

**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN CURRICULUM
MANAGEMENT OF THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE IN MOPANI WEST DISTRICT,
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Nthatheni Samson Neluheni, declare that this thesis titled “**The role of School Management Teams in Curriculum Management in the Intermediate Phase in Mopani West District Schools**” is my own original work and that all the sources that I used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

N S Neluheni

27.08.2023

Nthatheni Samson Neluheni

Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the following people:

My late father, Tshamaano Johannes Koos Neluheni, whose courageous words to me were “Nwananga, u kondelele tshikolo” (My son, persevere in school). Such words still resound in my mind and ears.

I also dedicate this study to my late wife, Thilivhali Jane Neluheni, and my daughters; Rendani, Tshamaano and Munei for their patience, understanding, love, support, interest and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to examine the function of school management teams (SMTs) in managing the intermediate phase curriculum in the Mopani West District of Limpopo Province. The implementation of SMTs is a significant change brought about by the new education system, which requires school leaders and their SMTs to undergo comprehensive training to contribute effectively to curriculum management. However, despite the training provided, there is evidence of poor curriculum management in the intermediate phase, as demonstrated by learners' academic performance. Guided by Hersey and Blanchard's (2014:215) Situational Leadership theory, this study adopted an interpretive paradigm within the qualitative research approach. A total of 18 participants, comprising six school principals, six deputy principals, and six departmental heads, were purposefully selected for the study. Data was gathered through observation, individual interviews, and document analysis. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data in three interrelated stages, guided by the study's four research questions. The study's findings revealed that SMTs are responsible for the daily management of school affairs and implementing departmental policies. Resources were identified as the most critical support structures, as curriculum management largely depends on the resources available in schools. The study recommends that SMTs should monitor and support curriculum implementation and suggests the development of a Curriculum Management and Delivery Model (CMDM) to assist school management teams in enhancing their curriculum management roles. Additionally, the study highlights the need for comprehensive training to be provided by the Department of Basic Education.

Keywords: *Curriculum; Curriculum Management; Management; School Management Teams*

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANA	:	Annual National Assessment
B. ED	:	Bachelor of Education
B. TECH	:	Bachelor Technologie
BA	:	Bachelor of Arts
CAPS	:	Curriculum and Policy Statement
CER	:	Critical Emancipatory
CLMM	:	Curriculum Leadership and Management Model
CMDM	:	Curriculum Management and Delivery Model
COLT	:	Culture of Teaching and Learning
DBE	:	Department of Basic Education
DBST	:	District-Based Support Teams
DHs	:	Departmental Heads
ECD	:	Early Childhood Development
EQ	:	Educational Quality
HODs	:	Heads of Department
LTSM	:	Learning and Teaching Support Material
NCS	:	National Curriculum Statement
NEPA	:	National Education Policy Act
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNSSF	:	National Norms and Standard for School Funding.
NSNP	:	National School Nutrition Programme
OBE	:	Outcome-Based Education
PIRLS	:	Progress in International Reading and Literacy Studies
QLTC	:	Quality Learner and Teaching Campaign.
QMS	:	Quality Management System
RSA	:	Republic of South Africa
SACMEQ	:	Southern and Eastern African Consortiums for Monitoring
SADTU	:	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SA-SAMS	:	South African Administration and Management System

SED	:	Secondary Education Diploma
SET	:	School-wide Evaluation Tool
SGB	:	School Governing Body
SLT	:	Situational Leadership Theory
SMTs	:	School Management Teams
STD	:	Secondary Teachers Diploma

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUN OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The present research examines the involvement of school management teams (referred to as SMTs) in the management of the curriculum for the intermediate phase in schools located in the Mopani West District, Limpopo Province. The researcher has experienced a significant shift in their career over the past 20 years, transitioning from being a schoolteacher to becoming a departmental head and member of the SMT. In the researcher's role as a departmental head for intermediate phase classes, clear expectations and responsibilities were provided upon induction into the position. The key roles and responsibilities of the SMTs include curriculum management, monitoring and support of teaching and learning (Department of Basic Education, 2015:24). Therefore, SMTs ought to monitor and support teaching and learning to promote learners' performance. The only evidence for effective curriculum management is learners' excellent performance. However, the roles of SMTs in the intermediate phase classes leave much to be desired, as learners continue to perform below expected standards (Department of Basic Education, 2016:3). It is on this basis that challenges pertaining to curriculum management in the intermediate phase classes aroused the researcher's interest to pursue this study.

In the field of education research, it is widely believed that the quality of leadership has a significant impact on school and learner achievements. Bush (2009:203) emphasises that schools require effective leaders and managers to provide the best education possible to learners, a sentiment echoed by the Department of Basic Education (2015:26) which states that School Management Teams (SMTs) are responsible for managing systems and procedures to ensure effective teaching and learning, and to improve learners' achievements. As such, curriculum management is not limited to just the school principal, but also involves other members of the SMTs who oversee specific subjects offered in different phases and grades. The members of the SMTs should collectively share the

responsibility for day-to-day management of teaching and learning, with the principal as the head of the curriculum. Bush and Glover (2010:3) assert that SMTs are responsible for taking the lead in implementing and improving the school curriculum. This means that SMTs have a professional obligation to organise and oversee all activities related to effective curriculum implementation, and to ensure successful teaching and learning outcomes.

From the Australian perspective, Gronn (2013:56) asserts that “school principals do not act alone; they work not only with members of the SMT, staff and the wider school community”. In concurrence, Cardno (2015:111) claims that “the SMTs have resulted from a range of influences, including the greater managerial complexity in school management and administration through a desire for collaboration”. In the United Kingdom, Wallace and Hall (2009:203) hold the view that “the responsibilities of SMT’s include making major decisions on behalf of the staff about curriculum management, policy, practices and the overall running of the school”.

In the South African context, Kruger (2012:206) states that monitoring and supporting teachers and learners’ work for quality is among the roles of the SMTs in schools. According to the Department of Basic Education (2014:30), “the principal, together with the school management team manages the process of teaching and learning within the school in accordance with curriculum policy in the national education policy framework”. The Department of Basic Education (2014:30) further stipulates that SMTs “monitor and support content teaching, by ensuring that the content for teaching and learning is in line with the approved curriculum statement”. Therefore, SMTs’ focus is on improving curriculum delivery and learners’ performance.

To the best of this study’s researcher, curriculum management forms the basis for effective teaching and learning, which means that for a school to be functional and productive, curriculum management should be considered to achieve the set curriculum objectives and goals. This corresponds with Kruger (2012:206) who suggests that SMTs should “ensure that the curriculum is relevant in terms of meeting the demands and

aspirations of the country, and learners must be able to cope within the fourth industrial revolution, socially, politically, scientifically and become culturally accepted”. Kruger (ibid) also submits that it is the responsibility of the SMT to ensure that “production at school is done and realised through tangible objectives”. Previous studies such as that of Bryson (2015:5) investigate the role of school principals in curriculum management leaving a gap on the role of SMTs, otherwise the need for such as study as this one. Therefore, this study takes a qualitative approach to investigate the role of SMTs in curriculum management of the intermediate phase in Mopani West District as the schools in Limpopo Province. This section outlined the detailed context in which the problem has been identified and exposes the need for conducting this study. The next section presents the problem statement of the study.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As a member of the SMT, the current research observes that the curriculum is not effectively managed in the intermediate phase classes. Summative assessments of Grade 6 learners’ performance inform the system of strengths and weaknesses of learners’ achievement levels in this phase. The findings from Progress International Reading and Literacy Studies (PIRLS) and Southern and Eastern African Consortiums for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) tests on Grade 6 mathematics and literacy levels are at 27%, which is far below the expected standards (DBE, 2010:16). This is a concern because literacy and numeracy are the fundamental critical skills to further education and achievement. Hence, this does not blend well with the expectations of curriculum management and its delivery frameworks.

The South African National Curriculum Statement (NCS), also referred to as Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS), is “promulgated to equip learners, regardless of socio-economic background, race, gender, physical disability or intellectual ability, with knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as critical citizens of a free society” (DBE, 2016:23). Therefore, school management teams are expected to take it upon themselves in turning around the

existing status quo in the intermediate phase classes. Despite, the training and in-service workshops conducted to re-skill school principals and their SMTs on curriculum management, the intermediate phase classes curriculum implementation continue to be a challenge. Reports from districts monitoring teams visiting schools reveal, amongst others, the absence of administered tools for curriculum monitoring and support.

According to the researcher's recent observation, there are still some teachers who rely on textbooks instead of adhering to the learning area policy documents for each stage as mandated and outlined in the overarching curriculum management. Also, the departmental heads may develop the curriculum during some phases without consulting the relevant policy papers to determine the evaluation criteria and learning objectives that must be met by the student. Also, the researcher has seen that when students advance to higher grades, disparities in their knowledge and abilities become more obvious. According to Taylor (2006:8), poor training from curriculum managers is to blame for some SMTs' continued confusion about the ideology guiding the curriculum. Due to curriculum leaders' lack of expertise in the curriculum, teachers fail to cover the topics that were intended for the year. According to the DBE (2012:5), this could result in the SMTs inability to effectively oversee the curriculum, which could have a negative impact on students' academic progress.

The Department of Basic Education (2012:5) points out that during training workshops, "teachers, including SMTs, are not familiar with methods of teaching neither curriculum nor are SMTs in possession of specific methods of effective curriculum management". It appears that workshops only give instructors a cursory awareness of curriculum ideas and a fictitious separation between their knowledge and practices. As a result, teachers do not properly organise their curricula (Taylor, 2006:3). With challenges in the curriculum by SMTs, the study investigates the roles of SMTs in curriculum management of the intermediate phase.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

With a distinct focus on Mopani West District in Limpopo Province, the purpose of this study is to investigate the roles of school management teams (SMTs) in curriculum management of the intermediate phase. To realise the purpose of the study, the following research objectives are pursued:

- To determine the roles of SMTs in curriculum management.
- To highlight challenges faced by SMTs in curriculum management.
- To identify resources needed to support curriculum management in schools.
- To establish strategies that SMTs should apply in curriculum management.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research probes are explored in the study in alignment with the objectives of the study:

- What are the roles of SMTs in curriculum management?
- What are the challenges faced by SMTs in curriculum management?
- What are the resources needed to support curriculum management in schools?
- Which strategies may be developed for SMTs in curriculum management in schools?

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Fink (2014:75), a literature review involves investigating and analysing various scholarly sources such as books and articles that are related to a specific research area, issue, or theory. This process helps to provide a detailed account, overview, and evaluation of the literature in question. The researcher believes that a literature review essentially describes the relevant literature within a specific field or subject matter.

1.5.1 The roles of School Management Teams in curriculum management

The primary role of the School Management Team (SMT) is to oversee and direct the management of educational institutions within the wider education system, as stated by Loliwe (2015:3). Each member of the SMT has their own specific duties that must be fulfilled daily. According to Walter (2013:41), the SMT members are accountable for the proficient administration of schools, which includes tasks such as devising plans, organising resources, guiding staff and monitoring progress. To guarantee the smooth operation of schools, it is imperative that the SMT members ensure that all these aspects are carried out effectively.

1.5.1.1 Planning

The South African Democratic Teachers Union (2016:3) asserts that planning is a strategic activity undertaken by School Management Team (SMT) members to exert control over the future. This statement underscores the interconnectedness of planning and action. Similarly, the Department of Basic Education (2012:98) shares a similar understanding of planning, positioning it to sustain ongoing school activities and establish new pathways for development and growth. In contrast, Freddano and Siri (2012:8) view planning as a dynamic process rather than a mere activity. They argue that during the planning process, management teams revise their collective mental model of the market and competitors. Furthermore, according to the Department of Basic Education's Task Team on Education Management Development (2012:15), planning plays a crucial role in ensuring that individuals with the appropriate skills and capabilities are deployed effectively at the right time and place.

Dimba (2001:17) contends that school principals should possess a clear vision for the school's curriculum. This view is supported by October (2009:7), who emphasises that effective principals must envision their schools as organizations and prioritise their role in actualising the vision. This entails communicating the vision to parents, teachers, and students, and aligning mission statements to guide efforts towards achieving the vision.

Furthermore, October (2009:8) argues that leaders should lead by example and translate the vision into concrete actions, such as teaching techniques aligned with the curriculum, even by personally attending to classes if necessary. Additionally, Wahyudin (2010:29) posits that principals should provide managerial and administrative leadership, including promoting and marketing curriculum changes within the institution, reviewing instructional materials, and addressing daily challenges faced by teachers in implementing the curriculum.

School Management Teams (SMTs) are entrusted with the responsibility of measuring teaching outcomes in schools to meet national goals, as stated by Nwangwa and Ometere (2013:160). This entails planning to ensure adequate teacher assignments, controlling school timetabling, procuring teaching materials, and organising teacher retraining. Interaction among principals, SMTs, and teachers is crucial for curriculum development in schools. SMTs act as resource persons by providing support to teachers, ensuring availability of teaching and learning resources, assisting teachers in interpreting curriculum guidelines, and monitoring and supervising teachers' work through class visits. Departmental meetings also serve as a platform for teachers to share their experiences, challenges, and successes (Nwangwa & Ometere, 2013:160). Additionally, SMTs should ensure that teachers understand their intention to assist them where possible (Kyahurwa, 2013:27). Furthermore, for effective monitoring, SMTs need to have proper knowledge of the curriculum they are responsible for (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2014:188).

The role of SMTs is to align current practices and plans with strategies, structures, and systems that support the outcomes of the new curriculum (DBE, 2012:3). As part of their responsibilities, SMTs are expected to select best practices that accommodate the diverse needs of the school community. According to Mokgaphame (2013:8), SMTs should also allocate staff time for planning and carrying out their roles and responsibilities, as well as organising the school to achieve its vision (DBE, 2012:3). In this context, SMTs, which consist of the school principal, heads of department, and senior teachers, form the school-based management structure. As stated by the DBE (2012:2), SMTs are established to ensure that the school culture is dynamic and supportive of effective

teaching and learning. Therefore, it is the responsibility of SMTs to ensure that the school aligns with its mission, vision, curriculum goals, and action plans (DBE, 2012:2).

Planning is a fundamental and pervasive management function. Effective performance in groups requires knowing in advance what needs to be done and performing activities in a timely manner (Kruger, 2014:5). This implies that planning is a basic management function performed by all types of organisations and managers at all levels of hierarchy. According to the Department of Basic Education (2017:15), planning is a management task that involves deliberate reflection on the organisation's outcomes, resources, and activities. Planning also requires leaders to identify organisational problems, as leadership entails effective diagnosis of problems and adopting appropriate responses to situations (Bush, 2014:120). Additionally, Kyahurwa (2013:60) argues that planning helps educational managers anticipate problems and opportunities, think forward, and contribute to the effectiveness of other managerial functions.

1.5.1.2 *Types of planning*

Effective planning is a critical component of organisational success and optimal performance, serving as a fundamental managerial function. It entails the thoughtful selection of missions, objectives, and actions designed to achieve predetermined outcomes. According to Aguilar (2017:3), there are four key types of plans, namely environmental scanning, strategic planning, tactical planning, and operational planning, that managers can utilise to advance their organisation's goals. The subsequent sections provide detailed discussions of these plans.

1.5.1.2.1 *Environmental scanning*

Environmental scanning is a process where an organisation learns about external events and trends, establishes connections between them, and considers the implications for problem identification and decision-making. According to Aguilar (2017:15), it is a straightforward process as critical information needs to analyse readily available industry

and market information accessible to all competitors. However, it can be complicated because many areas must be monitored (Steyn, 2012:75).

Similarly, Kazmi (2018:2) defines environmental scanning as the exploration stage of the strategic planning process of gathering and analysing information to plan, predict, or choose a preferred future. Additionally, Aguilar (2017:15) notes that environmental scanning is monitoring, evaluating, and sharing information from the external and internal environment with critical people within the corporation or organisation.

1.5.1.2.2 Strategic planning

Strategic planning involves “analysing competitive opportunities and threats, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation, and then determining how to position the organisation to compete effectively in their environment” (Bell, 2012:64). Utilising this perspective, it is crucial to consider that strategic planning encompasses a lengthy timeframe, typically spanning three years or more, due to its comprehensive nature that encompasses the entire organisation and the formulation of objectives. Additionally, strategic planning is typically grounded in the organisation’s mission, which serves as its fundamental purpose for existence, as supported by Steyn (2012:75). In the same notion, Wittmann (2018:3) articulates that “organisation’s top management most often conducts strategic planning workshops”.

The effectiveness of the implementation of a school's strategic plan may be impacted by the leadership style exhibited by the principal and Senior Management Team (SMT), as they influence the motivation, guidance, and management of staff involved in the process (Bryson, 2015:3). It is imperative for school managers to establish ambitious goals and prioritise the meticulous execution of strategic plans through effective leadership. Additionally, the strategic planning process provides a platform to thoroughly address all pertinent issues affecting the school (Cheng, 2013:3). In support, Reuter (2018:3) indicates that there is “overwhelming support for the implementation of strategic planning in schools as it generates a new focus on the quality of education”.

For Viljoen (2014:5) strategic planning is a “process of identifying, choosing and implementing activities to enhance the long-term performance on an organisation”. In support, Cheng (2013:56) posits that strategic planning “sets direction by creating an ongoing compatibility between the internal skills and resources of an organisation and the changing external environment in which it operates”. Similarly, Thompson (2014:5) defines it as “the process by which an organisation establishes its objectives and formulates actions designed to achieve these objectives within a timeframe, implements actions and assesses progress and results”.

In another study, Chang (2018:1) explicates strategic plan as a “living document that includes policy direction, implementation strategies, actions and benchmarks for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as the expenditure framework, which allows adjustments in areas for developments during implementation”. This plan includes the analysis and prioritisation of the school's strategic development issues, plans to address such issues, and the implementation of plans to ultimately address those identified development issues. It should be ensured that learners receive a quality education that considers their overall development and academic performance (Bell, 2012:10).

1.5.1.2.3 Tactical planning

Tactical planning, as a part of organisational management, encompasses the identification of specific objectives and corresponding action plans that align with the strategic goals of the system. It involves setting short-term goals within a timeframe that supports the overall strategic timeline for goal attainment. A tactical plan typically covers a period of up to one year and is utilised by managers to outline the operational requirements of different organisational components to achieve success within the immediate future (Chang, 2018:1; Gate Wood et al., 2015:3).

1.5.1.2.4 Operational planning

Gate Wood et al., (2015:3) define operational planning as “the process of connecting strategic goals and objectives to tactical goals and objectives”. It outlines targets, success criteria, and explains a way of putting strategic plan into a specific operational period. The focus is on achieving objectives and executing short-term activities, and it has a limited scope of any operational unit. This corresponds to the annual work plan (Gate Wood et al., 2015:3).

Operational planning involves developing datasets that can be integrated into the planning and decision-making machinery at different levels of an institution. These datasets should clearly indicate student enrolment patterns and the success and failure rates of academic programmes, enabling problematic areas to be identified and resolved during the planning phase (DBE, 2012:6). As its name implies, operational planning covers the operations or actions necessary to achieve short-term goals within a year. The objective of operational planning is to ensure that deadlines are met, and that administrative and technical measures are coordinated and communicated to achieve objectives (Villemain, 2013:2).

1.5.1.3 Organising

One of the main tasks of management is organisation, which involves creating the structure of the organisation, recruiting new staff, and establishing systems and working conditions that ensure everything operates cohesively to achieve the organisation's objectives (Smit et al., 2017:187). Further, Smit et al., (2017:187) also describe organisation as the process of assigning tasks to appropriate business units, departments, or sections to achieve the organisation's goals and providing the necessary coordination to ensure effective collaboration. The school's management team (SMT) and principal should establish the school structure by dividing labour and assigning tasks to educators to ensure the school's business runs smoothly.

According to Mathibe (2015:3), it is the responsibility of SMTs to ensure that all staff members in a school have equal work distribution. Good SMTs should encourage a spirit

of cooperation and support among colleagues. Pfeifer and Jankowski (2015:1) also state that “it is the duty of SMTs to ensure that every educator in the school fulfils their teaching and learning responsibilities”. Moreover, these researchers outline that it is the responsibility of the school’s SMTs to delegate tasks accordingly to ensure the smooth running of the school.

According to Williams (2013:32), organising is “the process of allocating and arranging human and non-human resources so that plans can be carried out successfully”. According to Van Deventer (2013:109) organising may also be explicated as “the process of creating a structure for the school for its members to work together effectively towards achieving its outcomes”.

1.5.1.4 *Leading*

The position of manager, leader, and administrator all fall under the category of educator (Walter, 2013:1). According to Walter (2013:2), leaders are required to be effective because of their position inside a school. Effectiveness requires developing into a reflective practitioner and ensuring that one does the daily duties assigned to a school management. Leading is defined by Smit et al., (2017:271) as influencing people’s behaviour through discipline, motivation, communication, group dynamics, and leadership. Leadership is the process of influencing others’ behaviour to further the objectives of the organisation.

Members of an SMT have a duty to direct instruction in the classroom, mentor teachers, and oversee students in addition to fostering teaching and learning. Depending on the roles they hold, this duty varies. For instance, the principal would meet with Heads of Department (HODs) to oversee and supervise them, while the principal would provide instruction and guidance to SMT members on how they should carry out their tasks (Walter, 2013:3). HODs have meetings with the teachers in their divisions to encourage, direct, and oversee their work.

According to Kumbe (2000:11), leadership is the process of persuading subordinates to contribute to the achievement of goals. Since leadership is all about connections, this also entails inspiring and guiding personnel, choosing the best routes for communication, and resolving disputes. Good leaders transform organisations, but exceptional leaders transform people, according to Leitch and Day (2005:7). People are the foundation of any organisation, but this is especially true of schools. Only by developing people, encouraging and testing them to grow and develop, and fostering an environment where everyone learns for the organisation to succeed (Leitch & Day, 2005:7).

According to Loliwe (2004:15), SMT members are “expected to play the role of leaders in their schools. Leaders, through their position in a school, are obliged to be effective, and their effectiveness depends largely on their sensitivity, approachability and management styles”. The SMT members oversee ensuring that the school's vision and mission are carried out. This is only possible if school administrators are self-aware enough to provide other staff members with a clear path to help them reach their objective. According to the Department of Education (2012:29), leadership include “guiding and inspiring”. This means that members of the SMTs are instructional and responsible for taking the lead in putting their curriculum into practice and improving it.

Leading involves inspiring or motivating others to do their best work. To fulfil the general objectives of the organisation, managers should be able to inspire their staff (Hauwa, 2014:3). Close contact and regular communication are two ways a manager might do this. Employees that receive encouraging remarks and inspiration from their superiors are more eager to assist the team in achieving the desired outcome (Hauwa, 2014:3). The manager may make sure the team effectively accomplishes its goals by motivating and leading its team members. When something is not working, the manager will be aware of it and be able to address it right away if they are closely collaborating with the team.

Leadership involves dominance where followers are obliged to submit to the leader's authority and control. Every theory of leadership encompasses aspects of power and authority (Mathibe, 2015:139). In leadership, authority is the ability of management to

enforce specific compliant actions. The authority figure also possesses the right to discipline followers who refuse to collaborate to achieve predetermined objectives. The head of education for the province gives the principal of the school the power to implement their authority within the establishment. According to Mathibe (2015:140), members of the senior management team obtain power from their subordinates, allowing them to exert some form of authority and enough power to be considered as leaders. Therefore, power is the capacity to influence others' behaviour, and it is unrelated to the hierarchical position held by the education leader.

1.5.1.5 Controlling

For SMTs, exercising control in the context of education may be challenging because it entails exercising control over both students and teachers. Loliwe (2015:15) claims that control was once a mechanism the principal used to monitor how well the teachers in each subject were covering the curriculum. On the other hand, according to Walter (2013:56), control in school management refers to the method SMT members use to guarantee that real actions match up with planned activities and that goals are met. Checking and moderating tests and exams to ensure that high standards are upheld and that teachers are creating examination materials that encourage their students to apply their thinking is one of the frequent ways to monitor educators' performance.

Verifying if everything happens in accordance with the plans adopted, orders issued, and principles established constitute controlling (Van der Westhuizen, 2014:216). Controlling makes sure that organisational resources are used effectively to accomplish the desired outcomes. The goal of SMTs, according to Middlewood (2013:66), is to make sure that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This means that the SMTs ensure that processes such as record-keeping and assessment are part of a greater whole to ensure that the grades for each learner are not just a collection of separate pieces of information but provide a holistic picture of everyone's progress and achievement. Kerri (2013:351) states that "the role of the School Management Team is to give the principal and instructional staff more decentralised control over budget, personnel, curriculum, instructional and organisational matters at the school level". One of the roles of the School

Management Team is to ensure that the educator and assessment activities are geared towards the needs of the learner so that no barriers to further learning are created (Bush, 2014:139).

The principal, supported by the SMT, is the highest authority figure responsible for supervising all delegated tasks. The principal has two methods of controlling: either directly or by delegation (Van der Westhuizen, 2014:216). To ensure smooth operation, SMTs must continually evaluate their own work and management, as well as that of the teachers they oversee (DBE, 2012:28). SMTs require specific abilities to carry out management duties. A competent SMT will possess strong management and leadership skills. For SMTs to be successful in their managerial tasks, they must have conceptual, interpersonal, and technical abilities (DBE, 2012:28). The Department of Basic Education (2012:28) highlights that the new educational paradigm necessitates all educational leaders to utilise their position of authority and influence to enhance others' capacity for self- and institution-management. This section of Chapter one presented the preliminary literature review, the next section presents the theoretical points of departure of the study.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Situational Leadership Theory is the proper and pertinent theoretical framework for this study, it emphasises that there are two dimensions to leadership (directive and supportive) and that both should be used effectively in a particular circumstance (Hersey & Blanchard, 2014:171). This theory's underlying tenet is that various circumstances call for various styles of leadership. In this regard, to be an effective leader, a person should modify their leadership approach to suit the requirements of various contexts.

The Situational Leadership Theory is presented as a behaviour-based theoretical framework that examines the leadership styles of managers. The theory posits that effective managers possess a range of styles and can adjust their styles based on the environmental variables they encounter. Furthermore, the theory asserts that managers can improve their management capabilities by understanding the theory itself (Hersey &

Blanchard, 2014:171). Situational leaders employ diverse leadership approaches depending on the situation and the maturity level of their team members. This leadership style is deemed successful because it adapts to the demands of the team and creates a mutually beneficial outcome for the entire organisation. Situational leadership encourages leaders to assess their team members, take into consideration various factors, and choose the leadership approach that aligns with their goals and circumstances (David, 2013:3).

The goal of situational leadership is to empower followers to chart their own path while aiding them in becoming competent and committed to the task at hand. Situational leadership fosters open communication in the workplace and facilitates followers in becoming more self-reliant. In a professional setting, leadership is defined as the ability to persuade and motivate subordinates to support organisational objectives (House, 2015:15). According to situational leadership, effective managers should adapt their management philosophies based on their team members' ability to complete the task at hand (Mark, 2013:3).

According to the situational leadership philosophy there is no one optimum leadership style. Instead, everything hinges on the current circumstance and the leadership style and tactics that are most appropriate for the job. The most effective leaders, in accordance with this view, are those who can adjust their leadership style to the circumstance and consider cues like the nature of the task, the makeup of the group, and other elements that may help get the job done (Bolden, 2012:10). The function of followers is highlighted by situational leadership. This leadership is about adaptability and employing the necessary leadership style to guide a follower at a specific stage of growth to succeed in each working setting (David, 2013:3).

The claim that situational leadership highlights the function of the followers is backed up by To succeed in a certain working environment, this leadership is about adaptability and employing the appropriate leadership style to nurture a follower's developmental stage. According to the Situational leadership idea, there is no one leadership style that can be

used in every workplace circumstance. According to the experts, (David, 2013:3) a leader's leadership style varies depending on the expertise and understanding of their followers in a certain task. According to what is required to complete the task successfully, a leader should be able to use a Situational leadership model to place focus on the relationships with the people he is leading.

