Just drawing: A case study of Visual Arts as a subject in an urban northern KwaZulu-Natal state high school

BY

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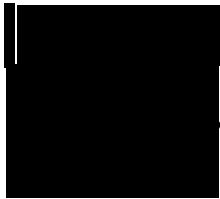**IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE**

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DECLARATION

I, Lindelwa Pepu, student number 217073552, hereby declare that this dissertation, submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Art History at KwaZulu-Natal University, has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at this or any other university and that the research reported herein, except for the acknowledged referenced citations, is my original work.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigated a well-established urban public high school that offers Visual Arts at Further Education and Training level. This was based on the aim of understanding the role and status of Visual Arts as a subject within the school curriculum. There are perceptions that Visual Arts is treated as less important than other School subjects like Maths and Science. The research addressed the main question: What is the role of Visual Arts as a school subject, and what do the perceptions and practices of stakeholders at School X reveal about the status of Visual Arts as a learning area?

This investigation was a case study with the subject of Visual Arts in School X as the unit of analysis. The research instruments were documentary analysis, questionnaires, and observational evidence. This allowed triangulation of evidence by gathering data from different sources. The participants were a stratified sample including learners, educators, parents and school management. The research revealed that the perceptions and practices of stakeholders are not clearly stipulated with regards to promoting, encouraging, and informing learners and parents about Visual Arts. The school-based participants, that were the Visual Arts teacher, non-visual arts teachers and school management, did not give clear directives about the role of this subject in the school. The study found that knowledge about the subject of Visual Arts needs to be promoted among stakeholders so that it can grow and be better resourced.

Key words:

Visual Arts, Curriculum, Art, Management, Visual Arts teachers, Visual Arts Learners.

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CANDIDATE STATEMENT

From the start of preschool to the end of my first grade of primary school, I had the privilege of living with just my mother and father. The reason I say it was a privilege is because my siblings lived with my grandmother during this time, leading to a living arrangement that granted me undivided attention and the freedom to watch anything I wanted on television. During this time of my life, I developed an immense fascination with cartoons and as a result, going out to play with other children after school or getting up to mischief were not things I did much. I only had friends at school and never felt the need to make friends in my neighbourhood. When my older brother and little sister eventually joined us, my brother was already too old to like cartoons and my little sister too young. This allowed me the space to watch all my favourite animated programs, which I still enjoy doing to his day. From the age of nine, I began understanding what was happening in the various series, learning from them, and developing my English vocabulary in the process. During that time, I practised drawing my favourite characters, which is how I discovered my ability to draw. I was fortunate to have a variety of quality colour pencils and crayons that helped me portray the animated characters accurately. Whenever I had finished my homework, I would spend time drawing and improving my skills. Later, subjects like technology, natural science and arts and culture led to me drawing even more and positively impacted how I interact with my schoolwork. The passion I had for the medium meant that I always poured my heart into my work.

Once I had started, I never looked back and only continued to challenge and enhance my drawing abilities. During my late primary school years, I realised I was achieving excellent marks for arts and culture in both the theory and practical. I also entered several drawing and colouring competitions where I won prizes for my work. My mum and dad were always impressed with my drawings and never discouraged me because I was doing just as well in my other subjects – leading them to realise that I simply liked art more. As I entered high school, I continued doing well in all my subjects though art was what I loved and enjoyed.

Our high school did not offer Visual Arts at a further education and training phase level, though our 2007 tenth-grade class became the first and last to be offered the subject until our matric year, whereafter the subject was discontinued. For many years, the school had two art teachers who only taught at the senior phase level, and one of them retired at that time. This left one teacher to teach Visual Arts to a single class made up of all the learners from our grade. This opportunity helped me realize and understand my interests better because I was able to change from geography to Visual Arts. Though I did not find Geography difficult, I found it uninteresting, and I did not see myself benefiting from it in the future. It seemed more exciting to study art under the guidance of a well-informed teacher. My interest in Visual Arts grew immensely and I continued to excel in both the theory and practical side of the subject. I received special awards for achieving the highest marks in Grade 10 and 11 and went on to obtain a distinction in my final year.

In Grade 11, I started researching the options and career opportunities available to me, considering the subjects I was taking. My research was done through the library, where I discovered career choices such as Fine Arts, Visual Arts and Architecture. Looking back, the career book I used for my research contained very limited information as it made no mention of animation and graphic design, which are currently in high demand in the arts field. My first option was an interest in a sport qualification and the second was an art qualification. Along with art, I also excelled in sport, leading me to consider qualifications such as Sports Psychology or Sports Management alongside an art qualification. In fact, the sport qualification was my first option at the time.

I applied for both and was accepted for Sports Management at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). I also successfully applied for a Diploma in Fine Art at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) and a degree for Visual Arts at the University of Zululand (Unizulu). When my uncle and father both passed away that same year, I believed it was going to be impossible for me to further my studies. The University of Johannesburg offer was off the table, as it required a high registration fee and other expenses that seemed impossible for my mother and brother to cover. Based on the financial considerations, I was compelled to take the offer at Unizulu.

Despite many challenges, I persevered for the duration of my degree, where I excelled and ultimately graduated at the top of my class. At the time, neighbours, friends, and relatives often asked me about my studies, and even when I explained what the course entailed, most seemed to associate the qualification solely with 'drawing' and were convinced that it was a waste of time. This did not deter me, and I continued with the belief that good opportunities would open up to me. However, I felt that I had gained only basic knowledge up to that point and, fortunately, my professor suggested that I pursue opportunities at other universities to not only expand my knowledge but build on my qualification. After completing my degree, I furthered my studies by doing an honours in Curatorship at the University of Cape Town (UCT). This postgraduate qualification was the first offered in an African university and I was one of fifteen students to be accepted on a bursary. This opportunity exposed me to the various opportunities and areas of specialisation within the Visual Arts field, including curatorship, art handling and art administration, to name a few. It was also interesting to see that while these careers are still slowly developing in South Africa, they are in high demand in many European countries. As such, my qualification made the prospect of working internationally a real possibility. It certainly also helped that I was surrounded by well-informed people who understood.

The honours degree was a great experience that offered me opportunities I never thought possible, such as studying art theory based on art from other countries and the opportunity to go visit museums that display artworks based on the history of Germany. This was my first international trip, and the experience was not only unique, but a true blessing. During my studies, I also improved my writing skills and developed an understanding of research and academic writing.

I was eager to gain knowledge and expand my network, so I applied for various master's degrees at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and received offers in four of them. To complicate my decision, I received a call from a museum in Cape Town with a job offer I had applied for. Ultimately, I wanted to continue studying, declining the job offer and leaving me to choose between the UCT and WITS master's courses. The fact that WITS offered a bursary was the deciding factor, and I eventually qualified for a master's degree in Heritage Studies.

I always told myself that teaching would be my last resort and that I wanted to gain more knowledge to ensure a more diverse range of job options; including curatorship, or working as a cultural- or exhibition officer, to name a few. While completing a postgraduate certificate in education in 2019, I was recommended to and ultimately employed by the school where I did my practicals. I became the first Drama teacher in the school's history to also teach Arts and Culture and Visual Arts. Within the first few months on the job, I was offered a part-time lecturing post at the nearby University of Zululand. Throughout the year, I was commuting between the school and the university, a very challenging experience as I was using public transport while gaining on-the-job experience at the university. Because they had not had a Visual Arts lecturer for several years, I assisted in developing the curriculum structure as there wasn't anything suitable in place. It was a challenging yet productive experience that gave me exposure, groomed me, and impacted my work abilities and experiences. When the university started doing interviews for the position of Visual Arts lecturer in the Department of Creative Arts, I successfully applied for the position, where I still teach at the time of writing.

CHAPTER ONE
STUDY ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As someone born towards the end of apartheid, I have always viewed art as something I can practice freely and not as something that is available for a specific race only. I may have not had enough knowledge about art at that time, but I remember the positive impact it had in my life. That is why I advocate for Art, and or Visual Arts in particular, to be given more exposure and to be actively promoted.

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) introduced the outcomes-based education (OBE) in 1997 that remodelled arts and culture into Creative Arts as a subject. It includes the four disciplines (visual arts, dance, music, and drama) to expand the various platforms learners can use to explore their creativity. Today we, any South African, is opened to studying anything, anywhere if they qualify to do so. This is declared by the NCS grades 10-12 (general) Visual Arts (2003:2) that,

> The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa forms the basis for social transformation in our post-apartheid society. The imperative to transform South African society by making use of various transformative tools stems from a need to address the legacy of apartheid in all areas of human activity and in education in particular. Social transformation in education is aimed at ensuring that the educational imbalances of the past are redressed, and that equal educational opportunities are provided for all sections of our population. If social transformation is to be achieved, all South Africans have to be educationally affirmed through the recognition of their potential and the removal of artificial barriers to the attainment of qualifications.

In other words, South African education seeks to provide diverse educational opportunities that will allow one to not only gain knowledge but chose fields that are of their individual interests. Accordingly, in 2012, Visual Arts was institutionalized officially by the (NCS) as a subject to be offered in any South African high schools officially by the Minister of Education. This was implemented according to the South African curriculum as follows.

The *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* gives expression to the knowledge, skills, and values worth learning in South African schools. This curriculum aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperatives. (CAPS, 2011:4)

In other words, it is already declared imperative by the South African education policy for learning to have diverse learning opportunities offered for learners to understand their life experiences. Notwithstanding that, South African schools vary in resources, quintiles and not all high schools offer Visual Arts as a subject. Therefore, in most cases it is non-government schools that offer Visual Arts because of the resources and sponsors they outsourced.

The year 1948, was the genesis of segregation that is, the apartheid regime that affected people of colour namely the blacks, Indians, and coloureds of South Africa. According to the (SAHO)South African history online (2022), apartheid is a word translated from Afrikaans meaning "apartness". This basically meant living separately as according to the colour of one's skin. Explaining this in detail is SAHO 2022 as follows.

Apartheid made laws forced the different racial groups to live separately and develop separately, and grossly unequally too. It tried to stop all inter-marriage and social integration between racial groups. During apartheid, to have a friendship with someone of a different race generally brought suspicion upon you, or worse. More than this, apartheid was a social system which severely disadvantaged the majority of the population, simply because they did not share the skin colour of the rulers. Many were kept just above destitution because they were 'non-white'.

In essence, interracial relationships were prohibited in any form by the monitory however, dominant and of European origin. This system affected and traumatized the majority of the country as freedom was very limited. Gradually, the country progressed and in 1953 the Bantu Education Act was introduced which was to accommodate people of colour with more opportunities and even then, not enough options were available. That is, studying in well-established schools, universities and being exposed to study subjects or courses such as Visual Arts.

Upon the arrival of a new democratic country in 1994 opportunities became vast for all races and freedom was equally divided with a new government dominating.

1.2   BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role and status of Visual Arts in a South African public high school. The case study school, herein referred to as School X, is located within the King Cetshwayo district of KwaZulu-Natal. According to the district Visual Arts cluster leader, Mr. T. D. Zulu (2021); there are a total of 12 high schools offering Visual Arts on the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal and most are private schools. In my teaching experience, it appears that even if schools employ sufficient Visual Arts educators, other subject teachers are uninformed of the actual content of the subject. Regardless of the school quantile or proficiency of the teachers, Visual Arts is often seen as an unorthodox subject, and this in turn affects its status. This shows a lack of understanding of the significant value Visual Arts can add in the sphere of education.

This study was prompted by a conversation with a colleague who pointed out how stressful it is to teach life sciences. The assumption was that Visual Arts and Drama were easy to teach because the learners 'just draw' or 'just act'. A learner also confided in me that her parents discouraged her from taking Visual Arts as a subject because they believed it is not accredited in universities, and that it is a waste of time because there are no job opportunities in the field. These assumptions rest on a shallow and notional understanding of the role and value of art and artistic skills, often leading to incorrect information being provided by other teachers and school management. I believe that parents and teachers should do far more to encourage interested learners to take Art in high school and even consider pursuing it as a career. In my experience, there is a shortage of skills when it comes to people with a Visual Arts degree or diploma. At the same time, the demand for Visual Arts in high schools is picking up, with schools now looking to employ specifically qualified educators. As such, this study investigates the status of the subject as offered by the school and whether the subject is valued, in comparison to the National Curriculum Statements (NCS).

This is based on the observation by Hardy (2018:63), that different school subjects are perceived to be of different value to young people, and that this value may be realised whilst they are at school or at a later stage in life; during employment and/or unemployment.

Additionally, Hardy (2018:63) states that "value is an individual's concept of a specific instrumental, terminal or intrinsic goal that is either potentially or actually important to the individual, society or both as a guiding principle". In other words, value and importance is based on how a person is influenced by what is happening around them, including the opinions of others.

Accordingly, the South African school system has evolved over the years and Visual Arts has only been offered since the establishment of the country's democratic dispensation. That being the case, my concern is to understand the role of Visual Arts as a subject offered in a prestigious government high school. Grade 9 learners and parents may seek advice from any schoolteacher when it comes to subject choices for the senior phase. In my experience, it is often the case that they don't approach a teacher based on who they are and what they teach as they are usually only interested in knowing the outlines of subjects. It would therefore be useful for teachers to know how to summarise the outline of subjects that they do not teach. Other teachers need to have knowledge about art subjects because, according to Nussbaum (2010:2), education towards critical thinking and the ability for citizens to think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements is being neglected. By being knowledgeable and able to provide detailed information about other subjects, including Visual Arts, parents are empowered with the knowledge to make informed decisions about unfamiliar subjects. This study also stems from my interest in promoting the potential significance Visual Arts could have for young talented people. I believe that it is possible to follow your passion and reach your potential in life through studying art or create a career in the arts field and make a difference in others' lives. This research can potentially assist in education because it can help highlight that there is a bridging gap between different subjects in high schools.

For instance, images are used in other subjects to portray visual understanding of the subject, which is the main method in Visual Arts. This suggests the significance of Visual Arts and how it correlates to other subjects, though this is overlooked. While this is the case, career guides are usually focused on maths and science, and learners feel compelled to study something they are not comfortable with because of the prevailing sentiments and unbalanced information they are given. Thus, the focus of the research was to assess the situation at School X from the perspectives of the teachers, learners, and parents by means of questionnaires.

1.3   MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

This study was seeking to answer the following question.

- What do the perceptions and practices of stakeholders at School X reveal about the status of Visual Arts as a learning area?

1.4   SUB-QUESTIONS ASKED IN THE STUDY

The following critical questions are asked in addition to the main research question, in line with the objectives.

1. What is the role and status of Visual Arts as a learning area in the school, according to official school policies espoused by school management?
2. What knowledge and perceptions do Senior Phase teachers of other subjects have about Visual Arts as a learning area?
3. What do Visual Arts teachers at School X experience in terms of the status given to their subject in practice?
4. How well is Visual Arts resourced in School X, in terms of staff, space, equipment, and time in the curriculum?
5. How does the enacted curriculum compare with espoused, official curriculum and school policies?
6. What insights can the situation at School X reveal about the challenges facing Visual Arts in South African government schools?

1.5   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the role and status of Visual Arts in School X as a Senior Phase subject according to school management.
2. To explore Senior Phase teachers' cognizance on Visual Arts.
3. To understand the experience Visual Arts teachers, encounter on the status their subject in practice.
4. To examine whether enough resources are available for Visual Arts to have successful outcomes as a senior subject.
5. To explore whether the enacted curriculum is equivalent to the official curriculum.
6. To examine whether any situations faced at School X reveal challenges faced by Visual Arts in South African government schools.

1.6   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The main concern of this study is to assess the role and status of Visual Arts as a subject offered in a well-resourced public high school. According to School X website (2021) the school is always sourcing new sponsorships for continuous improvement for its infrastructure while also funding projects that will benefit academic development. As a result, it is a public school that offers activities such as e-sport and the rugby team have a sponsor as well. For that reason, this study looks at how much is invested in equipping Visual Arts but also extent staff members to share the required knowledge about the subject with parents so that they feel comfortable in allowing their children to freely choose it. This is not part of a teacher's job expectation; however, I believe it can have a great impact on how parents view Visual Arts as a subject and possible career.

1.7   OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A brief summary of the literature review and theoretical framework is unpacked here, as more in details are discussed in chapters two and three. In the process of understanding the role and status of Visual Arts, the focus of attention is on what is known about art with respect to its influence on young people in education.

This is emphasised by Westraadt (2011:159) when saying that "quality and meaningful Visual Arts education provides numerous opportunities for learning and holistic development to all children at school. It is an important tool for rich and varied learning. In many schools, the teaching of Visual Art poses problems and challenges to teachers". That is to say that Visual Arts has the potential to make a significant impact in children's education and allows them to evolve and diverge into other learning areas. Unfortunately, Visual Arts education is challenging for teachers because the field lacks support and is misunderstood. This is elaborated on in chapter two by writers such as Lindström, Ebner and Goodman-Schanz.

The literature review is also guided by understanding the development of the South African curriculum post-apartheid. This is explained in detail by Westraadt (2011:159) as follows:

> With a new government ruling since 1994, a new National Curriculum (C2005) replaced the former curriculum rooted in Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). It soon became clear that this curriculum was unsuccessful, and it was reviewed by a task team appointed by the minister of education. A revised curriculum called the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was adopted in schools in 2002. As part of this curriculum Visual Art was grouped under the learning area Arts and Culture. Arts and Culture was one of eight learning areas forming the compulsory programmes in the General Education and Training Band (primary schooling).

After 1994, a curriculum was prioritized to accommodate a diverse platform of study for all South Africans. Since then, the curriculum has been revised three times to achieve better results while offering learners more diverse learning areas. Arts and Culture is a mandatory learning area that has long been implemented in primary school and gradually developed for high schooling, which is to date offered as Visual Arts. This is important to note, because while people are aware of the role of Arts and Culture in primary school, they are unclear about the curriculum and content of Visual Arts in high school.

This makes sense, as Westraadt (2011:160) noted that, "teachers who selected to receive training in the Arts and Culture learning area were not necessarily the teachers who eventually taught the integrated four disciplines, namely Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Art as this learning area was generally bestowed on teachers not for their interest, skill or expertise, but for their free periods on the timetables". This means that with Arts and Culture most teachers became aware of what the subject is about because training was given based on being a teacher not because they had the right qualifications. On the other hand, Visual Arts is qualification based and teachers who are aware of its curriculum and content are within the field. The content and curriculum of Visual Arts is elaborated further in chapter three namely by Ornstein, Felten and Jansen and Hoadley just to name a few.

1.8   DEMARCATION

South Africa consists of nine provinces. This study was conducted in the King Cetshwayo district on KwaZulu-Natal's North Coast. King Cetshwayo is one of the eleven districts in the province and is located between Empangeni and Richards Bay. According to Mr Zulu (2021) there are 204 secondary schools in the district and the school chosen for this study is one of eleven schools that offer Visual Arts. School X was chosen based on being one of the few well-resourced public schools to offer Visual Arts and has achieved remarkable results over several years, claiming a spot in the top ten of the districts. Most public schools do not offer the subject due to a lack of resources.

1.9   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a brief explanation of the methodology used and explained fully in chapter four. This study uses an interpretive case study design with a qualitative research approach. According to Merriam (2002:3), "the key to understanding qualitative research lies with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their worlds. The world, or reality, is not a fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in positivist, quantitative research. Instead, there are multiple constructions and interpretations that are in flux and that change over time". That is to say, when a researcher selects the qualitative approach, they are interested in understanding how humans' function in everyday situations. Participants' responses was therefore in relation to their situations and personal experiences. Qualitative research is based on diverse experiences and realities that are authentic and are never repeated, even by the same individual as time passes. While using this approach, a case study design is implemented to have a specific focus on the matter of interest.

According to Yin (2003), "a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context".

This dissertation focuses on a single case study to answer the research questions, but why was it chosen and how is it relevant? Yin (2003) notes the criteria of a qualitative study, including not controlling the participants 'responses, making it applicable to this single case study. This is known as a descriptive study which is "used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred. This study will use document analysis, questionnaires, and observation as data collection instruments.

A brief definition of each instrument is as follows. Bowen (2009:29) mentioned Stake (1995) & Yin (1994) when pointing out that, "as a research method, document analysis is particularly applicable to qualitative case studies — intensive studies producing rich

descriptions of a single phenomenon, event, organisation, or program". In other words, it is appropriate to use a document analysis under a case study as they correlate with the focus of a qualitative study and particularly this study. In addition to that, Bowen (2009:30) also affirmed that:

> documents provide supplementary research data. Information and insights derived from documents can be valuable additions to a knowledge base. Researchers should therefore browse library catalogues and archives for documents to be analysed as part of the research process.

In other words, documents assist with additional important literature that enhances pre-existing data discovered from other instruments that do not contain the same knowledge. Acharya (2010:2) asserts that, "questionnaire design is a very crucial and important part of the research, because an inappropriate questionnaire misleads the research, academics, and policymaking.

Therefore, a set of adequate and appropriate questions in a sequential order is required in a questionnaire". This means that as a researcher, it's critical to consider the structure and format of the questions posed to participants so that the responses are relevant to your study's objectives.

The questionnaires for this study are constructed through open-ended questions. According to Acharya (2010:8), "open-ended questions may receive various responses. These responses require categorisation and post-coding before they are entered into a microcomputer. Post-coding is tedious and seeks high-level personnel that are familiar with entire research. Therefore, open-ended questions and post-coding is not favoured in contemporary quantitative research". In other words, open-ended questions require detailed explanatory answers rather than a simple yes or no. The questions are not intimidating, as they are worded in such a way that participants feel at ease and are comfortable expressing their honest feelings based on their experiences. In addition, because this research required parental participation, the possible language barrier had to be considered.

The parents' questionnaire was therefore pre-emptively translated into IsiZulu, giving them an alternative to the English questionnaire. Acharya (2010:8) maintains that:

The language used in the questionnaire is the most important part of the questionnaire construction. The respondents should feel comfortable with the language used in the questionnaire. Questionnaire language should be non-threatening to the respondents. The investigator(s) should be familiar with the vocabulary of respondents.

This means if the participants are unable to understand the questions, or only partially understand them, it would be difficult to respond, and they would easily lose interest. Likewise, answering questions that are not clearly understood in a language they are not fluent in, will result in further degradation of the feedback quality. Lastly, the use of observational evidence is also included to substantiate the conclusion for the final results of the study. According to Wahyuni (2012:21), "observation provides a better understanding and enriches our knowledge of current events or phenomena".

This means that you gain a greater sense of the impact and interest in your study when field research is added to the written research. In this study, the fieldwork is conducted in School X based on Visual Arts and the observational evidence is based on surveying the environment and the way the subject is offered in the school. Ethical issues were addressed by considering anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation which is elaborated further in chapter four.

1.10   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The coronavirus significantly impacted the process of this study, primarily because of regulations that prohibited or greatly limited the ability to have face-to-face meetings with some respondents. The country came to a complete shutdown due to the high risks and losses of lives at the emergence of this study. This is also emphasized on the South African government website (2021) as follows.

