the views presented by research participants after analysing data.

5.3.1 What are teachers' understandings of the contribution of school-university partnerships in the development of rural school teachers?

When participants were asked about their understandings of the contribution of SUPs to the development of rural school teachers they had similar views. The understanding of participants revealed that SUP programmes contribute to rural teacher development (RTD) as they improve teachers' skills and knowledge, and their ability to deal with the challenges of rural school teaching. Further to that, participants' view these programmes as supporting the retention of scarce skills subject teachers in rural schools. Literature concurs with the participants' views as it alludes to the need for teachers' skills

development through specific programmes that may be continuously evaluated to monitor their success in improving school and teacher performance (Moloi, 2002; Steyn, 2009). The findings further suggest that school-university partnership programmes play a significant role in improving teaching and learning in rural schools. Participants confirmed this as they alluded to various teacher support SUP programmes in rural schools that improved school performance. Mellonkopf (2009); Gilakjani (2013); and Ngala and Odebere (2010) agree that various teacher support programmes may assist teachers in rural school to perform better and improve teaching and learning. Further, participants have a congruent view that SUPs promote continuous teacher development and maintain teacher professionalism. Rural school teachers understood the impact of being involved in SUP programmes as they increased their skills and knowledge to produce quality teaching and learning.

5.3.2 How do school-university partnerships contribute to the development of rural school teachers?

Participants were asked about the contribution of SUPs to rural school teachers' development. The findings reveal that rural school teachers gain various benefits by participating in SUP programmes for RTD. Further to that, findings conclude that SUPs have a significant contribution to rural teacher development. Additionally, there are different teacher development programmes that are embedded in SUPs as programmes for rural school teacher development. They include programmes like studying for formal qualifications, and programmes that improve rural school teacher performance. Findings further revealed that there is a significant role played by SMTs in creating an effective teaching and learning environment in rural schools through SUP programmes. Ntsoane (2017); Meyer (2010); and Gravett, Peterson and Ramsaroop (2019) agree that there are various means by which school-university partnership programmes contribute to rural school teacher development enabling teachers to improve their skills and knowledge in order to deal with challenges of rural school teaching.

5.3.3 How can the contribution of school-university partnerships to rural teacher development be enhanced?

When participants were asked about factors enhancing the contribution of SUPs to rural teacher development, all participants in this study agreed that in order to enhance SUPs as rural teacher development programmes, incentives are required in order to encourage rural school teachers to remain teaching in rural schools, regardless of the challenges. Findings further confirmed that there are various shortcomings that hinder the effectiveness of SUPs as rural teacher development programme. The findings finally reveal that school leadership plays a significant role in enhancing SUP programmes to improve the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools. Further to that, the findings suggest various roles to be played by universities involved in partnerships to ensure their success. In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools, literature (Segedin, 2011; Mutemeri & Chetty 2011; Carter, et. al., 2018) supports the need to enhance SUP programmes in rural teacher development.

5.4 Conclusions

School-university partnerships are a well researched concept in the education perspective of South Africa. They provide a variety of answers to most questions that aim to advance a relationship between schools and institutions of higher learning. This is a concept that is gaining interest from various scholars in Education. I have learnt that SUPs, as programmes for rural school teacher development, may assist both rural schools and teachers to improve their performance. Therefore, this study came to the conclusion that a SUP functioning as a rural school teacher development programme is significant in improving teaching and learning in rural schools. It further concludes that SUPs have a great contribution to rural school teacher development as they may improve rural school teachers' skills and knowledge in dealing with challenges of rural school teaching. This study finally, concludes that there are various factors that enhance SUPs as programmes for rural school teacher development, aiming to improve the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools. Rural school leaders and teachers have a significant role to play in improving schools and they continue to provide the professional support required. In the paragraph that follows I present recommendations from this study.

5.5 Implications for Practice and Research

This part highlights the implications of this study for the practice of school-university partnerships and suggests further study on the topic.

5.5.1 Implications for practice

This study recommends that school-university partnerships, functioning as rural school teachers development programmes should target both pre-service and in-service educators. It can help to enable teachers to explore new adventures for their continuous professional development. According to rural school teachers, they prefer this programme to improve skills and knowledge in rural school teaching.