Therefore, the current researcher chose the Situational leadership Theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 2014:171) because it is not reserved for a specific area of leadership, but applicable in all instances, school is not an exception. The Situational leadership theory is adopted to help people interact, help, and empower others looking for help or advice. In this regard, "everyone is unique and different, and depending on whom the person one is helping or leading, one needs to adjust one's traits and tactics to line up with that person, therefore, leadership does not have one-size-fits-all approach" (Mathibe, 2015:140). To be effective, one should diagnose the stage the person is in prior to coaching or leading that person to be successful in the task or responsibility.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

To examine the many intricacies of the concepts and avoid "narrow and rigid interpretations", any study should define its terms (Esterhuyse, 2003:1). Berger (1997:22) also cautions against using terms without first defining them. Therefore, the following concepts form the basis of this study:

1.7.1 Curriculum

The term curriculum encompasses everything taught in a school, including scheduled subjects and all aspects of school life that influence it (Favant, 2004:2). Similarly, Tunmer (1981:30) defines curriculum as a collection of courses and their content provided at a school. In addition, Marsh (1997:4) describes it as a product, a document that contains

information on objectives, context, teaching methods, evaluation, assessment, and resources. On the other hand, Hill and Fullan (2001:40) refer to it as the teaching style of the taught curriculum while Orstein and Hunkins (1998:11) suggest that “curriculum is a field of study or subjects or a plan for action or learners’ experiences at school”. Also, Jacobs (2000:97) defines the curriculum as a course to be taken since learners require knowledge to succeed in the race of life. Ross (2000:33) describes the curriculum as “all the features that contribute to the school’s life, values demonstrated in the school’s tasks, and the way in which teaching, and learning are organised and managed”. In this study, the term “curriculum” encompasses all learning, planned and directed by the school, whether it occurs in groups or individually, inside or outside the school.

1.7.2 Curriculum management

The Department of Basic Education (2012:10) defines curriculum management as “instructional leadership”. Curriculum scholars such as Cardno (2011:1) state that “curriculum management is academic leadership, instructional leadership or management and the unfolding point to the task of leading primary activities of a school, i.e., teaching and learning processes”. Similarly, Kydd, Anderson and Newton (2000:3) define “curriculum management as the way in which schools receive, organise, support, understand, interpret and give meaning to the official curriculum within the context and constraints of the classroom in which it is implemented”. The invention, packaging, and execution of subject matter are all aspects of curriculum management (Marsh, 2014:11). Curriculum management, according to Denzin (2010:21), is the management of the entire formal study programme made available by the school, producing an organisational plan and design for learning. The invention, packaging, and execution of subject matter are all examples of curriculum management in this study.

1.7.3 Management

The concept of management can be defined as the collaborative effort of working with and through others to achieve organisational goals in a dynamic and changing

environment. According to Franklin (2012:7), management is a distinct process that involves various activities such as planning, organising, actuating, and controlling, aimed at achieving predetermined objectives through the coordination of human resources and other available sources. Blaise (2013:3) also supports this definition, stating that management encompasses a system or structure that empowers teachers and enhances their perception of increased responsibility in their roles. In the context of this study, management is viewed as the process of formulating and implementing plans, completing tasks efficiently, and effectively interacting with individuals to achieve desired outcomes.

1.7.4 School Management Team (SMT)

The School Management Team (SMT) is one of the new concepts brought about by the change of the South African educational system. The SMT encapsulates the senior personnel of the school, who includes the principal, vice principal(s), and heads of department, according to the Department of Basic Education (2012:13). This is an official authority structure within a school constituted by the principal, deputy principal and departmental heads (Naidoo, 2014:103). Contrastingly, Gunter (2012:135) explicates SMT as “teachers who have posts that have a whole institutional focus and are responsible for the oversight of schools functioning including budgeting, professional development, assessment, resource management and curriculum management tasks”. In this study, SMT represents the school management structure responsible for the day-to-day running of the school affairs and implementing departmental policies.

1.8 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The terms “research traditions” and “worldview” are used to describe paradigms in the social sciences (Bryman, 2012:630). Researchers have a particular method for examining phenomena that are pertinent to their subject, and they are aware of the paradigm or tradition that each researcher follows when deciding which issues are worth looking into and how to do it in a way that is appropriate.

This study was conducted from an interpretive paradigm, which according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2012:22) describes a “central endeavour of the interpretive paradigm to be an understanding of the subject of human experience”. The interpretivism paradigm is adopted in this study to enable the researcher to understand the meaning members of SMTs construct regarding their roles. Nieuwenhuis (2010:78) states that the paradigm views a phenomenon in its practical context and situation. Further reasons for selecting the interpretive paradigm because this research is “very flexible and open-ended” (Charles & Mertler, 2012:92) Also, “data gathered through qualitative research is not limited or guided by only one instrument, but is conducted in-depth” (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2014).

In most cases, social science research is “suitable for interpretive paradigm, and it is well suited because of its constructionist base that seeks to unearth how participants make sense of their reality” (Bryman, 2012:28). Therefore, the objective of interpretivist paradigm is to gain a rich understanding of reality of the participants’ life and world view by piercing their social constructions together with the meaning they assign to these. The methodology, research design, and preferred paradigm are closely related. As a result, the researcher’s choice of an interpretative paradigm, which is mandated by the research topic, also dictates the qualitative study design and qualitative technique, which are presented in the impending section 1.9.

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research design is a plan for a study and use of instruments, whereas research methodology entails ways of soliciting responses (Burns & Grove, 2001:233). This section presents the design and methodology adopted for the purpose of this study.

1.9.1 Research approach and design

The basis of research is dictated by a research design and plan. How the study is conducted is refers to ‘research design’ (Merriam, 2013:92). Which is also described as

a strategy or blueprint for carrying out the study (Mouton, 2012:55). This study adopted the qualitative research design since it allows the researcher to gather sufficient information about day-to-day functioning of SMTs in intermediate phase. Since the study sought to gauge an understanding, feelings and attitudes of members of the SMTs towards their roles in ensuring effective teaching and learning.

According to Govender (2009:167), ideas, perceptions and suggestions of participants are received through direct interaction with them. To this extent, the researcher and members of the SMTs were inseparably interconnected. Adopting qualitative research approach in this study is in alignment with the adopted paradigm, which is interpretivist, on the basis that both interpretivist paradigm and qualitative research put emphasis on the participants interpretation of constructs. Krathwohl (2009:236), provides the following rationale for using qualitative research approach:

- Qualitative research approach allows researchers to categorically state the nature of the setting, systems, situation and processes.
- It allows fresh insights to develop regarding a given phenomenon and the existing problems.
- Participants are the sources of information when the research is collecting data. They enable the researcher to rely on them as sources of data and foster the collection of information in the natural contexts with less or no disturbance of the setting.

In accordance with the adopted qualitative research approach, the study utilised a case study research design. As per Yin (1984:23), “the case study research method is an empirical investigation of a current phenomenon within its real-life context, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly distinguishable, and multiple sources are utilised”. The case study research approach aims to develop a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of intricate issues within their real-life setting. This established research design is extensively employed across various disciplines, particularly in the social sciences (Mason, 2002:3). Further, Baskarada

(2014:13) suggests that the case study method is the most frequently used approach in academia by researchers interested in qualitative research. By employing the case study method, a researcher can closely analyse data within a specific context. Typically, a case study method involves selecting a limited number of individuals or a small geographic area as the subject of the study. Case studies are used to explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of limited events or conditions and their interrelationships (Yin, 2019:55).

1.9.2 Research Methodology

Research methodology pertains to the comprehensive methods employed in identifying a population, sampling that population, selecting instruments for data collection, and integrating measuring tools into an investigation (De Vos, 2013:1225). Schwardt (2012:13) asserts that research methodology is a theoretical framework that guides inquiry, encompassing the analysis of assumptions, principles, and procedures, particularly the approach to inquiry. Schwardt (2012:13) also explains that “methodologies define the types of problems that are worth investigating, what constitutes a researchable problem, testable hypotheses, how to frame a problem for investigation using specific designs and procedures, and how to select and develop appropriate means of collecting data”.

According to Creswell (2014:99), research methodology has epistemic content that justifies the “methods that generate data and analyses, which in turn produce knowledge”. This implies that research methodology is a selected approach that underpins the collection and analysis of data, with the research methodology guiding the identification of population, population sampling procedures, population sample size, instruments used for data collection, and data analyses.

1.9.2.1 Population

Bless and Higson-Smith (2011:550) define population as the total number of people who would serve as informants. In addition, White (2014:113) argues that population refers to

all possible elements involved in the research. This study's population are all School Management Team (SMT) members at 230 primary schools in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province. The human being served as the population in alignment with Airasian and Gay (2011:102) who define population as a group of people interested in a study. In support, Charles and Mertler (2012:45), states that population refers to individuals categorised according to their location, age or sex. Also, Neuman (2012:216) defines population as a particular pool of individuals who are taking part in the study.

1.9.2.2 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of cases from a larger population from which research data is to be extracted. The current study utilised a non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, also known as judgemental sampling. This technique allows the researcher to selectively choose cases that have the required information pertinent to the study objectives. The sample size for this study consisted of 18 participants, including six school principals, six deputy principals, and six departmental heads responsible for curriculum management in the Mopani District's schools. The purposive sampling approach was employed since it provides the researcher with discretion in selecting participants who meet the study's requirements. This study's sampling approach aims to represent the views of the school management responsible for curriculum management in the Mopani District's schools.

1.10 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

In this study, data were collected through interviews. Interviews were employed as the stand-alone data collection strategy. According to Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:188), interviews are valuable source of information, and they allow you to interpret and understand the meaning of participants' answers to specific questions. Therefore, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with sampled participants.

1.10.1 Interviews

The researcher employed individual interviews to collect data from participants. McMillan and Schumacher (2015:354) define interviews as qualitative data collection method which allows you to pose questions to participants with the aim of learning more about their views, opinions and beliefs about a specific phenomenon. Therefore, open-ended semi-structured interview schedule was used to solicit research data from members of school management teams.

1.11 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the procedure of organising and deciphering a potentially disordered, ambiguous, unstructured, and meaningless collection of gathered data (Kumbe, 2000:11). White (2005:256) defines data analysis as the process of bringing structure, order, and meaning to a voluminous, time-consuming, creative, and captivating process. In this particular study, the data collected from interviews and field notes is transformed into written records, which are then carefully reviewed and edited for accuracy before proceeding with analysis. Qualitative data analysis is employed in this study, which is primarily an inductive approach involving the organisation of data into codes, categories, and the identification of patterns and themes within those categories (White, 2005:256). This process includes transcription, pattern identification, theme development, and coding.

1.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

This section presents trustworthiness of the research process within the broader qualitative research field to ensure quality of data. According to Krefting (2013:115), trustworthiness is a framework “for ensuring credible qualitative research”. Trustworthiness factors considered in this study include credibility, dependability and transferability, as discussed below.

1.12.1 Credibility

Credibility, as defined by Hesse-Biber (2010:76), refers to the process of establishing trustworthiness and reasonability of research findings. This ensures that the conclusions drawn by the researcher are grounded in the collected data, as emphasised by Durrheim and Wassenaar (2011:31). In the specific context of this study, an audit process is implemented, involving a thorough review of the research process in both forward and backward directions. This ensures that the interpreted data and findings are not based on imagination, but rather derived from sound evidence and confirmed by the research findings.

1.12.2 Dependability

Dependability, as a component of trustworthiness, pertains to ensuring that the research process is consistent and reasonable across time, researchers, and methods, as defined by Miles and Huberman (2010:3). Establishing dependability is crucial in convincing readers that the findings indeed occurred as claimed by the researcher. In the context of this study, the researcher establishes dependability by providing comprehensive descriptions of the methods used for data collection, as well as the process of data analysis and interpretation. This ensures that the research process is transparent and can be replicated, thus enhancing the overall dependability of the study.

1.12.3 Conformability

Baxter and Eyles (2011:3) explicate conformability as the extent in which the findings from a study may be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Baxter & Eyles, 2011:3). In addition, Tobin and Begley (2014:394) alludes that “conformability is concerned with establishment of data and interpretations of the findings that are clearly derived from the data”. Scholars assert that achieving confirmability in qualitative research can be achieved through maintaining an audit trail, keeping a reflexive journal, and implementing triangulation (Bowen, 2013:20; Koch, 2010:87; Lincoln & Guba, 2015:22). In this study, the researcher took measures to ensure confirmability by providing detailed descriptions of the research methods employed, thus creating an audit trail. Additionally, the

researcher minimised interactions with participants to mitigate any potential biases that could compromise the confirmability of the study.

1.12.4 Transferability

Transferability, as defined by Lincoln and Guba (2014:57), refers to the extent to which research findings from one context can be applied or generalised to other contexts. In this study, the researcher employs rich and detailed descriptions of participants and contexts, providing clear and comprehensive information about the perspectives of School Management Team (SMT) members on curriculum management, as well as the settings in which they operate, as emphasised by Creswell (2014:131). This level of detail indicates the potential applicability of the findings in other contexts or with different participants, as noted by Babbie and Mouton (2011:91). Strategies for achieving transferability in this study include thorough descriptions of data and purposive sampling, which maximizes the diversity of information that can be obtained within a specific context, as highlighted by Babbie and Mouton (2011:91).

1.13 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Significance is defined as having an important effect or influence, especially on what will happen in the future (Sadhu, 2015:315). The significance of a study also depends on the selected audiences, in this case, the SMTs (Creswell, 2014:131). The primary beneficiaries of this study are expected to be the stakeholders of the Department of Basic Education and the School Management Teams (SMTs) in primary schools. The study aims to support SMTs in developing the necessary skills and knowledge required to effectively carry out their responsibilities in improving the teaching and learning process, thereby enhancing the overall performance of the school. The study will add the growing body of knowledge in the field of education research and serve as a guide for other researchers who would like to conduct studies of a similar nature.

1.14 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Delimitations refer to the characteristics that set boundaries and define the scope of a study, and thus limiting its extent (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012:153). In the context of this study, the objectives set out for the study minimised the scope of the study. The sampled primary schools also had an impact on the scope and outcomes of the study, if the study included secondary schools, the findings could have been different. However, this was done for the study to be well managed. The study could have been conducted over a longer period, but due to limited time given to conduct the study it was not going to be possible. The geographic location of the study also delimited the scope of the study to the sampled primary schools in Mopani West District, Limpopo province. Hence, findings from this study may not be generalized to all primary schools in the district.

1.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

In this research, prior to the interviews, all participants are provided with information about the purpose of the study. Measures are taken to ensure their privacy and anonymity. The ethical considerations considered in this study are outlined as follows:

- **Informed Consent:** In this context, the researcher elucidates the objective of the research to all participants and obtains their informed consent to proceed with the interviews. Participation in the research interview is voluntarily and participants may withdraw from the study at any time.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality:** “Information given anonymously ensures privacy for the subjects” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2015:61). In the context of this study, no names are required from the participants, who are assured that the information provided will remain confidential and used for study purposes only.

- **Protection from manipulation:** the researcher guarded against manipulation of participants and did not treat them as objects but treated them human beings. There was no unethical tactics and techniques in interviewing the participants.
- **Protection from Harm:** the researcher gave assurance to protect participants against any harm triggered by the results of the research.

1.16 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The thesis consists of six chapters, arranged as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the Study

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

Chapter 3: Literature review

Chapter 4: Research paradigm, design and methodology

Chapter 5: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

Chapter 6: Summary of findings, recommendations and conclusions.

This Chapter presented the problem under investigation and its context, the aims and research questions of the study were also presented. The next chapter details the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the context of the study. This current chapter presents the theoretical perspective of the study by further contextualising the study into the theoretical realm. This study adopts Situational Leadership Theory (Blanchard and Hersey, 1969:115) as an effective leadership theory in schools.

2.2 CONTEXTUALISING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Layder (1994:233) highlights that theories “are useful in guiding how societies work, how organisations operate, and why people interact in certain ways”. This indicates that theories serve as lenses that allow researchers to approach complex issues and social problems from different perspectives, directing their focus towards specific aspects of the data and providing a framework for their investigation. Littlejohn and Foss (2008:120) argue that a theoretical framework outlines the principles that guide specific perspectives used to examine a research topic. [A theoretical framework is indispensable in guiding the study and providing the researcher with a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon under investigation, akin to a bird’s-eye view. Therefore, it is imperative to further explicate the concept of “theory” to contextualise the study. Theoretical framework serves as the structure that holds or supports a theory of a research study. The theory introduces and describes the theory which explains why the research problem under study exists \(Layder, 1994:234\).](#) The next subsection defines and discusses the notion of “theory”.

2.2.1 What is a theory?

According to Ritzer and Smart (2003:98) a theory is an “organised, coherent and systematic articulation of a set of issues communicated as a meaningful whole”. Polit and Becker (2008:13) define theory as a universally accepted truth based on logic and reason

and a source of assumptions with no proof or verification. Roberts (2006:162) compares theory with binoculars which views objects that are far in the different fields of interest. Hence, similar to how binoculars magnify and bring distant images closer, theory serves as a tool for envisioning the underlying philosophy that underpins the framework, study design, and interpretation of findings. Theory allows researchers to focus and gain a closer or deeper understanding of a phenomenon, which influences the rationale of the investigation and leads to a more deliberate development of the study and the construction of a conceptual model (Neuman, 2011:132). [In this study, the researcher employs the identified theory to make informed decisions on how to conduct the study. Neuman \(2011: 133\) further maintains that the study's theory is a foundational review of existing theories that serves as a roadmap for developing the arguments you will use in your own work. Therefore, theories are developed by researchers to explain phenomena, draw connections, and make predictions.](#)

Theories are important as they enable researchers to better understand situations, they face in their daily working lives (Stones, 1998:59). According to Neuman (2011:139), a theory grounds a rooted research study. It then establishes the conceptual and theoretical foundation for understanding and interpreting the data that has been gathered. Theories have the potential to impact society positively by enhancing the quality of life and shedding light on previously overlooked concepts, enabling researchers to uncover new insights and perspectives (Suslu, 2006:100). As such, theories play a critical role in research studies and their significance cannot be overstated.

Situational Leadership Theory (Blanchard and Hersey, 1969) in the present research enables the researcher to discover the role of SMTs in the establishment of effective curriculum management in Mopani West District schools. This theory further assists the researcher in understanding leadership styles to assist teachers to develop professionally given their scope of work. Since the study is based on leadership in schools, the adopted theory guides the researcher in proposing a model, which contributed to the body of knowledge. The next sub-section presents a plethora of leadership theories, as it is important to clarify and discuss what leadership theories entail.

2.2.2 Leadership theories

Chan (2004:102) asserts that “leadership theories are explanations of how and why certain people become leaders”. Therefore, no matter how big or small, every organisation or company needs good leadership to be successful. Chan (2004:103) further maintains that “good leaders are a vital part of effective management practices and being a good leader does not come inherently”. Hence, there are programmes dedicated to assisting potential leaders to become great leaders in their various leadership fields.

The focus of leadership theories is on the characteristics and actions that individuals do to improve their leadership abilities. As per Muzzin (2005:65), key attributes essential for effective leadership encompass exemplary ethical standards and moral values, adept organisational skills, efficient learning abilities, fostering employee growth, and nurturing a sense of connection and belonging. As a result, many leadership theories foster stronger and more efficient leadership and followers are inspired to take on leadership roles. Muzzin (2005:96) further maintains that leadership theories that leaders and school principals can employ to influence subordinates in organisations and schools are the following: Behavioural Leadership Theory, Contingency Leadership Theory, Great Man Leadership Theory, Management Leadership Theory, Participative Leadership Theory, Power Leadership Theory and Relationship Leadership Theory. In the next sub-sections, an explanation of what each of these leadership theories entails is done.

2.2.2.1 Behavioral Leadership Theory

The behavioural leadership theory emphasises how leaders act and makes the supposition that these characteristics can be imitated by others. According to this view, effective leaders can be developed based on teachable behaviours rather than being born successful. Thus, behavioural theories of leadership place a strong emphasis on a leader's behaviour. According to this theory, observing a leader's behaviour is the best indicator of how successful a leader they will be (Muzzin, 2005:98).

2.2.2.2 Contingency Leadership Theory

The context of a leader is a key component of the contingency leadership theory, often known as situational theory. These theories examine how a leader's success or failure affects situations. Hence, the situational context directly affects a leader's efficacy. The setting and situation of the leader are more crucial to their achievement than their personality, which is only a minor impact (Muzzin, 2005:99).

2.2.2.3 Great Man Leadership Theory

According to the great man theory of leadership, often known as the trait hypothesis, effective leaders are bred. They are great because of natural qualities and abilities that cannot be taught or acquired. According to the trait idea, leaders are deserving of their positions due to their unique characteristics (Muzzin, 2005:99).

2.2.2.4 Management Leadership Theory

The management leadership theory, often known as transactional leadership, emphasises organisation, group performance, and supervision. When workers complete a task successfully, managers reward them through the system of rewards and penalties known as transactional leadership but if they mess up, they might get in trouble (Muzzin, 2005:102).

2.2.2.5 Participative Leadership Theory

As per Muzzin (2005:103), participative leadership theory, also known as democratic leadership, advocates for the direct involvement of employees in the decision-making processes of their organisation.

2.2.2.6 Power Leadership Theory

This idea examines how a leader uses their influence and authority to accomplish goals. It examines the effects of authority and individual power on the decisions and actions of leaders. According to this theory, powerful leaders appear to be extremely effective and

move things along rapidly. Yet, because it is authoritarian, most employees do not value power leadership (Muzzin, 2005:103).

2.2.2.7 Relationship Leadership Theory

Leaders who are primarily focused on their interactions with others are the subject of the relationship theory of leadership. They frequently serve as mentors for staff members, making time to speak with them and attempting to meet their needs. Such leaders prioritise fostering a healthy work atmosphere for many people as possible (Muzzin, 2005:103). The study's theoretical framework is presented in the following section.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

As highlighted in the introduction of this chapter, this study adopts Hersey and Blanchard's (1969) Situational Leadership Theory (SLT), as the theoretical framework for the study.

2.3.1 The Situational Leadership Theory

The Situational Leadership Theory (SLT), developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in 1969, posits that effective leadership requires adapting to different situations by utilising different leadership approaches. The theory identifies four main leadership styles (S1, S2, S3, and S4) that should align with the maturity levels of individual followers or groups (M1, M2, M3, and M4). Hersey and Blanchard (1996:159) argue that there is no one-size-fits-all leadership style that can achieve optimal outcomes. Instead, the most effective leadership style depends on the specific condition, and the preferred leadership style should match the maturity levels of subordinates.

2.3.1.1 Leadership styles

Being a leader can be challenging, and there are various ways to approach leadership. Hersey and Blanchard (2014:90) argue that several factors, including the leader's qualities and the characteristics of team members, influence the style of leadership. As a result, the situation at hand plays a crucial role in determining the appropriate leadership

style, according to Hersey and Blanchard (2014:90). It is on this premise that they developed the concept of situational leadership. Hersey and Blanchard (2014:100) state that there are four leadership styles that leaders must employ to deal with the individual followers or groups' maturity levels. The following leadership styles are at play: **S1-Telling**, **S2-Selling**, **S3-Participation** and **S4-delegating**, as detailed below.

S1-Telling: The style is also known as “directing”. The directing leadership style, also known as the telling style, involves the leader setting specific goals and regulations for subordinates who directly report to them, ensuring that they fully understand the leader's expectations (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996:262). In this style, the leader, referred to as the School Management Team (SMT), is responsible for ensuring that subordinates are aligned with the task at hand by providing task directions and closely monitoring their work to achieve established objectives. This style is characterised by high task orientation and low relationship orientation, as subordinates are still developing their competence and require guidance and supervision to complete tasks. Decision-making authority rests with the SMT, and communication is typically one-way, with top-down communication. The leadership style emphasises adherence to policies and procedures to improve school performance and curriculum implementation. As subordinates gain experience, the leadership style is adjusted and evolves towards the next stage, reflecting higher expectations, and the SMT adapts and changes their leadership approach, accordingly, continuing to emphasise the telling style.

S2-Selling: The “coaching” leadership style is concerned with enabling people to improve their performance. Instead of being taught, the emphasis is on enabling subordinates to learn (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996:268). Although coaching originated in sporting disciplines, it is pertinent to leadership style. Coaching is built on helping and guiding people, and this is where leaders are expected to offer knowledge and guidance. After all the leader is responsible for making final decisions but should create useful two-way communication. Selling leadership style is significant for subordinates who lack commitment but competent as they may not have experience. In this case, the leadership direction and supervision are crucial. Leadership should always assist and motivate

positive self-perceptions to their subordinates. By the assistance from leadership in making decision, commitment and diligence of subordinates is enhanced.

S3-Participation: The term “supporting” leadership style is another name for the participation leadership style. Supportive leaders, according to Hersey and Blanchard (1996:273), focus more on giving resources like workspace and tools than they do issuing commands and overseeing every facet of performance. SMTs are expected to shift their emphasis towards building relationships rather than solely focusing on direction, as this reflects a leadership style that prioritises relationship-building over task-oriented direction. In this approach, decision-making is shared between the leader and the team, recognising the importance of collaboration and teamwork in achieving desired outcomes. In the participation leadership style, leaders are to support and allow subordinate to take decisions in task allocations and processes, at the end, leaders take control of the followers. To promote successful curriculum implementation in schools, SMTs, when transitioning to a participative leadership style, should prioritise sharing ideas and involving teachers in decision-making. As teachers demonstrate confidence and motivation, SMTs should further adapt their leadership approach to include delegation, empowering teachers with responsibilities and autonomy.

S4-Delegating: In this context, the leader may assign responsibilities to subordinates, but still retains accountability and overall responsibility for their decisions, as noted by Hersey and Blanchard (1996:279). As the SMTs transition towards a participative leadership style, their supportive and directive behaviours may be gradually reduced during this process. Low-task and low-relationship behaviour are supported. Leaders are supposed to delegate most of their duties to the group or their followers; as a result, they continue to monitor progress but participate less in decision-making. While leadership styles **S3** and **S4** prioritise enabling team members to operate autonomously and effectively, leadership styles **S1** and **S2** are more focused on ensuring the completion of tasks or jobs with direct leadership. The leadership styles are illustrated from S1 to S4 in Figure 3.1 below:

<p>High Relationship Low Task Quadrant III “PARTICIPATING”</p>	<p>High Task High Relationship Quadrant II “SELLING”</p>
<p>Low Relationship Low Task Quadrant IV “DELEGATING”</p>	<p>High Task Low Relationship Quadrant I “TELLING”</p>

Low.....Task Behaviour..... High

The Situational Leadership Theory (SLT), developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in 1969, posits that effective leadership requires adapting to different situations by utilising different leadership approaches. The theory identifies four main leadership styles (S1, S2, S3, and S4) that should align with the maturity levels of individual followers or groups (M1, M2, M3, and M4).

Figure 3.1 above, illustrates the four different quadrants based on leadership style and subordinates’ maturity levels: Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4. The leadership style must align with subordinates’ level of maturity. In Q1 superiors must prioritise HIGH TASK with LOW RELATIONSHIP with subordinates, and resort to “TELLING” as the expected leadership style. In Q2, superiors must further establish HIGH TASK with HIGH RELATIONSHIP with subordinate and employ “SELLING” leadership. In Q3, superiors establish HIGH RELATIONSHIP as opposed to LOW TASK, and employs “PARTICIPATING” leadership style. In Q4, superiors establish LOW RELATIONSHIP with LOW TASK and employs “DELEGATION” leadership style as the subordinate shall have reached the highest maturity level.

Figure 3.1: Leadership styles (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996)

This section discussed leadership styles; the next sub-section presents maturity levels of subordinates.

2.3.1.2 *Maturity levels*

Hersey and Blanchard (1996:251) maintain that maturity levels of subordinates are about the levels of independence of employees depending on several factors. Consequently, an employee's experience serves as a crucial gauge to determine their ability to work autonomously and take accountability for their tasks. As a result, employees should possess ample expertise and skills to independently carry out their responsibilities and be self-motivated in their approach. The following are four different maturity levels of followers or subordinates as illustrated in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Maturity levels of subordinates

M4	M3	M2	M1
HIGH	AVERAGE		LOW

Adopted from Hersey and Blanchard (1996:248).

Leadership styles should match subordinates' levels of maturity, which must be in line with the expected needs to be achieved given the kind of teachers the principal is dealing with. Therefore, principals must always strive to take subordinates with low levels of maturity (M1) through to the average maturity levels (M3) to highest maturity levels (M4). This is the ultimate goal that superiors must expect from subordinates so that they work autonomously and be accountable for their tasks, self-motivated with expertise.

The term "Level **M1**" pertains to individuals who do not possess the requisite knowledge, skills, self-assurance, and drive to work autonomously. These individuals necessitate close supervision and support to successfully complete their tasks. These followers have limited job-related skills and are unable to take responsibility. They may display high commitment but low competency, often being new and inexperienced employees. Hersey and Blanchard (1996:253) suggest that utilising their existing skills and competencies can help them improve their energy and performance at work.

At Level **M2**, followers are willing to work but still lack the required skills to complete their tasks successfully and take full responsibility. They are competent but uncommitted and lack a wide range of abilities. These subordinates have not had much professional recognition, educational advancement, or achievement. Their enthusiasm and initial desire may have decreased, and they continue to struggle with their jobs, leading to insecurity (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996:259).