The five-level COVID-19 alert system has been introduced to manage the gradual easing of the lockdown. This risk-adjusted approach is guided by several criteria, including the level of infections and rate of transmission, the capacity of health facilities, the extent of the implementation of public health interventions and the economic and social impact continued restrictions.

This meant that schools were forced to close and public meetings were prohibited therefore I could only briefly explain my objectives to the potential participants and request for them to complete the questionnaire as soon as possible.

This also became impossible to encourage participants to respond as well as considering the impact the lockdown had on everyone's livelihoods. Speaking directly to people is helpful and builds rapport between the researcher and potential participants based on the manner of approach. As a result, it was not easy to follow-up on the progress made by the respondents and not all the staff members who received the questionnaires responded. Many stated that they were too occupied, and I believe that some possibly lacked interest. This is mentioned by Patten (2017:2) when pointing out that "put another way, people find it easier to discard a questionnaire they regard as impersonal than to say, "No, I won't answer your questions" to someone who has contacted them personally (e.g., by phone or in person)". This can result in not enough required data being collected to determine the outcomes of the study. This is determined and discussed further in chapter 5.

I am also aware that some of the learners, management and teachers responded to the questions in a manner that suits the school's image, even though their identities are not disclosed. This was also observed by Patten (2017:3) who states that:

> Another disadvantage of questionnaires is that some respondents may be swayed by social desirability. That is, they may give answers that they think are socially desirable-even if they are not fully accurate. Although making the responses anonymous may reduce the effects of social desirability, the need for approval and the desire to seek it is so strong in some individuals that they will give socially desirable answers even when their responses are anonymous.

Put differently, anonymity does not guarantee authenticity, as it can still drive people to respond in a generally favourable manner. A participant can thus respond in a way that makes them look good or make their situation look good, while that is not the case.

1.11   STRUCTURE OF THESIS

1.11.1 Chapter One

This chapter features the introduction as an overview of the dissertation, including a detailed description of the background and factors that influenced the study, as well as a clarifying explanation of the research questions and objectives.

I briefly explain the concerns around Visual Arts not being valued as a subject and put this within the context of bias, combined with a lack of knowledge on the part of the management, parents and teachers of other subjects in high school.

1.11.2 Chapter Two

In the literature review, I feature literature and policy on Visual Arts as a school subject, and the views of various academics who reveal the significance of Art and Visual Arts from preschool to high school. I also highlight my understanding of the influence art has had on my experiences as a learner and teacher.

1.11.3 Chapter Three

The theoretical framework chapter explains the role of Visual Arts as a subject in South Africa's Department of Education. Various sources emphasize the purpose of the subject in the new curriculum of South African education. I also include Visual Literacy and Systems thinking in correlation to Visual Arts.

1.11.4 Chapter Four

The methodology chapter highlights the research methods I chose to discover the outcomes of the research questions. The investigation is a case study which is understanding the role and status of Visual Arts offered in School X, the location. The primary method of data collection was through questionnaires, based on the

accessibility of School X staff, management, parents and learners under the lockdown conditions.

1.11.5 Chapter Five

The findings and analysis chapter features the results of the questionnaires and the review of the case study, known as School X in this study. The questions will be assimilated to gain an overall understanding of the status and value of Visual Arts in the school. An analysis of the outcome will include the achievements and challenges faced by the Visual Arts teachers.

1.11.6 Chapter Six

The discussion of findings chapter is a general overview of the outcomes, while the analysis of the perception of the teachers, parents, learners and management regarding the value of Visual Arts, and the recommendations of the study, is discussed in more detail.

1.11.7 Chapter Seven

Finally, the conclusions and recommendations chapter discuss the findings and analysis outcomes, including the overall methodology outcomes. This will guide the recommendations.

1.12   CONCLUSION

The introductory section of the study gives insight and a brief historical background of South African education from its segregated origins to its present status. This was done to clarify the study's focus and influence as described in the background section, leading into a breakdown of the questions, objectives, and significance of the study. A summary of the literature review and theoretical framework followed, while demarcation and limitations of the study have been addressed. This section concluded with the structure of the study. The next chapter explores the review of the literature underpinning this study.

CHAPTER TWO
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I discuss the conceptual framework of the South African policy for Visual Arts offered in high schools. To elaborate on this, I also refer to an example of a South African high school exhibition that went viral because of certain misconceptions based on people's understanding of Visual Arts. The general ignorance is compounded by a shortage of literature on the offering of Visual Arts in South African government high schools, as much of the existing literature speaks to Visual Arts or Fine Arts in higher education. I, therefore, refer to written work on Visual Arts in early schooling, high schools of other countries where the importance of Visual Arts is recognised. Lastly, this section features various study experts who advocate for the significance of Visual Arts in preschools, primary schools, and various government high schools in other countries.

2.2   VISUAL ARTS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGH SCHOOL

The Republic of South Africa Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Visual Arts Grade 10-12, is a document that explains in detail the offering of Visual Arts in high school. The document proceeds from the subject's theoretical to its practical components, a learner in the further education and training (FET) phase of senior high school must meet the expected requirements. In the latest update of the document, Visual Arts is defined as follows:

> Visual Arts covers a broad field of creative practice that involves the hand, the eye, the intellect and the imagination in conceptualising and creating two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks, objects and environments which reflect the aesthetic, conceptual and expressive concerns of individuals or groups. Learners acquire the capacity to make practical and aesthetic decisions in the development of a coherent body of work. The subject Visual Arts is about self-expression and offers learners a way to engage meaningfully with, and respond to, their world. It provides opportunities to stimulate and develop learners' intellect, engaging their creative imagination through visual and tactile experiences and the innovative use of materials and technology in realising their ideas.

It also encourages learners to develop an individual visual language and literacy, which is informed and shaped by the study of visual culture, past and present (2011:8).

The above outlines the formal training a learner acquires in Visual Arts in the Senior Phase in South Africa, where they are trained to realise their abilities by expressing themselves through creativity. Officially, in the curriculum statement, Visual Arts is regarded equivalent and important to other subjects, which is why it has been introduced in schools as according to Nompula (2012:126), who stated that: "In such a curriculum the arts are taught on the same level as experienced together with disciplines such as English, mathematics, and foreign languages. They are not embellishments to the curriculum, nor are they isolated from the basic educational subject areas; they are part of the core educational program". Visual Arts is an essential subject a learner can select as a choice of subject to study and not as a decorative or some unnecessary additional subject. Most of all it is a subject that is recognised and compulsory for a tertiary entry level for some qualifications such as a Visual Arts or Fine Arts degree or diploma.

While that is the case, a prominent non-government Northern KwaZulu-Natal high school offering Visual Arts as a subject, hosted an exhibition for Grade 12 Visual Arts learners in 2019, and their expressive art led to much publicised controversy. The exhibition that was held at Grantleigh College in Richards Bay led to News24 reporting that the artwork of matric pupil Gary Louw was labelled 'evil' and 'satanic' after the exhibition went viral. Pastor Andrew Anderson labelled the exhibition as 'demonic' because Mr Louw had torn The Bible into pieces while also altering religious paintings. A report by News24 (2019) stated that, "he was particularly upset by the pupil's reinterpretation of religious paintings and art, including Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper", in which Jesus was portrayed as a clown with dollar signs added on a lintel behind him. Excerpts of the biblical book Chronicles were also pasted over a sculpture.

I believe that the reaction and responses of the pastor is of someone who instinctively takes every remark or image regarding religion and the Bible personally, without trying to understand the other's point of view.

The pastor may also have feared that those who would come to see the display would not understand and interpret the work as Mr Louw had intended. The alterations to Leonardo da Vinci's painting may have portrayed the opinion that Jesus is a shield that pastors are using to gain rewards for preaching the word of God. In other words, for some, preaching often becomes a means of attaining wealth and power, or simply making a living.

In this example, Mr Anderson's belief that the installation was demonic is contrasted with the secular belief that art is for one's self-expression, as stated in the school curriculum. Mr Louw's representation of the theme 'religion vs money' in itself displays the intentions and influences of how the work emerged. The pastor did not see it this way, and stated that "the picture says it all, you will get people who will say that that is art. That is no art, that is completely a mockery of someone's faith". Clearly, the pastor has very specific views on both religion and art, which leave no room for alternative representations or critical discussion.

The fact that Grantleigh is a religious school also meant that the art Mr Louw made was deemed offensive and going against the school's morals. Though that may have been the case, everyone has the constitutional and human right to express themselves as they see fit. Secondly, a child can attend a Christian-based school that their parents trust for both religious or academic reasons, but a child will not necessarily abide by those beliefs and the school is not deemed to limit a learner's way of expression. Taking Visual Arts as a subject enhances one's ability to embrace diverse forms of self-expression. This raises a question pertinent to this study. Do people who are unfamiliar with art have the desire and curiosity to attempt to understand art on a non-personal level? Thus, Mr Louw's response that art is a way of expressing one's understanding and meaning of the life they are living. And though Mr Louw's work was strongly criticized, he was able to achieve 99% for Visual Arts. Could this mean that the art teachers and external examiners were incompetent, or perhaps that the exhibition being viral enhanced his chances of gaining high marks?

The outbreak of this exhibition had a negative impact, particularly the criticism by Christians of Mr Louw's work, which could have negatively impacted his final results. Yet, that was not the case, suggesting that the art teachers and external examiners paid little attention to the reviews and marked his work according to their expertise and expected outcomes of the practical work in Visual Arts.

Contrarily, Mr Louw was able to excel in both the theoretical and practical aspects of Visual Arts, which is not easy to achieve. This means that Mr Louw was able to understand and interpret his artworks in the expected language of Visual Arts, while displaying his understanding of the theoretical terms that need to be applied to achieve the best possible practical work that speaks to the viewers who, in this case, were the examiners. Lindström (2011:11) attested that schools from other countries such as Finland offers art education that is centred in accurate art, written and verbal language, as well as interpretative and communicative practical artwork. This highlights the corresponding teaching methods of South African art education to other countries when referring to exhibition outcomes. Additionally, Ebner (2006:27) observed that:

> I remembered reading an article by high school Spanish teacher Sharon Stover (2005) in which she recounted how she worked on a cross-curricular project with her school's art teacher by helping students make connections between the foreign language and the art of the country. Students even took the project to the next level by interpreting works and writing analyses. In Stover's words, "The use of art in a core-curriculum class demonstrates the importance of the arts as more than an add-on or frill, but a gateway to complete learning."

Similarly, Ebner also makes the significant observation regarding art as an important subject that assists one in various subjects because it combines the cognitive and creative senses. As such, Ebner quotes Stover in describing this as a tool that fulfils education outcomes.

2.3   EARLY CHILDHOOD ART

The ability to use visuals effectively is first experienced informally in our childhood, through exploring and curiosity. This is also observed in the study *K-1 Teachers' Visual Arts Beliefs and Their Role in The Early Childhood Classroom* (2012:11) that quoted Montessori who held that, "young children's cognitive development begins with learning through the senses and is fostered by nurturing their observational skills.

This is concurred for by Tyler and Likova (2012:1), who claim that, "within just a few weeks, for example, human infants can imitate an action such as sticking out the tongue in response to someone sticking out his tongue at them – how does the infant know just what motor action plans to implement based only on a visual input? Mirror neurons may account for this ability, translating visual input to motor output, underlying a connection between visual arts and movement, and the auditory arts and music". This claim is convincing, because I too have noticed that a child under 3 years is often unaware and incapable of doing certain tasks, but the mirror neurons allow them to act because of what they can see. Their parents' guidance and consistent practice nurtures the child's skills.

This is a good example of how important visuals are for human communication. In fact, it can be considered as the first basic human communication tool. Gradually, it became known that visuals make a dominant impact in art, hence the term Visual Arts. Writers also discovered how children used art to make their feeling known. For instance, Ebner (2006:27) quoted Graham who wrote that:

> Art is a means of expression. Many therapists use art to help children express themselves. Before children can write about their feelings, they are often able to express them through their artwork. However, by adolescence, most children have picked up that most adults find artwork irrelevant to their studies.

Ebner attests that children become aware or more engaged in communicating through pictures and drawn images, with adults expressing their emotions and affection. In early childhood, a child learns to draw (scribble) in order to show these visuals to adults as a means of communication.

Once a child enters their teens, they become aware of how the use of pictures or the images they draw are less interesting to the adults around them, and they soon lose interest too. Hence, only a small number of teenagers take art seriously enough to choose it as a subject in high school. This is a case I have had experience with, and it is quite a normal occurrence. Another example is a personal experience, where I have observed my niece learn how to hold a pencil or pen from as early as two years old and attempting to use it to copy her parents or siblings. When given a pen or pencil, children tend to scribble on paper or walls; this is a toddler's sense of showing their ability to write or draw. Writing is not easy to master at such a young stage but from preschool onwards, the process begins, and they start learning how to draw.

Lindström (2011:9) touched on this point when quoting Köhler & Pedersen (1978) who in their publication criticized a famous writer focusing on early childhood learning, for not acknowledging the impact of art on children. In addition, it is interesting to note that those who take art as a subject, learn that scribbling is in fact a technique that can be used to make a complete artwork and this expressive skill is enhanced through formal training in the art field.

It appears that art plays a role in a child's life whether they are aware of it or not. Furthermore, Kamhi (2007:34) affirms that "works of art are more than formal designs that arouse interest. They are about the life and death issues affecting their social and personal worlds [such as] war and peace, the need to belong, equity, justice, mortality, and the like". In other words, art is usually based on things in the past or present that may or may not align with one's actual experience; and whether good or bad, art seeks to relate to other people's experiences. This is evidently true when considering Stokes' observation regarding Leonardo da Vinci's works of art. Moreover, CohenMiller (2018:6) also affirms that,

> Art creation can be considered in line with highly descriptive text, metaphors and analogies that can articulate experience, but used instead with pen on paper to create images. By providing an additional avenue for participants to describe their experiences, creating art can allow both for individuals to better express their experience and also for the researcher to read between the lines of the experience described/drawn.

Ultimately it appears that through participant's artistic representations, the phenomenologist can gain valuable insight into the lifeworld of the individual experience.

CohenMiller makes a significant point of comparing art to complicated text, making art as complicated to understand. She continues by adding that those who do research based on art are challenged to make closely related descriptions of the meaning of the artist's work.

Hence, the idea of making meaning through visuals can create the ability to construct written text or verbal communication through art, but most importantly understanding the personal experience of the artist. It is evident from the various writers that visuals are a useful tool for communication from infancy because visual communication is a natural human capacity that can develop into art education.

Just as the child cannot yet communicate in written or verbal form, art allows an adult to express themselves in the same sense, especially when they struggle to write or talk effectively. In the current educational context, preschool really lays the basis of a formal understanding of life through art. This formal teaching is executed by an art specialist or a person that is both passionate about art and good with children, and therefore able to fulfil the requirements of the role.

This is also asserted by Goodman-Schanz (2012:3) when stating that:

Teachers' beliefs are based on their personal, academic, and professional experiences and these beliefs are what support the practices of teachers. Through their teacher training and professional development, most early childhood teachers are generally knowledgeable in the importance of visual arts and how it helps children with self-expression, creativity, aesthetic awareness, and curiosity. Typically, the academic coursework for pre-service and in-service teachers includes culturally and developmentally appropriate practices, knowledge of learning styles, and the influence of multiple intelligences on the learning environment.

In other words, a qualified art teacher should already understand the significance of the role they play in pre-schoolers' development. A teacher must guide a child toward understanding their strengths through creativity, as that is the gateway to understanding oneself as an individual.

Children are different and the art teacher needs to identify their characters using their professional and personal understanding to create a conducive learning space for every child. This is also asserted by Goodman-Schanz (2012:4), quoting Koster, "that for teachers to create an atmosphere conducive to the visual arts, they must first understand themselves as artists and their artistic abilities and experiences before being able to foster a classroom environment that nurtures the creative process and allow its impact on learning to develop and unfold".

As much as art is about being creative, not every child will be able to produce the same quality of work and meet the teacher's expectations. While some children are slow, others are fast learners; while there are those who are just not that creative. Because they have different interests and strengths, they will only produce basic creative output, to the extent that they feel comfortable doing so.

This is important for a teacher to understand because they may believe their teaching ability is lacking when that is not the case. When preschool educators teach a child to write their name, they do so by practising writing and identifying letters of the alphabet using innovative and aesthetic designs. A child is then able to write their name by visually identifying the letters in their name. This in turn creates the ability to remember the letter sequence, allowing the child to progress and write their name without looking at the alphabet. What one sees is therefore memorised, allowing you to interpret writing or images as a means of communicating.

Goodman-Schanz (2012:10) regards Fredrich Froebel as one of the first teachers who understood the significance of art in education for young children. Froebel's "gifts and occupations were materials for children to explore and manipulate into patterns and geometric designs and then, subsequently create their own patterns, figures, and objects. His first gift, six woollen balls from the primary (red, yellow, and blue) colors and secondary (orange, green, and purple) colors, was for his kindergarten students to explore color, shape, and counting". Froebel's method allows children to explore with colour, not only teaching them how to identify colours but in the process learning the basics of art through a colour wheel from a young age. Children learn colour combinations and the ability to identify the beautiful things in life as it applies to different individuals and cultural norms.

Accordingly, Colbert and Taunton (1992) highlighted that "the National Art Education Association (NAEA) guidelines state that children not only need many enriching and meaningful experiences to create, look at, and talk about art, but to gain a genuine and authentic aesthetic awareness of art surrounding them in their daily lives". In other words, art is everything around us, and one of the teacher's duties is to guide the child to be aware of that.

Goodman-Schanz (2012:9) quoted Saunders when saying that,

> in the 4th century B.C., the need for aesthetic development was conveyed in Aristotle's explanation of the four main areas of education: (a) reading and writing, (b) gymnastic exercises, (c) music, and (d) drawing. He felt that children should be taught how to read, write, and draw not only for practicality, but also because these practices lead to even greater and worthwhile knowledge. Aristotle asserted that learning to draw was rewarding because it enabled children to appreciate the beauty of humanity.

Regarding arts and drawing, Saunders asserts that it teaches young people to not only visualise the aesthetics of art but the beauty of being human and the learning areas mentioned above provide that. Even though this is a discovery of the Western traditions, it has been implemented within the South African Curriculum as most of the art curriculum in schools draws on Western approaches and culture. For instance, art history in South Africa is based on learning about artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Vincent Van Gogh, to name a few. This is an observation from the knowledge I gained in both my high-school and tertiary art studies, as I had the opportunity to visit one of the countries that hold the physical art history.

Goodman-Schanz (2012:11) also observed that Maria Montessori corresponded with Froebel about the significance of art for child learning, not only through drawing but by adding watercolour and clay as well.

> Like Froebel, Montessori's students initially learned drawing skills through lines, angles, and shapes, then progressed to personally-created designs. Montessori allowed children to use colored pencils, pens, and even watercolors to personalize their work (Montessori, 1965a). Children also drew inspiration from nature. They observed a unique pattern from underneath the microscope or looked in art books of masterpieces that would enhance their aesthetic imagination.

> Montessori (1965a) felt providing appropriate tools for children to explore and wonder created an atmosphere within themselves over time, enabling them to have an acute eye to accurately illustrate what is being discovered.

As a teacher, Montessori nurtured the child's abilities by understanding their strengths and weaknesses, while encouraging their creativity within certain guidelines. This is very important when it comes to art.

Her teaching techniques also included observing, which emphasises the importance of visuals in the education of a child, as well as viewing patterns under a microscope, which suggests the idea of combining art and science. In support of this, Goodman-Schanz (2012:12) quoted Lev Vygotsky "that art, much like language, should be taught in the manner that allows children to explore, interpret, and imagine what the possibilities are for self-expression, no matter the form it evolves into and how it matures. As the word suggests, self-expression is about one creating or doing something that you understand before others do.

Nompula (294:2012) quoted Bowman et al (2001) also affirmed that "in many preschool classrooms, the arts are valued as precursors to written language, aids in promoting oral language, and bridges to developing cognition, creativity, social interactions, and motor control". This means that art not only develops the ability to draw or think creatively, but also helps develop the ability to communicate verbally and in writing, which enables conversing with others and creating friendships. This is reiterated by Goodman-Schanz (2012:12) who, in quoting Vygotsky, states that "learning occurs through socio-cultural interaction with peers and adults, the influence of individual child's cultural and the cross-cultural of society as a whole, along with language as a tool and vehicle for greater literacy, knowledge, and understanding of the world around us". Learning involves interacting with everything around us, and even if not much focus and attention is given to some things, it doesn't mean they are less important. This is part of the foundation of teaching through art.

Various writers mentioned earlier in this chapter, who have been artists and teachers of art themselves, all concur with this. Nussbaum (2010:6) stated that "it is the faculties of thought and imagination that make us human … democracy is built upon the ability to see other people as human beings, not simply as objects". This is where humanity acknowledges education as a substantial element of life. According to writers like Ebner and CohenMiller, parents and teachers generally recognise the importance and value of art, especially in preschool and primary school where art is considered fundamental in the development of children. As they enter high school, it appears that this attitude towards art depreciates and its qualities and benefits are deemed secondary to the other subjects in the curriculum, which is something I can attest to from my teaching experience.

2.4   EVALUATING VISUAL ARTS

As stated in the introductory section of this study, there is limited literature on the status of Visual Arts in high schools, particularly South African literature. To substantiate, I've used relevant literature from other countries as I believe the issues I'm exploring are universal and paramount to understanding the status of Visual Arts.

In the study, *Visual Art Lessons for Non-Visual Art Teachers in Senior High Schools in Ejisu-Juaben District*, Ekwam (2009:2) highlights the general views and attitudes of educators toward Visual Arts in Ghanaian schools as follows:

> "They have the notion of art as a soft playtime therapy or an interlude for the teacher. Though they do appreciate and enjoy works of art, little is known about the effort that goes into the production of these artefacts. To them, art does not on the whole, provoke any deep thoughts or contain any abiding truth. Again students who study visual arts are those who cannot cope with 'more difficult subjects' such as mathematics, science, medicine or engineering just to mention a few, which is the mere misunderstanding of its social and technological roles".

From my teaching experience, I can confirm Ekwam's observation that other subject teachers undervalue and underestimate the diligence of art teachers. For the artworks to be completed, learners must persist through many failed attempts and doubts and the art teacher must help them overcome these challenges to achieve fulfilling results. When considering my own experience, I naturally showed interest in art from a very

young age. At the time, people around me did not understand how a female could have the ability to draw because they believed it to be unusual.

People did not notice how much effort I put into my drawings and seemed to be more concerned with the peculiarity of a young black girl having such an unusual interest. Ekwam also highlights the erroneous yet pervasive perspective that taking Visual Arts as a subject in high school is merely an escape or a sign of being less intelligent and unable to achieve in 'difficult' subjects like physical science.

It is also noted that in Ghanaian high schools,

> there is the wrong notion that Visual Art is for the less intelligent students because of its practical nature. As a result, right from Junior High School level, students with high grades are made to choose the Sciences and those with low grades are also made to opt for Visual Arts, which they claim does not require the higher-order thinking required of the Sciences.