This study recommends that school-university partnership programmes focus on skills improvement as a strategy to invest in rural school development and improving school performance. This is a programme that may assist rural schools to identify their development needs and to develop a turnaround strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

This study further recommends that the DoE design a formally constructed, policy approved and suitable rural school teacher retention strategy that will assist in attracting qualified and experienced teachers to work in rural schools with the purpose of improving the quality of teaching and learning. Regardless of their location and economic conditions, rural schools deserve quality teaching and learning in order to transform the societies in which they operate.

It is further recommended that school-university partnership programmes improve the time frame for development programmes to allow teachers to effectively and vibrantly participate and attain the required skills and knowledge. This may afford teachers an opportunity to learn new skills and gain the knowledge required to mitigate the challenges of rural school teaching.

5.5.2 Implications For Further Research

The following suggestion may provide an opportunity to expand research on this topic. This was a study in an elementary perspective that covered the experiences of rural school teachers about the contribution of school-university partnerships as a programme for rural teacher development. This study was conducted in one District in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal, which included two rural schools. I therefore recommend that a similar study be conducted on a larger scale to explore what other districts do in enhancing rural teacher development. Further to that, I suggest that any other research conducted expands from school-university partnerships in rural schools to include an exploration of the infrastructure required to meet the demands of e-teaching and learning.

5.6 Final Word

This was a difficult study to conduct in rural schools that are not easy to access because of their poor communication infrastructure. I appreciated engaging and learning from the experiences of teachers working in difficult rural settings. Rural school teacher development is now adopted and it involves different stakeholders that work together to capacitate teachers. It also assists in promoting the culture of teaching and learning for rural school teachers and it encourages them to be life-long learners. Teacher development through school-university partnerships is slowly taking rural schools to greater heights. This is proved in the Matric results where rural schools are observed achieving good marks. Therefore, the DOE, the school leadership and universities should assist one another to advance this kind of partnership model.

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**APPENDIX A: LETTER TO KZN DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION
REQUESTING FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

P.O. Box 11013

Ladysmith

3370

13 January 2020

Attention: The HoD

Department of Education

Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X9137

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Dear Dr Nzama

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KZN DBE
SCHOOLS**

My name is Nelisiwe Nonkululeko Mswane, a Master's student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg Campus). As part of my Master's degree fulfilment, students are required to conduct research. We therefore kindly seek permission for students to conduct research in identified schools under your jurisdiction. The project title is: **School-university partnership's contribution in rural teacher development: Experiences of teachers**. This study aims to determine the experiences of teachers regarding the contribution of school-university partnerships in rural teacher development and its importance in promoting quality teaching and learning in a school. The vexing question is: What are the experiences of teachers regarding the contribution of school-university partnership in rural teacher development? The study will use semi-structured interviews with school leaders and teachers. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 40-60 minutes at the times convenient to them, which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

For any further questions or concerns that you may have pertaining to the study, I have enclosed the contact details of my supervisor.

Yours faithfully

Miss N.N Mswane

Cell: 079 037 3888

E-mail: nelisiwe.mswane@yahoo.com OR 217080523@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Supervisor's Details

Professor Phumlani Myende

Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal – School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Tel. No. 031-260 3965/ 031-260 5291

Email: MyendeP@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Ethics Office

Tel. No. 031-2604557

Email: Hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX B: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

PO BOX 11013

LADYSMITH

3370

13 May 2021

Attention: The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Nelisiwe Nonkululeko Mswane (Student No. 217080523) a Master's (M. Ed) student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. As part of the requirement for this degree, I am required to conduct a research project. The title of my research study is: **School-university partnerships contribution in rural teacher development: Experiences of teachers.** This study aims to determine the experiences of teachers regarding the contribution of school-university partnerships in rural teacher development and its importance in promoting quality teaching and learning in a school. I request your assistance in this research project by being granted permission to conduct my study in your school. This study is expected to use three of participants who are the principal and teachers in your school and will involve the following procedures. Participants will be observed during lessons as a data generation method. They may also be required participate in semi- structured interviews that are expected to last between 20 to 40 minutes at a time suitable to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Follow-up interviews may be conducted if necessary. Each interview will be voice-recorded. The duration of their participation if they choose to participate and remain in the study is expected to be 4-6 weeks.