Employees at Level **M3** are more willing to help but still do not possess sufficient abilities. They have the necessary experience and skills, but they lack the self-assurance to take full responsibility. Subordinates at this level range from moderate to high in their commitment, with varying degrees of dedication. They possess some experience and skills and perform well in their tasks, but their motivation and commitment vary, depending on their achievements and successes.

The classification Level **M4** encompasses employees who are capable of assuming full accountability. As per Hersey and Blanchard (1996:268), these employees possess extensive work experience and have honed their skills to a high degree. They are strongly committed and motivated to their work. Leaders should understand the appropriate level of guidance these employees require, as excessive supervision may make them feel patronised and lacking in trust. This can lead to feelings of uncertainty and lack of motivation (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996:269). Ibid (1996:269) further assert that most leaders prefer their subordinates to be in these category as highly skilled and motivated employees create trust and complete their tasks on time. In a school setting, this scenario would allow the principal to focus on macro-level aspects such as school strategy and future projections. The leadership styles and maturity levels of followers or subordinates are essential components of [Hersey and Blanchard's \(1969:234\)](#) Situational Leadership Theory. Therefore, it is important to clarify and discuss the implications of the theory for school effectiveness in this study. The next sub-section presents the implication of the theory to school effectiveness.

2.3.1.3 The implication of the SLT in the SMTs' effectiveness

As per Hersey and Blanchard (1996:239), a universally appropriate leadership style does not exist, as different situations require different leadership approaches. Effective leaders adapt their leadership style to align with the specific situations and followers they are leading. The successful application of situational leadership theory involves leaders understanding the relevance of each situation and considering the maturity level of their followers. The choice of leadership style is contingent upon both the followers' maturity level and the situational context.

When leading followers at the **M2** maturity level, School Management Teams (SMTs) must aid in skill development and experience-building while also motivating them. SMTs should adjust their leadership style to **S2-Selling**, characterised by high-task and high-relationship leader behaviours, with the leader providing most of the direction. SMTs should aim to minimise the duration of this development stage and facilitate the progress of followers to the next maturity level, **M3**.

To gain commitment from followers at the **M3** maturity level, SMTs should offer support and strive to transform them into the **M4** maturity level. SMTs should adapt their leadership style to **S3-Participating**, wherein decision-making is shared through two-way communication between the leader and followers. When dealing with teachers at the **M4** maturity level, SMTs should adjust their leadership style to **S4-Delegating**, whereby SMTs delegate roles and responsibilities to these teachers, as they possess the capability, willingness, and commitment to direct their own behaviour.

As per Earley and Weindling (2004:3), situational leadership is effective when leaders can appropriately select the leadership style that aligns with the maturity level of their followers. Therefore, SMTs must be task-oriented, people-oriented, or both, depending on the demands of the situation. The effective application of situational leadership theory requires SMTs to fulfill their leadership role and ensure effective teaching and learning take place (Earley & Weindling, 2004:4). Misclassifying an employee into the wrong

category may result in adopting an inappropriate leadership style, compromising the quality of the task completion.

2.3.1.4 *Relevance of the theory in this study*

The study aimed to investigate the role of SMTs in curriculum management in the Mopani West District, Limpopo Province. Ineffective management of the curriculum in the intermediate phase is a cause for serious concern, and overcoming this challenge requires the use of a relevant theory to the problem statement. Therefore, the starting point in addressing the challenge must involve schools' leadership and subordinates. Effective leaders (SMTs) and followers (teachers) are essential to turn around the prevailing challenges in schools in the Mopani West District, Limpopo Province. The situational leadership theory is therefore relevant in overcoming the challenge and guiding the study.

The theory proposes that effective leaders must adapt their leadership styles to achieve desired outcomes based on the demands of different situations. The situational leadership theory suggests that leaders should vary their emphasis on task and relationship behaviours to effectively manage followers with varying levels of maturity. This theory is relevant as it aims to drive change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, situational leadership theory fosters positive change in followers, with the goal of enhancing effectiveness in schools. The leadership styles that are most suitable for subordinates at different levels of maturity ensure consistent engagement and encouragement for progress to higher levels. Hence, the theory ensures that leaders offer support and guidance to subordinates, regardless of their developmental level, utilising the appropriate leadership style.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework for the study, in which Situational Leadership Theory is adopted as the theoretical basis. The relevance of the theory to the study is clearly explained, highlighting the importance of SMTs as leaders who must

support, motivate, and direct their subordinates (teachers) towards achieving the goals of their schools. The theory's two dimensions of leadership behaviour, task-oriented and relationship-oriented, are also discussed, showing how they determine the appropriate leadership style based on the maturity levels of subordinates. During the discussion, it is emphasised that successful leadership requires understanding one's followers and their level of motivation. The next chapter presents a critic of the literature pertinent to the problem under investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one presented the context and rationale for the study while Chapter two presented the theoretical points of departure for the study. In the current chapter, literature pertaining to the problem of the study is reviewed to identify possible research gaps. According to Taylor (2013:3), literature review is “an account of what has been published on a particular topic by other scholars and researchers”. This means that it enables the researcher to be familiar with the findings of previous scholars. In the context of this study, the reviewed literature is centred on the roles of SMTs, both locally and internationally, as well as challenges in school management.

3.2 THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS (SMTs)

In an educational context, the School Management Team (SMT) consists of key personnel such as the school principal, deputy principal, and department heads. According to the Education Human Resource Management and Development Manual (Department of Basic Education, 2012:2), the SMT is a structure composed of experienced educators who are appointed based on their specific roles and responsibilities within the school.

3.2.1 Roles of SMT in curriculum management and implementation

In the field of education, the School Management Team (SMT) is entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the functioning of schools. However, individual members of the SMT are also assigned with their own distinct duties daily. As stated by Walter (2013:3), SMT members are accountable for tasks related to planning, organising, leading, and controlling, all aimed at ensuring efficient and effective management of

schools. It is crucial that these four aspects are carried out effectively to ensure that school's function properly. The school principal, who serves as the chairperson of the SMT, is responsible for any failures that may occur but should not be a dictator and undermine others' decisions.

SMTs act as school leaders with a professional responsibility to foster a positive culture that enhances education quality. As leaders, SMTs play a critical role in creating, maintaining, and facilitating quality education in schools. Leadership involves implementing policies and decisions that help direct an organisation towards its goals (Bush, 2012:1). According to Clarke (2012:1), a leader recognises followers and influences them to achieve desired objectives. Therefore, SMTs have a vital role in improving service delivery to the organisation and its members.

School Management Teams must understand their responsibilities and be accountable for their respective schools and associated individuals (Sergiovanni, 2016:169). They must accept the obligation to lead with dedication after being made aware of their roles. However, as noted by Bush (2012:139), most SMT members lack knowledge of their roles due to a lack of training. SMT members are responsible for the day-to-day school administration, ensuring effective teaching and learning, efficient use of resources, and policy implementation (DBE, 2012:3). They have overall responsibility for staff, students, and the quality of education provided. The principal, as an agent of change, should fulfil obligations and encourage SMT members and staff to share the same vision.

3.2.1.1 Planning

Planning is one of the managerial functions of the School Management Team which refer to all planning activities necessary to ensure learning organisation (Oldroyd & Hall, 2013:20). According to this study's researcher, planning activities include everything from developing the school's policies, projects, programmes, processes, and strategies to planning for establishing the school's mission, vision, purpose, and objectives. In this regard, planning is viewed as one of the fundamental functions that school managers must perform for their school to be an effective educational institution that provide quality

education to all its learners (Bell & Day, 2012:66). “Planning is the basic function of management, and it is a process of setting goals, developing strategies, and outlining tasks and schedules to accomplish the goals, and refers to the process of deciding what to do and how to do it” (Department of Basic Education, 2012:5).

Effective planning is crucial for the smooth operation of any organisation. However, it is not solely the responsibility of the principal to carry out the planning process. The principal relies on the collaboration and involvement of other senior educators, heads of departments (HODs), and deputy principals. This is because, as the leader engages in planning, it necessitates interaction and communication with other members of the senior and staff teams, resulting in a form of distributed leadership, as noted by Van Deventer and Kruger (2012:75).

Van der Westhuizen (2015:215) regards planning as “an indication of understanding how to put together the management systems, official, procedures, plans, ways and means and proficiency by a person who is leading an institution to achieve its goal through involving human resources”. On the other hand, Van Deventer and Kruger (2013:15) suggest that planning includes “aligning problems solving methods, decision making strategies and policy formulation with the vision, mission, aims and outcomes of the organisation in this case, a school”.

Planning is a fundamental part of management processes in all levels of organisational life and involves evaluating or redefining the goals and objectives of the organisation or a unit within it (Nwachukwu, 2015:16). This activity requires a comprehensive assessment of both external factors and internal resources and processes. Rue and Byers (2017:3) note that planning also involves creating plans to achieve the aims and objectives by making decisions about resource allocation and time management. Part of the planning process is considering how the plans will be executed.

Bell (2012:37) provides a definition of planning as the process of determining a course of action aimed at achieving desired outcomes, which are derived from the school

development plan and priorities. Similarly, according to the Department of Basic Education (2012:5), planning is seen as a means of sustaining ongoing activities in a school while also creating new opportunities for growth and advancement. Typically, in schools, the responsibility for planning lies with the management team, which then presents the plans to lower levels for review. Senge, Ross, Kleiner, and Smith (2014:47) conceptualise planning as a process that involves the management team in re-evaluating their shared mental models of the organisation, markets, and competitors. SADTU (2012:7) identifies planning as the work carried out by the School Management Team (SMT) to prepare for the future, including systematically presenting information and selecting the most effective strategies to achieve objectives.

The South African Democratic Teachers Union (2016:3) asserts that planning is a responsibility carried out by members of the School Management Team (SMT) in order to shape and control the future, highlighting the close relationship between planning and action. The Department of Basic Education (2012:98) shares a similar perspective, viewing planning as a means of maintaining current activities in a school while also setting the stage for future development and growth. However, Freddano and Siri (2012:3) hold a different view, considering planning as a process rather than a mere activity. According to their perspective, during the planning process, management teams undergo a change in their shared mental models of the market and competitors. The Department of Basic Education (2012:15) also emphasises that planning is critical for ensuring that individuals with the appropriate skills and abilities are placed in the right roles at the right time.

Planning is widely recognised as an essential aspect of managerial roles, particularly at higher levels, and has been extensively discussed in academic literature. Inner (2013:1) argues that planning has always been an integral part of a manager's work, and without a plan, other management functions would be ineffective. Rue and Byers (2017:3) contend that managers who attempt to organise without a plan will find themselves frequently reorganising, while those who hire without a plan will face continuous turnover of employees. Inner (2013:115) views planning as the aspect of management that

involves setting missions and taking actions to achieve them. Nwachukwu (2015:1) suggests that planning goes beyond simply striving to achieve organisational goals.

The initial step towards effective school management involves the planning and organisation of school activities, which requires self-reflection to ensure the implementation of plans aligns with their intended objectives. The South African Democratic Teachers Union (2016:3) posits that planning is how school management teams (SMTs) exert control over the future, underscoring the close association between planning and action.

Planning is deemed the most pivotal and pervasive function among all management functions. For groups to perform efficiently, they must be aware in advance of the tasks to be accomplished, the methods for accomplishing them, and the timeframe for their completion (Zimmerman, 2014:5). Consequently, planning emerges as the foundational management function performed by diverse organisations and managers at all levels of hierarchy. The Department of Basic Education (2017:15) characterises planning as a management task that encompasses critical reflection on organisational outcomes, resources, and activities, as well as problem identification. Effective leadership entails the ability to diagnose issues and adopt the most suitable approach (Morgan, 2014:3). Planning equips educational managers with the capacity to anticipate challenges and opportunities, engage in proactive thinking, and contribute to the effectiveness of other managerial functions (Priadi, 2012:3).

Dimba (2001:17) suggests that a school principal should possess a clear vision of the curriculum and have a clear direction for their students. October (2009:7) concurs, emphasising that effective principals possess a vision for their school as an organisation, and realising that vision is of paramount importance. The vision should be communicated to parents, teachers, and students, and a mission statement should be formulated to guide all efforts towards achieving the vision. According to October (2009:8), the leader should also translate the vision into practical actions by setting an example. To effect change, the principal must lead by example, observe classes if they have one, and utilise

appropriate teaching strategies as mandated by the curriculum. The role of the principal encompasses providing managerial and administrative leadership (Wahyudin, 2010:29). As the head of the curriculum, principals should proactively promote curriculum change within the institution. They should focus on reviewing materials and addressing the daily challenges that teachers encounter when implementing the curriculum.

The identification of a strategy to accomplish the intended goals is known as planning (Loliwe, 2014:14). Loliwe maintains that outcomes will be described in terms of objectives and drawn from the priorities set forth in the school development plan. According to Van Deventer (2013:79), one of the most crucial abilities to develop to become a great SMT or principle is planning. Democratic worldviews incorporate planning. According to Lourens (2012:19), planning is a managerial task that entails thinking ahead to where the organisation wants to be in its operations in the future.

According to the Department of Basic Education (2017:15), planning is a management responsibility that involves carefully considering the outcomes of the organisation, its resources, and activities, and developing an appropriate plan to achieve these outcomes effectively. By engaging in thoughtful planning, the desired outcomes can be accomplished. It is expected that Senior Management Teams (SMTs) take the lead in developing subject frameworks as part of their management role. Planning is the management function that sets goals and determines the actions necessary to achieve those goals (DBE, 2017:2). Managers need to be aware of the current and future environmental conditions that their organisation may face when engaging in planning (DBE, 2017:2).

Furthermore, planning is a management task that aims to ensure that the organisation's purpose, mission, objectives, and strategies for achieving them are clearly understood by all stakeholders (Van der Westhuizen, 2015:212; Smit & Cronje, 2013:82). Planning also involves establishing and implementing policies that will guide the planned actions (Dash, 2014:1).

According to Craig (2014:92), effective planning is the crucial element of curriculum management. Planning should commence with a clear vision or identified goals to work towards, to generate commitment and enthusiasm. Principals are advised to involve their staff in planning to ensure collective ownership of decisions. Regular staff meetings are necessary to ensure smoother implementation of the curriculum and stronger staff cohesion. Principals must understand that failure to hold regular meetings to monitor progress can lead to failure. These meetings provide a platform to articulate and resolve problems, as well as an opportunity for staff to share ideas, curriculum information and support each other (Craig, 2015:92). Since planning is a continuous activity, school principals should schedule meetings in a way that does not disrupt regular school operations. With a well-designed plan and its implementation, it is possible to measure progress towards the intended goal and the distance remaining (Craig, 2015:246).

In educational management, effective planning is an important aspect. Dash (2014:1) notes that planning, along with organising, staffing, directing, and controlling, is necessary to achieve educational aims and objectives. Proper planning is vital for the smooth running of any organisation. However, planning cannot be solely carried out by the principal; it requires the involvement of educators, Heads of Departments (HODs), and deputy principals. As the leader plans, it is essential to interact and communicate with other senior staff members, which promotes distributed leadership (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2012:75).

According to Van der Westhuizen (2015:212), planning is a critical aspect of managing an organisation that involves coordinating management systems, official procedures, plans, methods, and skills to achieve the institution's objectives with the help of human resources. On the other hand, Van Deventer and Kruger (2012:79) suggest that planning involves aligning problem-solving methods, decision-making strategies, and policy formulation with the vision, mission, aims, and outcomes of the organisation, specifically in the context of a school. Planning is the initial step in the management process that determines the desired outcomes of the organisation and how to achieve them (De Beer & Rossouw, 2015:10).

Through planning, goals and objectives are established, which serve as a guide in decision-making and direction setting. A manager considers various alternatives and selects the most viable one for the organisation's future. Planning sets the foundation for all other management functions, which are carried out within the plan's framework (Van der Westhuizen, 2015:225). Effective planning is necessary for a school's development, as it is a universal task with unique elements. Planning is "the process by which an individual or organisation anticipates future actions" (Omran, 2012:68).

Planning is a critical aspect of management, often considered the most fundamental function because it serves as the foundation for organising, leading, controlling, and staffing (Van der Westhuizen, 2015:225). Planning enables organisations to prepare for the future by determining their goals and identifying the steps needed to achieve them. Managers dedicate a considerable amount of time to planning, creating strategies aimed at meeting specific organisational objectives such as enhancing customer service or increasing sales.

According to De Beer and Rossouw (2015:10), "planning is the most basic and essential function of management", outlining the activities to be carried out in the organisation. Planning involves deciding when, what, where, and how to execute activities before commencing work. It is a cognitive process that requires careful consideration before formulating plans (Nel, 2012:160). Planning involves setting goals and establishing guidelines to achieve them, and all other management functions are ineffective without proper planning. Therefore, planning is the foundation of all other functions, serving as the organisation's map or blueprint. Planning serves as the foundation of the management process, determining what an organisation aims to achieve and the methods for achieving those objectives (De Beer & Rossouw, 2015:10). Further, Nel (2012:160) assert that planning is the most crucial aspect of any activity as it provides staff with goals to work towards.

Planning is the primary function of management, involving the development of a future course of action and the selection of the most suitable path for achieving predetermined objectives (Nel, 2012:52). The researcher believes that planning entails a systematic consideration of approaches and strategies for attaining predetermined goals. Planning encompasses the determination of goals, objectives, policies, procedures, methods, rules, budgets and other necessary plans to fulfil the organisation's purpose. It involves intellectual work that entails contemplation before acting, anticipating the future, and preparing for it. Planning necessitates making decisions in advance about what to do, how to do it, when to do it and who will carry out the tasks. Planning should be conducted before any other managerial function. Once initial plans have been established, managers continue to revise the course of action and select different alternatives as needed (Holt, 2017:124).

The process of planning entails selecting tasks that are necessary to achieve organisational goals, detailing how they should be performed, and specifying when they should be completed. Managers develop precise plans for organisational success, with planning focused on short-term as well as long-term objectives (Nel, 2012:162).

3.2. 2 Types of Planning

There are four main types of plans that a manager uses in his or her pursuit of company goals, which include strategic, tactical, operational and contingency plans.

Strategic planning

According to Johnson et al. (2012:3), strategic planning is defined as an organisational approach that takes a long-term view and aims to achieve a competitive advantage in a dynamic environment by aligning resources and capabilities to meet stakeholder expectations. A strategic plan is a long-term plan typically developed by top management, with a duration of at least five years, outlining the organisation's main objectives and strategies for achieving them. Strategic planning is a process undertaken by an organization to formulate a plan for the attainment of its overall long-term goals (Bell,

2012:3). It is important to note that strategic planning encompasses all the measures taken to provide a comprehensive overview of what needs to be achieved, the prioritisation of objectives, and the organization of a system capable of realising the overall goals.

According to Bell (2012:64) strategic planning involves “analysing competitive opportunities and threats, as well as strengths and weaknesses of the organisation, and determining how to position the organisation to complete effectively in their environment”. In addition, Wittmann (2018:3) states that “strategic planning has a long-time frame, often three years or more, it generally includes the entire organisation and includes formulation of objectives and is often based on the organisation’s mission, which is its fundamental reason for existence”. Furthermore, strategic planning is typically carried out by the senior leadership or top management of an organisation. (Wittmann, 2018:3). Setting a direction for the organisation, creating goals and objectives, and choosing a variety of tactics to use to attain those goals are all part of strategic planning (Bell, 2012:64). This suggests that strategic planning serves as a general manual for managing an organisation in accordance with the priorities and objectives of stakeholders.

The success of strategic plan implementation in a school can be influenced by the leadership style of the principal and other members of the School Management Team, as their motivation, guidance, and handling of staff members involved in strategic planning can impact the outcome. Schools should set high aspirations and diligently focus on executing strategic plans, which provide a platform for thoughtfully addressing all relevant issues affecting the school. Reuter (2018:3) highlights the overwhelming support for implementing strategic planning in schools as it promotes a renewed focus on the quality of education.

In Viljoen’s (2014:5) definition, strategic planning is described as the process of identifying, selecting, and implementing activities aimed at improving an organisation’s long-term performance by aligning its internal skills and resources with the changing external environment. Thompson (2014:5) defines strategic planning as the process by

which an organisation establishes objectives, formulates actions to achieve those objectives within a defined timeframe, implements the actions, and evaluates progress and results. Strategic planning is a comprehensive process undertaken by organisations to develop a plan for achieving their overall long-term goals.

According to Chang (2018:1), a strategic plan is a dynamic document that outlines a school's policies, implementation strategies, actions, and benchmarks for monitoring and evaluation. It also includes an expenditure framework that allows for adjustments during implementation. This plan involves analysing the school's strategic issues, prioritizing them, and developing and implementing a plan to address them, ensuring that learners receive a high-quality education that promotes both academic achievement and holistic development (Bell, 2012:10).

According to Bryson (2015:3), "strategic planning is a systematic effort to make fundamental decisions and take actions that shape and guide a school's identity, purpose, and activities". Effective strategic planning involves gathering comprehensive information, exploring various strategic options, and considering the future implications of current decisions. Strategic planning aims to establish a long-term vision for a school and steer it towards achieving its desired future state (Chang, 2018:1). This process encompasses a school's mission, goals, values, management philosophy, products, and services over the next three to five years (Bell, 2012:10).

Chang (2018:1) explains that strategic planning is an essential management activity used to prioritise, allocate resources, enhance operations, and align employees and other stakeholders towards common goals. It aims to establish consensus on intended outcomes and regularly evaluate and adjust the organisation's direction to adapt to changes in the environment. This is a structured process that results in critical decisions and actions that shape an organisation's identity, target audience, activities, and motivations towards the future. Effective strategic planning not only outlines the organisation's objectives and necessary steps to achieve them but also includes indicators to assess success. The strategic plan acts as a communication tool for the

organisation, summarising its goals, strategies, and other crucial elements generated during the planning process (Johnson et al., 2013:9).

Johnson (2013:9) suggests that strategic planning involves aligning an organisation's activities with its available resources and the surrounding environment. In schools, developing a strategic plan is a crucial management process that integrates institutional values and objectives, offering a framework for the efficient deployment of resources to ensure high-quality provision (Preedy, 2017:9).

In the school management context, strategic planning encompasses various planning activities required of school staff (Thomas, 2013:3). In essence, strategic planning involves determining a long-term vision for the organisation and charting a course to achieve that vision, based on the aspirations of its members or key stakeholders (Wallace, 2014:1). Tactical planning, which is connected to strategic planning, is a process that focuses on the routine operational planning requirements to ensure that the long-term strategy is successfully implemented (Smith, 2017:1).

Tactical planning

The tactical plan pertains to the integration of different organisational units to ensure the day-to-day implementation of strategic plans. Tactical planning involves determining how an organisation's resources should be utilised to achieve its strategic goals. This type of plan is also known as a coordinative or functional plan, as described by Chang (2018:1).

Tactical planning involves setting objectives and devising action plans that align with and support the overall schedule for achieving strategic goals (Gate Wood et al., 2015:3). It is a short-term planning approach that focuses on the current operations of different parts of the organisation, typically covering a period of one year or less. Managers use tactical planning to establish what specific tasks different parts of the organisation need to perform for the organisation to succeed within the next year (Chang, 2018:1).

Operational planning

The process of connecting tactical goals and objectives to strategic goals and objectives is known as operational planning. It outlines benchmarks, requirements for success, and how or what parts of a strategy plan will be implemented over a specific operational term (Gate Wood et al., 2015:3). Any operational unit whose primary focus is achieving goals and completing short-term tasks falls under the short-term scope of this. The annual work plan and operational planning are related (Gate Wood et al., 2015:3).

Creating datasets to be included into the planning and decision-making machinery at various levels of the institution is a requirement of operational planning. To identify and manage issue areas during the planning phase, these datasets should clearly show student enrolment trends, success and failure rates in the academic programs (DBE, 2012:6). Operational planning, as the name suggests, focuses on the operations or actions required to achieve a short-term goal within a year. The purpose of operational planning is to ensure adherence to deadlines, coordination and communication of administrative and technical measures to achieve objectives (Villemain, 2013:2).

Operational plans are plans created by lower-level management for the short-term, typically lasting up to one year. They focus on the day-to-day running of the organisation, are detailed and specific, and draw from past experiences. These plans cover functional areas such as production, finance, and human resources (Gate Wood et al., 2015:3). Operational planning is a management tool used to coordinate an organisation's resources (such as human, financial, and physical resources) to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan (DBE, 2012:6). Essentially, operational planning involves developing a plan to implement the strategies outlined in the strategic plan. It may be described as a plan created by a division of an organisation that clearly outlines the actions it will take to support the strategic objectives and plans of senior management (Villemain, 2013:2).

Contingency planning

A contingency plan is a strategy developed to enable an organisation to respond efficiently to a significant event or situation that may or may not occur in the future. A

contingency refers to any unexpected occurrence that may negatively impact an organisation's ability to function normally. In simple terms, contingency planning is about being prepared and is an essential component of regular operational planning. It serves as a blueprint for managing unexpected events (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2016:3).

3.2.3 Organizing

The term “organising” describes how a group of individuals divides and arranges their collective activity. The role of organising involves selecting the tasks to be completed, creating the departments, sections, and roles necessary to do those tasks, and building linkages between the various components of an organisation (Bell, 2012:166). The process of organising involves identifying and grouping the work to be done, defining and allocating responsibility and authority, and forming partnerships to work together as effectively as possible to achieve goals (Smit et al., 2015:11). During the organising phase, the School Management Team should divide the resources and activities into workable groups and assign the responsibility for achieving objectives to applicable staff members and delegate to those individuals the authority necessary to carry out their assigned duties (Bell, 2012:166).

The role of a leader in an organisation involves the organisation and coordination of various structures, committees, and departments with the assistance of other stakeholders. Organising encompasses the allocation of roles and responsibilities to individuals, as well as the improvement of interpersonal relationships through teamwork, reflecting the concept of distributive leadership (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2012:75). It is a process that brings together physical, financial, and human resources, and establishes productive relationships among them to achieve organisational goals (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2012:75).

Makgalemele (2013:32) defines organising as the process of allocating and arranging human and non-human resources to ensure the successful implementation of plans. Van Deventer (2013:109) describes organising as the creation of a structured framework

within a school that enables its members to collaborate effectively in achieving desired outcomes. Additionally, Mentz (2013:164) states that organising involves grouping tasks, assigning duties, authority, and responsibility, and determining relationships among people to achieve goals.

Furthermore, Miner and Luchsinger (2015:8) highlight that management must delegate authority to subordinate managers to enable them to fulfill their duties and responsibilities as part of the organising process. Establishing departments is also an important aspect of organising, as it designates specific divisions or sections of an organisation under the authority of a manager for the performance of designated activities (Holt, 2017:22).

Organising in the context of a school is the process of creating a structure that allows its members to work together effectively in achieving the school's aims and objectives, based on the principles of effective teaching and learning (Van der Westhuizen, 2017:161). It involves combining and integrating human, physical, and financial resources in a coordinated manner to achieve organisational goals, ensuring that all efforts align towards the common objectives (Holt, 2017:45), despite the time constraints faced by managers in their daily responsibilities.

[The Department of Basic Education \(2012:18\)](#) asserts that Senior Management Teams (SMTs) have the responsibility of organising school activities in a manner that aligns with the school community's vision and supports effective teaching and learning. This entails the leader working with other stakeholders to coordinate and allocate roles to individuals, including other staff members, to foster teamwork and improve interpersonal relationships, which aligns with the concept of distributive leadership ([Piek, 2015:41](#)).

The organising function of management encompasses various activities that directly or indirectly relate to the allocation of resources to achieve goals and plans established during the planning function ([Leung & Kleiner, 2014:36](#)). This includes human resources management activities such as job design and assignment of duties. For educational

leaders, organizing involves establishing order and structure in the organization (Van der Westhuizen, 2017:19).

In the context of schools, organising involves the work of school managers in arranging workload and assigning tasks to achieve departmental or group objectives, as well as coordinating these departments or groups to work together effectively (Van Deventer, 2013:69). Without effective organising, successful implementation of plans and strategies, and the creation of an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning, would not be possible (Kruger & Van Deventer, 2013:72).

Organising is not just about planning, but also involves actions such as delegation, coordination, and control, which are crucial for realising the outcomes of the school (Van der Merwe et al., 2015:310). Through organising, SMT members can establish an organizational structure, delegate tasks, and coordinate efforts to ensure that support services are provided efficiently and effectively (DBE, 2012:63; Lehlola, 2013:49).