As a former teacher and learner of Visual Arts in high school, I can attest that art is not particularly easy for those learners who need to be monitored and struggle in most of their subjects. In fact, nothing changes, they struggle as much in Visual Arts as in other classes.

The subject involves paying careful attention to detail and requires as much effort and concentration as any other subject. It is also important to note that creativity and talent are closely related to the practical aspect and is not so much associated with understanding the required language and thinking required to analyse the theory of the subject. Furthermore, talent does not beat hard work, without hard work the best results aren't achieved. Theory is also based on the ability to understand and write English effectively, where it is the language of communication. Concerning this point, Ebner and Exley (2008:310) discuss the knowledge outcomes of Visual Arts education by noting that:

> 1.[Students] use appropriate language conventions and learn arts specific vocabulary to interpret, communicate and explore their imaginative thinking, feelings, and understandings…. 2. Students use their developing literacy skills to listen, speak, view, shape, read and write in arts activities. 3. The Arts key learning area uses English literacy skills as well as contributing to

the development of those skills…. 4. Through these experiences' students develop their abilities to listen and view attentively and to work in metaphorical ways.

This ties in with my earlier assertion that the essence of communication in Visual Arts is language. There is a specific manner of communicating in the subject and a good command of English is important.

Exley (2008:312) affirmed that Visual Arts' written and spoken language is not necessarily easy to understand, and effective communication in Visual Arts requires a foundational understanding of the English language as a basis, because although it is one of a few languages used in urban public schools in South Africa, it is the lingua franca in most educational and social settings. Proficiency in English does not automatically mean one can understand and analyse the language. This analysis is based on English being one of the major languages of instruction in South Africa followed by Afrikaans. In most cases, schools that use IsiZulu and IsiXhosa as a means of communication offer it as an alternative additional language to English or Afrikaans. To add, English is an imperative learning area in the South African curriculum and art is usually an elective.

To an extent, it may be true that some learners choose art to avoid the so-called difficult subject, but sometimes subjects are chosen because of peer, parental, and societal pressure.

Learners who struggle in these 'difficult subjects' are usually compelled to take one of the so-called 'easy' subjects like Visual Arts but may still struggle to pass and are often progressed. I believe part of the issue is that non-Visual Arts teachers and school management think that learners will not fail art, while they are ignorant of the actual subject content and curriculum. The implementation of the 30 percent pass rate has compelled Visual Arts and other teachers (those who teach the so-called 'easy' subjects) to assist these struggling learners, who have been moved to their classes, to achieve the minimum mark with no consideration of the challenges faced. Visual Arts is apparently seen as a subject of sympathy and guaranteed condoning because no learner must be left behind.

With all the challenges mentioned, it is the Visual Arts teacher who must manage expectations and deal with parents who find it very hard to believe that their child could struggle with or fail art. Here, I draw again from a personal experience growing up, where I had hardly any exposure to other possible career fields and taking maths, science or technology was considered the most reliable and practical choice to earn a living.

However, school projects such as 'career choices' partially assisted me in discovering careers that I had an interest in and the possible career opportunities after graduating. A qualification in Visual Arts does not guarantee a well-paying job and being an independent artist is unreliable, to say the least. As such, one of the most stable and reliable careers for a Visual Artist is to become a teacher or branch into museum-related studies such as curatorship. These are not esteemed positions but are more likely to assure one a regular income.

They are currently in demand, especially teaching, as there aren't enough qualified people to teach Visual Arts, which may be the reason for the limited number of schools that offer the subject. The paradox is that a large percentage of South African youths, including those with qualifications in dependable professional fields, are unemployed and are encouraged to complete a teaching certificate to make a living while they pursue other opportunities.

Conversely, Ebner (2006:27) observed the importance of Visual Arts, referred to as Art, and its contribution to education and society. It was pointed out that,

> direct instruction in art is also necessary. Without art, our society would be lacking both culturally and conceptually in any number of areas. Without art instruction, we will not have a future with art, or skilled artists to teach others. We must continue to value and make available for our children both the abstract and very concrete benefits of art.

Ebner stated the significance of art regarding its contribution to society and future generations, whether it is the formal expression of art through what the learner is taught, or the informal individual expression. Another important point is the contribution teachers make by transferring their artistic skills to learners, demonstrating the significance of art teachers and their immense contribution to society. In line with the previous point, McCarthy & Ondaatje et al (2004:37) also concurred that,

> The instrumental value of the arts focuses on benefits that accrue from helping individuals socialise better, learn better and make better contributions to society. The intrinsic value of the arts is seen as benefits that accrue to individuals, and, as some researchers argue, consequently generate public and other instrumental benefits too. Thus, the arts are valued as a means of achieving learning and personal development as well as social and economic outcomes.

This summarises the value of the arts, including music, dance, drama, and visual arts, which together have an essential impact within society, including the promotion of free expression and dialogue, the sharing of ideas, and the celebration of our creativity and rich cultural heritage. In addition to this, John Dewey (1934) argued that art has a major role in untangling various experiences of human nature, customs that are multiple and complicated. In other words, the study of art enables an individual to tackle various challenges and develops the ability to conquer these challenges on a social and educational level. Furthermore, Lindström (2010:9) mentions Trondman, who stated that art is foundational to schooling, not only for those who have an interest in and value it, but for those on the outside too. It influences control, commitment, and inventiveness which are essential aspects of life. These constructive elements generated through art are often underrated.

Similar views by writer Goodman-Schanz (2012) were highlighted in the previous chapter, including examples of art playing a significant role in early schooling and making mention of Frobel, who made an important contribution in showing how to make art fun and educational for young children.

Roper and Davis (2000) suggested that Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences "has afforded parents and educators to believe that any career path children choose is equal to any other, based on research completed on schools in England. His advocacy of the arts as a cognitive area of importance to science has also been welcomed by art teachers to support claims for the validity of their respective arts subjects, which they always advocated but backed with mainly anecdotal evidence". Since this is an analysis based on research in England, Gardner's statement that any career choice is equal to another assumes that employment opportunities in England are vast and of great equity. One can conclude that in England, any qualification can help one earn a sustainable income. This contrasts with South Africa's struggling economy and very high unemployment rate.

South Africa is, however, developing with regard to art companies and interests, and while opportunities vary, art is becoming a viable career choice. For instance, the online platform known as Visual Arts Networks South African (VANSA), specifically advertises work and educational opportunities that are related to Visual Arts. Examples of exciting developments include the establishment of the international Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA), along with other small-scale but well-established galleries. As such spaces expand, they are raising the standards and exposing South African artists to the international art scene, while also showcasing local talent and trends.

Despite these positive developments, it is much more likely that art can lead to a financially stable career path in a country like England because its economy and education system is multifaceted. People can also find well-paying jobs with an art qualification in other highly developed countries, where art is regarded as important as science. Medina-Jerez et al (2012:210) asserted that "this marriage of art and science has had international play across history and global boundaries, all the way from African bronze and smelting practices to early Renaissance pigment experimentation".

This shows that art and science have been merged for many years in various parts of the world, including most parts of Europe and some parts of Africa. Yet, in South Africa art is not held in such high regard. Regarding the correlation of art to science, Medina-Jerez et al (2012:211) mentioned Chessin and Zander (2006) who pointed out that:

> they use precise terminology in their written and oral communication with their peers and with the public, practice observation skills which are at the core of the conceptualisation of an art piece or phenomenon under investigation, they both design experiments (approaches) to test their hypotheses (predictions), they approach prior knowledge in an attempt to inform their current work, they follow standard protocols in the practice of experimental work, and both artists and scientists dedicate a big portion of their work to reflect and assess their 'product' before presenting it for public scrutiny.

Here Chessin and Zander emphasise how art and science function in very similar ways. The specifics of each subject are what makes science and art different, but the aims and procedures of both the subjects are achieved in similar ways. Additionally, many writers emphasise how a high school in the United States is interchanging the use of art for science and vice versa.

> The integration of the arts in science teaching practices, and vice versa, allow students to practice and refine communication and problem-solving skills (Shaw, Baggett, Daughenbaugh et al. 2005; Chessin & Zander 2006) and from an artist-as-scientist angle, this collaboration fosters students' creativity and understanding of scientific concepts (Eisenkraft et al. 2006). This integration also 'promotes engagement in other disciplines and increases academic performance.' (Baggett & Shaw 2004, 3).

This suggests that through observational knowledge, the principles applied in art are also applied in science, and vice versa. Referring to Ekwam's Visual Arts programme, it was specifically created to evaluate and educate non-Visual Arts teachers in a Ghanaian school on the subject content. Ekwam (2009:12) explained its purpose as follows:

> Visual Art is one of the programmes in the new education reform of the Senior High Schools in Ghana. The rationale for this programme according to the syllabus is to help students acquire competent skills in art for individual and national development. The programme involves the process of visual thinking where the students is presented with problem-solving experiences in thinking, manipulating or acting and feeling creatively through the use of a variety of tools and materials. The programme seeks to prepare students to become whole. That is developing the Head, Heart, and Hand.

Here, Ekwam stresses that the significance of the Visual Arts programme was to combine the pleasure of creativity and cognitive ability.

It involved the evaluation of non-Visual Arts teachers and parents, leading Ekwam to conclude that "most well-educated people, especially the non-Visual Arts teachers in senior high schools, looked down upon the programme". From the experience I've had as a teacher, I have encountered non-Visual Arts teachers who disdain Visual Arts as a subject. Firstly, the non-Visual Arts teachers are unfamiliar with the subject content and secondly, they undervalue the work ethic and the many struggles a teacher has to face.

Ekwam's programme also helped discover the lack of knowledge and ignorance the non-Visual Arts teachers had regarding Visual Arts. Non-Visual Arts teachers are convinced that Visual Arts is just about 'drawing' and nothing more than releasing stress and having fun. Ekwam's investigation touches on many of the same focus points of my study, and these insights from the existing literature certainly helped guide me. In other research, Chelsea Bailey et al (2005:1) affirmed that "the Visual Arts, like multicultural education, play a vital role in our understanding of diverse human experiences". In other words, Visual Arts helps individuals understand the various issues humans encounter and develops the ability to be a tolerant person.

In my view, it seems that non-visual arts teachers are often intolerant and lack the interest and will to understand the actual content and value of Visual Arts as a school subject. They may lack knowledge and don't seem to recognise its value and that it is not a 'soft option'. I believe it's imperative for other subjects' teachers to understand the content so that they can help educate or enlighten the community about it.

Lastly, the Department of Education (2003:9) attested to the findings of many of the studies and articles mentioned above and align with the view that Visual Arts allows an individual to have greater options and opportunities in life. I seek to discover more about the assumptions people have regarding art, and in particular, its role in high school. I hope that this case study provides information that can be used to address the existing misconceptions and raise the status and appreciation of art.

2.5   CONCLUSION

At the start of this chapter, the South African policy for Visual Arts in high school was discussed to clarify the purpose of the subject within the curriculum. The example of an exhibition at a well-resourced KwaZulu-Natal high school was used to show the kind of misinterpretations sections of society have when it comes to art, and how this affects the status and role of Visual Arts. The contribution of Visual Arts in early childhood education is discussed with reference to personal and academic perspectives.

Lastly, an evaluation of Visual Arts looked at the misconceptions non-Visual Arts high school teachers in Ghana have about the role of the subject. The next chapter is the theoretical framework that outlines the curriculum approach that speaks to the foci of this study.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I feature the definition of curriculum, both as a term and an approach, as this speaks to the integration of Visual Arts in the South African education curriculum. The curriculum applies in a formal and informal perspective; that is, understanding different life experiences in relation to schoolwork, and specifically Visual Arts. Additionally, I include two defined models of curriculum approach, the competence and performance model, to understand where Visual Arts is positioned in the curriculum. To conclude, I analyze the term visual literacy and how it relates to Visual Arts education.

3.2   REVIEWING CURRICULUM AS AN APPROACH

To start with, I show some definitions of the word curriculum to better understand the basis of the term. According to Hoadley and Jansen (2014:9) a "curriculum is what is planned, intended, or prescribed to be taught and it can be called "curriculum as-a-plan". This means that a curriculum is a system, designed in a particular way, that must be employed according to its structure for the learning process to progress. This is echoed by Ornstein (1987:212), who mentions Saylor et al in saying that it is "a plan providing sets of opportunities for persons to be educated". Similarly, it is stated by Pratt (1980:4) that, "a curriculum is an organized set of formal training intentions". Lastly, one of the core definitions is by Van den Akker (2014:2), who quoted Taba (1962) in asserting that, "the Latin word 'curriculum' refers to a 'course' or 'track' to be followed. In the context of education, where learning is the central activity, the most obvious interpretation of the word curriculum is then to view it as a course or 'plan for learning'. In other words, a curriculum can be a module to acquire within higher education, hence it is a 'course' or a system that is set to be taught in school, a 'learning plan'. To learn and become qualified in something, a teacher or lecturer transfers specific and relevant knowledge to the learner or student.

Ornstein (1987: 208) defined it as follows:

> An approach to curriculum reflects the person's view of the world, including what the person perceives as reality, the values deemed important, and the amount of knowledge he or she possesses. A curriculum approach reflects a holistic position or a meta orientation, encompassing the foundations of curriculum (the person's philosophy, view of history, view of psychology and learning theory, and view of social issues), domains of curriculum (common and important knowledge within the field), and the theoretical and practical principles of curriculum. An orientation expresses a viewpoint in relation to how curriculum is developed and designed, the role of the learner, teacher, and curriculum specialist in planning curriculum, the goals and objectives, and the important issues that need to be examined.

Ornstein states that a curriculum approach is an individual's perspective of how they understand real life, which is based on how well they are informed. He goes on to say that a curriculum approach features various aspects that deal with one's understanding combined with what one has acquired through education and proven theories. This approach clearly defines a teacher's role, which involves achieving specific outcomes with their learners. Further, Ornstein (1987:209) stated that:

> "A curriculum approach reflects our view of schools and society, and to some extent it may become an all-encompassing view if we feel strongly about these views. By understanding one's curriculum approach, and the prevailing curriculum approach of the school or school district that one works in, it is possible to conclude whether one's professional view conflicts with the formal organizational view".

My understanding is that Ornstein defines the curriculum approach in terms of how an educator functions in relation to the institution and the official education department's curriculum, and whether they adhere to the rules and requirements that are set out for their role. It is also anticipated that one's understanding of the content will not necessarily be delivered in the manner expected in their working environment. A curriculum approach can therefore be formal as well as informal. In this case, the formal is based on knowledge that consists of past experiences that has been recorded and proven correct because several writers have demonstrated it to be true. As a result, there is evidence that proves the accuracy of the research or information.

How exactly this knowledge is transferred to the learners will be determined at the teacher's discretion, based on their natural aptitude and preferences as well as the peculiarities of the learning environment. Mainly, a curriculum is a document for teaching and learning and the approach is based on how the learning takes place. As a result, the curriculum approach is also mentioned by Ornstein (1987) in referring to other writers. This is known as behavioural-ration and is defined as follows:

> This is a means-ends approach, logical, and prescriptive. It relies on technical and scientific principles, and includes models, plans, and step-by-step strategies for formulating the curriculum. Goals and objectives are specified, the exact specificity varies according to the author, activities are sequenced to coincide with the objectives, and there is evaluation of learning outcomes in relation to the goals and objective. This is the oldest approach and still represents the major thought in curriculum, rooted in the University of Chicago approach (see Bobbitt, 1918; Charles, 1923; Tyler, 1949; & Taba, 196).

According to the above, behavioural ration appears to be an approach that corresponds with the basic meaning of a curriculum approach, as explained earlier. However, it's with specific reference to the writer of the curriculum that it is written purposefully for the activities to be achieved in an orderly manner. Moreover Ornstein (1987:209) mentioned Feinberg (1985) that, "this curriculum approach has been applied to all subjects for more than the past two thirds century and constitutes a frame of reference against which other approaches to curriculum are compared". An example of implementing a curriculum approach as in the CAPS document in Visual Arts would be explaining a particular topic, as written in the sourcebook, and then encountering a situation where learners become confused.

When this happens, I would show a practical example by either drawing images on the board or using a topic that is a current trend, if suitable. The informal approach is based on gaining knowledge by learning how to carry yourself around people. This can be seen as the impartment of skills and life lessons that are not necessarily in the curriculum, but the teacher recognises as being important. As a result, there is a fine line between the formal and informal curriculum as both help enable a learner to integrate and contribute effectively to the society.

This has been proven in the literature review chapter with regard to Visual Arts. Writers such as Nussbaum (2010) and Vygotsky (2012) concurred that Visual Arts is one of the subjects that provides knowledge one can apply in different life experiences. A simple example one can learn in Visual Arts is, for example, that colour co-ordination helps you understand which colours complement each other, which can sharpen your style sense when choosing outfits to wear, in the case of a fashion designer, applying these sensibilities when designing clothing. As the focal point of this study, Visual Arts is now a part of the official curriculum and is recognized as a subject that has application and value in the present society.

According to Carol Bertram (2014), the South African curriculum has been extensively reformed from the Bantu Education system to the post-apartheid curriculum; that is, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and Further Education and Training (FET). This has become a period of momentous change, as according to the National Curriculum Statement (general) (2011:4), various subjects' statements have developed and/or newly created in consideration of principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights, as defined by the constitution of the Republic of South Africa. In other words, the NCS has considered the known factors of learners' dissimilar interests and abilities that require vast options and or opportunities. The Bantu Education system provided limited options for the majority of the population, which Gallo (2020:16) clearly defined as follows:

> The *Bantu Education Act of 1993*, known as Bantu Education, was an infamous set of education policies passed in 1953 that legalized racial segregation, a strict and specific education curriculum, and more in Apartheid South Africa. The word "Bantu" means the word "Native", referring to any person from an indigenous tribe or race in South Africa (Union of South Africa, 1953, 258). Other notable portions of this act include stripping all control of education from the provinces and provincial councils, placing it all in the central government (Union of South Africa, 1953, 260). Yet most importantly, the Minister of the newly created Bantu Education Sector was given the power to prescribe what courses could be taken in Bantu schools, what language these courses were taught in, and how much funding Bantu schools received (Union of South Africa, 1953, 272). Notably, this section of *The Bantu Education Act* gave the government complete control over the education curriculum of all black South African students in the Union of South Africa. As will be seen below, this power over the curriculum resulted in the creation of a special curriculum for black South African students.

Therefore, the NCS that emerged in the post-apartheid era opened to create diverse career opportunities suited for all ethnic groups. This is asserted by Wium (2015:31) when saying that "differentiation is a key strategy for extending and varying aspects of curriculum (for example, content and teaching) in response to diversity, as it takes into account differences in learners; ability levels, interests and background, etcetera."

The democratic dispensation has seen diverse subject choices such as Visual Arts being included in the curriculum as part of the FET phase. In contrast, the apartheid era greatly limited educational opportunities, particularly on what and where to study. The addition of new subjects to the curriculum diversifies career choices that are now available to all racial groups. This is confirmed by Jansen and Hoadley (2009:173), who asserted that the South African curriculum post-1994 was integrated to transfer knowledge for related life experiences that learners will acquire in order to implement in various life challenges:

> *Curriculum 2005* was an attempt at radical change to this curriculum form by reorganizing the curriculum. Much of the change came in the way in which knowledge was organized. Thus, the new curriculum: was competence based, and organized knowledge in integrated learning areas; learning areas attempted to link theory and practice, and relate all learning to the lives of learners so that they could use what they learnt in life and work.

The new curriculum was therefore introduced to combine the knowledge gained in theory with the practical, resulting in a competence-based curriculum. This was introduced at an earlier stage and has been refined into two models by Basil Bernstein.

3.3   COMPETENCE VS PERFORMANCE CURRICULUM

Bernstein (2000) introduced two models with the intent to have a definite classification for each subject. These two models are known as the competence and performance curricula. The first model, or competence curriculum, is mentioned by Jansen and Hoadley (2009:175), as according to Bernstein, it is "characterized by the idea of integration between subjects makes strong links between school learning and real life. This means that learning is not limited to the knowledge gained in school only and knowledge gained in school is interdisciplinary.

It is also based on that which one learns outside of school that can also be applied in school. The second model, or the performance curriculum, is mentioned by Jansen and Hoadley (2009:175) when referring to Bernstein who noted that it, "stresses the importance of separate subject disciplines and does not draw extensively from real life in order to teach at school". This means that learning is specifically school-based, and each learning area contributes to learning only from that area of learning.

The following is a table that compares the differences between the two curricula as adopted from Jansen and Hoadley (2009:179).

Table 3.1: Differences between the two curricula as adopted from Jansen & Hoadley

	COMPETENCE CURRICULUM	PERFORMANCE CURRICULUM
Learner	- has control over what to learn, the order and rate of learning. - Assumes that learners learn at a different pace.	- has no control over what to learn, the order and rate of learning. - Assumes that learner learn at the same level and pace, leaving some behind.
Teacher	-Is more of a facilitator. - has calculated control.	- a dictator of knowledge according to the book. - has overall control.
Pedagogy	- Learning is based on how much the learner can process. - Learning based on real life experiences.	- Learning limited to teacher and content. - Learning limited to school knowledge only.
Assessment	-based on attempt and effort made by learner. -learning prolonged in order to avoid failure. -Requirements need to achieve task are shared.	- specific on what is wrong or right. - based on what is left out and not yet discussed. - failure is task is incomplete. Teacher completes task.
Learning Site	- Can be anywhere suitable to the learner.	- Is limited to specific learning sites.

The above table compares the two types of curricula, and it appears that the competence curriculum is based on meeting the needs of diverse learners. Regarding the focus of this study, Visual Arts appears to fall within a competence curriculum. This is based on the previous chapter's analyses from writers such as Köhler and Pedersen (1978) as well as Tyler and Likova (2012), who have asserted that learning through art from real-life experience, happens from infancy onwards and continues to guide the child as they progress through their schooling. This is also observed by writers such as Kamhi, Cohen, Miller and Goodman-Schanz, to name a few. They discovered that art is integrated into learning by firstly teaching the child self-expression, which teaches the child social interaction with other children. Art also allows the child to be cognitive, learn how to be creative, and be able to analyse art based on life experiences, thus combining learning from school and life experience. Writers such as Chessin and Zander confirm the interdisciplinary application of art in other subjects, including science. The understanding of art elements that apply in other subjects, as well as the use of visuals, shows the integration of more than one subject in learning.

The word 'competence' also suggests that teaching within this model ensures that the learning and knowledge the learner acquires is achieved successfully. This is also defined by Jansen and Hoadley (2009:175) when pointing out that "the key characteristic of a competence curriculum is named in the title: it is interested in learners' competencies which are believed to be innate. Thus, knowledge is not imposed from the outside, but the competencies that learners already have are sought on the inside". The focus of a competence curriculum is to make learning a realisation of the already existing potentials that the learners are unaware exists. This is where the duty of the teacher comes into play, to create realization through thinking and application. In addition to this, Jansen & Hoadley (2009:175) also affirmed that a competence model is "characterized by the idea of integration between subjects and makes strong links between school learning and real life". In other words, subjects that incorporate learning into each other are likely to transfer knowledge that is closely related to life-related matters.