This study will not involve any risks and/or discomfort for the school and participants. Also, the study will not provide direct benefits for the school or participants.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not be penalised. There are no consequences for participants who withdraw from the study.

Participants as a result of participation in the study will incur no costs and there are no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study. All names of schools and participants will be changed and pseudonyms will be used so that schools and participants remain anonymous. Information provided by participants will remain confidential and will not be shared with anyone else. Data generated through lesson observations, questionnaires and/ or semi-structured interviews will be stored in my supervisor's office, at the School of Education, Pietermaritzburg campus for five years, and thereafter be destroyed.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours in Education

Nelisiwe Mswane

NN Mswane (Miss)

Email: nelisiwe.mswane@yahoo.com

Cell: 079 037 3888

Supervisor's Details

Professor Phumlani Myende

Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal – School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Tel. No. 031-260 3965/ 031-260 5291

Email: MyendeP@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Ethics Office

Tel. No. 031-2604557

Email: Hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX C: DECLARATION OF CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

I _____ (Full names of the school principal) have been informed about the study entitled: **School-university partnerships contribution in rural teacher development: Experiences of teachers by Nelisiwe Nonkululeko Mswane.**

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

DATE

NN Mswane (Miss)

Email: nelisiwe.mswane@yahoo.com

Cell: 079 037 3888

Supervisor's Details

Professor Phumlani Myende

Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal – School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Tel. No. 031-260 3965/ 031-260 5291

Email: MyendeP@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Ethics Office

Tel. No. 031-2604557

Email: Hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX D: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

PO BOX 11013

LADYSMITH

3370

13 May 2021

Dear Participant

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECT

My name is Nelisiwe Nonkululeko Mswane. I am a Master's (M. Ed) student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education. As part of my degree requirements, I am required to conduct research. I have identified you as one of my potential research participants. I therefore kindly seek your permission to be part of my research project. My study title is: **School-university partnerships contribution in rural teacher development: Experiences of teachers**

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed, as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 20 to 40 minutes and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

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

Yours faithfully

NN Mswane (Miss)

Email: nelisiwe.mswane@yahoo.com

Cell: 079 037 3888

Supervisor's Details

Professor Phumlani Myende

Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal – School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Tel. No. 031-260 3965/ 031-260 5291

Email: MyendeP@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Ethics Office

Tel. No. 031-2604557

Email: Hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX E: DECLARATION OF CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

DECLARATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. In addition, I do consent/do not consent to the interview being voice-recorded.

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

	YES	NO
If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate by ticking an applicable box with an X whether or not you are willing to allow your interview:		
1. To be recorded using the following equipment(s);		
• Audio equipment		
• Photographic equipment		
• Video equipment		
2. To be kept confidential, as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.		
3. To last for about 1 hour and that may be split depending on your preference.		
4. Information to be used only for the purpose of this research and not against you. Data will be stored in a secured storage and destroyed after 5 years.		
5. To be terminated at your own time and choice and you will not be penalised for taking such action.		
6. To be used purely for academic purposes only, and that there are no financial benefits involved.		

Signature of Participant

NN Mswane (Miss)

Email: nelisiwe.mswane@yahoo.com

Cell: 079 037 3888

Date**Supervisor's Details**

Professor Phumlani Myende

Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal – School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Tel. No. 031-260 3965/ 031-260 5291

Email: MyendeP@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Ethics Office

Tel. No. 031-2604557

Email: Hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: Department official, school principals and teachers.

Main Question:

- What are the experiences of teachers regarding the contribution of school-university partnership in rural teacher development?

Sub-questions:

What are teachers' understandings of the contribution of school-university partnership in development of rural school teachers?

- Tell me more about the partnership that your school has with the university of...
- In your understanding, what should be the role of this partnership in improving teaching and learning in rural schools?
- What, in your view, should be the role of the partnership in rural teacher development and why?

How do school-university partnerships contribute to the development of rural school teachers?