According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2008:92), successful implementation of plans and strategies requires effective organising. This implies that the objectives of a new curriculum cannot be achieved unless SMTs organise resources in a meaningful manner. The Department of Education (2001:12) emphasises the responsibility of SMTs to organise school activities to align with the vision of the school community. This study focuses on the importance of organising in arranging necessary activities and resources for the successful implementation of a new curriculum.

Organising in the context of school management is the process of creating a structured framework that enables individuals to work together effectively towards achieving the school's goals and objectives. It involves implementing planned actions based on the principle that tasks should be carried out efficiently to foster a culture of teaching and

learning. Organising also entails developing mechanisms to accomplish the school's goals and objectives (Van Deventer, 2017:150). It is a critical step in the overall management process of a school and involves the implementation of planning. Organising is the function that is directly responsible for the systematic coordination of various tasks within the school and the formal relationships between those who perform them (Van Deventer, 2017:150). It also includes grouping activities necessary for achieving common objectives and assigning them to managers with the appropriate authority to perform the activities (Van Deventer, 2017:150). In the context of a school, the organising process involves managers arranging workloads and assigning tasks necessary to achieve the objectives of relevant departments or groups (Van Der Merwe, 2013:111).

Strydom (2017:77) argues that organising entails coordinating activities in a way that ensures objectives are achieved. As a management task, organising primarily involves classifying and allocating activities to divisions, creating positions within these divisions, and determining the duties, responsibilities, and authorities of employees. Hellriegel et al. (2015:9) further state that organising is the process of deciding where decisions will be made, who will perform specific jobs and tasks, and who will report to whom. Smith and Cronje (2014:191) state that the organising process involves dividing the work of the organisation, logically allocating it to business units, departments, and sections, delegating authority, and establishing coordinating, communication, and information systems to ensure that everyone works together to achieve the organisation's goals. The task of dividing work and allocating responsibility is commonly referred to as the design of the organising structure.

Organising refers to the determination of what resources and activities are required to achieve the organisation's objectives. During the organising phase, the School Management Team should divide resources and activities into workable groups and assign the responsibility for achieving objectives to applicable staff members and delegate to those individuals the authority necessary to carry out their assigned duties (Sears, 2014:7).

Organising is closely related to planning and the effort of the people, as it serves to put plans into action and achieve the objectives set by the administration (Sears, 2014:7). According to Van der Westhuizen (2015:113), an organisation is a machine for getting work done, made up of various elements such as people, materials, ideas, concepts, and rules. Organising, therefore, involves creating a structure within the school that enables people to work together effectively to achieve the school's goals and objectives.

Organising as a management function involves designing the structure of the organisation, recruiting employees, and creating conducive working conditions and systems to achieve the organisation's objectives (Van der Westhuizen, 2015:113). According to Smit et al. (2015:187), organising is the process of assigning tasks to different business units, departments, or sections and coordinating them to work collaboratively towards achieving the organisation's goals. The author argues that in a school setting, the senior management team, along with the principal, should design the school's structure by dividing the workload and assigning responsibilities to teachers to ensure the efficient operation of the school.

Organisation typically comes after planning and outlines how a company plans to implement its plans. It involves assigning tasks and responsibilities, grouping tasks into departments, and allocating resources (Strydom, 2017:79). Delegation of responsibility for task completion is a key activity associated with organising (Strydom, 2017:79). Organisation is crucial for achieving results and is essential for the successful operation of a business. It involves defining job roles, job responsibilities, and coordinating authority and responsibility (Smit et al., 2015:187). Therefore, effective organisation is always necessary for achieving desired outcomes.

Organisation be the allocation of tasks developed during the planning stage to individuals or groups within the company. It establishes a structure to put plans into action (Smit et al., 2015:187). Individuals within the organisation are assigned work tasks that contribute to the organisation's objectives, and tasks are organised in a way that ensures each

person's output contributes to the success of departments, which in turn contributes to the success of divisions, ultimately leading to the success of the entire organisation (Van der Westhuizen, 2015:113).

3.2.2.1 Classification of organizations

Relationships serve as the fundamental basis for categorising organisations. Formal and informal organisations, both of which are built on the relationships inside an organisation, are two different sorts (Van der Westhuizen, 2015: 113).

- **Formal organisation**

A formal organisation refers to a structured arrangement of roles and positions, each with a defined level of authority and responsibility. It is a deliberate choice made by individuals to follow the rules established by the structure to achieve their aims. With this kind of organisation, everyone oversees their own performance and follows a formal structure to accomplish predetermined goals (Smit et al., 2015:187).

- **Informal organisation**

An informal organisation is a network of social and personal connections that spontaneously develops within a formal structure. Relationships in informal organisations are based on sentiments, emotions, and preferences. As a result, the network of friendship-based social groups might be referred to as informal organisations (Smit et al., 2015:187).

- **Principles of organising**

If the managers are given specific instructions so they may act and make judgments, the organising process can be completed effectively. The following organisational principles may be used by a manager to plan effectively.

- **Principle of specialisation**

A concern's entire workload should be distributed among its subordinates based on their qualifications, aptitudes, and capabilities, according to the guiding concept. Specialisation

may be attained by the division of labour, which leads to successful organisation (Smit et al., 2015:188).

- ***Principle of functional definition***

This idea states that all of company's functions should be fully and precisely explained to the managers and employees. This can be achieved by outlining the roles, responsibilities, levels of authority, and relationships between individuals. Responsibility relationships facilitate coordination, enabling an organisation to operate successfully (Smit et al., 2015:188).

3.2.4 Leading

As stated by Lussier (2013:11), leadership entails exerting influence over employees to work towards achieving organisational objectives, which involves motivating and directing staff, selecting appropriate communication channels, and resolving conflicts. Leadership is centred around building relationships. Hoer (2015:7) argues that effective leaders bring about change in organisations, while exceptional leaders bring about change in individuals. People are the cornerstone of any organization, especially in the context of schools. Only by fostering growth and development in individuals, challenging them to improve, and cultivating a culture of learning can an organisation thrive (Hoer, 2015:7).

For leadership to be effective, the leader must possess a clear understanding of the school's aims, including its goals, vision, and mission, and intended outcomes. The leader must then guide the top team and followers towards achieving these objectives, providing support to followers through motivation and training. Effective communication with staff members is also crucial, as lack of communication can result in misinterpretation, misunderstandings, and resistance to tasks. Leadership is a management function that provides the leader with the opportunity to influence subordinates through effective communication of the school's vision and mission (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2012:75).

Members of the School Management Team (SMT) are expected to assume leadership roles in their schools. As leaders, SMT members are obligated to be effective, and their effectiveness depends largely on their sensitivity, approachability, and management styles (Loliwe, 2014:15). It is the responsibility of SMT members to ensure that the school's vision and mission are realised, and this can only be achieved if school managers are reflective enough to provide other staff members with clear direction in leading them towards their goals. According to the National Department of Education (2012:29), leadership is about guiding and inspiring, which means that SMT members are instructional and responsible for taking the lead in implementing and improving the school's curriculum.

The Department of Basic Education (2012:12) emphasises that the new education paradigm calls on all educational leaders to use their authority and power to develop the ability of others to manage themselves and the school. Although the participation of all school stakeholders in leading and managing schools is advocated in the new education paradigm, it is often the school principals and the SMTs who end up assuming responsibility for driving change. The leadership function of management can also include organisational change (Leung & Kleiner, 2014), which is significant to consider as trust is crucial in the context of major changes (Chawla & Kelloway, 2014:1).

Leading involves mobilising or inspiring people to achieve their best. Managers need to be able to motivate their employees to work towards the overall organisational goals (Bateman & Snell, 2014:39). One way for a manager to do this is through regular contact and communication with employees. Workers who receive positive feedback and motivation from their managers are more likely to contribute to the team's goal achievement (Bateman & Snell, 2014:39). Through effective leadership of employees, the manager can ensure that the team is making efficient progress towards their goals. If the manager is closely involved with the team, they can identify when something is not working and take immediate action to rectify it.

Leading also entails a level of dominance where subordinates generally accept the commands and control of a leader. All leadership theories incorporate the concepts of authority and power (Prinsloo, 2015:139). Authority is closely linked to leadership and refers to a manager's right to enforce specific actions within established guidelines. It also grants the leader the right to act against subordinates who refuse to cooperate in achieving certain objectives. In a school setting, the school principal is authorised by the head

According to Lewis and Goodman (2014:7), managers should be able to guide their teams toward achieving the organisation's objectives. Managers need to be able to inspire their staff members and be good communicators to be great leaders. They also need to grasp the dynamics of both individual and group behaviour. The destiny of an organisation, like a school, is determined by leadership, which is a critical success aspect. The climate, values, growth, and development of employees will depend on the leadership style that the leader chooses. Since schools are distinct, leaders in those institutions should create their own leadership practices and brands for School Management Teams to be successful (Moloi, 2015:78).

Leading leadership to teachers is regarded as a management function that influences teachers to accomplish the set targets and objectives of the school. Therefore, leadership functions encompass the instructional leadership qualities, management styles, communication, motivation, discipline and modelling aspects to inspire staff members to be worthy in providing quality education to all learners (Lewis & Goodman, 2014:7).

The act of providing leadership to teachers is recognised as a management function that influences them to achieve the school's set targets and objectives. This encompasses various leadership functions, including instructional leadership qualities, management styles, communication, motivation, discipline, and modelling, to inspire staff members to be dedicated followers in the pursuit of providing quality education to all learners (Moloi, 2015:78).

Leading can be defined as the process of influencing individuals' behaviour through motivation, communication, group dynamics, leadership, and discipline (Smit et al., 2017:271). The aim of leading is to guide employees towards achieving the organisation's mission and objectives, while also assisting them in fulfilling their own career goals. This involves turning plans into reality and motivating individuals to work towards agreed-upon group objectives voluntarily and enthusiastically. Effective leading requires communication and motivation, within the context of a supportive organizational culture, to ensure that tasks necessary for achieving the organisation's goals are performed (Rane, 2017:29).

Managers play a crucial role in leading by mobilizing and stimulating employees to achieve their best, which can be achieved through close contact and daily communication. Employees who receive feedback and motivation from their managers are more likely to contribute towards achieving the team's goals set by the Senior Management Team (SMT) (Lewis & Goodman, 2014:7). Leading involves using influence to promote shared values, communicate objectives, and inspire employees to perform to the best of their abilities, thereby motivating employees towards achieving organisational goals (Moloi, 2015:78). Similarly, in the context of a school, the School Governing Body (SGB) chairperson assumes a leading role in managing the school's financial affairs and delegates responsibilities as part of effective leadership (Miner & Luchsinger, 2015:7).

Leading, also referred to as directing, motivating, or influencing, encompasses various activities such as guiding, teaching, coaching, and supervising subordinates. It involves utilising the personal qualities, knowledge, and skills of the manager to influence the behaviour of subordinates. Leading is closely linked to the concept of motivation, and the manager strives to create an environment that promotes employee satisfaction while achieving organizational objectives (Miner & Luchsinger, 2015:7). In a hierarchical structure, leading involves using different methods to ensure that subordinates fulfill their job requirements as per their job design and description. It also includes assisting subordinates in reaching their maximum performance level and restoring effective

performance among those who have failed to achieve it or maintaining existing performance levels (Moloi, 2015:78).

3.2.5 Delegation

Efficient delegation is a critical aspect of effective management, leading to improved managerial skills and increased efficiency (Muir, 2016:3). Successful managers must possess the challenging skill of effective delegation (Lewis & Goodman, 2014:265). Delegation, which involves transferring responsibility for tasks to others, is a crucial approach that new administrators, such as principals, may struggle to implement but can greatly benefit from in terms of time-saving and improved leadership capacity at all levels within a school (Corwin, 2015:27).

Corwin (2017:27) maintains that delegation is the process by which managers transfer the responsibility and authority for a specific activity or task to another member of the organization, empowering them to accomplish the task effectively. In the context of school administration, delegation typically involves the transfer of responsibility from a manager to a subordinate (Corwin, 2015:27).

According to Dunham and Pierce (2014:377), delegation is the formal transfer of authority from one position to another within an organization, allowing managers to implement their authority system. Rather than having a generic meaning, delegation becomes a prescriptive framework for managers. One of the goals of delegation is to enhance the manager's influence while improving the quality of organizational activities. Delegation empowers employees to contribute significantly to the achievement of organizational goals by giving them decision-making authority (Holt, 2017:22).

3.2.6 Communication

Communication is a fundamental function of management, as it enables managers to make informed decisions, create well-thought-out plans, establish a sound organisational

structure, and foster positive relationships with their associates (Campher, 2013:32). Van Deventer and Kruger (2013:156) define communication as the transmission of messages from a sender to a receiver, whether through verbal or non-verbal means. In the context of educational leadership, communication encompasses various activities, tasks, and relationships involving staff, parents, students, and the school. From a managerial perspective, Van Deventer and Kruger (2013:156) highlight that communication is a critical tool through which educational leaders can influence groups and individuals, motivating them to contribute their best efforts to the school.

As noted by Campher (2013:32), the primary purpose of communication is to facilitate the exchange of ideas and the interpretation of messages. In the realm of educational leadership, effective communication serves as a vital tool for informing, clarifying, expressing emotions, exchanging ideas, issuing directives, and resolving issues. It plays a crucial role in planning, articulating the school's vision and objectives to teachers, parents, and students, as well as in decision-making processes and problem-solving.

3.2.7 Motivation

Motivation plays a significant role in employee performance, as individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities may underperform if not sufficiently motivated to dedicate time and effort to their work (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2017:153). Van Deventer and Kruger (2013:148) define motivation as the act of persuading subordinates to achieve the manager's desired goals. The term "motivation" originates from the Latin word "movere", meaning to move or initiate, as explained by Schrender and Landey (2012:100). Bisschoff and Mestry (2017:153) view motivation as a management responsibility that involves leveraging various factors to encourage staff to voluntarily work towards achieving the school's objectives.

Motivation is a complex process that initiates and directs efforts towards fulfilling individual and organisational goals (Sikavila et al., 2018:532). The role of management in

motivating employees is crucial, as one of the key objectives of managers is to increase employee motivation and align their efforts with organisational goals (Lewis & Goodman, 2014:265). Motivation involves understanding the needs, goals, tasks, and values of employees, and eliciting their willingness to undertake additional effort and use their skills to achieve the organisation's goals (Lewis & Goodman, 2014:265).

Van Deventer and Kruger (2013:148) emphasize that motivation is derived from “motive”, which refers to the needs, desires, wants, or drives of individuals. Motivation is the process of encouraging individuals to act to achieve their goals, and it is considered one of the fundamental functions of management to inspire employees to perform at their best. Thus, the leader's role is to generate interest and engagement in employees' work.

Shadare and Hammed (2013:17) argue that motivating employees is a critical management strategy for improving job performance in schools, and it is a fundamental psychological process within organisations. Motivation also stimulates, energises, guides, and sustains behaviour and performance by providing incentives to act and achieve desired tasks. Effective motivation is a process that enhances employee satisfaction and commitment to their jobs (Weiner, 2012:50).

3.2.8 Staffing

In the realm of management, staffing is a critical responsibility that encompasses various activities such as recruitment, selection, training, promotion, performance appraisal, and compensation to ensure that an organisation has an adequate number of qualified employees to meet its budgetary requirements and fill various positions as defined by the organizational structure (Miner & Luchsinger, 2015:7).

The primary objective of staffing is to prevent situations where an organisation faces a shortage of staff (Weiner, 2012:50). Managers are tasked with determining the number and type of employees needed for their respective sections and matching available positions with the qualifications of potential employees (Miner & Luchsinger, 2015:8). This

process involves creating job descriptions and job specifications based on job analysis, which involves studying the positions within the organisation (Holt, 2017:22).

People with the right skills, knowledge, and abilities are vital to an organization's success as they can either enhance or undermine the organisations reputation for quality products and services. Furthermore, organisations must be able to effectively adapt to change in order to remain competitive and having the right staff in place can facilitate smooth transitions during periods of change and ensure future success. Hence, effective human resource management, including sound staffing practices, is paramount to the success of all organisations, as it involves attracting, hiring, and retaining a competent and committed workforce (Weiner, 2012:50).

3.2.9 Controlling

Within the context of schooling, School Management Teams (SMTs) face challenges in exercising control, as it involves monitoring both learners and teachers. Traditionally, control was used by principals to track teachers' progress in covering the syllabus for each subject (Loliwe, 2015:15). However, Walter (2013:56) argues that controlling in school management is a process by which SMT members ensure that actual activities align with planned activities and that objectives are achieved. One approach to controlling teachers' work is through moderating tests and exams to maintain high standards and ensure that exam papers are designed to encourage students to utilise their thinking skills (DBE, 2012:2).

As per the Department of Basic Education (2012:8), the responsibility of controlling issues related to the entire school curriculum rests with the school management team. Leaders must assess whether the planned and organised activities are being achieved. In this process, the school's leader may seek assistance from deputies, Heads of Departments (HODs), and senior educators (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2012:75).

Nkoe (2014:16) suggests that managers ensure that people follow instructions according to the plan through the exercise of control. Managers can establish mechanisms to make

necessary corrections or adjustments. Similarly, Lussier (2013:12) defines controlling as the process of establishing and implementing measures to ensure the accomplishment of objectives. The author emphasises that measuring progress towards the achievement of objectives and taking corrective action when necessary is an integral part of controlling.

In the context of schooling, SMT members have the power to control others through their personality and authority, making them influential in decision-making compared to lower-level staff members (Walter, 2013:1). However, effective control requires a balance that allows all staff members to voice their opinions. Control is a management function that involves managing activities and is stressed in the normative and systematic perspectives as a means of bringing change to schools (Smit et al., 2012:438).

In the context of education management, effective control involves the regulation of teaching and learning, monitoring of work progress, and minimising deviations from planned activities to achieve school objectives with minimal disruption. Control serves as a means of measuring progress towards school aims and objectives and enables corrective action to be taken in case of deviations. It is not about manipulating or controlling the personalities, values, attitudes, or emotions of subordinates, but rather involves taking necessary actions to ensure that the work-related activities of subordinates align with and contribute to the achievement of organisational and departmental goals. Control involves clearly defined objectives, goals, and performance standards that are known to both employees and their superiors, and it ensures that the performance of divisions, departments, sections, and individuals are consistent with the predetermined objectives and goals.

Previously, control was used by principals to check progress in subject coverage by educators, but currently, it is a key role of School Management Team (SMT) members, and the criteria for controlling work are established before the actual control takes place. Controlling performance is important in ensuring that objectives are achieved, and tasks are completed. The control system serves as an indicator to management of whether activities are progressing as planned, and plans should be continued with if the situation

has not changed completely. Control complements planning, as it not only reveals deviations but also helps determine whether plans need to be revised due to environmental or other factors. Control is the regulatory function of management, enabling the actual implementation of plans and serving as an important tool to measure the performance of the entire organisation.

Education managers use effective control as a management process to assess and regulate teaching and learning, monitor work in progress, and minimise deviations or failures in planned activities, all to achieve the school's objectives with minimal disruption. The control process measures progress towards these aims and objectives and enables School Management Teams and staff members to detect deviations from the initial plan in time to take corrective action. Control is a continuous process at different stages to ensure that things are on track as planned. Management uses a control system to monitor and measure employees' performance and compare it with set standards and objectives.

Controlling is a way and means of assuring that the planned activities are actually implemented to achieve the desired outcomes and objectives. It involves setting up criteria and standards of performance, determining methods for measuring performance, measuring actual performance, and comparing it with established standards as a form of benchmarking. It also involves taking corrective action when necessary to align performance with what was planned. Controlling is a systematic exercise of checking actual performance against standards or plans to ensure adequate progress and recording such experience for possible future needs.

Controlling ensures that there is effective and efficient utilisation of organisational resources to achieve the planned goals. The aim of control is to monitor performance and action, ensuring that they conform to plans to attain the predetermined goals. Controlling means that managers constantly ensure that the school is on the right course to attain its goals and measures deviations from planned activities.

3.3 CHALLENGES SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS FACED IN CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The objective of this study was to examine the challenges encountered by School Management Teams (SMTs) during the process of curriculum development and implementation. The nature and magnitude of these challenges were found to be diverse and contingent upon the unique context and environment of each educational institution. Some of the research on these difficulties can be summed up as follows:

3.3.1 Lack of content knowledge

The management of curriculum in educational institutions demands a high level of preparedness from principals, as they need to stay abreast of the rapidly changing landscape of curriculum policies and implementation. According to Sayed and Jansen (2014:75), principals have a crucial role in interpreting educational policies and curriculum documents, necessitating them to possess knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable effective curriculum management and promote educational innovation. However, Cardno (2013:44) argues that most principals lack the necessary competencies to manage curriculum effectively and provide proactive leadership in this area, which can be attributed in part to inadequate training (Nsibande, 2012:23) that fails to sustain the process of curriculum transformation (Mabude, 2012:62).

Furthermore, Taylor (2016:8) asserts that members of the school management team also exhibit knowledge gaps in curriculum management, leading to poor lesson planning and teacher confidence in delivering lessons. Therefore, it is imperative for curriculum leaders to possess in-depth knowledge in curriculum management to provide guidance to teachers and address problematic areas in the curriculum (Nsibande, 2012:3). Effective curriculum management requires each team member to possess the necessary skills, expertise, and knowledge. Curriculum leaders need to be intellectually active, raise staff awareness of policy, and motivate and inspire them in the process of curriculum change (Mabude, 2012:71).

The poor performance of certain schools in the National Senior Certificate and the Annual National Assessment highlights content knowledge as one of the challenges faced by SMT members. Some SMT members may lack proficiency in handling all curriculum areas, as evident in the underperformance of schools and students, resulting in knowledge gaps and hindering the fulfillment of learning objectives by students (Taylor, 2016:8).

3.3.2 Increased workload

Cardno (2013:49) suggests that managing schools in today's world involves assuming multiple responsibilities, which many educators may decline due to the challenges involved. School Management Teams (SMTs) face various difficulties in managing the curriculum, including the fast-paced changes in the national system and policy implementation. The author argues that SMTs have a diverse workload that has become increasingly complex and restrictive over time. This includes administrative tasks like financial and property management, with a focus on being accountable to education authorities taking precedence over curriculum management. Additionally, middle managers often spend significant time on paperwork, handling disruptions, dealing with school crises, and resolving conflicts involving staff, students, and parents.

In the South African context, SMT members are typically senior teachers who have been promoted to management positions, but this promotion does not necessarily relieve them from teaching responsibilities (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2016:3). SMT members often carry a heavy workload and struggle to find enough time to fulfill their management responsibilities. Loliwe's (2015:5) study on SMT members in the Northwest Province shows that they have a substantial teaching load that affects their ability to manage effectively.

3.3.3 Lack of resources

The main obstacle to efficient curriculum management, which is frequently observed in South African schools, is a lack of resources. Yet, resources like physical, human, and financial resources are needed for efficient curriculum administration (Mabude, 2012:99). This is done to manage the resources and they need to target more historically underprivileged schools, where nearly no teachers are present in overstuffed classrooms due to a lack of funding for hiring additional teachers to lower the learner teacher ratio. These schools also lack the funding to purchase supplies like furniture, learning aids, and other tangible tools that improve teaching and learning.

3.3.4 Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities

One of the major challenges that SMT members encounter in terms of their effectiveness is the lack of clarity surrounding their roles and responsibilities. In certain instances, even SMT members themselves are uncertain about who is accountable for what within the management team. This implies that when SMT members are recruited by a school, they may not receive sufficient information regarding their roles and responsibilities, leading to various issues, such as overlapping of responsibilities among team members. In the Mopani District, it was discovered that some SMT members were not fully aware of all their management functions.

The unclear roles and responsibilities within the SMT can be attributed to several factors, including principals not ensuring departmental functionality, deputy principals neglecting their responsibilities, and heads of departments not effectively overseeing subject functionality within their departments. This issue is compounded by the fact that many SMTs do not regularly observe classes, conduct curriculum management and delivery meetings, or review curriculum documents, such as exercise books and teachers' portfolios.

3.3.5 Lack of vision

According to Kotter (2016:19), a lack of a suitable vision can lead to a transformation effort disintegrating into a jumbled, unsuitable, and time-consuming set of projects. One of the most significant errors made by leaders when introducing a new curriculum is rushing into implementation without first establishing a vision. It is important to communicate this vision to all stakeholders to maintain a clear focus. The SMT should establish a vision for where they want the school to be in a specific timeframe and collaborate with teachers as a team to achieve this vision.

3.3.6 Job vacancies that impact on curriculum management

When there are no teachers available to educate, learning cannot occur. For the curriculum to be delivered optimally, teachers must be hired, and any vacancy rates must be swiftly fixed. To ensure that students and teachers, in the case of office-based teaching work, are not left without subject advisors, the curriculum management strategy must refer to employment openings relevant to the curriculum. Without the availability of instructors, subject advisors, and other pertinent professionals to support instruction at the school, the curriculum plan will not be successful (Loliwe, 2015:5).

3.3.7 Lack of common strategy to deal with absenteeism

The delivery of the curriculum in schools is occasionally controlled by common sense. There is no established method for addressing the problem of learner and teacher absenteeism. While absenteeism has a direct impact on students' academic performance, there are no established procedures to help students who were absent for legitimate reasons make up for the time and tasks they missed. Similarly, there are no established procedures to deter students and teachers from being absent. The issue of absenteeism and its detrimental effects on curriculum delivery generally, syllabus

coverage, quality teaching, and adequate learner accomplishment must be addressed in the shared strategy for managing the curriculum (Kotter, 2016:19).

3.3.8 Teacher attitude

The proper execution of curriculum changes on a daily basis depends on the teachers' understanding of such changes (Nsibande, 2012:101). Teachers play a critical role in interpreting and contextualising curriculum policy, which requires them to possess the requisite knowledge, skills, positive attitudes, and enthusiasm for effective teaching. However, Glatthom (2013:22) argues that policymakers often fail to consider the beliefs, values, practices, and interests of teachers when implementing curriculum reforms, which can impede successful implementation as teachers may not fully comprehend the underlying principles of curriculum change.

Van der Westhuizen (2015:72) emphasises that individuals have varying ways of adapting to new situations, including the introduction of innovative teaching methods. While some teachers may readily embrace change and actively contribute to the process, others may encounter difficulties in accepting it. This is often due to changes that challenge their personal values and beliefs, which are deeply rooted in past experiences and practices (Carl, 2015:92).

3.3.9 Lack of support by the Department of Basic Education

Due to their own lack of thorough training, which should be provided by the Department of Basic Education, SMT members find themselves in a difficult situation where it is difficult for them to support and help educators (DBE, 2012:10). School Management Teams found the workshops to be too brief, lasting only two to three days.

3.4 SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS

Support structures encompass anything that aids, encourages, and improves how curriculum tasks are carried out by school administrators and helps teaching and learning (DBE, 2012:90). Resources are thought to be the most crucial support structures since they are so crucial to curriculum management in schools (DBE, 2012:94). They include people, curriculum knowledge, financial resources, and physical resources.

3.4.1 Human resources

Effective functioning of schools requires school management teams to recognise the significance of human resource management. The proper management of people is crucial for schools to be accountable and efficiently run, and it is the responsibility of the management team to ensure effective human resource management (Gold & Evans, 1998:54). Human resource management plays a central role in the success of any organisation, and without people, no organisation can function (Connely, 2000:2). As Riches (cited in Gold & Evans, 1998:62) points out, human resource management is focused on improving performance or productivity, acknowledging that people are the most important part of achieving goals within an organisation. Effective management of people is crucial to optimise both individual and institutional performance.

Human resource management, as defined by Oosthuizen and Van der Westhuizen (2003:184), encompasses activities that aim to acquire, facilitate, and enhance the services of teaching staff through management strategies to improve the effectiveness of educational training. Managing human resources in schools presents challenges due to the individual needs, beliefs, norms, and culture that employees bring to their work environment. Therefore, it is crucial for school management teams to effectively manage these resources to ensure quality teaching and learning outcomes (Department of Basic Education, 2000:95). To ensure uninterrupted curriculum delivery, school management teams should engage in various human resource management activities, such as mentoring, managing absent educators, and maintaining effective communication with

parents. Additionally, the management team should ensure that every classroom always has an educator present, as learners should not be left without a teacher (DBE, 2012:97).