This definition suggests that a competence curriculum is a model that links learning areas as well as relating education to life experiences. In addition to this, Hall et al (2007:607) also affirm that:

Competence pedagogies therefore tend to focus on the learner and what the learner has achieved. Control is implicit or 'invisible'; that is, it tends to inhere in personalised forms of communication and an assumption of self-regulation. Learners are likely to have a greater degree of control over what they learn, the pace and sequencing of lessons and the spaces in which they occur.

This means that learners are assisted to pass, no matter the challenges faced within the subject, by literally guiding the learner in the exact manner they are to achieve the outcomes of the exercise. In such cases, I believe the learner has fewer chances of using their innate abilities to achieve competence in a subject. Drawing from experience, I have witnessed learners who have failed other subjects being transferred to Visual Arts because non-Visual Arts teachers believe they will somehow manage better. On the contrary, these learners often admittedly have difficulty executing basic tasks, such as drawing a simple, accurate free-hand circle. A free-hand drawing requires one to draw using only a pencil, so no instruments are allowed.

While a learner experiences difficulty, their practical work will reflect this, leading to poor marks. The learner is then rewarded for the 'effort' as opposed to executing the task well. The idea of failing at a task is therefore not considered. Instead, ways are sought to accommodate learners who are well aware of this leniency, and as such, apply less effort to the work – not because they lack the ability, but due to lack of interest. This is in line with the competence curriculum, which is based on the attempt and effort made by learners, as well as avoiding failure. That being the case, the theory part of Visual Arts that is based on specific language and writing structuring, becomes a huge challenge that fails to augment the learners' final mark. If minimum requirements are not met, a learner is capable of failing and this usually occurs when no submission is made.

While that is the case, Jansen & Hoadley (2009:175/176) observed that:

> The competence curriculum blurs the line between school learning and everyday experience, very specific places for learning – for example school classrooms – aren't regarded as very important. Learning, it is assumed, does, and can take place anywhere: at home, at work, and at school. Predictably, then, learning tends to be organized around themes and projects and to be based on experience.

> Learners also have a large measure of control over what they learn (selection); when they learn it (sequence); how quickly they progress through the learning (pacing).

In other words, the competence approach is learner centred. Learners take control of their own learning, and the teacher's role tends to be covert. Rather than directly transmitting learning, the teacher acts as a guide and facilitator. Pedagogy is personalized and process orientated.

Jansen & Hoadley (2009) highlight that, within a competency-based curriculum, the way a learner is taught is not solely based on the ability to do assigned work when in the classroom. The focus is on how a learner is helped to understand and achieve the requirements of the work.

Competence is about assisting the learner in every way possible to meet the requirements, i.e., what they are expected to do, rather than purely on what they are expected to know. In contrast to this, the performance-based curriculum model is based on clear and measurable criteria. In other words, there are subjects that deal with outcomes that discover something to either be right or wrong, true or false. In addition to this, Hall et al (2007:608) state that:

> Performance models therefore focus particularly on the text produced by the learner; the emphasis in the teacher's evaluation is on what is missing and how the outcomes can be improved; control is explicit through the teacher's regulation of space, time, and discourse.

Hall (2007) emphasizes that in the performance model, the learner writes and the educator marks according to what is written. Revision aims to fill in the gaps and ensure that the answers are complete and precise. This is achieved within the rules, place, duration, and communication passed on by the educator.

Jansen and Hoadley (2009:181) also mention Bernstein's use of the terms 'weak' and 'strong' boundaries as a classification for subjects. Hoadley (2006:3) continues to substantiate the meaning of classification as follows:

> Classification is expressed as being strong (where boundaries are explicit and categories are insulated from one another), or weak, there is integration, or where the boundary is weak or blurred. In terms of discourse, the relations between different subject areas (interdisciplinary relations), and between school knowledge and everyday knowledge (interdiscursive relations) are considered, as well as the relation between knowledge within a particular subject area (intra-discursive). With respect to the classification of agents, the theory identifies how teachers and learners' pedagogic identities are demarcated.

With specification, there can be a relation between learning areas, school- and general knowledge, and related information within the same learning area. In this study, Visual Arts can be categorized as weakly bounded, because it incorporates interdisciplinary knowledge, diversity of content selection, and is open to individual interpretations.

The interdisciplinary subjects use of language or teaching methods help to enhance learning and knowledge engagement. There is also an integration of images that enhance the understanding of scientific terms, as touched on by Wieman (2007) in the example below. A practical way of understanding the integration of art in other subjects is, for instance, natural science using an image or illustration of a heart as a visual aid when teaching learners how the organ works. In this scenario, it seems impossible to teach the lesson if images are not presented to enable comprehension through visualisation. This is partly what Visual Arts is based on: a study of visuals and learning to understand them. It is not just about students expressions but has other applications and links.

Felten (2008:62) quotes Wieman (2007) who stated that "In the natural sciences a range of visual forms, including figures and simulations made possible by new technologies, are essential to effective scientific education". As the previous example shows, images are an unmissable part of effective teaching in many subjects, including science. This is just a particular example of how visuals and images are incorporated in a subject that is science-based, which appears to function in similar ways to Visual Arts.

Medina-Jerez et al. (2012:211) asserted that "In support of an art and science integrated instruction, it has been noted that both artists and scientists share a good deal of skills involved in the practice of their disciplines. As pointed out by Flannery

(1991:580), 'they all feel the tension of a developing idea and the elation of a successful creation, whether of a work of art or of a scientific theory or discovery". This is to say that science and art correlate because expertise is necessary to fulfil the practical work of either art or science. Additionally, this expertise corresponds with thinking that enables the creation of new projects or findings. Medina-Jerez et al (2012:211) also noted that both science and art have specific terms and language, and in order to deliver or create the final outcomes of the practical work, there are numerous tests or sketches required.

Furthermore, what is not recognised is that as soon as you take a pen or pencil to write something, that already includes a visual art aspect. I say this because in Visual Arts, line (or lines) is an important and most used element in creating anything, whether it's straight or a curved, line comes in different forms and is applied in everything we see. Furthermore, Ornstein (1987:212) adds that:

> Humanistic theories of learning are given equal billing, and sometimes greater emphasis, than behavioral and cognitive theories of learning. Music, art, literature, health education, and the humanities are just as important as science and math (and other academic subjects.)

Ornstein notes that learning which focuses on humans is often more recognised than learning focusing on the thinking and actions of people. Emphasis is placed on the fact that despite the many different career choices that exist, they can be integrated into each other, making any learning area as important as another.

3.4   VISUAL LITERACY

Visual Arts appears to be related to other subjects through the incorporation of images and visuals of drawings. Felten (2008:60) makes the point that "the new "pictorial turn" means that images no longer exist primarily to entertain and illustrate. Rather, they are becoming central to communication and meaning making.

So, while the use of images is established as a means for creating memories and enjoyment, images became the centre and essential means to make contact between people. Considering that, a discussion of visual literacy assists in showing a relation

to Visual Arts, as well as understanding its significance. According to Avgerinou and Ericson (1997:282), in quoting Curtiss (1987):

> Visual literacy is the ability to understand the communication of visual statement in any medium and the ability to express oneself with at least one visual discipline. It entails the ability to: understand the subject matter and meaning within the context of the culture that produced the work, analyse the syntax-compositional and stylistic principles of the work, evaluate the disciplinary and aesthetic merits of the work, and grasp intuitively the Gestalt, the interactive and synergistic quality of the work.

What Curtiss mentions, is that visual literacy is the ability to interpret the meaning of any transferred message using any means of communication that requires exercising your vision. A communicated message is not always in written form but can be in any form that allows one to analyse what is being shown or stated. Concerning that, Messaris and Moriarty (482:2005) define "visual literacy into two components-first, the ability to understand visual images and, second, the ability to create or use images as means of expression and communication. This distinction parallels the read and write characteristics of print literacy". Regarding the previous point, Visual Arts is also based on the creative urge to converse with diverse people by creating aesthetically pleasing images, and communicating messages, meanings, and portrayed feelings that one can interpret visually. In this context, the word 'visual' is a literal sense of sight, and the creation of art allows viewers to analyse and appreciate its aesthetics visually, which is co-related to visual literacy, where one analyses a concept through images, and perhaps understand written knowledge or knowledge that can be written better, through images.

Felten (2008:61) attests that "research demonstrates that seeing is not simply a process of passive reception of stimuli but also involves the active construction of meaning". This affirms that sight does not only allow one to see but to analyse in detail what can be created as an illusion that may not be identifiable through written explanation. Correspondingly, Stokes (2002:11) defined visual literacy in art, noting that:

> Visualization helps make sense of data that may have seemed previously unintelligible. Leonardo da Vinci, in recognizing the impossibility of recording volumes of data, translated words into drawings from different aspects. As

history repeats itself, we may find that a great deal of information is better presented visually rather than verbally.

Stokes highlights that some information may not make sense in writing, but when expressed in visual form becomes easier to understand or communicate to some people, including the artists themselves. Messaris and Moriarty (482:2005) added that the ability to communicate with images is a basic skill for artists in different specializations such as graphic design and photography. It can be said that a large amount of our knowledge is gained through sight, and while written knowledge can be complex to convey, images are often more easily conveyed and understood. In saying this, visual representation may require some time to analyse and understand.

This is confirmed by the Milan Art Institute (2020):

> Most people, including students, receive much if not all of their information via visual means. People remember 65% of the information they learn if it's accompanied by visuals. The brain takes in images faster than any other stimuli (it needs just 13 milliseconds).

From this, humans clearly acquire knowledge better through visual learning; a concept that is certainly being embraced in education. On the other hand, Stokes (2002:10) states that "although the educational community is embracing visual enhancements in instruction, the connection of visual and verbal information is evident throughout history". Stokes emphasises how what is said and seen has been connected for thousands of years, though what we see is better appreciated.

Stokes (2002:10) adds that:

> Only after the printing press was invented were illustrations and type separated, with illustrations often falling by the wayside. Recent history shows a reversal in this separation with greater reliance on visually oriented approaches to information presentation. The results are leading to a visualization movement in modern computing whereby complex computations are presented graphically, allowing for deeper insights as well as heightened abilities to communicate data and concepts.

Stokes reveals that for thousands of years before a printing press existed, images and written text have always existed alongside each other. Its invention revealed the significance of visuals, particularly in presentations.

A good example of heightening communication through visuals is the work of well-known Renaissance artist, Leonardo da Vinci, who proclaimed to not only express himself through art but also as a tool of recording as a means of communicating with images rather than words. This has also been observed by Stokes (2002:11) that "Leonardo da Vinci, in recognizing the impossibility of recording volumes of data, translated words into drawings from different aspects". The ability to portray a detailed artwork is, in a sense, translating what one cannot express in words, or the idea of creating an artwork based on personal experiences, emotions, or being influenced by others. Stokes also emphasizes how what we see makes a greater impact than what we say.

Images are always appealing and made to attract the eye, while words are rather plain and require more focus to understand what is meant. The ability to communicate with images does not mean one is less intelligent than those who communicate verbally or in writing. Instead, it is a different means of communicating, as we are individuals with different preferences and abilities. The ability to see gives access to the ability to read what you write and then being able to verbalize it. This is also observed by Stokes (2002:12) who quotes Flattley, saying that "an additional variation in learners is present in those who may have difficulty comprehending the spoken or written language, particularly those with language barriers, learning disabilities, and hearing disorder".

Lindström (2010:11) observed that in art, "the ability to 'read' pictures critically became a central objective of art education, and the communicative and instrumental significance of the picture was emphasised in educational discourse". In other words, because art is based on appreciating the beauty of what is created visually, it seems ideal to analyse these images and express a sense of understanding as to what they speak to.

Robinson (2001) and Eisner (2002) noted that "The Arts, and Visual Arts in particular, provide a place to start re-conceptualising education in the visual. Creativity and practice-based learning have long been defining features of The Arts and Arts Education".

Felten (2008:63) also emphasises that:

> Humans always have used images as one important tool for making meaning. That composition studies, and indeed most academic disciplines, are only now beginning to take visual representation seriously reflects a failure of many academics to understand human learning rather than a radical change sparked by technology and culture.

Felten makes a strong claim of how people have always used pictures to communicate their life experiences better and have recently realized that pictures have always had a pivotal role in education. This makes sense, as it also appears to be the reason people are misguided by the role of Visual Arts as a subject that is interdisciplinary. The idea of transformation centrally based on technology and philosophy detaches the understanding and correlation of images or visuals within the transformation.

Additionally, Avgerinou and Ericson (1997:284) continued to add that, visual literacy "refers to the use of visuals for the purposes of: communication; thinking; learning; constructing meaning; creative expression; aesthetic enjoyment. Within the context of visual literary, a visual may be seen with the eyes (visible); or in the mind". The researchers emphasise the ways pictorials are used to make definitive communication with others, while Stokes (2002:12) elaborates that "most people have a tendency to think in words rather than in pictures, yet the use of visualization in thinking appears to be increasing". Put another way, even if one thinks is in words, the mind creates images to visualise the information. Wileman (1993:114) highlights that "associated with visual literacy is visual thinking, described as "the ability to turn information of all types into pictures, graphics, or forms that help communicate the information.

Lindström (2010:13) writes that the visual arts correspond to visual literacy as an approach where:

art education explores the ways in which we interact through the construction of ways of seeing which include both the image (the viewed), the producer or recipient (the viewer), and the social and cultural contexts in which the act of production and reception of images occur.

It is important for what is viewed to make an impression or communication with the viewer to create an interaction between the two and establish a better understanding. As Dinham and Gruska et al. (2007:77) stated, "the conceptualisation of Visual Education is grounded in 'learning by doing' or 'learning by making". Creating something leads to viewers having to visualise *and* analyse the beauty of the creation. This relates to Lynna and Floyd Ausburn's definition, as quoted by Avgerinou and Ericson (1997:281), that "Visual Literacy can be defined as a group of skills that enable an individual to understand and use visuals for intentionally communicating with others".

In art, the skills are applied through your imagination and creativity, while your hands allow you to express the creativity visually – thereby enabling the viewer to interact, interpret and create a relation to the work. Avgerinou and Ericson (1997:282) also mention Raymond Sinatra's definition that "visual literacy itself is defined as the active reconstruction of past experiences with incoming visual information to obtain meaning".

This is true because most past events are easily re-lived visually, as when someone is telling a story, those listening can vividly picture the scenario. In this case, art is usually a display of the past, a dream and experience that an artist has undergone and wants people to relate to them through visual storytelling.

Consequently, the CAPS document (2011:40) stated that the practical component of Visual Arts has the same weighting as the theory, and it is usually the practical work that boosts the outcomes of learners who struggle with theory. As such, Exley (2008:310) asserted that education acquired in art can be classified as 'knowing how' and 'knowing that', which in this case, is the ability to explain verbally or in writing, which Exley has called a complexity because it requires specificity in precision with language expected in art.

'Knowing how' is about putting into action, showing the practicality of your knowledge, doing what is supposed to be done. For this reason, it appears that the theory section of Visual Arts is more complex, and the practical component allows the student to produce satisfactory results by enabling simpler communication with the teacher.

I draw again from a personal experience, setting an examination paper as a 60 percent practical and 40 percent theory has always encouraged learners to improve their drawing skills as it allows them to do well in art while the theory is always problematic due to grammar and writing complexities.

3.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter first looked at curriculum as an approach, mainly from the viewpoint of Ornstein. It was found that writers such as Jansen and Hoadley, Pratt and Van den Akker concurred on the definition of curriculum as it relates to Visual Arts. An example of implementing a curriculum approach in Visual Arts was discussed, along with an overview of the changing curriculum and the education system in South Africa over the years. A comparison was shown between two types of curricula, namely the competence and performance curriculum, as adopted from Bernstein, and it was discovered that Visual Arts falls within a competence curriculum. Finally, it was determined that writers such as Avgerinou and Ericson (1997), Wileman (1993), and Lindström (2010) agree that Visual Literacy is based on using image for understanding, which is in line with how Visual Arts operates. The next chapter speaks to the research methods and instruments that were used to collect data for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology to demonstrate how I went about investigating the research questions. I start by discussing the qualitative research approach used to analyse data related to the topic of the study, being an urban Northern KwaZulu-Natal school, and how it offers Visual Arts as a subject. First, I include the interpretive study that explains the basis and focus of this investigation, followed by a case study approach. I then include the different methods involved in conducting the case study, to determine who the participants were and for what purposes, as well as their consent regarding their participation in this study. Other data collection methods, such as a questionnaire and observation, are also included to consolidate sources of data collection. To conclude this chapter, issues of trustworthiness, credibility and transferability, and ethical considerations are also examined to enhance validity and reliability as they are the quality criteria of the qualitative research methodology adopted by this study.

4.2   QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

As mentioned, the approach of this study is qualitative. This is because of a belief and also understanding the perceptions of people with regards to the role and status of Visual Arts as a subject. This is established by Teherani et al. (2015:669) that "qualitative research starts from a fundamentally different set of beliefs—or paradigms—than those that underpin quantitative research". In addition to that, the research outcomes will come from word-based data via specific questionnaires that were created to understand participants' knowledge and views regarding Visual Arts the high school, as well as observations of school spaces and policies. Hennink et al (2020:10) stated that, "in broad terms, qualitative research is an approach that allows you to examine people's experiences in detail by using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods, and life histories or biographies".

For this study, at the time of planned data collection, the coronavirus limited the possibility of having any face-to-face interviews with the participants due to a complete nation-wide lockdown as schools became closed. Eventually, lockdown regulations were aligned to the different levels as according to the South African government website (2021) and School X was still prohibiting visitors due to the high levels of infections at that time.

As such, the study used questionnaires containing written interview questions that are answered by the various participants. Another method was the observation of the resources, space, and positioning of the art room, that is, evaluating the teaching space and the resources available for the teachers and learners as this contributes to triangulation, providing additional data sources than the questionnaire responses of participants. This is also emphasised by Heale and Forbes (2013:98) that,

> Triangulation in research is the use of more than one approach to researching a question. The objective is to increase confidence in the findings through the confirmation of a proposition using two or more independent measures. The combination of findings from two or more rigorous approaches provides a more comprehensive picture of the results than either approach could do alone.

The participants voiced their experiences and understanding of Visual Arts as subject by answering a questionnaire, which was the primary means of interaction. This approach allows participants, who in this case were the staff, management, learners, and parents, to share their own experiences of their reality, both directly and indirectly. Qualitative research discloses the voice of the participant and allows different perspectives. Merriam (2002:3) concurs by stating that qualitative research differs from quantitative research, which is based on calculations and measurements that are of a particular and specific calculation that needs to be accurate. Instead, qualitative research is about understanding the different people that have different views of an experience that may be similar but are not to be seen or viewed the same way.

Teherani et al (2015:669) also attest that:

> Qualitative research is the systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings. These phenomena can include, but are not limited to, how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and/or groups behave, how organizations function, and how interactions shape relationships. In qualitative research, the researcher is the main data collection instrument. The researcher examines why events occur, what happens, and what those events mean to the participants studied. Qualitative research starts from a fundamentally different set of beliefs—or paradigms—than those that underpin quantitative research.

Teheran confirms that qualitative research is concerned with understanding how people feel about the events, the environment, and the people they interact with throughout their lives. As a researcher, it is important to consider the participants' expressions and reasoning of their experiences. In the case of this study, Covid-19 lockdown restrictions meant that I could not interact directly with the participants. In addition, Merriam (2002:4) appends that a qualitative researcher is mainly concerned with understanding the subject or topic of interest from different perspectives by including various closely or immediately involved participants.

Within that process, it is important to consider the interests of the various participants for a better understanding. In other words, a researcher must picture themselves in the participant's situation. Merriam (2002:5) added that the qualitative researcher is human, and therefore has the opportunity to interact with other humans, enabling them to be flexible and make adjustments where necessary. This approach, therefore, allows the researcher to learn about other people's perspectives and views.

According to Uwe Flick et al (2004:3), qualitative research describes the 'life worlds from the inside out'. In other words, the participants are those that are directly involved with the matter at hand, in this case the Visual Arts learners and teachers. Those less closely involved are the parents, management, and non-visual arts teachers, as they do not have first-hand experience with Visual Arts but are within the environment and around those who are directly involved, and the results of the subject affect them too.

4.3   INTERPRETIVE STUDY

Qualitative research is made of various designs and strategies to help make sense of and understand people's life settings and the experiences that are of interest to an investigator. This qualitative research study uses styles such as an interpretive qualitative study and a case study. The word interpretive suggests that this research is focused on understanding and explaining the subject of interest from the perspectives of participants. While interpretive and qualitative approaches are similar, there are marked differences. Bhattacherjee (2012) posited that:

> The term "interpretive research" is often used loosely and synonymously with "qualitative research", although the two concepts are quite different. Interpretive research is a research paradigm that is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts (ontology) and is therefore best studied within its socio-historic context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants (epistemology). Because interpretive researchers view social reality as being embedded within and impossible to abstract from their social settings, they "interpret" the reality though a "sense-making" process rather than a hypothesis testing process.

What Bhattacherjee points out, is that the interpretive research approach exists because of qualitative research, which is the first approach to understanding social reality. This is based on the different events and experiences people encounter and in order to have a better understanding of people's experiences, one must keep in mind that although life settings may be similar, they are not the same – hence the idea of qualitative relating to interpretive research. Crowe et al (2011:4) also adds that Interpretive approach "Involves understanding meanings/contexts and processes as perceived from different perspectives, trying to understand individual and shared social meanings. Focus is on theory building". It is important to note that as a researcher analysing these experiences, the analysis should be close to how the participants express their personal feelings. Moreover, when something is being interpreted, it is being explained or expressed differently while retaining its meaning. An interpretive researcher must determine such an analysis.

Merriam (2002:6) further defined basic interpretive study as follows:

> A basic interpretive and descriptive qualitative study exemplifies all the characteristics of qualitative research, that is, the researcher is interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon, this meaning is mediated through the researcher as instrument, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive. In conducting a basic qualitative study, you seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives, and worldviews of people involved, or combination of these.

The above reflects how close the relationship between the researcher and the participant may become, and the researcher must first understand the view of the participant in order to analyse and create a detailed picture of the topic of interest. This study can also be seen as descriptive research, which according to Bertram and Christiansen (2014:43), is based on understanding the ways and roles of a particular example. As a researcher, my first aim was to understand the perspective of:

- the Visual Arts learners as the participants who have an immediate interaction with the subject,
- the art teachers who understand how the school management, staff and art learners operate within Visual Arts.
- School management who makes decisions that affect the way the subject operates.
- the teaching of other learning areas or subjects.
- and lastly, parents who are affected by the subject is performed tin the school but are not directly involved.