- In your view what do you gain from this partnership as the school principal or as a teacher?
- One of the goals for this partnership is to contribute to the development of teachers teaching in rural schools, in your view does this partnership contribute to this and how?
- What are development programmes are embedded in this partnership?
- As a teacher/ principal/ district official would you share with me how the partnership has contributed in helping you to deal with your daily leadership/teaching activities?
- Have the School Management Team of this school once organised a teacher development programme that could assist teachers to improve their contact with learners and how effective was the programme? What role has been played by the university that your school partners with in these programmes?

How can the contribution of school-university partnership to rural teacher development be enhanced?

- In your experience what have you seen as the shortcomings of the partnership in relation to developing rural teachers?
- What do you think can be done to enhance the aspect of teacher development in the partnership?
- What do you think should be the role of leaders in this partnership in enhancing rural teacher development?
- What should be the role of school leaders in this?
- What should be the role of university partners in this?

Annexure A: Approval letter from School A

AMAPHISI HIGH SCHOOL

P.O. BOX 87
JAGERSRUST
3354
TEL: 0716981797



KWA-ZULU NATAL
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UMNYANGO WEZEMFUNDO
ENQUIRIES: P.G. KHANYILE (0728807214)

03 February 2020

Declaration of consent

I **P.G.Khanyile** have been informed about the study entitled: **The role of school-university partnership in promoting rural schools teacher empowerment: A case of three schools in Bergville.** Name of researcher: **Nelisiwe Nonkululeko Mswane.**

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

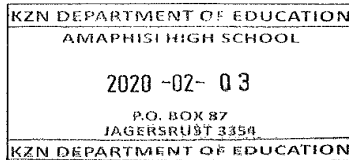
P.G.Khanyile (Principal)

P.G. KHANYILE

Principal

03-02-2020

Date



Annexure B: Approval letter from School B



D 282 ROAD (R 6) BRANCHED,
GREEN POINT VILLAGE
BERGVILLE 3350



Postal address
Nearest Town
Postal Code

Private Bag X 1640
Bergville
3350

I DUMISANI ELLIOT KUBHEKA (Full names of the school principal) have been informed about the study entitled: **The role of school-university partnership in promoting rural schools teacher empowerment: A case of three schools in Bergville.** Name of researcher: **Nelisiwe Nonkubheko Mswane.**

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

10/02/2020

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

DATE

KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Ngcongosi High School
2020 -02- 10
Private Bag X1640, Bergville, 3350

Annexure C: Approval letter from KZN Department of Education



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli

Tel: 033 392 1063/51

Ref.:2/4/8/4017

Miss Nelisiwe Nonkululeko Mswane
P.O. Box 11017
LADYSMITH
3370

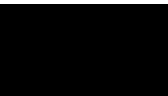
Dear Ms Mswane

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "THE ROLE OF SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP IN PROMOTING RURAL SCHOOL'S TEACHER EMPOWERMENT: A CASE OF SCHOOLS IN BERGVILLE CIRCUIT", 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 15 January 2020 to 10 January 2022.
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 below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UTHUKELA DISTRICT



Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 15 January 2020

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201

Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • Fax.: +27 033 392 1203 • Email: Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za • Web: www.kzndoe.gov.za

Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DBE_KZN... Instagram: kzn_education... Youtube: kzndoe

...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

Annexure D: Language Certificate

N. E. Avery
Education Consultant
76 Warwick Road
Pietermaritzburg
14/3/2022

Ms N Mswane

Confirmation of Language Editing of Med Dissertation: **School-University partnership's contribution in rural teacher development: Experiences of teachers**

Dear Ms Mswane

This letter serves as confirmation that I conducted a language edit of the abovementioned Dissertation as requested by you on 08/06/2023. In accordance with your request, the editorial process was limited to an English language edit of the Dissertation and I made no intentional substantive changes to the content. As usual in an editorial process I indicated that you were at liberty to accept or reject the proposed changes to ensure that no unintended modifications were made to the original manuscript.

Yours faithfully



N. E. Avery



NEIL AVERY

SENIOR CONSULTANT

C +27 (0)82 374 2278 T +27 (0)31 303 9808
E neil@psafrica.co.za W www.psafrica.co.za

18 The Boulevard, Westway Office Park, Westville 3630
P.O. Box 50577, Musgrave 4062

Annexure E: Turnitin Certificate

Nelisiwe Mswane | School... -- /null < 1 of 3 > ?

Match Overview X

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