Managing personnel is considered the most important yet challenging task, as individuals bring their own needs, beliefs, norms, and cultures to their work environment. Resources are crucial support structures, as the successful implementation of the curriculum heavily relies on the availability of resources in schools (DBE, 2012:94). Implementing a curriculum change without adequate resources can result in stress, dire consequences, and negatively impact teachers' morale to execute the planned changes (Sigh, 2012:595). A lack of necessary resources for teaching and learning can hinder effective curriculum implementation, as teachers may spend time searching for materials they do not have instead of focusing on teaching. It is the responsibility of the school administration to effectively bring together and allocate various resources to achieve the overall goals of the institution (National Teachers Institute, 2016:27).

Educational resources include teachers, community members, tangible objects, specimens or models, chalk and display boards, school buildings and layout, the wider community, and other essential materials like pencils, pens, and exercise books that learners require for effective learning (Agabi, 2012:30). However, in school administration, education resources are often not adequately harmonised, organised, coordinated, or controlled by the School Management Team.

It is the duty of the School Management Team (SMT) to handle resources and identify where to acquire them. The SMT should utilise school finances to procure necessary resources, while teachers, staff, parents, students, and members of the school community are responsible for maintaining different resources. According to Smit et al., (2017:392), physical resources in a school consist of tangible assets like office equipment, buildings, and equipment.

Human resources are a crucial aspect of any institution. In the education system, it encompasses teachers, school support staff, students, parents, community members, and various interest and social groups (Ugwulashi, 2012:32). Human resources are

accountable for planning, organising, coordinating, controlling, manipulating, and maintaining other resource types. Its administrative and forecasting capabilities make it superior to other forms of resources (Likert, 2016:9). The researcher believes that not only the availability of human resources but also their quality and quantity are critical for ensuring effective and efficient administration in schools.

This suggests that the management of educational resources in schools can be both limited and effectively and efficiently handled when the management activities are appropriately synchronised, organised, coordinated, and controlled by the School Management Team.

3.4.2 Financial resources

The national budget in South Africa prioritises education, reflecting its recognised value and significance. Adequate financial support is essential for schools to operate efficiently. At the school level, the School Governing Body (SGB) oversees financial matters with the principal's support. Departmental educators within the school create budgets for planned activities in the upcoming year. Financial resources are indispensable for the smooth functioning of schools, serving as the foundation of educational institutions. In addition to administration, funds are necessary for the acquisition of facilities, equipment, electronics, and communication tools that are crucial for effective performance. The researcher argues that proper financial management is a critical responsibility, as schools would struggle to achieve their objectives without sound financial practices.

3.4.3 Time resources

Financial resources are a vital resource for any organisation, and no organisation has ever prospered without them (Allis, 2014:3). In the context of schools, financial resources are necessary for the smooth functioning of the institution and are considered the foundation of any system. Other administrative factors are created, maintained, and sustained through financial resources (Ugwulashi, 2012:32). This highlights the

importance of financial management as an essential responsibility for education managers. Without effective financial management practices, schools would face difficulties in achieving their goals.

3.4.4 Physical resources

In general, schools possess essential physical resources that are instrumental in curriculum management. These resources include classrooms, exercise books, textbooks, writing materials such as pens and pencils, chalkboards, dusters, and papers. While the Department of Basic Education provides some of these resources, Section 21 schools are responsible for purchasing their own resources if their School Governing Bodies (SGB) effectively manage their finances as per regulations (DBE, 2012:103). Furthermore, the School Management Team (SMT) should encourage teachers to create their own resources to promote collaborative working relationships (DBE, 2012:103).

Physical resources are tangible objects that can be observed and examined in any organisation. These resources may encompass structures, machinery, raw materials, vehicles, and other tools that facilitate an organisation's activities and processes (Ugwalashi, 2012:32). Physical resources may vary across organisations, but in schools, effective management of physical resources plays a critical role in creating an optimal learning environment and significantly impacts educational outcomes. Therefore, it is imperative that school physical resource management practices align with the school improvement plan by linking school assets to basic education service delivery standards and strategies (Adedeji, 2017:8).

3.4.5 Parental involvement

Mill (2013:114) asserts that various individuals, processes and institutions affect learners' performance and adjustment. Schools should be willing to involve parents in their activities and consider ways of communicating information to help them participate in their children's education. Consistent research indicates that when parents actively participate

in their children's education and learning, both at home and in collaboration with the school, their children tend to perform better and achieve more. These positive effects can have long-term impacts on their health, relationships, and employment opportunities. Therefore, it is essential for the principal to acknowledge and address parental concerns and meet their needs regarding their children's education. Parents have the right to be kept informed about school conditions and establishing a positive relationship with them could be advantageous for the school (DBE, 2012:98).

3.4.6 District-Based Support Teams (DBST)

The District-Based Support Teams (DBST) are responsible for providing education support services to institutional-level support teams. The DBST works in collaboration with the provincial and national office to ensure that educators receive appropriate training and classroom support to address diverse needs and barriers to learning in schools. The Department of Basic Education has separate structures in place to provide support services, which may work together or separately. Some of these structures include school clinics/support centres, officials in the Departmental head's office, circuit managers, and specialised subject advisors. (DBE, 2012:39) (DBE, 2002:15)

3.5 STRATEGIES AND INSTRUMENTS MEMBERS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS USE IN CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

A rising collection of research indicates the importance of the monitoring idea in education (Bush et al., 2013:3). Since leaders can give different amounts of importance to various monitoring tactics, there are differences in the strategies that can be used. The following subtopics are used to organise the subject of monitoring strategies in this study: assessment, feedback; school programme and monitoring instruments; and human resource development.

3.5.1 Assessment

Evaluating student progress through assessment can serve as a monitoring tool for assessing teaching effectiveness and providing valuable information to leadership and other stakeholders for informed decision-making (Southworth, 2012; Bush & Glover, 2012). Scholars generally agree that monitoring involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data related to classroom situations (Southworth, 2012; Du Plessis, 2013). The Department of Basic Education, as outlined in the National Protocol for Assessment (DBE, 2012:1), requires that all classroom activities be recorded, analysed, and interpreted to assist learners, parents, and other stakeholders in making decisions about learners' progress, underscoring the significance of assessment as a monitoring strategy.

Assessment, aimed at evaluating learning progress, can indirectly provide insights into teaching effectiveness. The DBE (2012:1) emphasises that monitoring should indicate learner progress and achievement in an effective and efficient manner. It is also recommended that evidence of achievement should be collected through various forms of assessment to enhance the learning experience (DBE, 2012:1). Therefore, assessment can be utilised to evaluate teaching effectiveness as part of the monitoring process.

As per the CAPS document (DBE, 2012:3), learner performance must be recorded, and reports should be communicated to learners and relevant stakeholders. The recorded information should inform teachers, School Management Team (SMT) members, and other stakeholders about learner performance, with the primary purpose of providing regular feedback to learners.

Teacher files, containing learner scores, can be accessed from teachers upon request for accountability and moderation purposes (DBE, 2012:3). These files are used to verify the progress made by teachers and learners in teaching and learning, respectively. However, it is not evident whether school management has fully embraced and taken ownership of the monitoring process. The Annual National Assessment (ANA) is starting to raise awareness among managers about the importance of their involvement in instruction.

Serious monitoring seems to be carried out primarily in Grade 12 classes in preparation for the final secondary school examination.

3.5.2 Feedback

Providing assessment without useful feedback may not yield any benefits. The way feedback is given and received is important, as noted by Hattie and Gan (2013:3). Gamlem and Smith (2013:3) also argue that negative comments from teachers about a learner's work can impact their performance negatively. Learners may feel discouraged when told that they could have done better, especially if they feel they have already tried their best. Teachers who simply tell learners to work harder without understanding the reasons for low scores may also demotivate learners. Learners tend to perceive such feedback as negative and unhelpful.

Leadership can play an important role in preventing unintended negative feedback by monitoring classroom practices. Teachers should be encouraged to provide positive feedback instead, such as acknowledging a learner's efforts and specifying how they can improve their work (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2012:3). Formative feedback has been shown to promote learning and achievement, and praise related to the task can increase motivation, effort and performance (Gamlem & Smith, 2013:3).

Therefore, managers should not simply tick off learner books without paying attention to the feedback provided. Instead, principals and heads of department should focus on the content of the feedback to encourage positive feedback that can contribute to improved learner performance.

3.5.3 School programmes and monitoring instruments

Nearly all school activities should be included in a school programme designed to achieve specific goals (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2012:3). Examples of such activities are teaching, sports, and assessment. In fact, assessment can also be a part of a larger school

programme in which all subject schedules are determined according to the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b). Each subject should have specific dates for conducting assessments, and these dates should be included in a school assessment programme (DBE, 2012:4).

Different monitoring instruments are necessary for each activity to ensure its quality implementation. For instance, when conducting written assessments, the question paper must be submitted for moderation before being given to the learners (DBE, 2012:3). Monitoring instruments can be used for various activities such as attendance, preparation, marking, and completion of work. Teachers can also design cognitive tools to facilitate the learning process (Van Joolingen, 2016:7).

Monitoring instruments are not only used in classrooms but also in management to identify and solve problems (Neumann, Jones & Webb, 2012:5). These instruments can promote informed decision-making and enhance the learning experience (Van Joolingen, 1999). School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET) is commonly used in the USA to document positive learning procedures (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai, & Boland, 2014:1).

The SET is not only used to gather information on learners and learning procedures but also to assess teaching in schools. From this data, principals and SMTs can make suggestions for teacher development (Bush et al., 2013). Monitoring and evaluation tools are essential for managing teaching and learning and for adjusting teaching approaches where challenges are identified (Safer & Fleischman, 2005:3). Regular monitoring at intervals allows for better scheduling and improved efficiency (Lock, Qin & Brause, 2017:5). Monitoring instruments can be used to manage different areas of teaching and learning such as curriculum management, student assessment, attendance, timetable, staff activities, and curriculum implementation (Gamlem and Smith, 2013:3).

3.5.4 Strategy developing human resources

According to Newman, Jones, and Webb (2012:3), the needs of learners in terms of their academics, social life, emotions, and behaviour are becoming increasingly varied and complicated. This means that there is a high demand for dynamic teacher leaders who can handle various classroom situations. The existing state of the teaching profession, where teachers' responsibilities remain unchanged from the time of their appointment until retirement, fails to effectively address the needs of learners and the diverse challenges that necessitate new teaching strategies in schools (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2012:1). Also, Alexandron and Swaffield (2012:3) argue that many teachers who are promoted to management positions are merely figureheads who simply approve the principal's decisions, and little room for creativity exists in their absence. Hence, the development of teacher leadership is now more critical than ever before (Hunzicker, 2012:7). Human resource development can be employed as a strategy to enhance work monitoring at both the teacher and management levels.

3.5.4.1 Teacher development strategy

According to York-Bar and Duke (2014:4), teacher leadership is defined as the process through which teachers, both individually and as a group, exert influence on their colleagues, principals, and community members to enhance teaching and learning practices for improved learning outcomes. This definition highlights that leadership involves the ability to influence others and underscores the significance of teacher leadership and the use of influence in achieving desired results, particularly in a school setting where the desired outcomes include enhancing student performance (Poekert, 2012:1).

Given the changes in education, including curriculum reforms at all levels, educators in the UK are required to expand their knowledge and skills. Teachers face increasing complexity in demands from society and their work environments (Everard & Morris, 2012:92). As teachers strive to prepare students with a diverse range of skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a constantly evolving world, there is a need for competency-centered approaches to teaching and a greater emphasis on learning outcomes. Even the highest quality initial teacher training may not equip teachers with all the knowledge and skills required for a lifelong career in teaching (Everard & Morris, 2012:92).

As such, school principals have a crucial role to play in creating conditions that enable staff to develop their skills and knowledge to effectively achieve the school's objectives. Principals should assess the strengths and weaknesses of their staff and provide appropriate support, which can be achieved through workshops, conferences, in-service training, advanced studies, research, and development (West-Burnham, 2012:60). The goal of teacher development should not be to create teachers who adhere to a standardised approach to teaching, but to cultivate reflective practitioners who can evaluate and modify their practices to enhance student success (Day, Hall & Whitaker, 2017:122).

Principals should be proactive in considering all aspects related to staff productivity, effectiveness, and job satisfaction. It is important for principals to recognise that staff development does not imply a deficiency in the teacher, but rather a need for ongoing growth and development in the workplace (West-Burnham, 2012:60). As curriculum leaders, principals should engage in discussions with their staff about changes in education, encourage adoption of innovative teaching methods, and promote participation in professional development opportunities such as seminars and workshops (Bernardt & Hedlery, 2018:57).

The key to improving the teaching and learning process in UK schools lies in the professional development of teachers. Day, Hall, and Whitaker (2017:122) argue that a school cannot transform or improve without staff development and a change in approach to teaching. West-Burnham (2012:60) further emphasises that strengthening internal school conditions to promote teachers' development is a critical prerequisite for effectively responding to changes in their external environment, such as educational innovations and socio-cultural demands.

3.5.4.2 Leadership development strategy

Encouragement and support should be given to teachers and Heads of Department to see leadership as a part of their professional life and to work collaboratively towards this goal (Bush & Glover, 2012:17). School leaders, including principals and circuit managers, play a crucial role in promoting the development of teacher leadership in schools (Leonard, Petta & Porter, 2012). Principals should aim to foster a culture where schools collectively develop their human capacity to effectively meet challenges (Bush, 2013:5). It is important to encourage school managers to actively participate in higher levels of leadership, and principals have the responsibility to promote leadership among managers (Nicolaidou, 2013:3; Bush & Glover, 2012:17). Building teacher leadership should be a daily practice of top management, with a focus on sharing, networking, coaching, and supporting each other to create a culture of continuous learning (Nicolaidou, 2013:3).

Principals can foster leadership in schools by articulating their vision of teacher leadership and renewing teachers' aspirations of becoming leaders (Leornard, Petta & Porter, 2012). This approach can increase commitment levels and build trust between teachers and principals (Nicolaidou, 2013:3). Principals should interact with teachers in a distributed leadership manner, inspiring and encouraging staff to engage in leadership development programs (Bush, 2013; Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013).

3.6 CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was primarily on the roles and functions of School Management Teams (SMTs) in the management and implementation of the curriculum in schools. The literature review indicates that SMTs play a critical role in ensuring effective teaching and learning practices in schools. To effectively manage the curriculum, SMT members need to possess a comprehensive understanding of curriculum administration and execution, as discussed in the previous section. The literature from previous studies has been reviewed in this chapter, and the following chapter will detail the research methods employed in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH PARADIGM, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented a critic of the literature for the study. This chapter details the research paradigm, design, and methods used in the study and provide justification for the study. The interpretive research paradigm serves as the study's foundation because the researcher examines how school management teams' function from the viewpoint and context of the participants and tries to make sense of their perceptions and experiences of the phenomena. This study used a qualitative research design to gather participants detailed, lengthy descriptions of the data. The chapter also discusses the data collection methods and methodology used in empirical research.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to scholarly sources, the term “paradigm” originates from Greek and means “pattern”. Academics have extensively defined this term in various ways. One definition suggests that a paradigm is a way of perceiving the world, which shapes the research topic and influences the researcher's thoughts on the subject (Babbie and Mouton, 2010:95). Another view is that a paradigm is a set of beliefs about the existence of problems and how they can be investigated (Greet, 2011:99). Furthermore, a paradigm is described as a set of beliefs that guide action and is embedded in all educational research.

A researcher's paradigm represents their underlying worldview and encompasses their epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions. It provides a perspective that justifies the research and guides the researcher's choices in terms of data collection methods, observation, and interpretation. A research paradigm comprises a set of beliefs and guidelines for scholars in a particular field, influencing what topics should be studied

and how findings should be interpreted. It is not only a philosophical stance, but also shapes the approach and methodology of inquiry.

A paradigm establishes the boundaries of acceptable research and consists of a collection of logically interconnected assumptions, concepts, or propositions that guide thinking and research. It encompasses general ways of understanding the world and serves as a fundamental orientation, perspective, or worldview that is rarely challenged. Paradigms are shared sets of beliefs and practices within disciplinary communities that regulate the process of inquiry. In essence, a paradigm is a foundational framework or worldview that informs the researcher's philosophical orientation, perspective, thinking, and shared beliefs, which in turn influence what topics are investigated, how they are studied, and how the findings are interpreted.

4.2.1 Ontology

Babbie and Mouton (2010:95) contend that interpretive research involves comprehending the subject matter from the perspective of human experiences. This entails maintaining the context of the study and basing the investigation on the viewpoints of the participants rather than the researcher's own. Creswell (2011:79) further notes that there can be multiple interpretations of a single situation, and reality is intricate, layered, and perceived through the participants' lens. Therefore, the opinions and views of practitioners are revealed as they exist within their own world. Babbie (2011:85) suggests that reality is multifaceted and shaped by the perceptions of the participants, and thus the construction of reality is based on the instances that arise during interviews. In field research, the researcher assumes an engaged participant role, interacting directly with the participants to gain insights into the leadership roles of principals in establishing conducive conditions for effective learning and teaching (Greet, 2011:99).

Ontology refers to a philosophical framework that shapes the researcher's view of reality. It is the study of being and deals with the nature of reality (Marsh & Furlong, 2002:2). Ontology is a belief system that reflects how an individual interprets reality. In other words,

ontology is concerned with whether social entities should be perceived as objective or subjective. This aligns with Bryman's (2012:18) view that ontology is concerned with the nature of social entities, which implies that ontology describes the researcher's perspective on the nature of reality or being in the societal and organisational phenomenon under study. The next subsection will focus on epistemology.

4.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology, as defined by Antwi and Hamza (2015:219), refers to the relationship between the researcher and reality, and how various research types and investigative methods contribute to the acquisition of human knowledge and understanding. Additionally, Morgan (2007:53) emphasises that epistemology is a belief system that guides how research questions are formulated and addressed and is influenced by an individual's philosophical worldview regarding the nature of knowledge.

Epistemology is concerned with how knowledge is created, acquired, and communicated, and determines what sources of evidence and findings are considered acceptable (Hoberg, 2018:12). It also guides a researcher's methodology and influences debates on objectivity, subjectivity, causality, validity, and generalisability (Patton, 2002:134).

The quest for knowledge involves seeking truth about a phenomenon and identifying best practices within specific contexts, as outlined by Creswell (2013:34). The knowledge individuals possess is influenced by political, social, cultural, and historical factors within their context, and is constructed through processes such as interpretation, evaluation, and decision-making, as posited by Maxwell (2008:170).

Epistemology plays a crucial role in determining how knowledge is obtained and made accessible. In the present study, knowledge was obtained through the interpretations of teaching and learning practices provided by the participants, aligning with the interpretive paradigm, as suggested by Scotland (2012:35).

4.2.3 Interpretive

The present study utilises the interpretive paradigm, which is particularly suitable for social science research due to its constructivist approach that seeks to comprehend how individuals perceive and interpret their reality, as emphasised by Bryman (2012:28). According to Rubin and Babbie (2011:90), accurate and genuine narratives are necessary in social research, and the interpretive approach provides researchers with a unique opportunity to capture the experiences of individuals, groups, and communities.

The aim of this qualitative research is to uncover how school management teams comprehend their day-to-day activities as educational leaders. The study acknowledges the challenges associated with eliciting diverse stories and constructing knowledge collaboratively between the researcher and participants. Therefore, the interpretive paradigm is deemed appropriate for achieving the study's objectives.

Interpretive research is based on the idea that social reality is shaped by human experiences and contexts and that it is best understood within its socio-historical context by reconciling the subjective interpretations of its various participants, as highlighted by Jackson (2011:92). Therefore, the interpretive paradigm focuses on the complexity of human sense-making as it unfolds, as outlined by Wolcott (2010:38).

Interpretive researchers aim to develop a comprehensive understanding of participants' reality based on their life experiences and worldviews. They use meaning-oriented techniques such as interviews or participant observation and emphasise the subjective relationship between the researcher and the subjects. Interpretive research aims to comprehend the world as it is through the subjective experiences of individuals, seeking to reveal the underlying subjective reasons and meanings behind social actions.

The findings of interpretive research are based on insights gained from social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, symbols, documents, tools, inferences, and observations, as expressed through the voices, activities, beliefs,

and behaviours of participants. The researcher gains deep insights into the phenomenon under study by closely interacting with participants in their natural settings, focusing on their role in creating effective spaces for teaching and learning. Qualitative research is distinguished by its in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study, rather than superficially addressing issues, as discussed by Creswell (2009:645). The following section will elaborate on the research design used in this study.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

In academic research, a research design refers to a systematic and organised framework that outlines the researcher's approach to conduct a study and address a specific research problem. It provides a clear structure and guidance for the methods, decisions, and interpretations that will be employed in the study. The research design encompasses various components, including participant selection, data collection or generation methods, and strategies for generating empirical evidence to answer the research questions.

The research design serves as the overall strategy that integrates different elements of the study in a coherent and logical manner to effectively address the research problem. It serves as a blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis, ensuring that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to effectively address the research problem. The research design provides direction, from underlying philosophical assumptions to research design, data collection, and execution of research findings. It serves as an action plan for progressing from the initial set of research questions to obtaining answers. Furthermore, the research design encompasses all the activities involved in planning and implementing the research project, from identifying the research problem to reporting and disseminating the findings.

A research design serves as a roadmap that guides the researcher throughout the research study, facilitating the discovery of answers to research questions in an exact, reliable, unbiased, and cost-effective manner. It is a procedural and operational strategy

that outlines the methods and procedures to be employed during the research process to ensure greater control of the study and enhance its validity. The research design determines how subjects or participants are organised and measured, and it provides guidance on how data should be collected and analysed to ensure validity. It serves as a unifying framework that integrates the research procedures into a cohesive whole, providing a cost-effective approach to data collection.

To put it succinctly, a research design refers to a framework or plan that delineates the methodology the researcher plans to employ to investigate and answer the research queries. It includes the study's objectives, the methodologies utilised, the decisions made regarding data gathering and analysis, the techniques and procedures implemented, the study's duration, and ethical considerations.

4.3.1 Qualitative research design

The term “qualitative research design” encompasses a range of approaches that involve constructive and interpretive perspectives, with the main characteristic being the construction of meanings by individuals in their interactions with society. This implies that reality is not fixed or singular, but rather multiple constructions and interpretations of reality exist that are constantly changing over time. Qualitative research utilises a naturalistic perspective, seeking to understand the phenomenon being studied within specific contexts without manipulating it.

Qualitative researchers conduct investigations in natural settings and interpret the phenomenon based on the meanings attributed to it by the individuals involved. The aim of qualitative research is to uncover the meanings and interpretations of participants' views of the world they inhabit, rather than imposing the researcher's own interests or perspectives. The goal is to explain complex phenomena by relying on the participants' own words, behaviors, and experiences to generate rich descriptive data.

Qualitative research is an approach that explores and comprehends the meaning that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. The focus is on understanding how people describe their experiences, construct their worlds, and attribute meaning to those experiences. The perspectives of the identified participants are central to understanding their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and the social context of the participants is described to ensure that their views are not isolated from their context.

Qualitative research encompasses a range of techniques for gathering data, which center on investigating the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals. This type of inquiry involves engaging with participants in naturalistic settings without introducing experimental manipulations or prescriptive structures. Qualitative data is typically expressed through textual or narrative formats, rather than in numerical terms, and is obtained through in-depth interviews that aim to elicit rich accounts of personal experiences and perspectives related to the research topic at hand.

The rationale for using a qualitative research design is based on an understanding of the phenomenon being studied through investigating and interpreting the meanings that participants ascribe to it.

4.3.1.1 *The rationale for using qualitative research design*

The research design for this study was a qualitative case study, which was selected based on the reasons provided below (McMillan & Schumacher, 2011:274-275):

- “It enables an in-depth investigation of the school management teams in curriculum management”.
- “It forms an essential tool for collecting narrative information from selected participants”.
- “It allowed new insights to be generated through obtaining data from a small sample of 10 principals, 10 deputy principals and 10 departmental heads of the selected primary schools, instead of focusing on all the primary schools in the Mopani West District, Limpopo Province”.

- “It focuses on school management teams in curriculum management to mirror the broader contexts. In the process, complex contexts can be studied to reflect their richness and holistic nature”.
- “It allows for the collection of data for the purpose of synthesising, evaluating and analysing them for the establishment of befitting situations”.
- “The researcher can collect extensive information on the school management teams in curriculum management”.

The research design employed in this study allowed for the capture of participants' opinions and perspectives about investigation. As argued by Babbie and Mouton (2010:105), qualitative methods encourage an approach that involves interpreting the real world from the perspective of the subjects being studied.

Qualitative methods were utilised in this study to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena related to SMT (School Management Teams) and their contextual situation. One of the advantages of qualitative research design is the ability for researchers to develop their own interpretations within the educational field they are studying, often through “thick description” drawn from a small number of participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:90).

In this study, the flexibility of qualitative research design was deemed relevant due to the involvement of human subjects, namely school principals, deputy principals, and departmental heads, as highlighted by Kothari (2012:94). The potential influence of contextual circumstances on the data collected and the importance of obtaining first-hand perspectives from participants were also noted. As emphasised by Wahyni (2012:10), qualitative research design is particularly suited to capturing the perspectives of participants with direct experience, as was the case in this study.

McMillan and Schumacher (2011:240) argue that research design should be tailored to the purpose, nature, and context of the study. Accordingly, this study employed a qualitative research design grounded in an interpretivist philosophy that acknowledges

the subjective nature of human experiences and interpretations. Through this design, the researcher gained a nuanced understanding of the role of School Management Teams (SMTs) in curriculum management. The selection of a qualitative research design also informed the choice of data collection methods that were sensitive to the social phenomena being studied.

This study aimed to explore the role of SMTs in curriculum management, and the use of qualitative research design facilitated a deep understanding of the study's context through rich and detailed data. The researcher focused on capturing the opinions, perceptions, and experiences of participants in relation to the creation of a culture of teaching and learning. To this end, the qualitative research design emphasized the use of interviews, document analysis, and observations to produce a holistic picture of the role of SMTs in curriculum management. The unique characteristics of the participants and the processes of the study were of particular interest to the researcher.

Finally, it is worth noting that qualitative research encompasses a range of designs, including grounded theory, ethnography, case study, content analysis, and phenomenology, which are selected based on the study's focus, purpose, methods of data collection, and data analysis strategies (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013:144). In this study, a case study design was adopted, allowing for an in-depth examination of the phenomena with a small number of participants in their local contexts, as outlined in Section 4.3.1.2.

4.3.1.2 Case study

To attain a comprehensive comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation, namely school management teams in ten primary schools, a case study research design was employed. As per McMillan and Schumacher's (2011:398) recommendation, a case study research design focuses on a detailed examination of a single phenomenon, regardless of the number of participants or sites involved in the study. Babbie (2010:100) elucidates that case studies are used to provide a comprehensive and descriptive portrayal of a situation by capturing the lived experiences, thoughts, and feelings of

participants. However, De Vos et al. (2011:139) note that case studies often have a narrow focus and may involve a blend of objective and subjective treatment of data.

The researcher, being a resident of the Mopani West District and a representative of the targeted population of the study, selected six primary schools in the district for the case study. The case study design was preferred to explore the specific phenomenon of school management teams. Data was extensively collected on individuals and programs via interviews, observations, and documents. The data analysis involved the organisation of case details, categorisation of data, interpretation of individual instances, identification of patterns, synthesis, and generalisation. Further details regarding the justification for using a case study research design are presented in the subsequent sub-section.

4.3.1.2.1 The rationale for using case study

This study utilised a qualitative research design with a case study approach, which was chosen for the following reasons as discussed by McMillan and Schumacher (2011:275):

- “It forms an essential data collection tool for collecting narrative information”.
- “It enables an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon, such as the role of the principal as an instructional leader in establishing an effective teaching and learning culture”.
- “It allowed new insights to be generated through obtaining data from a small sample of 6 principals, 6 deputy principals and 12 departmental heads of the selected primary schools, instead of focusing on all the high schools in the Mopani West District, Limpopo Province”.
- “It focuses on contexts to mirror the broader contexts. In the process, complex contexts can be studied to reflect their richness and holistic nature”.
- “It allows for the collection of data for the purpose of synthesising, evaluating and analysing them for the establishment of befitting situations, therefore, case study design enables the investigation of bounded systems such as groups, family, community and practice”.

- “An investigator can collect extensive information on the phenomenon of study, therefore, this study employed observation, individual interviews, and documents analysis as data collection instruments”.

In conclusion, the research design of a study determines the methodological approach that will be used in conducting the empirical research. As such, the subsequent section will outline the research methodology employed in this study.

4.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In academic discourse, methodology is commonly defined as a general approach employed in the study of a research topic, dictating how the phenomenon will be investigated. It is distinct from methods, which are specific techniques used for data collection. The principles underlying research approaches are typically encompassed in methodology, determining the approach researchers will take to generate data for analysis. Research methodology is often defined as the techniques, procedures, and methods employed to implement a research design. It can also be seen as the process and tools used for research. In simpler terms, research methodology refers to the approach adopted for gathering and analysing data.