Qualitative research therefore focuses on various perspectives to understand people's differing views of a matter they have in common. In this study, I will be analysing questionnaires from these participants which will contain diverse views of the participants' understanding of Visual Arts as a subject. Preparatory to this, I will elaborate on the history of the school and the way that it presents Visual Arts.

4.4   CASE STUDY

There are various resources and researchers who have studied and defined the term 'case study' according to their different research approaches. A relevant definition for this study is that of Yin (2003:13), for whom, "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". Yin's definition states that a case study is an analysis used to understand the subject of interest in the setting where it occurs and usually when the subject of interest and its surroundings do not appear to have a clear relation. Consequently, it is important to note that Visual Arts is the main object or the phenomenon and the situation in the high school of interest is analysed. Roger Gomm et al (2000:3) state that:

> "The term 'case study', is also often taken to carry implications for the kind of data that are collected, and perhaps also for how these are analysed. Frequently, but not always, it implies the collection of unstructured data, and qualitative analysis of those data".

It is evident that a case study assists in reaching a conclusion about a phenomenon based on evidence and reasoning. Merriam (2002:8) confirmed that a case study is a detailed explanation and investigation of a phenomenon which is either of an individual, collective, organization or group specifically chosen as a place for research data collection. In this case, the phenomenon is Visual Arts as a subject offered in an organization, School X. The subject's status and role within that setting is then investigated.

Maree (2007) affirmed that a case study approach allows for various views and opinions on every side of the topic, creating advocacy for the voiceless. In this study, this meant not only interviewing key people (such as the principal or the HODs), but the 'ordinary' visual arts teachers, parents, learners, and even people who are not involved in Visual Arts. In this case, the voiceless are the participants and the subject itself. Crowe et al (2011:1) explain that:

A case study is a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context. It is an established research design that is used extensively in a wide variety of disciplines, particularly in the social science.

Crowe et al emphasise how a case study approach aims to understand life situations by unpacking them as they are. I believe that the role of Visual Arts is complex and often misunderstood, as it is not recognised for its contribution to society. To understand a phenomenon, it is important to include people who are both intimately and distantly involved as this will produce rich, balanced data leading to greater insights. The following section discusses the research instruments used to gather data while considering the various ways.

4.5   DOCUMENTS INSTRUMENT

One of the most important research instruments for this study is the use of various documents containing information on Visual Arts and School X. In Chapter Two, I discussed the CAPS document for Visual Arts in Grade 10-12 to understand the role of the subject within the South African curriculum, in particular its learning objectives and outcomes. This underlines the significance of the subject and avoids the misconception non-Visual Arts teachers may have about the subject. In addition, I also include the South African curriculum from the NCS document to understand the development of South Africa's education system to allow different teaching approaches that accommodate different learners' abilities. In this study, Visual Art is categorized under the competence curriculum as it seeks to develop every learner's skill at a pace that is suitable for the learner's understanding. I also include links to the school's online website and local online newspaper in chapter five. This is to gather and present the historical background of the school to understand how it evolved from its initial offering of Visual Arts to date. These documents also include additional information that is not accessible anywhere else. Bowen (2009:27) noted that "documents contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention". In other words, some information related to the case study is not generated by the investigator because it is pre-existing information gathered in the past.

This includes information and pictures of the images of the school of choice, which adds to the context and richness of the study. These documents are also significant for triangulation, as asserted by Denzin (1970:291) when writing that a "document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation, 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon".

4.6   QUESTIONNAIRE

The use of questionnaires was the most suitable and convenient data collection method to use in light of coronavirus restrictions, as I was able to do drop-offs or send it to participants via email. In addition to that, schools were not fully functioning, and the university did not allow fieldwork for data collection for some time. According to Babbie (1990:377) "a questionnaire is defined as a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate to analysis". In this study, the questionnaire consists of questions that are designed to elicit specific knowledge from the teachers, management, and parents, while some questions were also designed to be similar for all these participants, as they were required to answer them from their individual perspectives to gather sufficient general and specific information to meet the objectives of this study. To substantiate, O'Leary (2014) and Cohen (2013) define some important terms regarding questionnaires as follows:

> '*Surveying*' is the process by which the researcher collects data through a questionnaire. A '*questionnaire*' is the instrument for collecting the primary data. '*Primary data'* by extension is data that would not otherwise exist if it were not for the research process and is collected through both questionnaires or interviews, which we discuss here today.

For this to be possible, Acharya (2010:12) confirmed that "the layout of a questionnaire depends on the mode of administration. Developed countries also use self-administered questionnaires. A respondent is expected to fill in the questionnaire without assistance of others in such self-administered questionnaires. Therefore, self-administered questionnaires should be attractive and printed in a very clear manner of directions and skipping patterns". In other words, questions should be simple and straight forward and the questionnaire for this study was created in that manner, enabling easy understanding and interpretation.

Acharya (2010:13) maintains that:

> The prepared questionnaire should be pre-tested to check the vocabulary, consistency, and ambiguity. Pre-test provides basis for amendment of questionnaire. No matter how better the questionnaire is [sic], if the administration is performed in no normal environment the results are certainly affected. In haste, within a little time and in the situation of mental tension of either party (interviewer or respondent) the information may be biased.

The questionnaires for this study were pre-tested and it was, for example, discovered to lack detail in the question whereby participants should have been prompted to elaborate on their answers. The questionnaire was amended and corrected accordingly.

Apart from being the most low-risk manner of collecting data, this instrument became suitable for the kind of research being conducted. According to Ekwam (2009: 25), a questionnaire "is one of the instruments for collecting data, is a set of question forms prepared and distributed by the researcher to obtain responses". It is, therefore, designed to have questions that are specific to the targeted participants in order to gain relevant and reliable feedback.

Babbie (1990:377) also observed that, "a questionnaire is defined as a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate to analysis". As this study evaluates the role of a particular subject in a high school setting, there was a high possibility that the participants would feel uncomfortable participating and openly sharing their views. The questionnaires helped to address this, as they did not require participants to divulge any personal information. Patten (2017:2) confirms that "questionnaires can be administered anonymously. Knowing that their responses are anonymous encourages respondents to be truthful". Considering that the study is set in and based on their working environment, it was anticipated that the participants might feel uncomfortable airing their feelings and views on matters related to the school. This includes the role and value of a particular subject, which in this case was Visual Arts.

For this study, the questionnaires required participants to answer questions according to their knowledge, opinion and experience. This type of questionnaire, which does not ask respondents to pick an answer from a pre-defined set of options, such as with a nominal or rating scale, is known as an 'unstructured' questionnaire. According to Acharya (2010:2), "unstructured questionnaires include open-ended and vague opinion-type questions. Maybe questions were not in the format of interrogative sentences and the moderator, or the enumerator must elaborate the sense of question. Focus group discussions use such questionnaires in order to gain opinions from different perspectives that relate to the topic of interest.

4.7   OBSERVATIONAL EVIDENCE

To include observational evidence is to consolidate the outcomes of the data collection to have more definitive outcomes to answer the research questions. As such, the observational evidence is based solely on understanding the environment where the subject of Visual Arts is offered. This is the classroom/s, resources, and the positioning of the classrooms within the school.

Creswell (2012:213) defined observation "as the process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site". In other words, to better understand the subject of interest, it is important to conduct a survey by interacting with the participants and seeing their workspace. This involved visiting School X and observing the school premises, the Visual Arts teachers, and classes, and understanding the material and resources that were available to the learners. This process was almost impossible due to the aforementioned Covid-19 regulations. In fact, this was the last activity to be conducted, as it only became possible in 2022 when lockdown restrictions were eased, allowing the principal to grant me permission. It was, however, only possible to visit the school after school hours and I had to seek assistance from the Visual Arts teacher to capture images of the classroom with learners present.

Concerning observation, Yin (2009:110) asserted that:

> Observational evidence is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied. If a case study is about a new technology, or curriculum, for instance, observations of the technology or curriculum at work are invaluable aids for understanding the actual uses of the technology or any potential problems being encountered.

This stresses that any research conducted needs to have multiple sources of evidence to substantiate the outcomes and conclusion. The research should show evidence from the participants, the environment, and written resources. I will now discuss the sampling method used to select the participants for this study.

4.8   SAMPLING METHOD

When choosing participants, the selection method must correspond to the aims of the research and the ways the data is collected. The method of sampling for this study is explained by Bertram and Christiansen (2014:59) as follows:

> "Sampling involves making decisions about which people, settings, events, or behaviours to include in the study. Researchers need to decide how many individuals, groups, or objects (such as schools) will be observed. In doing so, researchers must consider the population from which they are sampling. In research, the word population is used to mean the total number of people, groups or organisations that could be included in a study."

Sampling is the selection of a small part from a particular portion or section of something, such as a defined group. In this sense, as a researcher, I choose a particular number of people who are part of a larger group of people in a particular institution. The sampling for this study purposively features people who can yield information relevant to my research questions. My sampling features ten Grade 12 Visual Arts learners, ten non-Visual Arts teachers, ten parents and two school management staff. This is the targeted number of people from the population featured in this study, as the pandemic limitations prevented me from sampling 50% of the population. The selected participants are also to include different perspectives and opinions according to an individual's position and experience concerning Visual Arts.

This is the role of constructivist researchers who, "believe that there is no single reality, but that the researcher elicits participants' views of reality" (Tereheni et al., 2015:669). According to Taherdoost (2016:18), researchers are unable to include the entire population of a chosen institution because of time, resources, and in this case, the limitations resulting from the pandemic. Establishing a sampling method then helps determine what sampling technique is suitable. This is asserted by Sharma (2017:249), who explains that:

> Sampling is a technique (procedure or device) employed by a researcher to systematically select a relatively smaller number of representative items or individuals (a subset) from a pre-defined population to serve as subjects (data source) for observation or experimentation as per objectives of his or her study.

A researcher is guided by the sampling technique when selecting a relevant number of participants. To answer the research questions, I used stratified sampling as defined by Ackoff (1953, in Taherdoost, 2016:21):

> Stratified sampling is where the population is divided into strata (or subgroups) and a random sample is taken from each subgroup. A subgroup is a natural set of items. Subgroups might be based on company size, gender or occupation (to name but a few). Stratified sampling is often used where there is a great deal of variation within a population. Its purpose is to ensure that every stratum is adequately represented.

Stratified sampling suits this study because it features participants with different roles, holding different views and perspectives. In Ackoff's definition, Bertram, and Christiansen (2014:61) concur that stratified sampling is based on the population chosen that consists of subgroups. Sharma (2017:750) also asserts that:

> A method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller groups known as strata. In stratified random sampling, the strata are formed based on members shared attributes or characteristics. A random sample from each stratum is taken in a number proportional to the stratum's size when compared to the population. The subsets of the strata are then pooled to form a random sample.

According to Ekwam (2009:25), the research instrument is a tool for gathering and measuring information according to the questions, which are set and arranged by the investigator for particular groups. In this study, questionnaires are set to suit the various subgroups mentioned in this chapter to answer the research questions. Patten asserts that (2017:1) the use of questionnaires in a research study enables the researcher to arrange, examine and record the outcomes discovered from the participants effortlessly.

In other words, questionnaires allow for easy analyses in order to sort or group answers. In this case, the questions were very similar, but the answers were diverse, seeing that they expressed the views of different subgroups concerning the same topic. Patten (2017:2) points to the fact that a questionnaire can be built and answered without identifying the participant, thereby ensuring confidentiality, and encouraging participants to answer truthfully, which in turn leads to rich data that can substantiate the findings. Using a questionnaire instrument is also economical and convenient. Besides being able to circulate the instrument via email, it allowed the participants and researcher to be in contact despite the inability to meet face-to-face.

4.9   TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to Polit and Beck (2014), when qualitative research data is demonstrated to be truthful and coherent, it is considered valid. While validity is equivalent to trustworthiness, Maree (2007) states that a data set can reveal a clear understanding of what is investigated. What Polit and Beck are saying, is that one's writing must be accompanied by evidence, because as much as a writer's approach or style may differ, others have likely discovered something similar or created parallel theories. In other words, it is important to verify that the data collected is reliable and true. I use the following principles to ensure trustworthiness and rigour in my study. Firstly, I am aware of the Hawthorne effect, which according to Kenton (2019), "is the inclination of people who are the subjects to an experimental study to change or improve the behaviour being evaluated only because of changes in the experiment parameters or stimulus". Put another way, the Hawthorne effect is the sudden change in behaviour of people who know that they are being investigated or evaluated for the work, particularly in their professional setting.

This is something a researcher should be cognisant of, as most research is based on understanding people within their working or learning environment and how they operate on a daily basis. It is expected for people to act different when they are being observed or evaluated, hence it is important to inform the participants of your intentions and the precautions taken to ensure their safety and privacy. In talking to this, Wickström and Bendix (2002:363) asserted that:

> The "Hawthorne effect" is often mentioned as a possible explanation for positive results in intervention studies. It is used to cover many phenomena, not only unwitting confounding of variables under study by the study itself, but also behavioral change due to an awareness of being observed, active compliance with the supposed wishes of researchers because of special attention received, or positive respond to the stimulus being introduced.

Although the participants in this study were informed about the specifics of the research, including its purpose and what was expected of them, I remained cognisant of the fact that some might be inclined to modify their answers or choose their words to fit in with perceived expectations. I was aware of my subjective influence, and my position as someone the participants were familiar with. To ensure that they knew their rights and felt free to respond honestly without fearing repercussions or judgement, I assured them that I would treat their responses with absolute confidentiality and asked for their informed consent. They were given the freedom to answer the questionnaire at a suitable time, though this required some monitoring to remind those who had not responded to please do so.

4.10   TRIANGULATION

In a qualitative study, triangulation must be considered before starting the research, as it influences and directs the reliability of the outcomes. In this study, there is more than one method of data collection, these being the questionnaire, and the remote observations of the class, including resources such as space and the positioning of the art room. Honorene (2017:91) mentions four different types of triangulations and for this study, it is best categorised as "triangulation of sources". According to Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999), this is "examining the consistency of different data sources from within the same method. For example: at different points in time; in public vs. private settings; comparing people with different viewpoints".

As much as my ability to do this was reined in by covid regulations, I believe it was achieved to the extent that respondents completed the questionnaire in different environments. That is, teachers and learners doing so in their classes or the comfort of their homes, while the parents could complete theirs either at home or work.

The fact that views will differ based on individual perspectives and perceptions is mentioned by Honorene (2017:91), who wrote that "triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methods in the study of the same phenomenon". The use of a single method isn't enough to prove the accuracy of the research conducted, and as a matter of fact, it appears impossible to even consider that a study can only use one method.

According to Patton (1999:1192), "the logic of triangulation is based on the premise that no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival explanations. Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of data collection and analysis provide more grist for the research mill". As a result, the data generated includes an analysis of the curriculum, the participants, and the working environment in order to better understand and evaluate the findings. This is emphasised by Heale and Forbes (2013:98):

> Triangulation is typically associated with research methods and designs. However, there are several other variations on the term. Triangulation may be the use of multiple theories, data sources, methods, or investigators within the study of a single phenomenon. The technique was originally introduced into qualitative research in the 1950s as a means to avoid potential biases arising from the use of a single methodology. This technique is used to confirm suggested findings, but it can also be used to determine the completeness of data.

To cover as many angles of a single investigation as possible, it is therefore important to search and include everything and anything that might become useful data to prove the results of the study.

In looking to determine and understand the value of Visual Arts in a well-established public high school, the data collection in this study was done through the different people involved within the school and the subject matter, whether directly or indirectly, as well as the learning environment, including the classroom settings and resources available to the learners.

Heale and Forbes (2013) also state that "triangulation in research is the use of more than one approach to researching a question. The objective is to increase confidence in the findings through the confirmation of the proposition using two or more independent measures". This is attested by Carte et al., who highlighted different methods of triangulation. This study is specifically suited for data source triangulation, which Carte et al. (2014:545) define as follows:

> Data source triangulation involves the collection of data from different types of people, including individuals, groups, families, and communities, to gain multiple perspectives and validation of data.

The information collected will be narrated or analysed through the questionnaire instrument. To conclude, most researchers focus on different schools and would consider this study limited because it is focused on a single high school.

4.11 TRANSFERIBITLITY

The extent to which the data is proven accurate through triangulation will determine its transferability. Korstjens and Moser (2018:122), quoting Lincoln and Guba, stated that transferability means "describing not just the behaviour and experiences, but their context as well, so that behaviour and experiences become meaningful to an outsider". That is to say, the research is not only concerned with observing participants' actions or collecting data, but how this information clarifies and adds to a greater understanding of the matter at hand. Connelly (2016:435) quoted Polit and Beck (2014) who asserted that "the nature of transferability, the extent to which findings are useful to persons in other settings, is different from other aspects of research in that readers actually determine how applicable the findings are to their situations".

The purpose of transferability is to create a clear understanding of an investigation, so that readers who are unfamiliar with the particular research topic can look at the outcomes of a study and apply the findings in their field.

4.12   CONCLUSION

Writers such as Merriam (2002) and Teherani et al. (2015) concurred that qualitative research aims to understand human behaviour, and as such, was chosen as my study approach along with an interpretive design, as explained in detail at the beginning of this chapter.

This is followed by a discussion of the data collection methods used for this study, namely a case study, questionnaire, and observational evidence. Finally, to explore how the research methods are implemented, the sampling approach is defined along with a discussion on trustworthiness, triangulation, and transferability, which speak to the truthfulness of the evidence gathered. The following chapter presents the findings based on the data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I discuss the data generated to answer the research questions. This research is based on understanding the role and status of Visual Arts as a high school subject. Data was collected from chosen location of the case study Visual Arts; an urban public high school located in the King Cetshwayo district of northern KwaZulu-Natal. To protect the image of the school, I have taken precautions and decided to refer to it by the pseudonym 'School X'.

In this chapter, I start by sketching the historical background of the school using one of the research instruments referred to as *the document*. This information was gathered from the school website and the online local newspaper to understand how the school was established and developed up to the present day. I then continue to analyse the remaining research instruments such as the questionnaires that involve the immediate and closely related participants. In this case, the immediate participants were the Grade 12 Visual Arts learners of 2021 and their teacher, whom in this case is referred to as Mr Y. The closely related participants are the non-Visual Arts teachers, management who is given pseudonym Mrs X. The eight remaining teachers are given numerical pseudonyms Teacher 1 to 8 and I also feature the parents of the learners. Observational evidence is also included to evaluate the environment, resources and equipment used by the learners.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the role and status of Visual Arts as a curriculum subject offered in the school by answering the following questions:

1. What is the role and status of Visual Arts as a learning area in School X, according to official school policies espoused by school management?
2. What knowledge and perceptions do senior phase teachers of other subjects have about Visual Arts as a learning area?

3. What do Visual Arts teachers at School X experience in terms of the status given to their subject in practice?

4. How well is Visual Arts resourced in the school, in terms of staff, space, equipment, and time in the curriculum?

5. How does the enacted curriculum compare with the espoused, official curriculum and school policies?

6. What insights can the situation at School X reveal about the challenges facing Visual Arts in South African government schools?

The final section of this chapter shows the data being presented and analysed. Data collection commenced with the distribution of questionnaires to two members of the management staff, namely the principal and head of the Department of Technology. The 10 non-Visual Arts teachers were selected without prearrangement that is, organizing with the teachers in advance for their participation, while management was aware of my research. A teacher assisted in handing out questionnaires to these teachers, who represented various academic fields. The 10 Visual Arts learners in the Grade 12 class of 2021 also received questionnaires to complete, as did a sample group of five parents. Data was also generated through observational evidence, such observing as well as comparing the Art classroom and its relative position to the classrooms of other subjects within the school, the equipment and resources that were available, and the way the subject is presented to the community, including exhibitions and other such activities.

5.2 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The starting point of this section gives an historical overview of School X (figure 1), which is based in a small town called Empangeni, near Richards Bay. The school's marketing advisor (2021) says that "there is no written or recorded history on paper that is based on the early years of the school until today. However, the school website has information pertaining to the historical background of the school". For that reason, I used School X's website and a local online newspaper. The background information was gathered from the school website and local online newspaper, which are supplementary documents to this study. According to Bowen (2009) a "document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing printed and electronic documents".

By examining the environment, which in this case is the location or institution; the background information can be elicited to help understand the school's approach to a subject like Visual Arts as the case study. This document helps enrich the official records by South African Education CAPS and policy. This information also combines with the questionnaires and observational evidence for triangulation purposes.

School X is a prestigious school which was once a single-medium Afrikaans school that gradually became a dual-medium school, with English and Afrikaans being the current languages of instruction. With a total of 67 staff, it is regarded as one of the best schools in the King Cetshwayo district, having consistently produced excellent matric results over the years. The school is not only recognised for its high standard of academic performance but also its sports and cultural societies, according to the school website's blog page (2020).

Figure 1 - **School X**. Zululand Observer Online Press reader (2021).

According to its website (2021), School X was "established in 1957 and is the largest and best known multi-cultural high school in Zululand that accommodates diverse learners. The school boasts a beautiful, modern, well-equipped school building complex and widespread sport fields". This school is regarded as one of the best because it offers more than any public school in the district does. The school's big fields allow learners access to a variety of sports such as rugby, soccer, cricket, netball and volleyball, to name a few. The article reports that this has provided many learners with scholarship opportunities based on their sports performances. The Zululand Observer (2021) states that the school:

> offers Music, while we are the only public school that offers IT as a subject in the whole of The King Cetshwayo District and the only public school that offers Marine Sciences in the whole of Kwa-Zulu Natal. This year we have also teamed up with Fezile's Fashion Skills Academy. Fashion learners travel weekly to Durban to attend classes here they can become accredited and qualified fashion designers.

It is evident that the school is continuously developing and is seeking to offer an increasing variety of subjects, allowing a wider spread of career choices for its learners. The Zululand Observer (2021) points to the successful international collaborations and opportunities the school has enabled.

According to the School's website (2021):

> Cultural activities offered include drama, public speaking, chess, land service, bridge building, Teenagers Against Drug Abuse (TADA), first aid, C-King, Representative Council for Learners (RCL), choir, band, Interact, music, cheer leading and music theatre. The school boasts a well-equipped music centre with 150 music learners. School X's marching band has done exceptionally well throughout the years and has won the SA Championships over 10 times. Its choir was crowned National Champions twice in 2017 and 2018. Numerous School X learners have been selected for the KZN Youth Orchestra, KZN Youth Choir and KZN Wind Band over the years. A musical theatre production is staged by School X every second year. Being voted a couple of times (including this year) as the Best High School in Zululand by the Zululand community in the Zululand Observer's Readers' Choice Awards.

The above reveals many noteworthy achievements for the school, which appears to be doing better each year. As a school that is well known in the district, it manages to attract a larger number of sponsors than the average public school.

It is noticeable that there are a variety of creative cultural pursuits and performing arts such as music and drama that are promoted publicly, perhaps due to the fact that the school competes as a choir and also hosts drama performances. However, there is comparatively little mention made of Visual Arts, Music or Drama as school subjects that are part of the curriculum. For that reason, this investigation includes different views from people that are either directly or closely related to Visual Arts to understand the various perceptions and levels of knowledge.

