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**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF  
EDUCATION POLICIES IN SCHOOLS**

**BY**

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree**

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS**

**in**

**Education Management and Policy Studies**

**in the**

**Faculty of Education**

**University of Pretoria**

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**NOVEMBER 2008**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with deep gratefulness that I express my sincere appreciation to the following for their contributions:

- Professor T. Kuhn for editing this document under extreme time constrains;
- Mr Jean Van Rooyen for supervising my dissertation from the beginning to the end
- Mr Ronald Maphosa for providing technical support in writing the dissertation
- Mr Paul Machiane for also providing the technical support in writing the dissertation
- All the educators who participated in the study
- My family who always encouraged me throughout the studies
- My wife Kgomotso who remained supportive during the turbulent times of study

## **ABSTRACT**

Effective implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools impact directly on the quality of education in public schools in general and on the vision and mission of the North West provincial department of education in particular, where the research was conducted. The effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools are investigated by analysing data collected in through questionnaires and interviews conducted on the study in the Moretele Area Project Office (APO) of the Bojanala Region of Education in the North West Province.

The study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of educational policies by educators, Principals and District Officials in schools. The study focused on their understanding of the concept policy and its purpose, since policies serve different purposes and are constructed for different reasons.

It has emerged from the study that much still has to be done in order to improve on effective policy implementation and monitoring in schools. Educators have shown that they are aware of the concept policy and its purpose. There are, however, challenges identified in terms of implementing these policies and also ineffective communication by the district offices and the schools. This assertion is evidenced by the findings from the questionnaires that revealed a serious communication problem between districts and schools.

It was also found that educators are aware of the different authoritative roles held by policies in education system. They were able to give examples of policy documents that have national authority, provincial authority, and district and school authority. What seems to be still lacking is the effective application of the theoretical knowledge gained on policies when executing their duties.



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## LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **ORIENTATION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a brief background to the study on the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools, the rationale to the study, the aims and the research question, conceptualisation of the study, the description of the research site, the research methodology, the definition of concepts and the possible contribution by the study.

#### **1.2 BACKGROUND**

It is universally recognised that the main objective of an education system in a democratic society is to provide quality education to learners so that they will be able to reach their full potential and to contribute meaningfully and participate in society throughout their lives.

The responsibility of an education system to develop and sustain such a learning environment is premised on the recognition that education in South Africa is a fundamental right (Section 29(1) of the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996), which extends to all learners. Exercising this right involves ensuring that the education system creates equal opportunities for effective learning and teaching for all learners and educators.

The way in which an education system is structured, managed and organised impacts directly on the process of learning. Education governance during the apartheid years was a complex mixture of centralised and decentralised forms of administration and control. The basic centralisation of this system has left a legacy of restrictive centralised control, which inhibits change and initiative. Legal responsibility for decision making in the past tended to have been

located at the highest level and the focus of management remained orientated towards employees complying with rules rather than ensuring quality service delivery.

A major factor inhibiting effective human resource development of educators and other personnel has been the absence of effective monitoring of performance or appropriate processes for assessing merit. Central to such styles of management and governance has been the limited or total lack of attempts to include key stakeholders in the governance and management of education at all levels. One of the more severe consequences of this is the division between centres of learning and surrounding communities, with few opportunities for parents and other community members to participate in decision making and planning.

The biggest challenge to educational transformation in South Africa in general and the North West Province in particular was created by the previously inequitable distribution of resources along racial lines. Concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the white minority by the apartheid regime, gave rise to large inequalities and poverty, with very few people sharing in the resources available in the country.

Z.P. Tolo, (MEC for Education in the North West Province) during his address to the “Educationally Speaking” conference of the North West Department of Education held at Buffelspoort on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2002, acknowledged the fact that, his department had inherited poor structures from the apartheid government the backlog in rural and formally disadvantaged areas was severe and some learners had no classrooms and were taught under trees. Although significant progress in redressing this imbalance has been registered since the advent of the democratic dispensation, the impact is still felt throughout the country’s education system.

The disparities alluded to above, inevitably, still impact negatively on effective teaching and learning at schools and also on the effective coordination of educational programmes within the province. This claim is evidenced by the

fact that most schools in the remote or rural areas within the Province and in particular, the Bojanala Region, barely receive visits by departmental officials to monitor and assess performance in schools because of their rural geographical position.

The question that immediately comes to mind based on the preceding unhealthy state of affairs is whether these learners and their educators not part of the general education population of South Africa where the Bill of Rights is enforced? According to the (RNCS. p8) an Outcomes Based Education policy framework that seeks to emphasise the values and principles of the new society envisage by the Constitution aims at developing the full potential of each learner (rural or urban based) as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. It further seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate and multi-skilled, compassionate, with respect for the environment, and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen. To achieve this, the education system must be equipped with the personnel and the support structures that will be able to deliver such a vision.

### **1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

As a Middle School [Grade 7-9] educator for the past eleven years, I have noticed that teaching and learning at schools in most cases has been compromised by either extra or core curricular activities/programmes which are poorly organised for educators during teaching and learning time by different education directorates and the confusing or contradictory interpretation and understanding of policies by educators, principals and district officials in the area.

It has become a habit for education officials to convene workshops during teaching and learning time to the extent that some of these programmes even clash in terms of dates, times, venues and even to a larger extent of the duplication of workshops.