Other scholars concur that research methodology pertains to the general approach used in conducting a research project. It may focus on the research process, tools, and procedures employed. Methodologies justify methods, which in turn yield data and analysis, ultimately leading to the production of knowledge. Thus, research methodology refers to the approach used for gathering and analysing data in the specific research being discussed.

Saunders and Lewis (2019:595) provide a definition of methodology as the theory that guides how research should be conducted, including the philosophical assumptions that underlie it and their implications for the methods employed. Walter (2015:35) suggests that methodology is shaped by the paradigm in which the theoretical perspective is

developed, while Nguyen (2019:4) posits that it is connected to the paradigm, theoretical framework, literature, and ethical principles. Methodology encompasses concepts such as paradigm, strategies, procedures, and methods of research.

Methodology serves as an informed approach to data production (Ellen, 2014:9), providing guidance for the selection of research methods (Crotty, 2018:3), and informing how research should be conducted (Grix, 2004:32). It assists researchers in determining the type of data required and the appropriate data collection tools. Research method refers to the collection of data collection and analysis techniques that operationalise the methodology (Henning, Van Rensburg, and Smith, 2014:36). Collins and Hussey (2013:12) state that research methodology encompasses the entire process from theoretical underpinnings to data collection and analysis. The subsequent sections will focus on the methodological processes employed in the study, including population, sampling procedure, sample size, data collection instruments, and data analysis.

4.4.1 Population

The term “population” refers to a group of individuals who share one or more characteristics relevant to the research being conducted, according to Babbie (2010:153). This may include all individuals of a specific type or a more restricted subset of the group. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:129) provide a definition of population as the entire group of people, events, or things that are of interest to the researcher. Bless and Higson-Smith (2014:33) assert that population refers to the complete set of events, people, or things to which research findings will be applied. Parahoo (2014:223) defines population as “the total number of units from which data can be collected”, such as individuals, artifacts, events, or organisations. Similarly, Yount (2016:3) concurs that population encompasses all possible cases (persons, objects, events) that constitute a known whole.

In this study, the population consists of a total of 18 participants, which includes six principals, six deputy principals, and six departmental heads who participated in focus group interviews.

4.4.2 Sampling method and procedure

According to Maree (2011:79), researchers are unable to test every individual in a population, which gives rise to the idea of a sample. Michael (2012:2) explains that a sample is a portion of the population in the research area, chosen to represent the entire population. Gray (2017:7) defines a sample as a subgroup of a population, while Ross (2015:2) argues that sampling is typically used to study part of a population in detail, rather than the entire population. The resulting information from the sample is then used to make generalisations about the population, such as characteristics associated with the population or estimates of the relationships between characteristics.

For this study, purposive sampling was used as the most appropriate technique because the aim was not to generalise findings but rather to highlight the views of school management teams in curriculum management (Ntho-Ntho, 2013:95). The participants were selected from six primary schools in the Mopani West District of the Limpopo Province, including six principals, six deputy principals, and six departmental heads. These individuals were chosen as the focus of the study.

Table: 4.1: Research sample and size

Schools	A	B	C	D	E	F	Totals
Principals	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Deputy Principals	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Departmental Heads	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Totals	3	3	3	3	3	3	18

4.5 DATA COLLECTION AND FIELDWORK TECHNIQUES

Qualitative research heavily relies on the process of field work, which allows the researcher to have a direct and personal encounter with participants in their natural settings, enabling them to gain access to their day-to-day lives and experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:189). The focus of this study was on the experiences of participants within their workplace and the relationships developed among co-workers.

According to Creswell (2009:10), data is collected from identified participants after obtaining permission to do so. Data collection involves acquiring opinions and responses from participants to form judgments (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:322).

- **Phase 1- Planning Stage:** In the planning phase of qualitative research, the researcher analyses the problem statement and research questions to determine the appropriate interview settings for obtaining reliable information. They also construct and validate data collection instruments. The researcher tests the theoretical aspects of the research instruments through a pilot study and becomes familiar with the selected participants by visiting a few schools before collecting actual data.
- **Phase 2 - Collection of data:** The first stage of the study involves building relationships with the participants and earning their trust and rapport.
- **Phase 3 - Basic data collection:** This step involved data analysis, which helped the researcher discover reliable information and hypotheses related to the investigation.
- **Phase 4 -The finalisations of the data collection process:** The field trip concludes, and follow-up interviews are conducted. The data is interpreted, and

the conclusions are validated using input from human informants, which becomes the primary focus.

- **Phase 5 - Active data collection process is completed:** To combine the obtained data into a coherent whole, a reconstruction of the data is made. Overall, both interactive (interviews and observations) and non-interactive methods were used for data gathering (document analysis). The numerous fieldwork methodologies and tools used for data gathering in the study are explained in Section 4.5.1 below.

4.5.1 Data collection instruments

Kumar (2011:203) defines “data” as the information obtained by researchers from participants involved in a research study. Ruben and Babbie (2011:215) define data as the raw materials that researchers collect from the context or world under investigation, which provide the basis for analysis. This chapter offers an overview of frequently utilised qualitative research instruments, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. A brief summary of each data collection tool is provided below.

4.5.1.1 Interviews

In accordance with the interpretive research approach, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, which provided the flexibility to ask both pre-determined questions and spontaneous follow-up questions as needed (Bhengu & Gounder, 2014:340). This approach was used to conduct semi-structured individual interviews with school principals, deputy principals, and departmental heads to gather in-depth data on their perspectives on curriculum management (Christiansen, 2010:10).

To prepare for the actual interviews, a pilot interview was conducted to familiarise the researcher with the necessary procedures and equipment, such as the voice recorder. The pilot was done with one principal who volunteered to participate. The actual interviews were conducted individually with participants on their school premises during their free time.

The researcher administered the interview questions as outlined in the interview schedule and documented the responses provided by the participants. In cases where participants did not fully comprehend a question, clarifications were provided, and follow-up questions were posed to ensure accurate capture of their perspectives. Prior to the formal interview recording, each participant was given a three-minute informal introductory conversation to establish rapport and alleviate potential tension. The duration of the interviews varied, ranging from twenty-five to forty-five minutes, depending on the extent of participant input. The subsequent section elucidates the rationale for selecting individual interviews as the chosen data collection method for this study.

4.5.1.1.1 Rationale for using interviews

In research studies, interviews are a crucial tool, as researchers cannot directly observe all aspects of research issues, including thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and interactions (Greef, 2011:109). Interviews, therefore, provide researchers with the opportunity to gain a more profound understanding of the multifaceted perspectives of participants. As a qualitative data collection method, interviews differ from observations as they enable researchers to elicit descriptions of participants' thoughts, interactions, feelings, and behavior (McMillan & Schumacher, 2011:239). The purpose of interviews is to comprehend the perceptions and experiences of participants regarding the phenomenon under study, allowing emergent meanings to shape the discourse of the research (Johnson, 2008:68). Qualitative interviews, thus, aim to capture the perspectives of the interviewees to achieve a specific research objective.

4.5.1.1.2 Advantages of interviews

Flexibility plays a pivotal role in interviews, as highlighted by Fouche et al. (2011:96). Interviewers could observe the respondents and their context, allowing for repetition of research questions or clarification of their meanings if needed (Denzin et al., 2017:86). Further, interviewers can request additional information when responses appear incomplete or irrelevant.

According to Babbie (2011:109), interviews are especially appropriate for inquiries that cannot be effectively structured into a multiple-choice format, such as those that pertain to personal issues. Through the establishment of rapport and the building of trust, interviewers can often gather information that respondents may be reluctant to provide on a questionnaire. Additionally, interviews may elicit more accurate and truthful responses, as interviewers can clarify the research purpose and individual questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2011:234). Interviews may also result in higher response rates, as personal contact increases the likelihood of participation and information provision. Moreover, interviews offer accessibility to individuals who may have limited reading and writing abilities or who may prefer verbal communication over written responses.

Another advantage of interviews is the ability to control the sequence of questions. In certain cases, it is crucial to prevent respondents from knowing the nature of later questions, as their answers could influence earlier responses. Interviews mitigate this issue, as respondents do not know what questions are forthcoming and cannot modify previously given answers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017:322).

4.5.1.1.3 Disadvantages of interviews

According to Greef (2011:195), a limitation of using interviews is their higher cost and time-consuming nature compared to questionnaires, and their ability to accommodate a smaller number of participants. Strydom (2011:84) concurs that while interviews are effective in capturing personal perspectives, they necessitate meticulous planning and substantial investments of time, both in conducting the interviews and analysing the resulting data. McMillan and Schumacher (2011:246) further emphasise that interviewing demands a high level of skill, including proficient communication and interpersonal abilities, as well as sound knowledge of research methods.

Nieuwenhuis (2009:324) highlights the risk of inaccurate responses in interviews, as participants may provide responses that are not entirely truthful or may exaggerate certain aspects to impress the interviewer. Additionally, interviews may compromise participants' anonymity, as the interviewer often has access to personal information such as names and addresses. This can be especially concerning if the information discussed is sensitive

or embarrassing (Babbie, 2010:96). Participants may also struggle to answer questions if they do not have sufficient information or may deviate from the topic to make the interview more interesting. Despite these limitations, the researcher strives to maintain objectivity and avoid bias in interpreting and reporting the findings.

4.5.1.1.4 *The interview process*

Thorough preparation for the interview process is emphasised by McMillan and Schumacher (2011:268) as an essential step before engaging with participants. This includes creating an interview schedule with predetermined questions to serve as a suitable tool for interaction. De Vos et al. (2011:230) suggest that employing open-ended questions can be particularly effective, as they allow for flexibility in asking broader questions in any order, while still facilitating probing and clarification.

Creswell (2009:222) advises on the importance of structuring the conversation and taking detailed notes during interviews. The aim of the interview process is to elicit participants' opinions and views on a specific topic, which involves conducting face-to-face interviews and allowing participants to express their thoughts beyond the specific questions. In obtaining consent from participants, the researcher sought permission for using an audio recorder during the interviews, as Mouton (2011:173) notes that recording interviews provides a detailed record, with note-taking serving as a backup.

4.5.1.2 *Observation*

Observation was employed as an alternative method for collecting information from respondents. As explained by Hennink (2011:179), observation entails the researcher being exposed to or involved in the activities of the participants in the research setting, allowing for systematic observation and recording of their actions, behaviour, and interactions. Observation generates empirical data in naturally occurring settings, where the researcher can assume either a passive observer or participant role. Maree (2012:83) defines observation as a systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects, and occurrences without engaging in questioning or communication.

In everyday life, people often use their senses and intuition to gather data through observation.

Observation is widely recognised as a primary method for collecting information in research, particularly in cases where participants may be uncooperative or unaware of the answers, making it challenging to elicit complete and accurate information through questioning. Kumar (2012:240) suggests that observation allows the researcher to observe essential events in real-life settings and take notes without predetermined objectives. This method provides the researcher with detailed information on observed actions, conversations, people, and settings, while analytical notes provide insights into the researcher's interpretations of the study.

Qualitative research utilises observation as a means of obtaining a de facto sample of all possible observations, with field notes serving as written accounts that capture what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks during data collection and reflection. Babbie and Mouton (2010:294) note that observation is intentional and free-flowing, allowing the researcher to shift focus as new and potentially significant objects and events emerge. The key advantage of this approach is its flexibility, enabling the researcher to capitalise on unforeseen data sources as they arise (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:147).

Observation involves systematically noting people, events, behaviours, settings, artifacts, routines, and other elements, providing the researcher with an opportunity to gather live data from naturally occurring situations. Yin (2009:456) suggests that observational data is appealing because it allows the researcher to collect "live" data from "live" situations, enabling a deeper understanding of the context of programs and accessing personal knowledge beyond perception-based data. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000:305) also note that observational data are valuable for providing insight into the context of the study and moving beyond surface-level data.

4.5.1.2.1 *Rationale for using observation*

Due to the study's social context and its potential to shed additional light on the phenomenon under examination, qualitative observation was used in the research (Mouton, 2011:153). The following are some of the justifications for using qualitative observations, according to Patton (2007:263).

- Observation allows the researcher to gain firsthand experience of the object of study, providing an opportunity to be immersed in the research context and not solely rely on preconceived notions. It also allows for the collection of rich information about the study setting, as the context is open for direct observation.
- Observation can uncover issues that may go unnoticed by others in the context being studied, providing the researcher with unique insights. Additionally, through questioning during observation, the researcher may be able to elicit information on sensitive topics that participants may be hesitant to discuss due to ethical considerations.
- Observation facilitates the production of knowledge about the social environment through the firsthand experience of natural conditions. Not all crucial knowledge can be captured or expressed through interviews alone, making observation a valuable method for uncovering tacit knowledge.

4.5.1.3 *Limitations of observations*

The use of observations as data collection instruments has several limitations, as noted by Airasian and Gray (2003:198):

- There is a risk of the researcher losing objectivity due to emotional attachment during the observation process.
- The researcher may miss spontaneous events of interest if absent during their occurrence.
- There may be situations that are not conducive to observations.

To address these limitations, triangulation was employed by supplementing observations with individual interviews with participants and document analysis. The next section will further explore document analysis as a research instrument.

4.5.1.4 Document analysis

Since those documents are widespread in schools and provide workers with information, schools create them for different newsletters, yearbooks, news releases, and memos (Maree, 2011:78). Letters, autobiographies, and other personal materials are also shown in schools (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:280). A document, according to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011:249), “is a record of an action or process”. These documents can be created by both people and groups, and they can take many various shapes. Photographs and papers that represent different cultural viewpoints were also used in the research. The researcher was interested in these to use them to triangulate data obtained from other sources.

a) Personal document

First-person accounts are used in this to record the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of people (McMillan & Schumacher, 2011:454). The researcher may come upon documents or ask participants for them. According to Babbie and Mouton (2010:300), the autobiography, which covers the major trajectories in a person's life, is the most prevalent type of autobiographical record. “The diary represents the immediate recording of experiences, unimpaired by the reconstructions and distortions of memory, in contrast to an autobiography” (Wolcott, 2010:140).

b) Official documents

According to Babbie (2010:320), official documents are used to supplement research and provide explanations for specific events. In this study, sources of documentary material to be analysed were those that school administration teams used to manage the curriculum daily. Organisations produce many documents, and the following were examined at each location.

- Curriculum management plan
- School policies
- Monitoring tools
- Class visit schedule
- Minutes books
- SMT meeting; and
- Staff meeting minutes.

The role of school management teams' current practices in curriculum management can be effectively described using document analysis as a research tool. Document analysis allows for a detailed description and explanation of the current nature and state of the role of school management teams in curriculum management.

4.5.1.3.1 Rationale for using documents

Document analysis serves as a valuable research tool for triangulating data by providing corroborating evidence from multiple sources, as highlighted by Maree (2011:83). In this research project, document analysis was employed as a means of cross-checking and comparing information gathered from interviews. Specifically, the study involved examining and analysing school policies in conjunction with participants' feedback on these topics during the interview process. The utilisation of documents allowed the researcher to access information that may not have been obtained through formal interviews or could have been challenging to obtain, as emphasised by McMillan and Schumacher (2011:209).

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The current study aims to investigate sourced data and uncover underlying patterns and meanings related to the phenomenon under examination. Qualitative data analysis, as distinct from statistical analysis, involves a process of becoming familiar with the data,

categorising issues, manipulating and summarising information, and addressing research questions through coding and categorising data obtained through individual interviews, observations, and document analysis. The analysis process aims to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study by organising and synthesizing the collected data to reflect the study's findings.

Yin (2014:71) explains that data analysis involves a systematic presentation of collected data to make sense of its meaning. Briggs (2012:345) posits that data analysis is a true test of a researcher's skill in processing captured data into meaningful information that can be used to understand the phenomenon. Cohen et al. (2011:45) elaborate on data analysis as a process of making sense of data from the perspective of the participants, through identifying themes, groups, and patterns.

Data analysis is also described as the process of breaking down and integrating data, as indicated by Creswell (2014:63). Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2012:55) state that data analysis involves following analytic procedures to identify, understand, and interpret the experiences of study participants. This implies that the researcher needs to uncover the personal, social, and cultural meanings associated with people's behaviours to understand, explain, and interpret human experiences.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367) caution that analyzing the voluminous qualitative data generated during the research process can be challenging, requiring tasks such as data segmentation, coding, and thematic organization for interpretation. To address this, the researcher took measures to ensure the completeness and availability of all field notes, interview transcripts, audio tape cassettes, and documents used during the fieldwork. The interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim, without altering grammatical correctness. Data analysis was conducted through observation, document analysis, and interviews, and gathered data from participants' biographical details were presented in tables. Personal information on the participants was also tabulated to facilitate the extraction of the required data on the phenomenon under study.

Verbatim accounts of interviews and audio-taped responses were transcribed to facilitate analysis, and data from observations and references from documents were categorised into different patterns and themes. These themes were coded and categorised to derive meaning on a single concept constructed from the diverse perspectives of the participants. As recommended by Schurink et al. (2011:189), the reduction of information and codes enhances the manageability of the interpretation of participants' views, aiding in the establishment of reliable findings and conclusions. Thus, the researcher aimed to ensure the validity and reliability of the collected data and the resulting outcomes during the analysis. The subsequent section will focus on discussing the trustworthiness of the study.

4.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

This section is dedicated to ensuring the quality of data collected through trustworthiness in the context of qualitative research. Trustworthiness, as defined by Maree (2011:297), pertains to how the researcher convinces the reader that the findings of the study are of high quality and worthy of consideration. However, assessing the accuracy of qualitative findings can be challenging, as noted by McMillan and Schumacher (2011:327). To enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings, various strategies and criteria can be employed. In qualitative research, trustworthiness is the term used to assess the quality of data, encompassing the believability and reliability of both data and data analysis. Creswell (2009:324) proposes four principles - credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability - to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research. The subsequent subsection elucidates how the researcher ensured the trustworthiness of the collected data.

4.7.1 Credibility

In qualitative research, credibility refers to the extent to which research findings are considered trustworthy and reasonable, as stated by Hesse-Biber (2010:76). Establishing credibility in qualitative research involves ensuring that the findings are perceived as

believable from the perspective of the participants, as highlighted by Maree (2011:85). Credibility implies that the research results are dependable, trustworthy, and accurately represent the views of the participants, as noted by Corbin and Strauss (2008:10). However, it is acknowledged in qualitative research that reality is subjective and constructed within social contexts, as emphasized by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:160).

The objective of this study is to produce credible results, which entails selecting appropriate participants with relevant knowledge and experience pertaining to the subject matter. Triangulation was used to establish credibility by cross-checking the data obtained from different sources, situations and methods (Strauss & Corbin, 2008:114). This process involved comparing themes emerging from the research and checking for discrepancies in the findings. Additionally, member-checking was employed to increase credibility, which involved obtaining feedback from the participants on the data, interpretations and conclusions (Creswell, 2009:55). “Triangulation is generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning and verify the repeatability of an observation or interpretation”. As per McMillan and Schumacher (2010:309), triangulation refers to a process of cross-validation that involves utilising multiple data sources, data collection strategies, time periods, and theoretical frameworks.

4.7.2 Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research is the ability to track the methods and processes used by the researcher to collect data in a way that allows for replication by future researchers, even though the same results may not necessarily be produced (Shelton, 2004:231). The goal of dependability is to ensure that the results accurately reflect the participants’ views rather than the researcher’s bias (Bryant & Charmaz, 2008:172). Unlike reliability, which is difficult to achieve in qualitative research due to the dynamic nature of human behaviour and individual interpretation of meaning, dependability can be

enhanced by providing detailed descriptions of the methods used to collect and analysed data.

In this research, measures were taken to enhance the dependability of the study. These measures included using a tape recorder and member checking to confirm the accuracy of transcribed interview data, as well as reviewing relevant literature on the same phenomenon. The use of transcripts and quotations from participants served as evidence of the conducted interviews. Furthermore, providing a detailed description of the methods used in data collection, analysis, and interpretation also contributes to the dependability of the study, as it offers insights into the potential for repeatability or uniqueness of the situation, as suggested by Maree (2011:69).

4.7.3 Transferability

To make research findings transferable or generalisable, they must be applicable to new contexts beyond the original study setting. Transferability is similar to external validity, which refers to the degree to which the findings can be generalised. The transferability of qualitative research results depends on how well they can be applied to other contexts with different participants. According to Maree, transferability means that the study's findings can be used to inform larger populations or different settings. For Cilliers et al., (2022) transferability means that the study's results can be applied to similar situations that will yield similar outcomes.

To ensure transferability, the similarity between contexts is crucial to ensure the research's findings are applicable in other settings. To enhance transferability in qualitative research, one approach is to gather comprehensive and detailed descriptions of the data, which enables readers to grasp the meaning attributed to the research findings and form their own judgments about their transferability. Furthermore, offering contextual information about the participants and the settings in which the research was conducted contributes to ensuring transferability (Maree, 2011:91).

4.7.4 Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability, which refers to the extent to which research findings can be verified or supported by others, is akin to the concept of objectivity, which encompasses the researcher's awareness of and accounting for their individual subjectivity or biases (Creswell, 2011:199). It is assumed that each researcher brings their unique perspectives to the study, and to ensure that the research findings reflect the situation under investigation rather than the researcher's beliefs or biases, a clear link between the data and the findings must be established (Fouche et al., 2011:98). Therefore, it is crucial for researchers to continuously check and verify the data throughout the study, both during and after data collection, to ensure its accuracy (Mouton, 2011:271).

In the present study, confirmability was ensured by providing a detailed description of the study methods for an audit trail, and by utilising research assistants to facilitate the sharing of views, ensuring triangulation of data and reducing the potential for biased ideas. Additionally, the organisation and archiving of all collected data in a retrievable format addressed any potential challenges to the findings (Cilliers et al., 2014:259). This process enhanced the trustworthiness of the collected data by confirming the data recorded throughout the study process. Furthermore, triangulation was employed during both the data collection and analysis phases to further strengthen the trustworthiness of the study.

4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the field of qualitative research, the term “research ethics” pertains to the set of rules that govern morally upright conduct during research, as research itself is inherently ethical in nature, according to Gomm (2008:365). As the current study is qualitative in nature, the researcher had to engage deeply with the participants, delving into their personal domains to collect data on their values, weaknesses, and individual issues. Creswell (2009:201) underscores the importance of researchers being aware that they are entering

the private spaces of their participants and must address ethical issues that arise during and after the study, while also respecting the rights, needs, values, and desires of the participants, as highlighted by Maree (2011:86).

Researchers operating within the qualitative paradigm must recognise and adhere to the significance of research ethics in their choice of topics, interactions with participants, and face-to-face data collection, as emphasised by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:334). Gomm (2008:365) views “research ethics” as encompassing the moral obligations that researchers have in conducting their work.

In accordance with Merriam's (2009:29) observations, research undertakings, especially during data collection and reporting of research outcomes, are prone to ethical violations. In this study, the objective was to collect genuine data concerning individual experiences and perceptions regarding the investigated phenomenon. Creswell (2009:201) posits that it is the responsibility of the researcher to maintain and defend the values, rights, and preferences of the participants throughout the research process, including data collection and dissemination of research findings.

4.8.1 Informed consent

The underlying principle of allowing participants autonomy and freedom in the research process is grounded on the work of McMillan and Schumacher (2011:231) in the academic literature. Informed consent, as elucidated by Anderson (2009:75), requires the provision of comprehensive and concise information to participants regarding the study. This concept acknowledges participants' right to receive information about the research and their involvement as research subjects, as emphasised by Barbas (2017:75). In this study, the researcher personally visited the participants to explain the study's purpose, research nature, data collection methods, and study scope before beginning the research. Given the unique approach to data collection, the researcher also described the participants' expected roles, which was especially critical. The researcher obtained written informed consent and ethical clearance from the University of Venda's research

committee. Additionally, permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Provincial Department of Basic Education, Mopani West District office, and Motupa Circuit office.

4.8.2 Privacy and confidentiality

Confidentiality is concerned with the control of information when research data is available, with the aim of protecting participants' privacy (Krathwohl, 2009:215). This means that confidential information must not be disclosed to unauthorised individuals, and participants' identities must be kept anonymous throughout the research process (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:55).

To ensure confidentiality, researchers must take active steps to remove any identifying information and protect sensitive information that participants disclose (Barbas, 2017:80). Creswell (2009:11) agrees with Krathwohl, stating that participants have the right to keep their information private. In this study, participants' names were not disclosed, and anonymity was ensured.

To maintain confidentiality, the study ensured that participants' responses and involvement were anonymised. Audio recordings were destroyed once the study was completed to protect participants' privacy.

4.8.3 Protection from manipulation

Researchers must be mindful of avoiding any manipulation or dehumanisation of participants, treating them as individual human beings rather than mere objects or numbers, as emphasised by Creswell (2009:11). Unethical tactics or techniques should be strictly avoided during the interviewing process.

4.8.4 Protection from harm

The researcher should make sure that subjects are not subjected to unwarranted bodily, psychological, or emotional harm (De Vos, 2011:115). The process of conducting research, including physiological or psychological experiments, intrusive procedures, and steps involving responses to an abnormally stressful stimulus or activity, must not expose the subjects to a substantial risk of personal harm, according to Hardwick and Worsley (2011:33). Due to the sensitive nature of the study, the researcher chose to interview participants under fictitious names and made sure that the interview location was private. According to Maree (2012:301), to protect the identities of the participants, “all information and responses supplied by participants during a study must be kept confidential”.

4.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research design and methodology employed in the study have been elucidated, encompassing various aspects such as processes, participants, data collection tools, data analysis, ethical concerns, and study credibility. The concept of qualitative research design was introduced, including principles, assessment tools, and the framework used to apply philosophical assumptions in practical research practice. Methodological processes, including population, sampling methods, sample size, data collection tools, and data analysis, were discussed, leading to the adoption of a qualitative case study research design. The justification for selecting a qualitative research methodology has been expounded upon. Moreover, ethical implications, including but not limited to informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, accessibility, participant voluntary engagement, and equitable treatment, have been elucidated. Additionally, the pilot study's outcomes, which were performed as a precursor to the comprehensive investigation, have been reported in this chapter. Subsequently, the upcoming chapter will concentrate on the exposition of the research findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the research paradigm, design, and methodology employed in the study. In this chapter, the findings of the empirical investigation conducted at six primary schools in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province, are presented. The focus of the study was to address the research probes outlined below:

- What are the roles of school management teams in curriculum management in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province?
- Which challenges are faced by school management teams in curriculum management?
- What are the resources needed to support curriculum management in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province?

- Which strategies are used by school management teams in curriculum management in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province?

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the six primary schools that were sampled for the study, including profiles of the schools, biographical information of the participants, findings obtained from document analysis, as well as observations and interviews conducted. The subsequent section presents detailed profiles of the six primary schools located in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province.

5.2 PROFILES OF SAMPLED PRIMARY SCHOOLS

To protect the privacy and anonymity of the schools and participants, this section provides profiles of the six primary schools that made up the sample. The schools are designated as schools **A**, **B**, **C**, **D**, **E**, and **F**. The profiles of the schools in Table 5.1 are provided below.

Table 5.1: Profiles of schools

Biographical Items	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Year established	1921	1917	1960	1993	1990	1995
Quintile Level	5	5	1	1	1	1
Type of school: public: rural: urban	Urban	Urban	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Enrolment	1272	561	1007	760	685	550
Number of teachers	56	18	30	17	16	12

Deputy Principal (s) & Principal	2	2	2	2	2	2
Departmental Heads (HDs)	6	2	4	3	2	2
Admin staff	3	2	1	1	1	-
Support staff	8	7	5	4	4	4
Security	4	4	2	2	2	2

5.2.1 School A

This is a publicly-funded educational institution located in an urban area, established in 1921. It currently enrolls 1,272 students ranging from Grade R to 7, with a teaching staff of 56, including the principal, deputy principal, and departmental heads. The school also has eight support staff members, including food handlers, administrative clerks, and security guards. The school maintains a teacher-learner ratio of 1:21.

To manage student, teacher, and curriculum-related data, the school utilizes the South African Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS). Governance is provided by three structures, namely the School Management Team (SMT), the School Governing Body (SGB), and Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), all of which play a role in promoting a culture of learning and teaching within the school.

The school is categorised as quintile five (Q: 5), and most of its students' parents are employed. It holds a Section 21 status and receives funding through the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSF), which covers daily operational costs, maintenance of school infrastructure, and acquisition of teaching and learning resources.