To append to the already existing documents I include the school's yearbooks that document important events of every year with the focus of grade 12 learners. The yearbooks are also existing electronically, and I hoped to gain more knowledge about the school's offering of Visual Arts as a FET subject. As a subject that was officially introduced by the South African Education I was seeking to discover when School X was able to offer the subject and who were the first teachers to do so.

However, even in the yearbooks, as something that could have occurred in a particular year this is not recorded, and it had deemed impossible to discover as there are no written documents on the school's history. I include a detailed discussion in the next chapter on the contributions of the yearbooks to this study.

5.3.1 STAFF RESPONSES (Management, Non-Visual Arts teachers and Visual Art Teacher)

Initially, the idea was to have at least two management staff members complete the questionnaire, these being the principal and the head of department that Visual Arts is categorized under, that is department of technology. Numerous attempts were made to get a response from the principal, but he was continuously occupied with other matters and later indicated that he had misplaced the questionnaire.

I concluded that he was not interested in participating, as the questionnaire only required five to ten minutes of an individual's time. This lack of interest is one of the possibilities mentioned by Patten (2017) which I highlighted in chapter one.

In a way, this reveals something in itself about how much the subject Visual Arts really means to the Head of the school. If they were really committed and supportive of the learning area, there might have been more effect to commit to answering the questionnaire for this research. Consequently, I was able to obtain just one response from management, therefore the outcomes are a total of six non-Visual Arts teachers from a variety of specialities, namely Music, English, Mathematics, Business Studies, and Dramatic Arts. Mrs X from management and Mr Y, the Visual Arts teacher who are included, totalling eight staff respondents.

This analysis is based on open-ended questionnaires that allowed participants to willingly answer with no constraints created by the questions asked. Acharya (2010:8) maintains that "some qualitative research methods prefer open-ended questions. Open-ended questions provide more freedom to the interviewers as well as respondents.

What exactly the respondent is feeling and what exact language (verbatim) is the response is sometimes very important in anthropological in-depth research. However, the further analyses of qualitative information need high level human resource with much time and resources". The questionnaire begins with two tick-box questions requiring biographic information such as the gender and role of the participants, followed by the eight open-ended questions shown below.

5.3.1.1 *What do you think of Visual Arts as a further education and training (FET) subject?*

Mrs X did not respond to this question; the space is left blank. The majority of respondents, being Teacher's (1), (2), (3) and (4) females and one male Teacher (5), shared very similar sentiments.

In their understanding, Visual Arts helps learners develop their drawing and creative skills, which provides opportunities for the talented learners to explore their gift. Some interesting responses from the English and music teachers are:

- "*It is [an] important and a good inclusion in the school's curriculum. There is a vast diversity of learners in schools, and this creates an opportunity for more creative ones to showcase their talent*".

- "*It offers a multi-disciplinary programme that trains the brain, the hand, the eye, while engaging the intellect as well as the imagination in conceptualising 2D and 3D artworks*".

Mr Y responded in a similar vein by stating that it is *"a good subject since there are learners that are very talented and need to be channelled accordingly"*. The second music teacher emphasised that "in a country with so much raw talent, I think it is imperative to have visual arts as a FET subject".

5.3.1.2   Why do you think Visual Arts is part of the School X Curriculum?

Teachers (1) and (2) who believe that the school understands diversity and individuality, and the subject is offered to cater for such learners. Teacher (3) understands that art contributes to critical thinking and being open-minded, which empowers learners to face the challenges of the world. On the other hand, teacher (4) believes the subject develops talents and skills, while teacher (5) and (6) refer to academia in interesting ways. A female business studies teacher (7) stated that:

- "*School management understands the importance of art in the society and also that not everyone wants to pursue careers in the science, accounting fields but some learners would do well in the arts field*".

The other, a male maths teacher (8), stated that "*firstly, we must acknowledge that learners are different, some are creative, and some are academic, so it is part of the school curriculum to create a platform for learners to showcase their talents*".

What specific evidence can you provide that highlights the importance of Visual Arts in the school?

The response from Mrs X maintains that the subject produces excellent results. The maths and dramatic arts teacher, as well Mr Y teacher, stated that several learners had taken the subject and furthered their studies within similar fields:

- *"I have taught learners that have excelled and have taken art (visual arts) as their profession"*
- *"The school has produced learners that have gone on to become great artists, therefore that not only shows the importance of the subject but helps motivate learners who want to explore this field".*
- *"There are a lot of students who are products of this school that have gone to greater heights in this field".*

One English teacher (1) maintains that the role of the subject is to encourage and develop creativity and talent, while a music teacher (2) adds that the subject supports the "development and the ability for a learner to practice self-expression". A response that stood out came from another music teacher (3), who said that "*art can act as an escape or outlet for learners. Using art as a means of communication".* Teacher (4) did not respond to this question. Mrs X highlights what can be deemed true by the report stated on the school website on the high passing rate the school achieves. It also appears that there are some learners who follow careers in the art field after. While the response from teachers (5) and (6) above indicates a lack of understanding to the question.

5.3.1.4   What knowledge and perspective do you as a FET teacher have on Visual Arts as a learning area?

Mrs X is the head of the technology department that Visual Arts falls within. She states that part of her role involves overseeing the development of the learners, while Mr Y emphasises that the subject as being a key that unlocks a variety of related career paths.

Teachers (2), (3), (4) and (5) express an understanding of the subject as being particularly useful for knowledge and skills only learnt in the subject, such as creativity and analysis. Finally, the English teacher (1) and business studies female teacher (7) admitted not having any knowledge about the subject:

- *"I do not have knowledge as such; however, I feel that visual arts as a learning area develops a lot of skills in a learner beyond drawing and painting".*

- *"I do not have any knowledge on visual arts, but I think It is important because it teaches a lot of skills like concentration, accuracy, etc that can be applied in other learning areas".*

This question gained a variety of responses that are from Mrs X quite vague and not necessarily responding to the question as she is also teaching within the FET phase. While the four teachers appear to contradict the findings by Ebner (2006) mentioned in chapter two. As a concern for the lack of knowledge by non-visual arts teachers it may influence informing parents as indicated above.

5.3.1.5 How well do you think Visual Arts is resourced in the school in terms of staff, equipment, and time in the curriculum?

For this question, there are six respondents including one from the management team, and the Visual Arts teacher. These teachers all believe that the school is well-resourced and equipped to effectively present the subject, though some of the reasons given to substantiate their comments are not very specific or detailed:

- *"In my school, it is well resourced, we have enough space and art material available".*

- *"In my school VSLA is well resourced. I do not have knowledge about other schools".*

- *"It is very well resourced, the staff goes all out to ensure the visual arts learners have necessary space, time and equipment".*

- *"It is well resourced. There are qualified teachers, and they have all the resources they need to teach V/A at their disposal".*

- *"It is well resourced learners have all the material they need at their disposal and also well-equipped teachers. Time allocated to V/A is enough as per the CAPS requirements".*

- *"Well resourced - the school has a Visual Arts classroom that caters for practicals and well knowledgeable staff who drive the vision. More improvement to be made".*

- *"I think it is well resourced".*

On the other hand, music teacher (2) maintains that *"it is average. We do not cater for all art forms. If we have more equipment and a Visual Arts studio, we can teach learners more skills and give them a better understanding why Visual Arts is important".*

5.3.1.6 Do you think Visual Arts teachers in School X get the same acknowledgement as other subject teachers?

Teachers (2), (3), (4), (5) and had corresponding answers to this question, including the management member and the Visual Arts teacher. Mrs X and English teacher (1) simply responded with a "yes", providing no reasons for their answer. Mr Y's response indicates a lack of understanding of the question, stating that "as *far as I know, there are schools that have art as a subject but the teachers teaching the subject have not been trained properly".* The maths and business studies teachers explain that:

- *"All teachers regardless of the subject they teach are given respect, for no subject is less than another".*
- *"Yes, School X aims to drive equality and sufficient acknowledgement as it forms a major part of the school's curriculum".*

On the other hand, a dramatic art teacher (3) and music teachers (2) and (4) strongly believe that Visual Arts is not at all acknowledged, as it is not seen as an important subject or career path to follow. The dramatic arts teacher responds by stating:

"I do not think so. Fellow colleagues and the management do not see visual arts as a learning area one can make a career out of, so they think V/A teachers have it easy".

5.3.1.7 How is school management advocating the status and role of Visual Arts as a learning area?

Teachers (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6), including the Visual Arts teacher, maintain that the school management contributes to organizing the exhibition space.

In line with this, a maths teacher (5) states that *"the school provides funding for learners /students to attend exhibitions to view different arts so that they may gain inspiration".*

An English teacher (7) stated that *"they support and encourage learners who are doing the subject and teachers as well".* The management staff member vaguely answered that "They do", without elaborating on *how* they do this. The music teacher felt that *"they are not. They mainly focus on maths, science, and languages. Visual Arts is the least of their worries".*

In my view, this statement is demonstrated by the fact that Visual Arts is left out of the cultural activities that the school promotes in the local online magazine. This is one of the reasons parents are not well informed about the subject. I also believe that the promotion of the subject on various online platforms, especially the annual art exhibition hosted by the department, would help to raise awareness of the subject, and give more positive exposure.

5.3.1.8 Do you as an individual acknowledge Visual Arts as a significant learning area? Explain in detail.

The Visual Arts teacher responded affirmingly:

- *"Yes, I do, art is the cornerstone of a number of careers such as video filming, animation etc- are all dependent on the knowledge of visual arts".*

The management staff member concurred: "Definitely. My own children took VSLA and they still benefit from the knowledge".

The dramatic arts teacher (5), music teacher (2) and English teacher (7) shared similar sentiments regarding this question:

- *"Yes. It is a learning area that seeks to curb lack of creativity by maximising it. It enables learners to learn and appreciate its history".*

- *"Yes, artists are very open-minded, so I think since we have V/A as a learning area in our school, we will produce an open-minded generation of matriculants".*

- *"I do acknowledge visual arts as a significant learning area. I believe that art stimulates one's mind and improves creativity which comes in handy in other learning areas".*

5.4 VISUAL ARTS LEARNER'S RESPONSES (GRADE 12)

The following is an analysis of the questionnaire responses from School X's Grade 12 Visual Arts class of 2021. This investigation focuses specifically on the Matric class who were all given questionnaires in the hope of achieving a decent response rate. In the end, ten learners out of a total of twenty responded, including only two males. The following is an overview of their answers.

5.4.1 What do you think of Visual Arts as a further education and training (FET) subject?

There are two respondents, a male and female, who stated that they are "unsure" how they perceived Visual Arts as an FET subject. This response can be taken at face value, in that they simply can't define their experience with (and feelings towards) the subject. It is also possible that they were simply uninterested and didn't take the time to consider the question. In contrast, three female respondents expressed very similar sentiments regarding Visual Arts' status and level of recognition. Their answers speak directly to the research questions:

- *"Visual Arts as a further education and training subject can be beneficial to those who do visual arts but in my opinion, I think Visual Arts should have a different school/ its own school of arts because no one pays attention to it".*

- *"Visual Arts is a subject that people take for granted not knowing you can be an international artist by taking V. Arts in University. You are qualified and easily recognized"*

- *"It is a subject that is taken for granted and is not well recognised in the school".*

Three other female learners saw Visual Arts as an opportunity to improve their drawing skills and use their ability to draw to process difficult life experiences. One of the male participants stated that he chose Visual Arts because he wanted to further his university studies within the field. Lastly, a response from a learner who identified as 'other' made the significant observation that Visual Arts has a great influence on creativity but, most importantly, influences learners to perform well in other subjects by using their creative mind.

5.4.2 As a Visual Arts Learner, what role has the subject played for you?

Four respondents to this question indicated that Visual Arts has made a great impact in terms of their main reason for taking the subject, which is learning how to draw and improving their skills. The next three respondents are females who concurred that art has made a positive impact in their lives to help them conquer and overcome difficult life experiences and express their emotions. In addition, one female felt that the subject is a step towards a career path she wants to follow, while another female learner expressed that the creativity taught her to be more open-minded, not just in art but in other subjects and life situations in general. The remaining male learner claimed to have acquired a better understanding of the subject content, which has empowered him with a clear and better perspective of art.

5.4.3 How important do you think Visual Arts is at School X? Give specific reasons for your answer

The majority of the respondents to this question, six learners including one male, deem Visual Arts to be an unrecognised and undervalued subject in the school for various reasons.

- *"I do not think it is a subject that actually gets recognized enough".*

- *"I think it is extremely important however, our school does not expose art to kids that much. I think we would have so many more artists in School X if it was exposed to people/kids more".*

- *Visual Arts is not highly recognized as other subjects such as Maths and Science".*

- *Learners do not know much about the subject offered at the school; it is not well recognized".*

- *Visual Arts is not highly recognized as much as learners and teachers would like".*

- *The school doesn't expose Visual Arts that much to the learners and parents".*

Three other learners believe that they have benefitted from the subject in terms of gaining confidence and mentioned the contribution the subject can potentially make to the school.

- *A lot of children get confidence through Arts, and some express their emotions through Arts. It helps us grow and we also learn about the background of Arts.*
- *I think it is very important, it allows learners who are artistic to channel their minds in a constructive way.*
- *I think culturally it will have a big impact to the school because of the different styles and techniques the students have.*

The last response is from a female who gives a vague answer with no direction.

- *Helps learners improve.*

5.4.4 What knowledge and perception do you think your parents have about Visual Arts as a learning area?

Four learners noted that their parents as being uninformed about Visual Arts but took the initiative to learn from their children and gained a better understanding of the subject. They now fully support and encourage their children to achieve better marks and follow a career within the field. Three other learners answered along similar lines in saying their parents felt they were wasting their time with Visual Arts as there are no job opportunities available for it. In addition, two learners said that their parents just don't pay attention to the subject, so it doesn't matter. One learner felt that parents should seek to understand the reasons their child takes the subject.

5.4.5 How well do you think Visual Arts is resourced in the school in terms of staff, equipment and time in the curriculum?

A total of seven learners believe that Visual Arts is under-resourced in the school. Mention is made of only having two teachers, along with a few other points:

- *"There is not enough space and only two teachers available. Not enough time for the classes during the week".*

- *"it's not highly resourced as there are two teachers and regarding the space and time it is not resourced as some other schools are".*

- *"We only have two Visual Arts teachers, and their classes are situated at the base of the school. The classes are small, and we do not have enough equipment".*

- *"Visual Arts is a well-resourced subject in School X. However, we only have three educators throughout the school I think personally we could have more".*

- *"We only have two teachers for grade 10 to grade 12 and we only use equipment that we have".*

- *"There is not enough space for everyone and not enough equipment".*

- *"I think it is well resourced, but there is room for improvement".*

It is also mentioned that classrooms are situated at the base of the school, feeling that the subject is secluded from other subjects, and not having enough time in the class. The remaining three learners believed that the resources were sufficient, but wanted to see them increase, along with potentially appointing an additional teacher.

5.4.6 As a Visual Arts learner, how do non-Visual Arts learners react towards you?

A total of four learners stated that other learners believe they are taking a very easy subject and that this inflates their grades. Three learners described others' perceptions of them as 'weird', in the sense that they are doing something unusual or unrecognized. A female learner states that "as a Visual Arts learner, other students pay attention to our works and encourage and motivate us. They however say they are unable to do art because they don't know how to do it, however if they try and if they are exposed to it more everyone is capable" [sic].

A male learner states that "they are open-minded", while the last female respondent appears to have no experience regarding this question as she gave no answer.

5.4.7 Why did you choose to take Visual Arts as a subject?

Nine out of ten learners maintain that they chose Visual Arts because they have always been fascinated by it. This passion influenced their decision to take art as a subject because they were eager to learn and understand it more. The remaining learner mentions the difficulty they had in another subject and saw the need to change to something more interesting and suitable for them.

5.4.8. Do you as an individual acknowledge Visual Arts as a significant learning area? Explain in detail.

Again, nine out of ten learners believe that the subject is significant because of the ability for one to express yourself through art and portraying who you really are, as well as finding the creative experience to be therapeutic. Some interesting responses are shown below:

- *"Yes, Art is fun, and you can actually improve each year".*
- *"Yes. My self-expression and socializing capabilities have improved a lot".*
- *"Yes, because it has helped me unfold my creativity and has made a great impact in my schooling life".*

The remaining learner didn't believe that Visual Arts was of much significance as a subject and that it was something people don't pay much attention to.

5.5   VISUAL ARTS LEARNERS' PARENTS' RESPONSE

The following is an analysis of the questionnaire responses of the parents of the Grade 12 Visual Arts learners of 2021. It was hoped that ten parents would consent to participate, thereby corresponding to the number of learners, however, only five responded. This didn't come as a surprise, seeing that the research by Acharya (2010), as mentioned in the first chapter, pointed out that respondents may lack interest or fail to understand what is expected of them.

When following up with the learners, they attributed this to parents either losing their questionnaires or simply not applying their time to answer the questions. The majority of the respondents are female parents possibly indicating the interests and initiative taken according to gender, although there can be other reason. Nonetheless, the following are the responses of the questions as they appear on the questionnaire.

5.5.1 What do you think of Visual Arts as a further education and training (FET) subject?

Four of the five parents, including the only male, responded that they don't know much about the subject. The other female parent answered that she believes "it is a good subject, because of the experience and performance in it".

5.5.2 How important do you think Visual Arts is at your child's school? Give Specific reasons for your answer

It is interesting to learn that four parents have concurred that the subject is "*not important because they learnt about it when their children wanted to take it as a FET subject, and the subject is not advertised*". Only one parent says it is important because their child enjoys the subject and speaks about it often.

5.5.3. What convinced you as a parent to allow your child to take Visual Arts a learning subject? And why?

For this question, three parents responded with similar answers. One said that they *"did not deprive [their child] from taking the subject because [they] believe in letting them do what they like and have interest in"*.

An interesting response was received from a male parent who stated that "*we are not happy with [our] child's choice because there are not much job opportunities in the field".* A female parent stated that their child chose the subject without informing them about it.

5.5.4 What knowledge and perception do you as a parent have on Visual Arts as a learning area?

All the parents agreed that they do not know much about the subject apart from what their children have told them. However, the male and one female parent pointed out that they understand the subject "teaches learners to draw".

5.5.5 How well do you think Visual Arts is resourced in School X in terms of staff, space, equipment and the time on the curriculum?

Only one parent expressed an opinion on this matter, stating that *"I do not think it's well-resourced and there are only two teachers of the subject in the school".* The other four parents, including the male, have only met one Visual Arts teacher. Additional comments were that the main Visual Arts classroom is isolated and that one of their children complained about the shortage of paint.

5.5.6 Do you think Visual Arts teachers in the school execute their work effectively?

A response from the only male, as well as one female parent, concurred that they were uncertain if the teachers are executing their duties well, as their children are only just managing to pass. The three remaining female parents felt that the teachers are doing well, and that their children are getting good marks and know exactly what and how to do the work.

5.5.7 As a parent of a Visual Arts learner, what role do you think the subject has played for your child?

A very interesting response from the male parent is that his son *"achieves better marks in Visual Arts than in geography, which is a subject he dropped for art".* Notably, three parents mentioned an improvement in their child's confidence. The first female mentioned their *"child being creative and confident", while the* second stated that *"he has gained more confidents [sic] and enjoys school better".*

The third parent answered by saying that *"she has become more confident with not only her schoolwork, but as a person, because she is doing what she loves"*.

The last respondent highlighted the fact that "my child is open-minded and is really good in drawing and creativity".

5.5.8 Do you as an individual acknowledge Visual Arts as a significant learning area? Explain in detail

In response to this question, the male parent plainly stated that *"no, I do not understand its significance"*, while the female parent also said *"no, however it has played a big role in my child's schooling life"*. The other two female parents felt that the subject is significant, particularly regarding the role it has played in their children's lives from a personal growth perspective.

Finally, the last female parent responded in the affirmative and added that *"my child is now better excited about school [sic] and is doing well"*.

5.6 OBSERVATIONAL EVIDENCE

The inclusion of observational evidence is to understand the environment and space in which the learning takes place. In this case, it is to understand how and where Visual Arts is presented, referring to the classroom and position of the class on the premises of School X. Ndlovu (2016:137) concurs that, "observations take place in the setting where the phenomenon of interest naturally occurs instead of a location designated for interviewing". As a result, the following includes the observation of the environment to determine the position of the classroom within the school. In addition, the classroom is observed to determine the equipment and material the learners have available.

5.6.1 POSITIONING OF CLASS

School X consists of two Visual Arts classes, one for an all-Afrikaans and the other for an all-English class. Basically, learners receive instruction from one teacher based on the language of learning and teaching (LOLT).
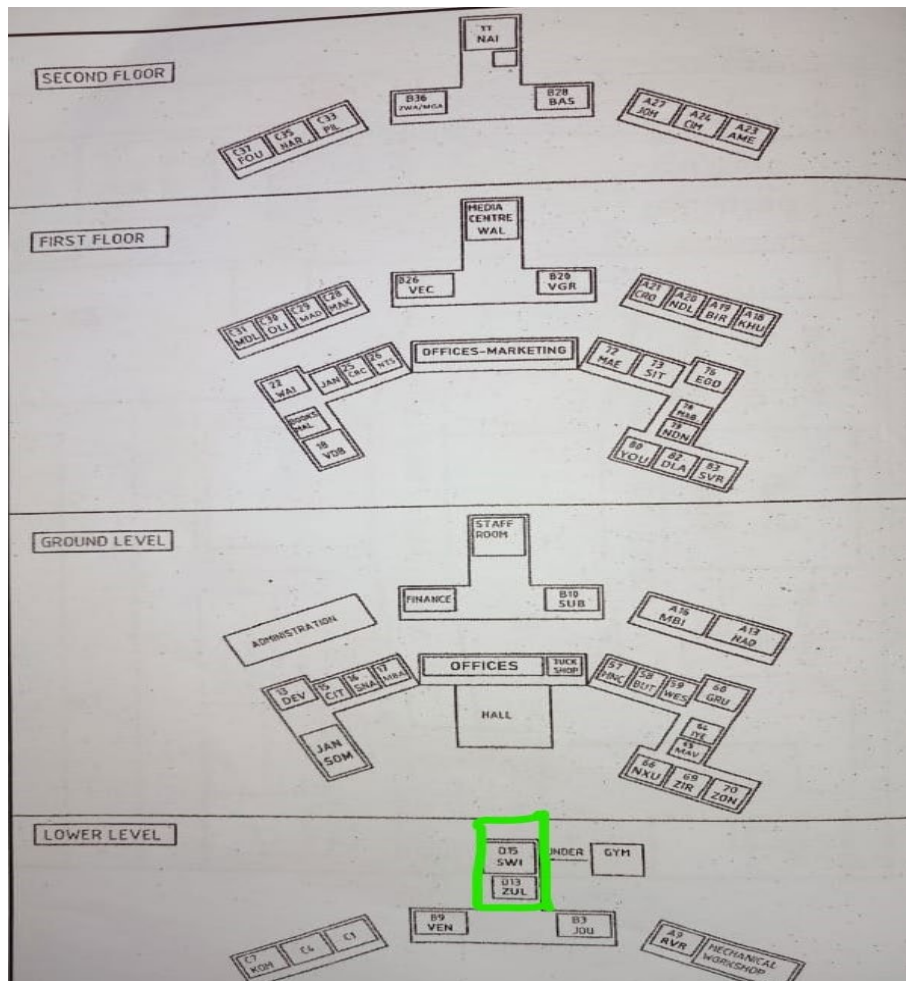
Figure 2 - **School X floor plan**. School X handbook (2022).