5.2.2 School B

It currently enrolls 561 students ranging from Grade R to 7, with a teaching staff of 18, including the principal and departmental heads. The school also employs seven support staff members, including food handlers, administrative clerks, and security guards. The teacher-learner ratio is 1:25.

To manage student, teacher, and curriculum-related data, the school utilises the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS). Governance is provided by two management structures, namely the School Management Team (SMT) and the School Governing Body (SGB), both of which contribute to fostering a Culture of Teaching and Learning (COTL) within the school.

The school is categorized as quintile five (Q: 5) and charges fees for attendance. Most of the students' parents are employed, and the school holds a Section 21 status. Funding for the school is sourced from the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF). The school is equipped with thirty computers, fifteen printers, twenty laptops, and five duplicating machines to support the administration and management of the school through SA-SAMS.

5.2.3 School C

This is a publicly-funded primary school located in a rural settlement, established in 1993. The school has a current enrollment of 1,007 students ranging from Grade R to 7, and employs thirty teaching staff members, including the principal, deputy principal, and departmental heads. The teacher-learner ratio is 1:40. Additionally, there are five support staff members serving as food handlers, one administration clerk, and two male security guards.

The school holds a Section 21 status and receives funding through the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF). It falls under quintile one (1), indicating that it serves an extremely impoverished community. Consequently, it has been designated as a “no-fee school” due to the high rate of unemployment among parents, with some

working on nearby farms and relying on government social grants as their primary source of income.

The school has several management structures in place, including the School Management Team (SMT), School Governing Body (SGB), and Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), all of which play a crucial role in promoting a Culture of Teaching and Learning (COTL) within the school. To manage data related to students, teachers, and the curriculum, the school utilizes the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS).

5.2.4 School D

This is a public ordinary school situated in a rural settlement that was established in 760 AD, prior to the democratic era, in 1994. The school currently enrolls five hundred and sixty (560) students ranging from Grade R to 7, and employs seventeen teachers, including the principal, deputy principal, and departmental heads. Additionally, there are four support staff members serving as food handlers for the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), one administration clerk, and two male security guards. The school is equipped with ten computers, five printers, three laptops, and two duplicating machines to facilitate its administration and management through SA-SAMS.

The school is classified under quintile one (1) and has a Section 21 status, making it a “no-fee school”. The school is able to manage its financial affairs, cover daily running costs, maintain school infrastructure, and procure teaching and learning resources through the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSF). Most parents of students are unemployed, though some may work on nearby farms, with government grants serving as their primary source of income. The school has established management structures, including the School Management Team (SMT), School Governing Body (SGB), and Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), which play a crucial role in fostering a culture of teaching and learning within the school.

5.2.5 School E

This is a public school located in a rural community that was established before the democratic dispensation, specifically in 1990. Currently, the school has an enrollment of four hundred and eighty-five (485) learners from Grade R to 7, overseen by seventeen teachers, including the principal, deputy principal, and departmental heads. Additionally, there are four support staff members, including food handlers, an administration clerk, and two male guards. The school is equipped with four computers, two printers, six laptops allocated for School Management Teams, and one duplicating machine utilized for administrative and managerial purposes via SA-SAMS.

Categorized as quintile one (1) and holding a Section 21 status, the school is classified as a “no-fee school.” The school manages its financial affairs efficiently, covers daily running costs, maintains school infrastructure, and procures teaching and learning resources through the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF). Most of the students’ parents are unemployed, while some work on nearby farms, with government social grants serving as their primary source of income. The school has established management structures, including the School Management Team (SMT), School Governing Body (SGB), and Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC), which significantly contribute to promoting a culture of teaching and learning within the school.

5.2.6 School F

This is a rural public ordinary school that was established in 1995, during the democratic era. The current enrollment of learners is three hundred and eighty (550), spanning Grades R to 7. The teaching staff consists of twelve (12) members, including the principal and two departmental heads, resulting in a teacher-learner ratio of 1:40. There are four support staff members responsible for food handling, as well as two male security guards, but no administration clerk.

The school holds a Section 21 status and relies on funding from the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF). The South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS) is used for managing learners, teachers, and curriculum-related information. Due to its location in an economically disadvantaged community, the school is categorised as quintile one (1) and is considered a “no-fee school”. Most parents are unemployed, with government social grants serving as their primary source of income. The School Management Team (SMT), School Governing Body (SGB), and Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) are established structures aimed at promoting a culture of teaching and learning within the school.

The school has limited technological resources, including two computers, one printer, two laptops, and one duplicating machine for administrative and managerial purposes using SA-SAMS. In the following section, biographical information about the participants will be provided.

5.3 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS

The biographies of the participants, including details such as gender, age, professional qualifications, academic or managerial degrees, years of teaching experience, current position, and duration of service in that role, are presented in this section. The sub-section specifically includes concise biographical information about the principals.

5.3.1 Principals

In this study, a total of six primary school principals were interviewed, and their biographical information is presented in Table 5.2 for reference.

Table 5.2: Biographical details of school principals

Biographical Items	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male
Age	56	57	45	50	58	36
Professional Qualification	STD	SED	SED	SED	SED	STD
Academic or Management qualifications	B.Ed. (Hons)	B. A	B. TECH IN EDUCATION	B. A	B.Ed. (Hons)	B. TECH IN EDUCATION

Years of teaching experience	30	15	33	25	31	24
Position held	Principal	Principal	Principal	Principal	Principal	Principal
Experience in the position held	15 Years	8 Years	26 Years	10 Years	9 Years	4 Years

As shown in Table 5.2 above, four of the interviewed principals are male, while the other two, from schools **B** and **D**, are female. This may be due to the common perception that only men can be high school principals and women can only be primary school principals. Three of the principals are approaching retirement age, and all six have considerable experience in teaching and serving as principals. However, the principals from schools **B**, **D**, and **We** have more experience than those from schools **A**, **C**, and **F**. All six principals have professional qualifications, with those from schools **B**, **C**, **D**, and **E** holding Secondary Education Diplomas (SED), while the others hold Secondary Teachers' Diplomas (STDs). The principals from schools **A** and **E** have Bachelor of Education Honours (B.Ed. Hons) in Management and Leadership. Principals from schools **B** and **D** have Bachelor of Arts (BA) degrees but no management and leadership qualifications. The principals from schools **C** and **F** hold **B. TECH** in Management (B. TECH) degrees. Based on these biographical details, the researcher believes that there is an over-representation of male principals. The next sub-section presents the biographical details of the deputy principals.

5.3.2 Deputy principals

In this section, the biographical information of the deputy principals is presented 5.3 below:

Table 5.3: Biographical Details of Deputy Principals

Items	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male
Age	56	57	50	59	52	49
Professional Qualification	SED	ACE	ACE	SED	SED	SED
Academic Management qualifications	B.Ed. (Hons)	B. Ed (Hons)	B. Ed (Hons)	B.Ed (Hons)	B.Ed. (Hons)	B.Ed (Hons)

Years of teaching experience	30	35	23	36	27	24
Position held	Deputy Principal	Deputy Principal	Deputy Principal	Deputy Principal	Deputy Principal	Deputy Principal
Experience in the position held	10 Years	20 Years	6 Years	15 Years	7 Years	3 Years

Table 5.3 indicates that there are three female deputy principals among the six who were interviewed, representing schools **B**, **D**, and **E**, while the remaining three are males from schools **A**, **C**, and **F**. All six of the deputy principals are professionally and academically qualified, with four of them holding Secondary Diplomas and Bachelor of Education Honours qualifications from schools **A**, **D**, **E**, and **F**. The other two from schools **B** and **C** have more advanced qualifications, specifically an Advanced Certificate in Education and a Bachelor of Education Honours, respectively. Two of the deputy principals, one from schools **B** and the other from **E**, have the same number of years of experience in their positions, while the other three, representing schools **A**, **B**, and **C**, have more years of experience. Based on these biographical details of the deputy principals, the researcher's opinion is that there is no over-representation or under-representation of any group. The biographical details of the departmental heads are presented in the next sub-section.

5.3.3 Departmental heads

This section presents biographical details of departmental heads. Details of departmental heads in Table 5.4 appear below:

Table 5.4: Biographical details of departmental heads

Items	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Gender	Female	Female	Male	Male	Female	Male
Age	50	39	48	59	40	34
Professional qualification	STD	STD	NPDE	STD	STD	STD
Academic or management qualifications	Diploma	M.A	B. Ed (Hons)	B.Ed (Hons)	B.Ed. (Hons)	B.Ed (Hons)
Years of teaching experience	17	25	17	18	24	17
Position held	DH	DH	DH	DH	DH	DH
Experience in the position held	12 Years	12 Years	6 Years	12 Years	12 Years	4 Years

The information presented in Table 5.4 shows that out of the six departmental heads interviewed for the study, four are women and the remaining two are men, indicating an overrepresentation of women in the sample. Four of the departmental heads are in the middle age group, with ages below 50, while the other two are above 50 and close to retirement age. All six departmental heads interviewed were qualified teachers, possessing both professional and academic qualifications. Five of the departmental heads had Secondary Teachers Diplomas in Education, while one had a National Professional Diploma in Education. Two of the departmental heads from schools **D** and **E** held a Bachelor of Education Honours degree, and one departmental head from school **B** had a Master of Education in management. Two departmental heads from schools **C** and **F** had a Higher Education Diploma. The teaching experience of three departmental

heads was above 10 years, while the other three had the same number of years of experience in their current positions, which was also above 10 years. The next section of the report provides details on the findings from the analysis of documents at the six primary schools.

5.4 INTERVIEW RESPONSES

This section provides the results obtained from the individual interviews conducted with school principals, deputy principals, and departmental heads. The interview responses were recorded and transcribed, and they are presented in full below.

5.4.1 The roles played by school management teams in curriculum management

The individuals who were interviewed appear to have a limited comprehension of their responsibilities in curriculum management. The subsequent section contains the outcomes of the interviews with the participants.

5.4.1.1 *Superficial knowledge of curriculum management roles*

Interview responses revealed that MSTS members lack depth, and an understanding of their curriculum management functions and leadership roles. With pertinence to this question, the DH from school F uttered the following:

DH (School F):

“My main role in the curriculum is . . . eh! I look after the orphans and vulnerable learners in school and visit them in their homes”.

From the above *verbatim* response from the DH of school F, indications point to superficial knowledge of curriculum management roles among participants, which does not resonate

with the study's literature review, according to Walter (2013:3), SMT members are responsible for the effective management of schools and this includes planning, organising, leading and controlling. The situational leader needs to nurse a given developmental and maturity level of followers to be successful in each environment by placing less emphasis on the relationship with subordinates and more emphasis on the tasks to be completed successfully, depending on what is needed to get the job done.

The views of the DH from school **F** were also shared by the Deputy principal from school **C**. The Deputy principal from school **C** had this to say:

Deputy principal (School C):

“Ehh!! . . . the principal does not have a clear picture of the curriculum policy, instead, he ‘ducks and dodges’ curriculum responsibilities, and these are the DHs and Deputy principals’ main tasks.”

The DH from school **F** concurs with the views expressed by the Deputy principal from school **C**. Hence, this points to the fact that members of the SMTs have a shallow understanding of their curriculum management roles.

In a school setting, it is crucial for the School Management Team (SMT) to have a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum, not only in specific areas or phases, but across the entire spectrum of the school curriculum. This knowledge is necessary to enable the SMT to engage in strategic planning for curriculum management and planning, and to address curriculum-related matters in all phases and departments within the school.

According to the literature reviewed, Bush (2012:139) argues that SMTs have the responsibility of managing the day-to-day administration of the school, including ensuring effective teaching and learning, efficient utilisation of human and material resources, and implementation of school policies. However, the responses from the participants in this study contradict the findings of the literature review and the adopted theoretical

framework. Situational leadership, which aims to develop followers' competence and commitment to tasks and promote open communication and self-reliance, is an important aspect of effective leadership in schools.

The interview responses revealed that SMTs lack clarity about their roles in curriculum management, resulting in negative impacts on the overall schooling system. This lack of understanding may jeopardise curriculum policy intentions and goals, as SMTs serve as custodians of the curriculum in schools. Consequently, the school may not be able to produce learners who possess critical thinking and problem-solving skills as envisioned in the policy, largely due to the superficial knowledge of curriculum management among SMTs. Therefore, the theory underlying this study emphasises the importance of flexible leadership styles that take into consideration the knowledge, skills, and maturity level of followers or subordinates in each task. To be effective, leaders must diagnose the stage or level of competence of individuals before providing coaching or guidance to ensure success in their assigned tasks or responsibilities.

5.4.1.2 *The dominant practices and role confusion*

The interview responses revealed that SMTs are a team only in name. It further seems that how the curriculum is being managed at these schools reflects personal styles of principals. Furthermore, there seems to be a sense of authoritarianism and autocracy existing in SMTs practices under the transformed curriculum management practices in schools.

In responding to the question, deputy principal from school **C** had this to say:

Deputy principal (school C):

“I am not enjoying my role as a deputy in as far as curriculum restrictions are concerned, . . . one does not work freely, sometimes you say things to the teachers and do not see if it your way. Sometimes teachers do not like to take your opinion if it is not from the DH. The only people that

they recognise are the DHs. They are given more powers in the curriculum than deputy principals”.

The Departmental Head of School **D** concurred with the views expressed by the Deputy Principal of school **C**, and in responding to the question, the Departmental Head had this to say:

Departmental Head (School D):

“As curriculum specialist . . . Ehh!! . . . it is my responsibility to monitor and control the curriculum as the immediate senior of the post level 1 educator. . . but . . . the principal and deputy principal . . . are not giving me the autonomy . . . to do my work well as they keep on interfering in my roles and job descriptions”

Hence, the responses from the participants in this study indicate a lack of collaboration, power-sharing, information-sharing, and competition among members of the School Management Team (SMT), with less recognition given to the deputy principal by the teachers. The SMT functions more as a group rather than a cohesive team. Additionally, the role of the deputy principal in curriculum management conflicts with the role of the Department Heads (DHs), who are responsible for curriculum in schools. As a result, the deputy principal is limited to certain roles in performing curriculum management in this school. If this attitude is not addressed, the school may miss out on important information and expertise that the deputy principal may possess regarding curriculum management. This bureaucratic approach also leads to a division among phases, as SMT members have differing understandings of their curriculum roles and responsibilities. This misalignment does not align with the theoretical framework adopted in this study.

The Situational Leadership Theory posits that no single leadership style is universally applicable to all situations. Therefore, leaders should adapt their leadership style based on the specific situation at hand and be flexible in addressing challenges, as there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership.

5.4.2 Challenges faced by SMTs in curriculum management

This sub-section presents the findings from the interview responses to research question 2.

5.4.2.1 Lack of support systems

The findings of the study reveal that schools are not receiving the much-needed support from the Department of Basic Education, the community, and parents in various ways. Firstly, the Department of Basic Education, which is responsible for schools, fails in its duty by providing stationery late, at the beginning of the year instead of delivering it towards the end of the previous year. Moreover, schools often receive books that they did not even order. Secondly, the Department of Basic Education does not provide ongoing support to School Management Team (SMT) members to help them better understand the curriculum. Consequently, SMT members are unable to adequately support teachers, as they themselves have not received continuous support from the Department of Basic Education to address confusing areas in the curriculum within the school. This cycle results in a breakdown of a professional approach to the curriculum, as teachers receive insufficient and ad hoc curriculum training workshops conducted by facilitators who themselves lack clarity on the curriculum.

Lack of support gives evidence of SMT practices in this school because they struggle with certain aspects of the curriculum such as assessments. In responding to the question, the DH from school E had this to say:

DH (school E):

“We do not get support from the Department of Basic Education, for instance, I invited them telephonically so that they can assist us with assessment strategies. It was May and it is now October and they have not yet responded to our invitation, yet we are expected to manage the curriculum . . .”

In responding to the question, the DH from school **B** was in support of views shared by DH from school **E**, and had this to say:

DH (school B):

“The Department does not give us support and teachers do not understand this new curriculum because the training was not enough for teachers”.

In responding to the question, the deputy principal from school **C** had to say:

Deputy principal (school C):

“Eh . . . if the policymakers want the effective implementation of their policies, such as curriculum policies, they should make sure that those leading to the implementation of the curriculum (school leaders) receive ongoing support because I could not monitor something that I am not sure of hence my leadership role as curriculum leader is not fulfilled”.

According to Maude (2012:99), it is expected that School Management Team (SMT) members provide comprehensive support to teachers by empowering them with curriculum knowledge, facilitating access to resources, and receiving support from the community and parents of learners. However, my findings indicate that the SMT in this school lacks explicit initiatives aimed at developing and supporting teachers, as well as themselves as leaders of the curriculum. Instead, they seem to be relying on the Department of Basic Education and district offices to initiate support, neglecting their role as curriculum leaders to initiate developmental programs and provide support to teachers. As per the theoretical framework of this study, leaders should assess their team members by considering various variables in their workplace and choosing a leadership style that aligns with their goals and the prevailing circumstances. Furthermore, the theory suggests

that leaders should place less emphasis on their relationship with subordinates and instead prioritise the tasks to be completed.

5.4.2.2 Poor teacher attitudes

Based on the responses obtained, it is evident that teachers' attitudes are unfavourable, and they appear to be resistant to changes in teaching methods. This sentiment is echoed by the response provided by the DH from school **F** when asked the question.

DH (School F):

"We have people who are not willing to change and who still believe that the old method of teaching is the only way to deliver the matter in the classroom".

According to Nsibandé (2012:101), the effectiveness of the curriculum is contingent upon teachers' comprehension of the daily changes in the curriculum. Consequently, the research findings indicate that teachers lack motivation in fulfilling their professional responsibilities and resist the adoption of new teaching methods. In the case study school, it was observed that teachers are disheartened by the management approach of the SMT, which undermines their capabilities and hinders their participation in curriculum-related decision-making. Teachers subtly undermine the authority of the SMT. The **DH** from school **D** provided the following response when asked the question.

DH (school D):

"Teachers absent themselves from school without reporting, yet other teachers know that . . . so and so . . . is absent. It is like a game; today this person is absent and tomorrow he/she will come with a medical certificate, and you cannot question the medical certificate, the next day he/she will be absent again".

As per Carl (2015:92), policymakers often fail to consider teachers' beliefs, values, practices, and interests when initiating curriculum reforms, resulting in hindrances during

implementation due to teachers' lack of understanding of the underlying principles of curriculum change (Glatthom, 2013:22). The findings from the interviews in this study also indicate that teachers' attitudes have a negative impact on curriculum delivery and management. Carl (2015:92) further notes that some teachers may willingly participate in the innovation process, while others may resist change. Considering the study's theoretical framework, effective leadership entails adaptability to the situational context, taking into consideration factors such as task type, group dynamics, and other relevant factors that contribute to achieving the desired outcomes. Therefore, situational leadership underscores the importance of considering the role of followers in leadership approaches.

5.4.3 Resources needed to support curriculum management in schools

This section presents individual interview responses of participants on the resources needed to support curriculum management in schools, research question 3.

5.4.3.1 Human resources

Participants responding to the questions on human resources revealed that schools experience challenges of inadequate human resources. In responding to the question, the deputy principal from school **E** had this to say:

Deputy Principal (School E):

“Yes . . . the SMTs need human resource personnel to make schools more functional, however, . . . we are sitting with unoccupied posts in schools for years”.

The Departmental Head of school **B**, in responding to the question revealed that human resource is a very serious challenge in schools. The Departmental Head of school **B** had this to say:

Departmental Head (School B):

“Human resource provisioning remains a serious challenge . . . as we are supposed to be 18 teaching staff but . . . there are still three outstanding promotional posts which are yet to be advertised . . .”

According to Connely (2000:2), human resource management is central to the effective running and success of any organisation. It is imperative for a school or any institution to run smoothly with inadequate human resources. Therefore, schools are laden with challenges of inadequate human resource personnel. However, given the challenge of inadequate human resources experienced by schools, situational leaders are those that can adapt their style to the situation and look at cues as the type of challenge and factors that might contribute to getting the job done as part of the solution to the challenge at hand.

5.4.3.2 Parental involvement

Interview responses revealed that parents of learners are minimally involved in the education of their children. In responding to the question, the principal from school **F** had this to say:

Principal (School F):

“Yes... poor involvement of parents in the education of their children makes it difficult for them to achieve their goals”.

From the interview responses and findings, it was clear that parents negatively impact the education of their children. Parents should understand that they have a responsibility for the education of their children. Literature review research consistently demonstrates that where parents are involved with their children’s education and learning, both at home and in partnership with the school, their children do better and achieve more.

Participants’ interview responses made it clear that parents did not get involved in the education of their children. The principal invites parents to schools, but they do not

respond, efforts and follow-up are made through learners. The principal from school **C**, responded to the question as follows:

Principal (School C):

“Yes... parents are not involved in their children’s education; we call the parents in case a learner gives us a problem and when parents are not responding we return the learner home to come with either a family member, but parents end up not responding”.

The same views were shared by the deputy principal of school **D** who responded as follows:

Deputy principal (School D):

“It is difficult because parents are not cooperative; they just dump their children on us and don’t make any follow-ups about their children’s schoolwork”.

The researcher observed that parents and the community exhibit a lack of interest in the activities of the school and their children, which adversely affects the day-to-day operations of the school. The literature review highlights the importance of schools being receptive to parental involvement and providing informative communication channels to engage parents in the school and their children's education (Mill, 2013:114). The situational leadership theory, which is rooted in behaviour-based approaches, suggests that effective managers possess a repertoire of leadership styles to adapt to various environmental variables. Leaders should be able to influence and motivate followers and tailor their leadership style based on the situation and the maturity levels of their followers. Therefore, situational leaders should be equipped to address challenges and ensure active parental involvement in the education of learners.

5.4.3.3 Physical resources

Interview responses revealed that schools are experiencing a huge backlog of physical resources such as classrooms and other school-related infrastructure. The following interview responses attest to this. In responding to the question, the principal from school **A** had this to say:

Principal (School A):

“Shame! Resources are a big problem in our school as learners are without enough classrooms, stationery, and furniture. We made requisition for furniture every year to the Department of Basic Education but no responds”.

When prompted to elaborate on the challenges related to physical resources, the deputy principal of school **E** revealed that they rely on norms and standard funds to acquire some of the required resources. The principal of school **E** also shared their perspective on the matter.

Principal (School E):

“Infrastructure . . . Ehh! has become another challenge facing public schools . . . classrooms are so old and dilapidated . . . learners still use pit toilets . . . “

From the interview responses, schools have challenges with infrastructure. The literature review points out that a school’s physical resources have a direct impact on the learning environment and are a key determinant of educational outcomes. School physical resource management practices must align with the school improvement plan by linking assets to basic education services delivery standards and strategies (Adedeji, 2017:8).

5.4.4 Strategies used by SMTs in curriculum management in schools

This section presents individual interview responses of participants on strategies used by school management teams in curriculum management, research question 4.

5.4.4.1 Assessment

The participants' interview responses revealed that SMTs played their roles in monitoring and supporting the curriculum through quality assurance of assessments. In responding to the question, the DH from school **F** had this to say:

DH (School F):

“The work that is given to the learners by the teachers may be of high quality and appropriate. To ensure that, I verify the quality of the assignment or test before it is given to the learners. If there are things that need some improvement, I indicated that to the teacher concerned.”

Southworth (2012) and Bush and Glover (2012) assert that assessment, as a strategy of monitoring teaching and learning, can provide information to leadership and other stakeholders to make an informed decision about learners' progress. Therefore, assessments are quality assured before being administered to learners. Participants concur that assessments are quality assured before being administered to learners. In responding to the question, the DH from school **F** had this to say:

DH (School F):

“Work given to learners is quality assured and goes through all the moderation processes as per policy.”

Participants are in unison regarding quality assurance of written assessment, as the deputy principal from school **A** had this to say:

Deputy principal (School A):

“According to the policy every assessment that teachers are supposed to give to learners is first submitted to the DH for pre-moderation, and after marking there is post-moderation done.”

Interview responses revealed that SMT members monitor, control, and check teachers’ and learners’ workbooks always. This resonates with the study’s literature review, as illustrated in the National Protocol for Assessment (DBE, 2012:1).

5.4.4.2 Feedback

Participants’ responses to feedback resonate with the study’s literature review. Learners do receive feedback after an assessment, such as well done!!!, keep it up!!! Pull up your socks!! etc. In responding to the question, the principal from school **C** had this to say:

Principal (School C):

“Yes . . . Ehh!! We do come across comments such as well-done my son!! In learners’ assessment books, . . . and . . . this is encouraging and motivating to learners . . .”

Hattie and Gan (2013:3) assert that the power of feedback lies not only on when and how it is given but also on when and how it is received. Therefore, positive feedback can be encouraged among teachers. The principal from school **D** concurs with the views expressed by the principal of school **C**. In responding to the question, the principal from school **D** had this to say:

Principal (School D):

“I do monitor of classroom practices . . . and listen to some of my colleagues teaching . . . I become so impressed to hear their comments and feedback to learners such as excellent!! Good!! and try to improve next time!! . . . these do appear in learners’ written work”

From the interview responses, it was clear that assessment feedback may improve/not improve performance. Therefore, the SMTs must concern themselves with the contents of the remarks made to encourage feedback that can contribute to improved learner performance.

5.4.4.3 School programmes and monitoring instruments

The participants, in their responses to interview questions, all agreed that monitoring is used as one of the tools for managing teaching and learning. SMTs monitor classes, period registers for teachers and learners, class visits for staff development and check the pace of progress. In responding to the question, the principal from school **D** had this to say:

Principal (School D):

“We . . . have monitoring tools and DHs monitor teachers, then the Deputy principal monitors the DHs, as principal I monitor the deputy principal, but I do not rely on the information I get from the deputy as . . . I also do class visits even if I do not stay in the class and listen, I take rounds”.

In responding to the question, the principal from school **B** concurs and had this to say:

Principal (School B):

“Through monitoring, I use DHs to monitor classes that they must check that ATP is covered teaching and learning is taking place I do random visits to random class visits, and we have the period registers that learners give to teachers to sign when they come to class and do nothing”.

The participant used different monitoring tools to check if teaching and learning were taking place in the classrooms. This finding is supported by the observations where the researcher observed when he visited the school that despite a lack of buildings and resources, teaching and learning were taking place and no learners were roaming outside the classrooms. The next section presents data from observations conducted at the six primary schools in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province.

5.5 OBSERVATIONS

This section provides findings from observations conducted at the six primary schools. Items observed are portrayed in Table 5.5

Table 5.5: Findings from Observations Conducted at the Six Primary Schools

Observed Items	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Availability and conditions of classrooms	a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)
Availability of NSNP	g)	h)	i)	j)	k)	l)
Availability and conditions of toilets	m)	n)	o)	p)	q)	r)
Availability of running water	s)	t)	u)	v)	w)	x)
Availability of Administration block	y)	z)	aa)	bb)	cc)	dd)
Availability of computer Laboratory	ee)	ff)	gg)	hh)	X	ii)
Availability of LTSM	jj)	kk)	ll)	mm)	nn)	oo)

Availability of sports grounds	pp)	qq)	rr)	ss)	tt) X	X
Availability of security fence	uu)	vv)	ww)	xx)	yy)	zz)
Availability of vision and mission statement	aaa)	bbb)	ccc)	ddd)	eee)	fff)
Availability of Siren	ggg)	hhh)	iii)	jjj)	kkk)	lll)
Availability of Electricity	mmm)	nnn)	ooo)	ppp)	qqq)	rrr)

Key:

sss) : Available

X : Not available

5.5.1 Condition of classrooms

School **A** comprises of seven blocks of four classrooms each, making a total of twenty-eight classrooms. Unfortunately, these classrooms have broken windowpanes and appear worn out due to a backlog of infrastructure maintenance. The poor infrastructure has a negative impact on both teaching and learning, leading to lower academic performance.

Upon inspection at school **B**, it was noted that there were ten classrooms, but they too suffered from broken windows, doors, and an unpainted roof. The interior of these classrooms was also damaged with potholes and signs of dilapidation.

At school **C**, there were sixteen classrooms, with an additional four temporary corrugated iron-built classroom structures. Although the presence of these temporary classrooms highlights infrastructural challenges at the school, the condition of the classrooms was

still good. They were well-maintained, clean, and equipped with ceiling fans, bulletin boards, and modern folding chalkboards.

School **D** had eight classrooms with severely damaged corrugated iron roofs, ceilings, fisher-boards, gutters, and worn-out floor tiles. These conditions indicate that maintenance of the school infrastructure had been neglected for a long time.