The school floor plan in figure 2 highlights the way the school is built and how each class is positioned according to the register class of each teacher. The two Visual Arts classes (highlighted in green) sit next to each other on the lower level of the school premises, isolated from the other classes. The classroom description (D15, ZUL) indicates the class number as well as the teacher's name of the main Visual Arts class that forms part of this investigation. When looking at the overall floor plan, these are two of the few classes that are isolated, and the Visual Arts teachers depend on each other for any assistance and enquiry.

It would be fair to say that other teachers are largely unaware and uninformed of the challenges and progress that occur in these classrooms unless informed by the teacher, or if a major event occurs. This could be indication of the status of Visual Arts within the school and the role of the subject with reference to how the school management sees the subject.

5.6.2 CLASSROOM SETTING, EQUIPMENT AND MATERIAL

The image below (Figure 3) shows the Visual Arts classroom setting in School X. Due to Covid regulations, desks were arranged to provide as much spacing as possible, with learners seated at individual, single desks. However, judging from the image the class is quite small and this may be the reason learners have limited art forms to explore, that is, only being able to create art on paper or small canvasses. The learners use pencil, charcoal, and paint (figure 4) as material provided by the school. It is important to note that the school has a full camera surveillance system, and the Visual Arts classes are not installed with them.

Figure 3 - **Classroom setting of Visual Arts in School X** (2021).

In addition, the right corner by the window is a storage space for the learner's work, which is essential for the safekeeping of their work. However, the storage consumes space that could otherwise create additional room to spread the desks apart. The image also indicates the lack of equipment such as easels for each learner. The main Visual Arts teacher (Mr Y:2021), highlighted the fact that "each learner is expected to buy themselves an easel" as it is not part of the school equipment budget.

Seemingly, the learners are only exposed to drawing and painting as an option, which suggests limited options to explore their creativity. This also indicates a lack of equipment and material such as clay, wire, sculpture, and printmaking, to name a few artistic processes that can be used to create artworks. Consequently, this speaks to question four of this research which asks if the class has sufficient resources such as material, equipment, and staff.

Figure 4- **Visual Arts Paint material** (2021).

I include staff members, as learner numbers are limited when it comes to choosing Visual Arts because only a certain number of students can be accommodated. In addition to that, the staff employed are a retiree and a young teacher that is not fully qualified. This raises a question as to how and why a well-resourced school does not create a job opportunity for a young, fully qualified Visual Arts teacher.

Though the current teachers are producing excellent results, the young educator is not fully qualified and working unsupervised, while there are little to no opportunities available for younger people who are qualified, unemployed, and possibly full of new

ideas and enthusiasm. As a retiree, the senior Visual Arts teacher may be producing good results but is ultimately occupying a position that can be filled by a young teacher. It seems that the school management is not seeking to create job opportunities for young people in some cases, as not enough attention is given to subjects such as Visual Arts. Young people are better informed and innovative because of their exposure to technology and contemporary art.

5.6.3 TIME ALLOCATED

There is an official time allocated to each subject as part of the curriculum of the South African education policy (CAPS). According to CAPS Grade 10-12 (2011:7), Visual Arts falls under group B as an elective subject within NSC. Each of these elective subjects is allocated four hours a week, as indicated on Figure 5 below.

SUBJECT	TIME ALLOCATION PER WEEK (HOURS)
Home Language	4.5
First Additional Language	4.5
Mathematics	4.5
Life Orientation	2
A minimum of any three subjects selected from **Group B** Annexure B, Tables B1-B8 of the policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12, subject to the provisos stipulated in paragraph 28 of the said policy document.*	12 (3x4h)
TOTAL	27,5

Figure 5 - **CAPS subject allocation**

The timetable of the Visual Arts teacher shown below (Figure 6) seems to have a varied time allocation for the two weeks. Day 1 to Day 5 is a week's time and Day 6 to Day 10 is another week's time, starting from Monday.

Day 1 to Day 5 Week	Day 6 to Day 10 Week
- The Grade 12 class has Visual Arts three times a week, which is 3 hours for this week. - This suggests an imbalance in the time learners have for Visual Arts, resulting in more pressure During the Day 6 to Day 10 week there are more hours invested. - The pressures of one week may not be the same as the other week and this could be adjusted as there are free periods available. Therefore, some learners may have a harder time catching on.	- The Grade 12 class has 5 hours of Visual Arts in this week. - Learners work at different paces, so they need individualised attention and time to absorb the information taught. - This is also with reference to the responses from learners on the questionnaires on the role of Visual Arts improving their drawing skills. This suggests learners seeking more attention and time for such which may rely in equal time share between the theory and practical.

Day 1	VSLA 10E Line3 11	VSLA 12E Line3 D15	VSLA 11E Line3 D13			
Day 2	VSLA 10E Line3 15		VSLA 12E Line3 D15			VSLA 11E Line3 D13
Day 3					VSLA 10E Line3 15	VSLA 11E Line3 11
Day 4	VSLA 12E Line3 D13	VSLA 11E Line3 D13	VSLA 11E Line3 D13			VSLA 10E Line3 11
Day 5	VSLA 10E Line3 D13	VSLA 10E Line3 D13				VSLA 11E Line3 D13
Day 6		VSLA 12E Line3 D15	VSLA 12E Line3 D15	VSLA 11E Line3 D13		
Day 7	VSLA 12E Line3 D15					VSLA 10E Line3 11
Day 8					VSLA 12E Line3 D13	VSLA 11E Line3 D13
Day 9	VSLA 11E Line3 D13	VSLA 12E Line3 D15		VSLA 10E Line3 15		
Day 10				VSLA 10E Line3 15		VSLA 12E Line3 D13

Figure 6- **Visual Arts Teacher Timetable** (2021).

The times allocated above is by the school management, and it would be interesting to discover whether they considered the challenges that may affect the learning process.

5.7   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I analysed the outcomes derived from the research instruments, which are the documents, questionnaires, and the observational evidence. Each instrument greatly added to the knowledge required to answer the research questions. The information gathered from the school's website and online newspaper were not of equal value, but it was concluded that the online newspaper contains sufficient information on the school's history. This became an issue because it was not possible to validate and append information regarding the school.

Secondly, questionnaires were analysed and found to have no sufficient explanation in some instances and participants were found to have general or insufficient knowledge about Visual Arts. Lastly, the observational evidence points out important information regarding the material, time, and staff, although this knowledge may not be considered problematic to the role and status of Visual Arts in the school. In the next chapter, these problems are discussed in detail.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I analyse the findings of the outcomes from the research instruments used for this study, these being the documents, questionnaires, and observational evidence. The analysis of documents was implemented to set sketch the background of how School X emerged, developed, and evolved. However, most importantly documents were to analyse if the school made any claims about the role and status of Visual Arts. Meanwhile, the questionnaires were implemented to understand the individual experiences of a variety of the school's personnel, learners, and parents in seeking to answer the research questions. Lastly, the observational evidence is used to consolidate the outcomes determined from the document and questionnaires, for triangulation that is explained in detail in chapter four. This helped answer the main research question of this study: *What is the role and status of Visual Arts as a learning area in the school, according to official school policies espoused by school management?* I will start by discussing the findings from the documentary evidence using the school's website and online local newspaper.

6.2   THE DOCUMENT FINDINGS

I discovered that the school website contains limited information about its history, the progress particularly from its founding and understanding how long Visual Arts has been offered. The website does, however, have more detailed information regarding the school's pass rates and other achievements as well as yearbooks that highlight the events and experiences of every Grade 12 class starting from the year 1966 up to the latest 2018 version. This is interesting, considering that the school started in 1957 and is still running to date. It is possible that there is no record of the early years, as there are no printed yearbooks available. As a sidenote, each yearbook is based on the school's greatest highlights of the year.

According to Mr X (2021) Visual Arts was "offered by at least three teachers before him and was initially only offered in Afrikaans". According to the yearbooks, a feature of the learners' art has only been included in more recent years, from 2012 up to the 2018 yearbook, to be precise.

It was also interesting to see that the 2012 yearbook is the only one to display works from the Grade 11 Visual Arts classes, while the rest display Grade 12 work as per the yearbook mandate. I also learned that the 2013 yearbook does not have any art displayed in it, although the school had started offering Visual Arts in 2012. This may not have been a priority in 2013. While that is the case, both the Visual Arts teacher and some of the other teachers confirmed in their questionnaire responses that, "the school management organises an exhibition for the Visual Arts learners". Yet, the artworks are displayed in the different yearbooks with no evidence of that. In my view, it does not appear that the artworks displayed on the yearbook were actually organised exhibitions and whether school management plays a role in organising the exhibitions.

I also analysed the different yearbooks and noticed that the display has shifted tremendously. In my view and understanding of art display, it is important to create enticing and well-designed visuals for it to appeal to viewers. For instance, the 2012 yearbook displays the art haphazardly (Figure 6) and over the years the design has obviously improved and is much more interesting to look at (Figure 7). The difference between the displays may indicate that the focus for Figure 6 was to present it "in the interest of" the school image. By this, I mean that the art may have been featured simply to advertise the fact that the school offers art, as opposed to showcasing the learners' creativity and talent.

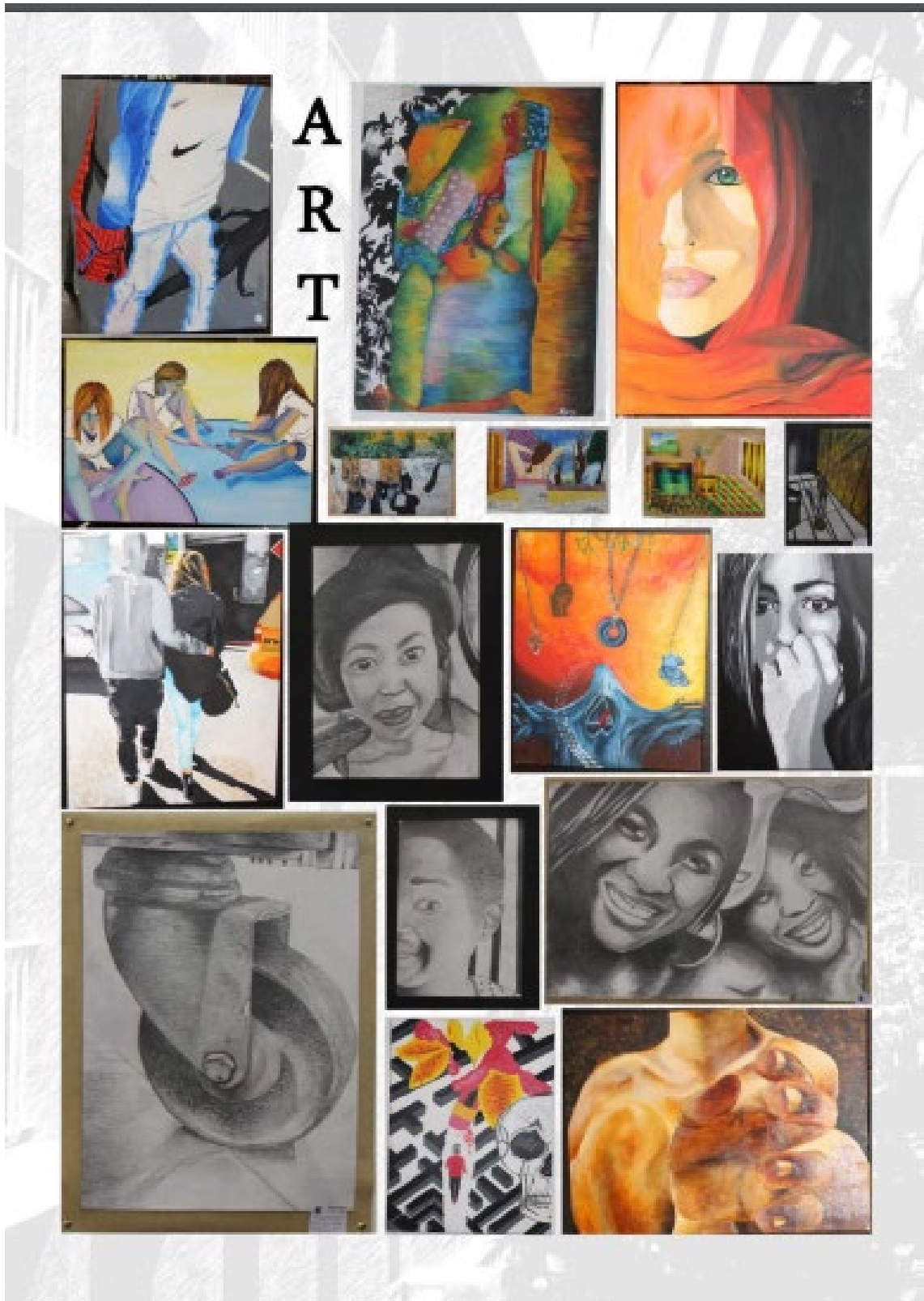Figure 7 - **Visual Arts Online display** (2012).

Figure 8- **Visual Arts Online display** (2015).

In terms of promoting the school's subjects and activities, the local online newspaper features substantial information regarding the school's history and past achievements and highlights major events, such as international exchange programmes for some of the learners within the maths and science field. This is an example of creating exposure for other subjects and showing what opportunities these fields can offer learners. This contrasts with the questionnaire response of a music teacher when asked how the school management was promoting Visual Arts as a learning area. The teacher responded that they weren't, and that the focus was mainly on maths, science, and languages. He added that *"Visual Arts is the least of their worries".* This question received very specific responses that appear show an understanding and reflection of Visual Arts as a subject in the school. On the other hand, Mrs X and a maths teacher clearly highlight the concerns of this study that is, Visual Arts not seen as an educational subject. This is also emphasized by Ekwam (2009) in chapter two.

According to my findings, this response is the only one that specifically answered the question, and it also concurs with the theory of Ekwam (2009:2) touched on in Chapter Two. The other teachers referred to the arrangements that the management makes for an exhibition to occur every year, as opposed to the actual processes of promoting the subject. Interestingly, the CAPS (2011:40) document states that it is mandatory for school management to decide for the exhibition as part of the curriculum.

The findings show that the school management is performing duties that are compulsory and not additional. It is evident that non-Visual Arts and management staff were unable to give substantive or insightful answers to the question *How is school management advocating the status and role of Visual Arts as a learning area?* The school is consistently updating its website with current events and achievements, but there is never any mention of Visual Arts, even during the time of the exhibition. This leads back to the main research question mentioned in this chapter's introduction, and when considering the findings above it is evident that Visual Arts is undervalued in terms of its role and status. As a subject, it should not only be familiar to the Visual Arts learners and their parents, but the larger community including the school's sponsors and the parents of non-Visual Arts learners.

My analysis of the above findings indicates that the school offers Visual Arts in order to expand FET subject choices; and that it is not held in very high regard in terms of its status. However, management does make the necessary efforts to meet the requirements of the school plan and uphold the school's image and standards. Accordingly, artworks are featured in the yearbook, while they also host an annual exhibition, though it is only known about and promoted internally.

6.3   QUESTIONNAIRES FINDINGS

6.3.1 Management and Staff Respondents' Findings

The following is an analysis of the responses from the staff and management with the focus on the research questions. Distributing and collecting the questionnaires was challenging in the sense that there were a lot of questionnaires that had to be handed out manually, while the process of following up and reminding participants to complete them was tedious and time-consuming. The coronavirus restrictions no doubt caused additional delays as staff were not always at the school premises and I could not communicate with the on a personal level to convince them easily as they hesitated to participate. In addition, my experience has proven that in general, people have little interest in applying their minds to think, write and respond truthfully unless they will benefit or even be rewarded for their participation. As a result, not all the questionnaires expected were completed or even returned, as the participants were misplacing them or simply not making time to complete the survey. One particularly disappointing example was the fact that one of the expected key participants, the principal of the school, ended up not responding to the questionnaire.

This gives the impression that the principal is not that interested in the subject of Visual Arts, or that he did not want to be put in a position where any potential partiality or lack of understanding could come to the fore. In Chapter Two, it is evident that non-Visual Arts teachers have minimal knowledge and inaccurate perceptions of Visual Arts, and as a former teacher in another field, the principal may be unintentionally biased against Visual Arts, as pointed out by Ekwam (2009). In fairness, his decision not to participate could have also been due to any number of other reasons, including personal reasons.

I am, however, satisfied with receiving feedback from at least one key respondent from management, that being the head of department (HOD) for Technology, under which Visual Arts falls. The findings of the response from the HOD are based on the role and policies management espoused to the school. Firstly, it is interesting to note that Visual Arts falls under the technology department when it is clearly understood to develop "drawing and creativity" skills, as per the overall staff feedback on the first question on the survey. This response clearly suggests that the subject involves freehand drawing and the creation of projects using different art equipment. This is a general perception people have regarding art, according to Ekwam (2009), as highlighted in Chapter Two. It is unlikely for art to be considered technical unless referring to technical drawing. This is evident from the theory of Medina-Jerez et al. (2012) and Chessin and Zander (2006), among others.

Secondly, the response of Mrs X to the main research question is very vague and speculative. It appears that this management staff appears to have a generic overview regarding the topic and is not a person who works closely with Mr Y. She stated that hers is a supervisory role, and it appears that she may not necessarily be informed about what exactly happens within the subject as she focuses on the administration of the subject such as ordering equipment. She was unable to answer one of the questions and most of her answers are quite generic and vague, making it difficult to determine her level of knowledge about the subject. It appears that the staff members understood the requirements of the first question as they have knowledgeable responses, which appeared not the case with Mrs X. A response from the one of the music teachers above appears to be a definition similar to a google search or that is on the CAPS documents.

I also include an analysis on the feedback of the non-Visual Arts teachers as well as Mr Y's respond regarding the main research question. My general speculation and experience with the perceptions people have of Visual Arts is discussed in the abstract of this study. That is conversations with people who consider Visual Arts easy, and a subject hardly recommended for its role and significance. Ekwam (2009) discovered that non-Visual Arts teachers regard the subject as therapeutic and creative.

In this study, teacher's (1), (2), (3) and (4) responded along the lines of it being a subject for creativity, containing knowledge that is useful for the subject only, not applicable elsewhere. This contradicts the findings of Ebner (2006) and Lindström (2010) in chapter two, where Visual Arts is clearly indicated for its contribution to not just other subjects but schooling and life in general. Teacher's (5) and (6), while admitting that they have no real knowledge of the subject, also gave similar responses. In my view, these responses are based on the general understanding and speculations of teachers who have no specific knowledge about the actual content of this subject. As a result, I believe that most of the non-Visual Arts teachers at School X will not be able to give a brief and accurate summary to a parent or even encourage learners to choose the subject.

6.3.2 Learner Respondents' Findings

This is a discussion of the findings based on the learner responses from the 2021 Grade 12 Visual Arts class of the case study, School X. The majority of the learners, or seven of the ten, concur that Visual Arts is not well recognized or promoted by school management.

This may be the reason why only a small number of learners take the subject, and why so few parents seem to be encouraging and supporting their kids to take the subject. The concern is that the subject is not being promoted in the same way as other subjects that are considered 'more important' or of greater value. This is one of the common factors discovered by Ekwam (2009) in his investigation, as many non-Visual Arts teachers perceive it to be a subject that caters for the less intelligent learners.

Through the questionnaires and background of this study, it was discovered that learners who struggle with other subjects are often moved to Visual Arts in order to pass. These are the things that devalue the subject in the eyes of learners, effectively reducing it to a 'last resort' subject. There is no attention given to the fact that some learners struggle with Visual Arts due to poor grammar and a lack of creativity and critical thinking ability. This is exacerbated by the lack of knowledge from management and other teachers.

Three learners displayed an understanding of how they have benefitted from the subject because they have tapped into their creative capabilities and understand what is expected of them. This testifies to the efforts made by their Visual Arts teacher and does not include how the school promotes the subject to outside learners, parents, and the community at large.

6.3.3 Parent Respondents' Findings

The following is a discussion of the findings from the responses of the parents of the Grade 12 Visual Arts learners. The five parents who responded all indicated that they have no knowledge about Visual Arts and how it was offered in the school. Two parents state that they have an understanding that learning to draw is part of the syllabus. Even though this is true, it appears that parents and most non-Visual Arts teachers have little knowledge of the subject, leading to misconceptions.

The feedback received clearly underlines the fact that the school has not been effective in promoting Visual Arts to parents. It appears that several parents who have allowed their children to take the subject feel obliged to because their children are not performing well in other subjects. They are therefore convinced to accept the switch to a subject like Visual Arts because it is considered easy. In other cases, parents simply support their children to make the decision and allow them to choose the subject without knowing what it entails and how it will benefit them, including future career opportunities. Many learners may take the subject without their parents' consent because they are simply uninvolved, and do not understand its role and purpose, as was discovered in the feedback in Chapter Five.

6.4 OBSERVATIONAL EVIDENCE FINDINGS

The following is a discussion of additional findings that are relevant to this study's focus. In the previous chapter, I determined that the Visual Arts classes in School X are located at the base of the school. It is evident that there are disadvantages to having the classes located further away from all the other classes, one being that non-Visual Arts teachers are not exposed to the activities or the actual content that occurs within the subject.

As a result, not many of the other teachers take time to understand the subject as they are also occupied with their workload. Another observation was that the Visual Arts classes are not installed with cameras like the rest of the school's classes. This indicates a possible lack of support, and the level of importance Visual Arts has in the eyes of school management.

Judging from the responses of the HOD, this is also the reason why they lack knowledge and understanding of the actual activities that happen in these classes. The classroom location and the fact that no cameras were installed add to the impression that the subject is completely isolated. With regards to the classroom setting and equipment, it is evident that the class is quite small and because of coronavirus regulations space is important. The school provides only basic art supplies and there are limited mediums and materials to explore. This might be because the Visual Arts teacher is a pensioner who is not familiar with the ways in which the school can improve its offering. Perhaps the effort has been made, but because the school management does not understand the role of the subject, or due to some unintentional bias, improving the Visual Arts offering may not be a priority.

To conclude, the findings that relate to the times allocated by the school for Visual Arts show a definite imbalance in comparison to the official policy of the South African curriculum. This can be problematic, as it may affect the progress the learners make in learning and understanding the work, and this becomes difficult for the teacher to deal with alone. Time spent on theory may be needed more than practical work, and vice versa.