At school **E**, there were two blocks of three classrooms, along with three mobile classrooms that were not well-maintained, with broken windows and doors. The school's classrooms appeared dilapidated, and the roof was in poor condition. It was apparent that the maintenance of the school infrastructure was not up to par.

Lastly, school **F** had six classrooms that were in good condition, as the buildings seemed to have undergone recent renovation. The roof was well-painted, and the classrooms had no broken windows or other signs of wear and tear.

5.5.2 Availability of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)

The National School Nutrition Programme is being implemented in six primary schools, where a team of volunteer food handlers was observed preparing, cooking, and distributing meals to learners. During breaks, the learners were seen enjoying these meals.

It was observed that the cooking facilities at these six schools were makeshift structures made of corrugated iron, and firewood was used for cooking. The food was stored separately from the cooking area, but the storage facilities were unhygienic and not clean, and the floors in the cooking areas were dusty. These unsanitary conditions in the cooking and storage areas could have negative implications for the learners' health. The meals provided to learners included maize meal, vegetables, samp, milk, soya soup, beans, fish, rice, and fruits.

5.5.3 Availability and conditions of toilets

Observation reveals that there were “Enviro-loo” toilets at the six schools built by the Department of Basic Education to replace the old pit toilets. The conditions of these toilets were good, hygienic and without flies.

At schools **E** and **F**, dilapidated old pit toilets were destroyed and replaced with new “Enviro-loo” toilets; however, there were serious challenges regarding the conditions of newly built learners’ toilets. The newly built toilets were not being taken care of, for example, doors and toilets seats had been vandalised and although these toilets were still new, they now appear to be old and dilapidated. There is a challenge with learners’ toilets at schools **E** and **F**; however, conditions of toilets at schools **A**, **B**, **C**, and **D** were better than at schools **E** and **F**.

5.5.4 Availability of running water

It was observed that there was running water at the six schools. Boreholes were observed as the source of water at the six schools. The availability of running water in these schools has a positive impact on the day-to-day running of schools. Water is used daily for cooking, drinking, sanitary purposes and cleaning.

5.5.5 Availability of administration block

Observations revealed that administration blocks were available at the six primary schools; however, schools **E** and **F** administration blocks were temporarily built structures. These temporarily built offices were only two-roomed structures, with one room used as the principal’s office and the other as a staff room. Schools **A**’s, **B**’s, **C**’s and **D**’s administration blocks were standardised buildings constructed by the Department of Education and housed a principal’s office, deputy principal’s office, DH’s offices and staff room, with one female and one flushing toilet.

5.5.6 Availability of computer laboratory

It was observed that computer centres were only available at schools **A**, **B** and **C**; schools **D**, **E** and **F** were without computer centres were donated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Computer centres had a security door and windows to ensure security of these assets.

5.5.7 Availability of LTSM

Observation reveals that there was sufficient LTSM delivered for the academic year. School **D** and **F** had received their LTSM and stationery delivery packages for the academic year but were not enough for all grades; learners in Schools **E** and **F** to receive deliveries of textbooks at the end of February.

5.5.8 Availability of sports grounds

It was observed that sports grounds were available at schools **A**, **B** and **D**, although the sports grounds were full of weeds, which is a sign of a backlog in maintenance. There were no sports grounds at schools, **E** and **F**. These schools use a community sports ground for sports days.

5.5.9 Availability of security fence

Security fences and entrances to the six primary schools were built with palisade iron. Entrance gates were also built of palisade iron, with brick walls on both sides of the gates. The conditions of security fences and entrance gates were good. The two schools, **A** and **B** had security alarm systems installed.

5.5.10 Availability of vision and mission statement

It was discovered that the vision and mission statements at schools **A**, **B**, and **C** were on display, but those at school **D**'s main entrance gate were not. The school's vision and mission statements were prominently placed in large letters on the walls of the main entrance so that everyone could read them and become familiar with the values and goals of the institution.

5.5.11 Availability of school siren

During observations, it was noted that all six schools had a siren system in place. However, at School **F**, the siren was not functioning due to technical issues, and an old bell that needed to be operated manually was used instead to manage school time. The purpose of the siren was to signal the start and end of lesson periods as well as the end of the school day. Learners and teachers were observed to be prompt in responding to the siren, which helped them adhere to the school timetable and be punctual in attending to their daily school activities.

5.5.12 Availability of electricity

The six schools had electricity as the main source of power. They used electricity to operate computers, borehole machines for pumping water, duplicating machines, printers, lights and school sirens. There are electric lights fitted in all classes and within the school premises, which enhances teaching and learning activities since it allows modern technology in the schools, such as televisions, overhead projectors, and computers. The next section focuses on the documents analysed.

5.6 DOCUMENTS ANALYSED

This section presents findings from documents analysed from the six primary schools. The researcher requested to examine official school documents. Findings from documents analysed at the six primary schools are presented hereunder in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Documents Analysed at the Six Primary Schools

Document analysed	Schools					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Curriculum management	ttt)	uuu)	vvv)	www	xxx)	yyy)
School policies	zzz)	aaaa)	bbbb)	cccc)	dd)	eeee)
Curriculum monitoring tool	fff)	gggg)	hhhh)	iiii)	jjjj)	kkkk)
Class visits	llll)	mmmm)	nnnn)	x	x	x
Schedule	eeee)	xxxx)	yyyy)	uuuu)	vvvv)	www)
SMT minute book	oooo)	pppp)	qqqq)	rrrr)	ssss)	oooo)

Key: Documents Available

X: Documents not Available

5.6.1 Curriculum management plan

All six schools had curriculum management plans available. School **A**'s plan included due dates for teacher submissions to the SMT, including weekly or monthly audits of learners' written work, teacher preparations, school-based assessments for moderation and approval by the SMT.

School **B**'s plan used a template with three columns for dates, activities, and persons responsible, further divided into terms, months, and weeks. Activities included monitoring and controlling written work, lesson preparations, curriculum coverage, and analysis of tests with educators.

School **C**'s plan had monthly, weekly, and daily activities such as submitting lesson preparations to DHs, class visits, auditing written work, support meetings, subject

committee meetings, and accountability meetings reporting on lesson preparations and curriculum coverage.

School **D**'s plan was referred to as a “teaching and learning policy”. It outlined expectations for both teachers and learners regarding curriculum coverage and implementation. Expectations included educators being punctual to school and classes, maintaining discipline in the classroom and within the premises, completing schoolwork within a given timeframe, regularly marking and controlling learners' written work, and adhering to codes of conduct without compromise.

5.6.2 School policies

During observations in the six schools, it was noted that there were established policies and regulations governing the educational institution. School **D** was found to have no safety and security policy in place. Such a policy would have measures to ensure the safety of both learners and staff in case of emergencies or if a learner gets injured during school hours. On the other hand, school **F** had available safety and security policies that prohibited dangerous weapons or any form of intoxicating substances on school premises. Analysis of the safety and security policies from the six schools indicated that the school management teams are committed to and concerned about the safety and security of all learners, teachers, and school resources.

5.6.3 Curriculum monitoring tool

There is evidence of curriculum monitoring tools in the six schools. In terms of the National Policy Act (1996) and the South African Schools Act, it is necessary to ensure that accountability for quality education is supported by monitoring and supporting teaching and learning.

5.6.4 Class visit

Schools **D**, **E** and **F** did not have any recorded evidence of class visit monitoring tools, unlike schools **A**, **B** and **C** where such tools were available. The lack of administered class visit monitoring tools in these schools is an indication that the SMTs may not be conducting class visits. As a result, SMTs could apply the strategy of monitoring teaching and learning through class visits without any hindrance. The National Protocol for Assessment endorses direct involvement of SMT members in classroom activities as a means of verifying progress in the teaching and learning process.

5.6.5 SMT Minutes book

Regular School Management Team (SMT) meetings were held in all six schools, as evidenced by recorded minutes of previous meetings. In School **A**, for example, there was evidence of a meeting held on the 21st of April 2021, where the principal expressed the importance of improving learners' performance. School **B** also had regular SMT meetings with recorded minutes available. In School **C**, there was evidence of regular SMT meetings held, with a meeting held on the 4th of February 2021 discussing reports from subject departmental meetings and the development of curriculum monitoring tools. School **D** also had recorded minutes of meetings held, with one meeting discussing strategies to manage teaching and learning. Similarly, School **E** had recorded minutes of regular SMT meetings, with a meeting held on the 9th of July 2021 discussing 2021 curriculum coverage, and the deputy principal expressing commitment to improving learners' results. In School **F**, regular SMT meetings were held, and in one meeting held on the 11th of April 2021, the agenda was the preparation of the second term examination, with the principal emphasising the need to improve grades of students who performed poorly in the first term.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The chapter presented findings from interviews, observations and documents analysis conducted at the six sampled primary schools in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province. The themes and patterns that emerged from the empirical study were consolidated,

discussed and summarised to serve as the study's major findings. The next chapter presents a summary of findings, conclusions and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The study investigated the role of school management teams in curriculum management of the intermediate phase in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province. The summary of findings from the study are synchronised with the literature review and the theoretical framework. The chapter further presents the researcher's proposed model as a contribution to the body of knowledge.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following themes emerged from the analysed data collected during the empirical study conducted at the six sampled schools in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province.

- **Theme 1: Challenges faced by school management teams in curriculum management in the intermediate phase of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province**

The study revealed that school management teams lacked depth and clarity about their curriculum management roles. School management teams are not supported in their roles by the Department of Basic Education, other stakeholders, and parents of learners.

Teachers' attitude to the new curriculum is that they tend to resist change, and this impact negatively on the SMT's role in curriculum management. Observations also revealed that schools have basic resources; however, there were schools with infrastructure challenges such as lack of computer laboratories and sports fields that form part of the school curriculum. Documents also revealed the absence of classroom visit monitoring tools. Though interview responses revealed that SMTs do monitor, support and control teachers' work, it remains to be proved whether this was carried out as there was no evidence of monitoring tools in support of participants' interview responses.

These findings are consistent with the literature review from the study. According to the literature, legislators typically do not consider the beliefs, values, practices, and interests of teachers when considering curriculum reforms. As a result, these procedures impede implementation because instructors may not grasp the rationale for curriculum change (Glatthom, 2013:22). From the interview responses and findings, attitudes of teachers, impact negatively curriculum delivery and management. Carl (2015:92) pointed out that some teachers may willingly contribute to the process of innovation, and some may not easily accept change. According to Hersey and Blanchard's Situational leadership theory (1996:239), the most effective leaders are those that can adapt their style to the situation and look at cues such as the type of task, the nature of the group, and other factors that might contribute to getting the job done. Therefore, situational leadership brings attention to the role of followers.

- **Theme 2: Resources needed to support school management teams in curriculum management in the intermediate phase of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province**

Participants' responses reveal that schools are struggling with inadequate human resources. Schools had unoccupied promotional posts which have been there for a long time. Only co-opted teachers served as SMTs, as schools are without appointed Departmental Heads and Deputy Principals. Therefore, there was a need for appointed SMT members who have accepted the appointment, with the assurance of accountability

for the assigned curriculum management tasks and job descriptions. Therefore, there was an urgent need for the appointment of DHs and DPs to address human resources needs of schools.

Interview responses further reveal that schools have a huge backlog of physical resources such as classrooms and other related infrastructures. However, observations revealed that schools have enough classrooms and that only schools **D** and **E** did not have computer laboratories, and schools **E** and **F** were without sports fields.

Findings from the empirical study do not resonate with the study's literature review. According to Connely (2000:2), human resource management is central to the effective running and success of any organisation. It is difficult for a school or any institution to run smoothly with inadequate human resources. Therefore, schools are laden with challenges of inadequate human resource personnel. According to Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory (1996:329), schools, like any organisation, must have leaders to strive and run smoothly, and the situational leadership theory advocates that committed leaders should check subordinates' growth. Therefore, the absence of appointed SMTs in schools may compromise the effective management of the curriculum as co-opted members of the teaching staff may not give their all and be accountable for their assigned tasks.

- **Theme 3: Strategies used by school management teams in curriculum management in the intermediate phase of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province**

Interview responses revealed that SMTs were hands-on in curriculum management, as they conducted monitoring, support and controlled the curriculum and quality assured assessments. Teachers' and learners' work and workbooks were being controlled respectively. SMTs ensured that learners receive feedback after an assessment timeously with comments to learners on their performance. Responses revealed that monitoring tools were employed for quality assuring teaching and learning in the

classrooms. However, findings from the documents analysed were contrary to what respondents revealed regarding monitoring of teaching and learning in the classrooms, as there was no evidence of classroom monitoring tools.

Findings do not resonate with the study's literature review, as the absence of class visit monitoring tools does not support findings from interview responses. In literature review, Southworth (2012) and Bush and Glover (2012) assert that assessment, as a strategy of monitoring teaching and learning, can provide information to leadership and other stakeholders to make an informed decision about learners' progress. According to Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory, task-orientated SMTs are likely to increase the quality of work towards contributing to the quality of teachers' work by always assessing maturity levels of their subordinates to come up with the appropriate leadership style. Hence, failure to conduct class visits, as revealed by the absence of monitoring tools, does not resonate with this study's theoretical framework. The next section presents the limitations of the study.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher opted for a qualitative research approach to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon being studied. However, this approach presented one of the study's limitations as it was difficult to meet the expected standards. The data collection process, which involved interviews, may have been difficult due to the sensitivity of the research topic and the participants' status as members of the SMT. Some participants were uncomfortable with the use of a tape recorder during interviews, despite the researcher's assurances of confidentiality and anonymity.

Additionally, the study's time frame limited the amount of data that could be gathered. If more time had been available for data collection, the study's outcomes might have been different. The researcher's request to review school official documents also made some participants uneasy, which prevented them from allowing access to such documents. These documents could have provided more and diverse data on the SMTs' role in

managing the curriculum in the intermediate phase of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province. The next section provides recommendations for the study.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher developed the following recommendations from this investigation based on the research findings that were discovered during the study.

6.4.1 SMTs should keep records and evidence of their curriculum management activities

One of the main roles and responsibilities of the school management team is to monitor, support, and control the implementation of all curriculum activities. Therefore, in carrying out all these activities, it is crucial to use tools that according to Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory can assist in identifying teachers' levels of maturity, capacity, and skills so that SMTs can adjust to the appropriate leadership style to support and mentor teachers. Record-keeping is one of the most important management skills.

6.4.2 The SMTs should monitor and support curriculum management

It is crucial for SMTs to carry out frequent classroom inspections to oversee and facilitate the implementation of the curriculum. This will enable SMTs to determine how successful teachers are in carrying out the curriculum and allow for prompt corrective action to be taken where necessary. Through monitoring, SMTs can also determine whether the curriculum resources and policies are being used effectively to enhance learners' performance.

6.4.3 The SMTs should involve stakeholders to ensure effective curriculum management and implementation

Education has been declared a societal issue. Therefore, involvement of stakeholders is one of the pre-requisites for a successful and more competitive system of education, which must regularly be subjected to scrutiny at all levels of society. Hence, SMTs need to start with the involvement of stakeholders in school such as parents, SGBs, QLTCs, departmental, community and other institutions with an interest in education. The involvement of stakeholders can benefit both the school and the community in terms of resources and outsourcing of skilled volunteer community members who could be of service in addressing some of the challenges the school may be experiencing.

6.4.4 SMTs should solicit school resources timeously

It is essential for SMTs to guarantee that all the required resources are sourced and made available to the school early before the start of the first academic term. SMTs should work together with the department to ensure that the school is provided with necessary infrastructures, including NSSNP facilities, classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and LTSMs, as prescribed by the norms and standards for school infrastructure.

6.4.5 SMTs should conduct school-based staff professional development workshops

SMTs need to put in place programs for staff professional development in schools with a focus on teachers' developmental needs as identified by Quality Management System (QMS) professional growth plans. This should be an ongoing process as guided by the proposed Curriculum Leadership and Management Model (CLMM). This will further ensure that teachers are moved to their next maturity levels given their competency and skills. Hence, the SMTs will be hands-on in ensuring that all members of the teaching staff are moved to maturity level four (M4). The next section presents the contribution of the study to new knowledge.

6.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The study has made a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge by focusing on the management of the curriculum in the intermediate phase of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province. The unique focus on this district and phase of schooling has made the study's findings more distinct. The theoretical framework and proposed model developed from this study are expected to have a positive impact on the intended beneficiaries, leading to improvements in curriculum implementation and teaching and learning practices in schools and society.

The study utilised a qualitative case study research design, which distinguishes its findings from other studies that used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. However, the study's findings reinforce the importance of the leadership and management roles of school management teams in implementing the curriculum, particularly in the intermediate phase. The study suggests that school management teams should adopt Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory to motivate and influence their staff to achieve the school's vision and mission.

According to the study, school management teams should prioritise task completion and maintain low relationships with teachers as subordinates to delegate responsibilities and empower staff. The proposed Curriculum Leadership and Management Model (CLMM) is based on Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership model and aims to enhance SMTs' leadership and management capacity for effective curriculum delivery and teaching and learning in the intermediate phase and beyond.

<p>Q3: SMTs' leadership (PARTICIPATING) High-relationship and Low-task ttt) Maturity level M3 (more skilled than M2, but still lacks self-confidence and</p>	<p>Q2: SMTs' leadership (SELLING) High-task and High-relationship www) Maturity level M2. (have basic abilities but lack the ability to fulfill the responsibility</p>
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<p>full responsibility), perform between (60% - 79%)</p> <p>uuu) Mentoring and support</p> <p>vvv) Move to M4, SMTs adjust to S4</p>	<p>xxx) Class visits, QMS, close monitoring and support, and workshops</p> <p>yyy) Teachers move to M3, SMTs adjust S3. Perform between (50% - 59%)</p>
<p>Q4: SMTs leadership (DELEGATING) Low-relationship and Low-task</p> <p>zzz) M4's level has abilities, willingness to take responsibility, direct their own behaviors, and are self-motivated.</p> <p>aaaa) Can sustain their skills further and take responsibility to work on their own.</p> <p>bbbb) SMTs wish all subordinates to belong to M4, their performances between (80% - 100%)</p> <p>cccc)</p>	<p>Q1: SMTs leadership (TELLING) High-task and Low-relationship</p> <p>dddd) Skill audit and baseline assessment of staff members identify maturity levels.</p> <p>eeee) Move staff to appropriate maturity levels those with M1 remain in Q1 and SMTs adjust to S1.</p> <p>ffff) Provide assistance, close supervision as teachers lacks skills, capability, and experience as newly appointed and those whose subjects and learners underperform, perform below (50%)</p> <p>gggg) Staff later moved to M2 in Q2.</p>

Figure 6.1: Curriculum Leadership and Management Model (CLMM)

The CLMM, as proposed, will be implemented as illustrated in Figure 6.1 above. SMTs should take note that the model has four quadrants: Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4.

- **Quadrant 1** is the first and lower level of teachers who are in maturity level one (M1). This is the stage in which the SMTs adjust their leadership style to tell and conduct skill audits through a baseline assessment of all members of the teaching staff. All members of the teaching staff must go through this baseline assessment to identify their level of maturity. After this, baseline staff is moved to their relevant maturity levels and SMTs adjust their leadership to the appropriate leadership style. SMTs provide close supervision and support as these staff members are still inexperienced and most are newly appointed, and those with underperforming subjects perform below (50%). They are later moved to Q2 after attaining required experience and skills and are ready for **M2**; SMTs adjust their leadership to **S2** (Telling).
- **Quadrant 2** is the second quadrant of the model. SMTs adjust to the leadership style of selling (**S2**). Subordinates have now moved from **M1** to **M2** and have acquired some basic skills but lack the ability to take full responsibility. Hence, the SMTs need to do close supervision through class visits to monitor and support subordinates and move them to Q3 at the **M3** maturity level. They perform between (50% - 59%). Those who get skilled and experience and perform at low task move on to Q3, and **M3**, and SMTs further adjust their leadership style to **S3** (Participating).
- **Quadrant 3** is the third quadrant of the model. Teachers have moved from M2 to M3 and have acquired more skills than those in M2. These teachers still lack self-confidence and are unable to take full responsibility for working on their own. They now perform between (60% - 79%). SMTs need to adjust their leadership style to **S3** (Participating) and keep mentoring and supporting teachers in carrying out their assigned professional roles by conducting class visits. Teachers are moved to the next maturity level **M4**, and SMTs adjust their leadership to **S4** (Delegating).

- **Quadrant 4** is the fourth and last quadrant of the model. Teachers have moved from maturity level **M3** to **M4**. Teachers have acquired the ability and willingness to take full responsibility, with high confidence, skills, commitment, and competence to do their tasks. This is the category of teachers that SMTs wish most teachers should belong. They perform between (80% - 100%). SMTs adjust their leadership styles at **S4** (Delegating), as these cohorts of teachers are self-driven, and can be entrusted with huge responsibilities through delegation. This affords SMTs to focus much of their time on other responsibilities of dealing with teachers who are still at maturity levels **M1**, **M2**, **M3**, and other macro levels and projects of the school.
- To sum up, the last quadrant (**Q4**) allows SMTs to regularly review their curriculum management roles on a quarterly basis, with a focus on moving teachers who are still at maturity levels **M1** and **M2** to **M3** and **M4**. Hence, the implementation of the model is an ongoing review and reflection process, on teachers' maturity levels and SMTs' adjustment of their leadership styles, as dictated by their situations. The next section presents suggestions for further study.

6.6 SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study specifically examined the role of SMTs in managing the curriculum in the intermediate phase of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province. The author suggests that a larger scale study that includes multiple districts, former model C schools, and both rural primary and high schools would have resulted in more data being obtained. The researcher also recommends further research in other educational settings such as Early Child Development (ECD) centers, foundation phase classes (Grades R to 3) and senior phase classes (Grades 7 to 9) based on previous studies that have highlighted challenges in implementing the curriculum in these phases of the education system.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The study focused on the management of the curriculum by SMTs in the intermediate phase of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province, and the findings were based on data collected from interviews with school principals, deputy principals, and departmental heads, as well as observations and document analysis. The data collected confirmed the study's main and sub-questions, but limitations were identified. The study also provided recommendations and proposed a model to contribute to the body of knowledge. However, there is still room for future researchers to explore further and overcome the limitations of this study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR PRINCIPALS

TOPIC: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS OF INTERMEDIATE PHASE IN CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT IN MOPANI WEST DISTRICT SCHOOLS

The interview schedules were based on Four Research Questions of the study.

Research Question 1: What are the roles that school management teams play in curriculum management?

Research Question 2: Which challenges faced by school management teams in managing curriculum?

Research Question 3: What are the resources needed to support curriculum management in schools?

Research Question 4: Which strategies should be used by school management teams in curriculum management in schools?

END OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

The interview schedules were based on Four Research Questions of the study.

Research Question 1: What are the roles that school management teams play in curriculum management?

Research Question 2: Which challenges faced by school management teams in managing curriculum?

Research Question 3: What are the resources needed to support curriculum management in schools?

Research Question 4: Which strategies should be used by school management teams in curriculum management in schools?

END OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

The interview schedules were based on Four Research Questions of the study.

Research Question 1: What are the roles that school management teams play in curriculum management?

Research Question 2: Which challenges faced by school management teams in managing curriculum?

Research Question 3: What are the resources needed to support curriculum management in schools?

Research Question 4: Which strategies should be used by school management teams in curriculum management in schools?

END OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

APPENDIX D: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MOPANI WEST DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Student No: 11606970
Cell: 076 909 2232
Email: nneluheni@gmail.com
The Manager
Mopani West District
P/Bag X4032
TZANEEN
0850

BOX 3866
TZANEEN
0850
14 May 2021

Si/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MOPANI WEST DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

I am a Doctor of Education (DED) student at the University of Venda. I hereby wish to request permission to conduct research in Mopani West District primary schools. The research topic is: **The roles of school management teams in curriculum management of intermediate phase in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province.** My Promoter is Prof. Mashau T.S, and he can be contacted at this number: 0606748860 e-mail: Takalani. Mashau@univen.ac.za.

The study is aimed at investigating the roles of school management teams in curriculum management of intermediate phase of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province.

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To identify the roles which school management teams play in curriculum management
- To investigate challenges faced by school management teams in curriculum management
- To identify resources needed to support curriculum management in schools
- To examine strategies that school management teams should apply in curriculum management

Ten primary schools will be involved in the study. Participants will be principals, deputy principals and Departmental Heads (DH).

The research instruments are interviews, observations and documents analysis. Should permission be granted, I will adhere to research ethics by ensuring that participants participate voluntarily, and I will respect their privacy and keep the research data confidential and anonymous.

Yours truly

Neluheni N.S. (Student Researcher)

**APPENDIX E: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN
MOPANI WEST PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

STUDENT NO: 11606970

CELL: 076 909 2232

EMAIL: nneluheni@gmail.com

P.O BOX 3866

TZANEEN

0850

08 FEBRUARY 2021

**THE PROVINCIAL HOD
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LIMPOPO PROVINCE
PRIVATE BAG X9489
POLOKWANE
0700**

Dear Sir/ Madam

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MOPANI WEST
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

I hereby wish to request permission to conduct research in Mopani West District Primary schools. I am a registered Doctor of Education (DED) student at the University of Venda. My Promoter is Prof Mashau T.S. His contact numbers: 060 674 8860, e-mail: Takalani.mashau@univen.ac.za.

My research topic is: **The role of school management teams in curriculum management of intermediate phase in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province.** The study's objectives are as follows:

- To identify the roles which school management teams play in curriculum management

- To investigate challenges faced by school management teams in curriculum management
- To identify resources needed to support curriculum management in schools
- To examine strategies that school management teams should apply in curriculum management

Should my request be successful, I will ensure that all research ethics are strictly adhered to. I will, therefore, respect the respondent's privacy and further ensure that participants' information and their schools are kept confidential and anonymous. Your immediate attention to this matter will be highly appreciated.

Yours truly

Neluheni N.S (Student Researcher)

APPENDIX F: INTENTION TO SUBMIT DISSERTATION/THESIS FOR EXAMINATION



Student Name : Nthatheni Samson Neluheni

Student number : 11606970

Topic : The role of School Management Teams in curriculum management
of intermediate phase in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province

This is an intention of submitting my dissertation/thesis for the Examination

Signatures

Student : *Neluheni*

Supervisor :

Co-Supervisor :

APPENDIX G: CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE – LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CONFIDENTIAL



LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Meeting: April 2021

Project Number: LPREC/30/2021: PG

Subject: The Role of School Management Teams in Curriculum Management of Intermediate Phase in Mopani West District, Limpopo Province

Researcher: Neluheni NS

Dr Thembinkosi Mabila



Chairperson: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee

The Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) is registered with National Health Research Council (NHREC) Registration Number **REC-111513-038**.

Note:

- i. This study is categorized as a Low Risk Level in accordance with risk level descriptors as enshrined in LPREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- ii. Should there be any amendment to the approved research proposal; the researcher(s) must re-submit the proposal to the ethics committee for review prior data collection.
- iii. The researcher(s) must provide annual reporting to the committee as well as the relevant department and also provide the department with the final report/thesis.
- iv. The ethical clearance certificate is valid for 12 months. Should the need to extend the period for data collection arise then the researcher should renew the certificate through LPREC secretariat. PLEASE QUOTE THE PROJECT NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

APPENDIX H: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr NS Neluheni

STUDENT NO:
11606970

PROJECT TITLE: **The role of school management teams in curriculum management of intermediate phase in Mopani west district, Limpopo province.**

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: **SEDU/20/CSEM/20/1412**

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Prof TS Mashau	University of Venda	Promoter
Dr AT Nesengani	University of Venda	Co - Promoter
Mr NS Neluheni	University of Venda	Investigator – Student

Type: **Doctoral Research**

Risk: **Minimal risk to humans, animals or environment**

Approval Period: **December 2020 - December 2023**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
 - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
 - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
 - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project,
 - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
 - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
 - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Date Considered: September 2020

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: ...M. Manjoro-Mwale.

Signature: *Mwale*

<p>UNIVERSITY OF VENDA OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION</p> <p>2020 -12- 1 4</p> <p>Private Bag X5050 Thohoyandou.0950</p>

APPENDIX I: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE



COPY-EDITING ENDORSEMENT

To whom it may concern,

This certifies that the doctoral thesis (excluding appendices) whose title appears below, has been edited for proper English language grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall style. It remains the researcher's decision to effect the recommended changes.

TITLE

The Role of School Management Teams in Curriculum Management of the Intermediate Phase in
Mopani West District, Limpopo Province

RESEARCHER

Nthatheni Samson Neluheni

DATE EDITED

22 March 2023

Signed



Mr. L. Nendauni
Copyeditor
Nendauni Editing Hub
Cape Town
South Africa