6.5   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I discussed the findings from the previous chapter that include all the research instruments, these being the documents, questionnaires, and observational evidence. It is clear that Visual Arts has numerous challenges that management is not aware of, and the role and status of the subject are overlooked. The school management also appears to be out of touch because they are overlooking minor yet important issues such as the classroom location and size that highlight the neglect of Visual Arts. In the final chapter, I consolidate this research investigation with a conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1   INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study was to explore the role of Visual Arts in a South African high school, using School X as a case study based in the King Cetshwayo District. To recap, this study was guided by the following research questions: What is the role and status of Visual Arts as a learning area in the school, according to official school policies espoused by school management?; What knowledge and perceptions do Senior Phase teachers of other subjects have about Visual Arts as a learning area? ; What do Visual Arts teachers at School X experience in terms of the status given to their subject in practice?; How well is Visual Arts resourced in School X, in terms of staff, space, equipment, and time in the curriculum?; How does the enacted curriculum compare with espoused, official curriculum and school policies?; and What insights can the situation at School X reveal about the challenges facing Visual Arts in South African government schools?

In pursuit of understanding Visual Arts in the FET Phase within the South African curriculum, a definition of what the subject offers is detailed in Chapter Two. In the process, I explain the motivation for undertaking the study, which was to determine the perceptions in South African schools on Visual Arts as a high school subject. Several resources are mentioned to put my personal experiences in perspective by comparing them with the findings and observations of different researchers regarding the introductory phase of art from early childhood through to the senior level. Writers such as Ekwam (2009) discovered the knowledge gap non-Visual Arts teachers have about the subject that, seemingly is present on some teachers in School X, while McCarthy and Ondaatje (2004), Ebner (2006), and Nompula (2012) define the role of Visual Arts in the curriculum. Its function is compared to that of science and its significance and impact on society are highlighted which is clearly not evident in School X. These previous findings informed the progress of this study and enabled me to further investigate the research questions.

7.2 CONCLUSIONS

7.2.1 What is the role and status of Visual Arts as a learning area in the school, according to official school policies espoused by school management?

The analysis and the findings for this question are based on the document; the questionnaires containing the responses from the staff, management, Visual Art teacher; and the observational evidence.

The outcomes of the findings from the different instruments are unpacked in detail in Chapter Six as this is the main research question. It can be concluded that School X's policy, as espoused by school management, appears to have an immense impact on the misconceptions about the role and status of Visual Arts. This is based on the classroom allocation and setting, timetable, as well as equipment. Management is not aware of the negative impact the isolation of the classes has and that is why they are not aware of the activities, curriculum and challenges that affect the Visual Arts teachers. It appears that the basic equipment needed is available for the learners to explore. However, different art forms or mediums are not available to allow learners to interpret their work differently as some activities included in the official South African curriculum can be explored differently. It also appears that staff members and management responded vaguely to this question because of lacking knowledge about the needs of Visual Arts learners.

The school is well-resourced in terms of sponsors and can offer a variety of art forms. As mentioned by a music teacher, I concur that a Visual Art Studio can greatly impact the space and proper facilities can be created to cater for the different art forms. The classroom used for Visual Arts is clearly a standard classroom that has been improvised to suit the basic needs for the subject to be included in the school curriculum, but it is obviously not prioritized. It was interesting to discover that one maths teacher stated that "the school provides funding for learners/students to attend exhibitions to view different arts so that they gain inspiration".

This is not the case, because according to the Visual Arts teacher (2021), he has unsuccessfully tried to arrange such field trips in the past, confirmed that the learners have not attended exhibitions, at least not in a school capacity. In addition, a business studies teacher also stated that "the school has a Visual Arts classroom that caters for practical's".

This is also untrue, particularly for the Grade 12 learners, as the Visual Arts teacher informed me during my visit that the learners use an alternative location in the school to complete their practical's. This situation also affects the class time for the other grades because the teacher is required to sit in during the practical exam, meaning the teacher is unable to attend the other grades during that time. These types of responses suggest a more biased response where the participants modify their responses in favour of the image of the school and can also suggest a lack of knowledge about how other subjects operate.

Based on the above point, it is evident that at least one additional Visual Arts teacher is required, if not a better and bigger space for all activities to happen in. Most of the teachers and management gave very general and basic responses in their understanding of Visual Arts and its curriculum. The findings appear to show a misconception and little knowledge on the subject as the responses were not detailed, which is what Ekwam (2009) discovered and is aligned with my ideas and assumptions. For these reasons, it can be concluded that learners are not encouraged to do the subject and parents are not exposed to or properly informed about the subject. School X's Vision states that:

It is our vision to empower our Learners with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitude to enter their future with assertiveness, passion and commitment.

This vision statement states that the school accommodates all aspects of the school curriculum. However, most of the learners who participated in this study have stated that they believe Visual Arts is not recognized enough in the school. This is also emphasized Ornstein (1987) mentioned in chapter three.

This is where Ornstein makes emphasis that there are different career choices and as different as they are they can be integrated into each other, making any learning area as important as another. In other words, Visual Arts is seen appropriate to be part of School X but not integrated in other subjects which underpins its status and role with the school.

Based on the questionnaire responses from the parents, as they say they have very limited knowledge and most of them have no knowledge at all on Visual Arts. This highlights the impression that   the school could not be advocating for or promoting Visual Arts to parents and the community.

7.2.2   What knowledge and perceptions do Senior Phase teachers of other subjects have about Visual Arts as a learning area?

A Business Studies teacher (7) and English teacher (1) stated that they have no knowledge about the subject and indicated that they think drawing is a learnt skill. This is true; however, this response gives an impression similar to the conversation that prompted this study as mentioned in the background section. For that reason, it can be concluded that these teachers only have a general understanding, which has been the main observation of this study, proven evident by the responses received. Teacher (4) believe the subject teaches knowledge and skills that are only useful to the subject. This is contradicted by numerous writers, as highlighted in the literature review; as well as the explanation of the significance of the subject included in Chapter Four. It can be concluded that my speculations about the teachers outside of Visual Arts are supported, as their responses demonstrate a lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject and what it offers.

7.2.3   How well is Visual Arts resourced in School X, in terms of staff, space, equipment, and time in the curriculum?

This question is answered by the management and staff, the Visual Arts teacher, and learners, as well as their parents. Based on the responses, the majority believe that School X is well resourced, though most of the teachers' answers are very vague, including one saying that,

"It is well resourced; we have enough space and art material available". These types of answers are not substantive and come across as generic and 'safe' answers. It is clear that the teachers are not well informed about what actually occurs in Visual Arts. On the other hand, the Visual Arts learners respond with more detailed answers such as "it's not highly resourced, as there are only two teachers and regarding the space and time, it is not resourced as some other schools are". This learner is aware that they require more space and teachers, and it appears that the learner struggles to complete the work within the allocated time. Based on the attached sample of the timetable (Figure 5), it appears that the structured time is imbalanced and is affecting the progress of some learners.

Finally, the parents' subject knowledge is solely based on the little knowledge they gain from their children as well as feedback they received from teachers regarding their children's progress. Some of the parents have met both or at least one of the teachers, and one parent is aware of the class being in an isolated area of the school. Majority of the Visual Arts learners also highlighted the lack of equipment as some of them appear to have contact with Visual Arts learners from other schools. It can be concluded from the findings that although School X is well-resourced in general, Visual Arts lags behind in terms of not having an appropriate classroom or equipment in addition to being understaffed.

7.2.4 How does the enacted curriculum compare with the espoused, official curriculum and school policies?

Based on the findings in Chapter Five, it is clear that the Visual Arts teacher enacted the curriculum according to the learning capabilities of the different learners. The CAPS document states that each additional subject from group B requires four hours per week, however, the table time (Figure 5) of the Visual Arts teacher shows an imbalance in how the weekly hours are allocated. This creates a scenario where learners will spend 3 hours in Visual Arts one week, and 5 hours the week after. This appears to give the impression that there is an alteration to the way the curriculum is delivered to the learners, who have no choice but to adapt. In the official curriculum (2011:32) it is stated that "learners are to explore any arts and craft form suitable for the chosen material.

This means that learners should be exposed to different creative hand-making forms using various mediums and materials. Figures 5 & 6 show that the learners in School X work with paint, pencils, and pastels to create their work. They do not appear to have experience with any craft work that requires the use of different material such as wire and found material, to name a few. I was able to verify this on an observational visit in May 2022 while the learners were doing their practical work.

7.3   REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In most cases, a qualitative study requires the researcher to be the chief data collector. This was a tedious process that was because of the prolonged respond from the Department of Education (DOE). Permission was first requested from School X's principal particularly to liaise with different school personnel's that were required to assist with resources telephonically or electronically due to the coronavirus regulations. Later, I received response after several months from DOE. This was a disconcerting experience that restrained the progress of this study as it was the ultimate document for this study to materialize. In due time I was able to get the first responses of the questionnaires back and realised that questions needed to be amended to require specific and detailed answers, which became another long process that required waiting and patience.

Even though that was the case, the alteration of the questions developed a better outcome of the responses from the questionnaires from one-word answers to better detailed explanations. In addition, I realised that my questions were broad and vague at first which may have caused the confusion because the altered questioned showed understanding and proof of lack of knowledge were applicable. The experience taught me a lot and assisted me to obtained better results than my first trail. The delay also taught me the importance of respecting people and taking the time to explain what may be confusing them during an opportunity for me to visit the school after strict covid regulations. To also include a few different documents that is CAPS, school handbooks and local and school website, assisted the study with sustainable data that at first, I assumed would come from the school history book which I discovered is non-existence. Lastly, the visit allowed me to obtain observational evidence as well as have short interviews answered by Mr Y as the main data source.

In addition, observational evidence assisted with understanding the environment the subject is offered in and to understand it's position around the school which appears not a priority to management. I also discovered that as much as the times allocated for Visual Arts are imbalance they are as according to the caps document. For that reason, I believe the instruments I used really worked as they give a clear triangulation on the various knowledge required for the outcomes of this research.

That is, the documents on understanding the role of Visual Arts in high schools (CAPS), the local and school website that give different but significant information about the school's history as well as the handbooks on understanding the status of Visual Arts. These assisted tremendously with the data generated. The inclusion of observational evidence concluded the triangulation by understanding the actual situation and positioning of the classes that can have an impact on the status and role of the subject that management is unaware of. In conclusion, I believe I was able to deal with my bias by reflecting and attending more on the perspectives of the individual participants.

7.4   LIMITATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

This study was evaluating a case study that was based on one school, and as a result the outcomes are not transferable to the general population of schools. However, the idea was to discover more about how Visual Arts is offered and treated in this particular school as the outcomes from School X offers concepts that may be of use when considering similar situations. There are a few government schools in KwaZulu- Natal of such calibre, that offer Visual Arts and actually have the capability to improve the status and role of the subject because of its resources. I also believe from the sample, I had anticipated the results would be richer and more detailed if I had received the greater number of expected responses, and especially with receiving feedback from the school principal. Lastly, as someone who has taught in that school, I may have some researcher bias as I chose this school and this topic based on my desire to understand the situation better.

However, I have acknowledged this position and by reflecting on it when drawing my conclusions, I hope I have avoided bias. As a qualitative researcher, I present perspectives on the situation and have tried to use many data sources to balance my description and analysis.

7.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

7.5.1   What insights can the Situation at School X Reveal about the challenges facing visual arts in South African Government Schools?

In this section, I will consolidate the study's findings on the above question to outline the recommendations for this study. It appears that the problems revealed in the findings are only faced by the Visual Arts teachers, who are forced to work around them to meet the requirements of the curriculum. School X is fortunate to have numerous sponsors which most government schools in South Africa do not have. The school has the financial means to offer learners field trips, as highlighted by one of the teachers in their questionnaire responses.

I recommend that the case study school, as well as any other school that wants to motivate their talented young people, invest in taking their Visual Arts classes to visit museums, galleries, and artist studios to give them a better understanding of the different professional perspectives of art, as well as simply inspiring them to work hard and dedicate themselves fully. This gives the school greater possibilities to improve how subjects are offered. The school also has other platforms that can be used for fundraising to finance specific projects or improvements.

If it were prioritised, the school could very likely utilise existing resources to improve the classroom conditions and or build a Visual Arts studio or even just an art centre to accommodate all the art forms they offer. In comparison to most government schools in northern KwaZulu-Natal such as Bhekuzulu high school, School X is rated at a quintile equivalent to some private schools because of its resources and facilities. In addition to the infrastructure issues, a lack of material resources was identified, more so in terms of supplies for different mediums.

This is problematic because it limits learners' exposure to other art forms that could potentially benefit their tertiary studies if they consider furthering their education in the art field. It is my belief that, not every child is good at drawing, while those who are good at craft work do not necessarily draw well. Having more options to choose from will assist learners to understand where their strongest abilities lie, and this can encourage them to further their art studies. Not everyone has the aptitude to pursue careers in maths and science, and as with everything in life, there must be a balance.

There are many other fields that are equally important, and I believe this study adds value by highlighting the lack of recognition disciplines like the arts face within the educational system. Some of the feedback and observations have given me food for thought, for instance, why is there a need to have a retired teacher return from pension to teach Visual Arts when there may be several young unemployed graduates who are looking for work. I am aware of some graduates who have qualifications in Visual Arts or Fine Arts but not a teaching qualification, and while they'd prefer to pursue freelancing, it does not offer a stable income, while a profession like teaching does.

The possibility of teaching is often overlooked, and according to the findings in Chapter 5, there is little knowledge about the potential job opportunities because there are not many jobs or such qualifications. Teachers and parents don't understand that these skills apply to a variety of highly respected and in-demand careers. Therefore, consideration should be given to alternative ways of promoting Visual Arts in School X, as well as other schools that offer the subject. This could start with something basic like their social media platforms, which offer a quick and simple way of reaching employees and communities, including other government schools that want to learn more about the subject. School X also offers Music as a FET Phase subject and because it competes in provincial music competitions, it is promoted online and in other school communications, so unlike Visual Arts, people are better informed when it comes to the music activities of the school.

During an interesting conversation with one of the music teachers, I learned that the school principal is also the school's choir conductor, and the choir has been consistently winning competitions.

It is evident as seen of the school website that their performances have helped to attract sponsorships, which would be well-deserved, but it raises the question whether there is any prejudice towards promoting and investing in Music because the principal is involved. Drama is also offered as a FET subject and the school's annual play is well promoted on social media, both before and after the event. This ensures that the parents and larger community are informed about the subject, or the promotion may possibly be limited to knowledge only based on the play only. The coronavirus has resulted in people spending more time working online, so the promotion of Visual Arts via social media and other digital channels makes sense. One example is to create an online exhibition that is always accessible to the alumni, parents, and the community. An important part of promoting the subject is to give learners and parents detailed information about the possible tertiary- and career options available to Visual Arts learners. This is because the arts field is broad, consisting of subjects like Visual Arts, Drama, Dance and Music.

In most cases, teachers are qualified to teach creative arts in the Senior Phase as a chosen major that consists of these different art fields, but because limited opportunities are available for the FET Phase, some schools are compelled to let Senior Phase teachers cover the FET phase. This is not ideal, because Senior Phase training covers only the basics, while in the FET Phase the work is more advanced and detailed. Being taught by an under-qualified teacher becomes a problem, as learners do not gain sufficient knowledge. Therefore, I highly recommend that learners are encouraged to pursue a career in art, particularly within education. It provides a stable career opportunity and ensures that the next generation of budding artists can hone their skills under the guidance of forward-thinking, qualified teachers. I hope this research study has contributed to showing the importance of valuing Visual arts.

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APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER (DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION)

KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

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

Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Ref.:2/4/8/2006

Miss L Pepli
Unit 57 Dunford Heights
86 Dunford Road
EMPANGENI
3880

Dear Miss Pepli

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"JUST DRAWING: A CASE STUDY OF VISUAL ARTS AS A SUBJECT IN EMPANGENI HIGH SCHOOL, KWAZULU-NATAL"**, 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 01 February 2022 to 02 November 2024.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

KING CETSHWAYO DISTRICT

Dr MJB Mthembu
Acting Head of Department: Education
Date: 07/02/2022

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER (SCHOOL X)

Privaatsak X 20006
EMPANGENI, 3880
Frank Bullstraat
TELEFOON: 035 772 6749
FAKS: 035 792 3163
EPOS: ehs12@telkomsa.net
Hoof:
MNR SD ZWANE

Private Bag x 20006
EMPANGENI, 3880
Frank Bull Road
TELEPHONE: 035 772 6749
FAX: 035 792 3163
EMAIL: ehs12@telkomsa.net
Principal:
MR SD ZWANE

HOËRSKOOL EMPANGENI HIGH SCHOOL

09 October 2020

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to certify that Lindelwa Pepu has been given permission to conduct research based on understanding Visual Arts as a Subject offered in Public Schools. She is granted permission to have an interaction with some of the Staff of Empangeni High School.

Yours sincerely

S. D Zwane
Principal

APPENDIX C: PARTICPANT CONSENT FORM

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL
For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE TEMPLATE

Note to researchers: Notwithstanding the need for scientific and legal accuracy, every effort should be made to produce a consent document that is as linguistically clear and simple as possible, without omitting important details as outlined below. Certified translated versions will be required once the original version is approved.

There are specific circumstances where witnessed verbal consent might be acceptable, and circumstances where individual informed consent may be waived by HSSREC.

<u>Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research</u>

Date:

Greeting:

My name is _____ from _____
You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research_____ . The aim and purpose of this research is to _____. The study is expected to enroll_____. It will involve the following procedures (answering questionnaires). The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be (no more than 10 minutes). The study is funded by (not Funded).

The study may involve the following risks and/or discomforts (discomfort of being honest). We hope that the study will create the following benefits (a better understanding of visual arts as a subject; otherwise state that the study will provide no direct benefits to participants. The study aims to have an influence on more creative practitioners and art educators un the future). The researcher must disclose in full any appropriate alternative procedures and treatment etc. that may serve as possible alternate options to study participation.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at (0731162588) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

CONSENT (Edit as required)

I (Name) _____have been informed about the study entitled (provide details) _____provide name of researcher/fieldworker) _____.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study (add these again if appropriate).I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at (provide details).

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

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion   YES / NO

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   **Date**

_____   _____
Signature of Witness   **Date**
(Where applicable)

_____   _____
Signature of Translator   **Date**
(Where applicable)

APPENDIX D: a) QUESTIONNAIRE (VISUAL ARTS LEARNERS)

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

SCHOOL OF ART

CENTRE FOR VISUAL ARTS

Dear: Participant

I am Lindelwa Pepu student number (217073552). This is for the fulfillment of a Masters in Art History at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am **conducting a case study research titled "Just' drawing: A case study of visual arts as a subject in a northern KwaZulu-Natal state high school."**

I kindly request for your co-operation as a **Visual Arts Learner** in School X to complete this questionnaire. It should take no more 30 minutes of your time to complete the questions below. This information will be used for academic and research purposes only. Your participation will be completely voluntary and information will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your participation in my research.

Sincerely,

Researcher

Miss L Pepu

APPENDIX A

Instructions

Please answer questions as relevant to you. Tick where necessary and or give detailed answers where applicable.

1. Your Gender

(Select only one)
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other

2. Your Role

(Select most suitable)
- ☐ Learner
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Staff
- ☐ Management

3. What do you think of Visual Arts as a further education and training (FET) subject?

4. As a Visual Arts learner, what role has the subject played for you?

5. How important do you think Visual Arts is at School X? Give specific reasons for your answer.

6. What knowledge and perception do you think your parents have about Visual Arts as a learning area?

7. How well do you think Visual Arts is resourced in the school in terms of staff, space, equipment and time in the curriculum?

8. As a Visual Arts learner, how do non-visual arts learners react towards you?

9. Why did you choose to take Visual Arts a subject?

10. Do you as an individual acknowledge Visual Arts as a significant learning area? Explain in detail.

THE END

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

SCHOOL OF ART

CENTRE FOR VISUAL ARTS

Dear: Participant

I am Lindelwa Pepu student number (217073552). This is for the fulfillment of a Masters in Art History at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am conducting a case study research titled "Just drawing: A case study of visual arts as a subject in a northern KwaZulu-Natal state high school."

I kindly request for your co-operation **as a Parent** of learner in School X, to complete this questionnaire. It should take no more 30 minutes of your time to complete the questions below. This information will be used for academic and research purposes only. Your participation will be completely voluntary and information will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your participation in my research.

Sincerely,

Researcher

Miss L Pepu

APPENDIX A

Instructions

Please answer questions as relevant to you. Tick where necessary and or give detailed answers where applicable.

1. Your Gender

(Select only one)
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other

2. Your Role

(Select most suitable)
- ☐ Learner
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Staff
- ☐ Management

3. What do you think of Visual Arts as a further education training (FET) subject?

4. How important do you think Visual Arts is at your child's school? Give specific reasons for your answer.

5. What convinced you as a parent to allow your child to take Visual Arts a learning subject? And Why?

6. What knowledge and perception do you as a parent have on Visual Arts as a learning area?

7. How well do you think Visual Arts is resourced in School X in terms of staff, space, equipment and time in the curriculum?

8. Do you think Visual Arts teacher's in the school execute their work effectively?

9. As a parent of a Visual Arts learner, what role do you think the subject has played for your child?

10. Do you as an individual acknowledge Visual Arts as a significant learning area? Explain in detail.

THE END

APPENDIX F: c) QUESTIONNAIRE
(STAFF/MANAGEMENT/VISUAL ARTS TEACHER)

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

SCHOOL OF ART

CENTRE FOR VISUAL ARTS

Dear: Participant

I am Lindelwa Pepu student number (217073552). This is for the fulfillment of a Masters in Art History at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am conducting a case study research titled **"Just drawing: A case study of Visual Arts as a subject in a northern KwaZulu-Natal state high school."**

I kindly request for your co-operation **as part of the Staff/Management/ Visual Arts Teacher** of School X to complete this questionnaire. It should take no more 30 minutes of your time to complete the questions below. This information will be used for academic and research purposes only. Your participation will be completely voluntary and information will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your participation in my research.

Sincerely,

Researcher

Miss L Pepu

APPENDIX A

Instructions

Please answer questions as relevant to you. Tick where necessary and or give detailed answers where applicable.

1. Your Gender

(Select only one)
☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Other

2. Your Role

(Select most suitable)
☐ Learner
☐ Parent
☐ Staff
☐ Management

3. What do you think of Visual Arts as a further education and training (FET) subject?

4. Why do you think Visual Arts is part of the School X curriculum?

5. How specific evidence can you provide that highlights the importance of Visual Arts in the school? Give specific reasons for your answer.

6. What knowledge and perception do you as a FET teacher have on Visual Arts as a learning area?

7. How well do you think Visual Arts is resourced in your school in terms of staff, space, equipment and time in the curriculum?

8. Do you think Visual Arts teachers in School X get equal acknowledgment as other subject teachers?

9. How is school management advocating the status and role of Visual Arts as a learning area?

10. Do you as an individual acknowledge Visual Arts as a significant learning area? Explain in detail.

THE END