Educators' Unions and the department officials call their meetings during teaching and learning time. There is also a wide spread phenomenon lately where memorial services - honouring educators who have passed away – are organised during the teaching and learning time and this more often than not disrupts the teaching and learning process as learners in most of the cases are without educators who attend these services. Surely there should be guidelines somewhere to regulate this unavoidable reality. The question is what the guidelines for such events are and who should implement such guidelines.

Another worrying factor that inhibits effectiveness between schools and education officials is the issue of communication between the two structures. It is clear that the current communication method of sending circulars to schools has largely contributed to the poor response or non-compliance by schools to new policies and other developments in education as circulars reach schools very late or not at all.

According to the Personnel Administrative Measures as contemplated in terms of section (4) of the Employment of Educators Act, 1998, it is the core responsibility of the education officials to liaise with other education offices for the purposes of coordination and monitoring of any educational activity to ensure that learners as the main beneficiaries receive quality education.

#### **1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to assess the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The main research question is the following:

How effective are the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools?

In view of the above general question of the study, the following sub-questions were formulated to channel the research:

- Do educators have sufficient knowledge to implement what policies require from them when executing their daily responsibilities?
- Do principals have sufficient knowledge to manage schools in line with current policy requirements?
- Are district officials able to monitor the performance of schools in accordance with the current policy requirements?

## **1.6 CONCEPTUALISATION**

A search on the Internet on “the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools” has confirmed that limited research has been done on the theme. This vacuum has as a result, motivated me to conduct research on this problem.

However, there is published literature which is more or less closer to this topic. Age (1990) in his dissertation, “The optimal functioning of the Inspector of education as educational leader with special reference to curriculum development”, argues that because of the relative position of authoritativeness that the Inspector (Superintendent) of education assumes or ought to assume in the teaching hierarchy, he is the obvious person to command a special educational leadership position which can fulfil a particular important liaison, consolatory and facilitation role.

The above-mentioned leadership culminates in a renewed view with respect to staff development, clinical supervision and the maintenance of greater and effective educator professionalism. Although the study brought important changes in the role and functions of the Inspectors in the pursuit of effective



leadership, it was based mainly on the experiences of the education department of the erstwhile House of Representatives which happened to have been more privileged than the Blacks during the apartheid era furthermore, the study was conducted long ago and lacks the basis of recent empirical studies.

Strydom (1993) in his thesis, "The Inspector of education's and the subject advisor's role as educational guides in the promotion of effectiveness in schools" argues that the development of both teaching ability and teaching methods applied by educators must become a major objective of subject advisers and inspectors of education through effective management and coordination of educational programmes. In this thesis the necessity of an awareness of the extensive domain of instructional leadership is stressed; its essential components are person development, aim and objective orientation, an evaluating responsibility, development of teaching ability and methods of curriculum development involvement and a focus on evaluation of pupil achievement. This study also lacks the basis for recent empirical studies as it was conducted long ago and it further motivated me even more to conduct this study in order to assess the latest trends with regard to the phenomenon under study.

Chapman and Dunstan (1990) argue that management essentially means making decisions about the conduct of the enterprise. New decisions are required when conditions and circumstances change, or when it has been judged that they are about to change. However, given the size of the Department of Education and the spread of their operations, it is difficult to judge whether decisions made at the centre are appropriate for all those who will be affected by such decisions. Are there also mechanisms in place within the district that are used to communicate such changes effectively? Also of significance is how those changes are monitored from the province down to the schools.

Chapman and Dustan (1990) further argue that in recent years and in many countries there have been major changes in the organisation of public

education to enable it to meet the needs of the society that it is intended for. In association with these changes there have been substantial revisions to the principle governing the organisation and operation of schools and a reshaping of relations between the central level, regional level and schools within the education system. Such a practice is also essential that it be carried in the Moretele District in order to enable the provincial department to assess the successes and the failures of such changes for purposes of corrections and improvements where deemed necessary.

These changes which are a response to a broad range of social, political, economic and management pressures have influenced the education officials to decentralise administrative arrangements and devolve responsibility to regions and schools. While contributors or stakeholders generally agree that schools and regional administrators are increasingly introducing democratic decision making involving educators, parents, learners and administrators, testimony to this assertion is the introduction of the South African Schools Act which is adhered to by almost all schools, however, they also state that such decision making is constrained. It is exercised only within the boundaries of government policies and guidelines.

Chapman and Dunstan (1990) also assert that these changes brought about suspicion with regard to motive and intentions. The burning questions about these changes are whether the intention in relocating decision making to the local level supposed to increase democratic approaches? Or is it to contain expenditures and to allocate resources more effectively and with less opposition? To what extent is local decision making a bona fide endeavour to acknowledge the professionalism of educators to make more meaningful decisions about the educational needs of learners, and to match school programmes with the wishes and the circumstances of school communities? Or must it be regarded as an abdication of responsibility by government and central administration?

## **1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

The following operational terms are used for this study;

### **1.7.1 Educational Officials**

Educational authorities refer to educators who are holding management positions at circuit, district, regional, provincial and national level of education department. They also include those who are at support services.

### **1.7.2 Extra or Core Curricular Activities**

Extra or core curricular activities refer to all the activities performed by educators at schools in their quest for effective teaching and learning in schools, for example teaching [Core] and training learners in different sporting codes [Extra].

### **1.7.3 Contingency**

Contingency refers to any variable that moderates the effect of an organisational characteristic on organisational performance.

### **1.7.4 Educational Programmes**

Educational programmes refer to activities performed within an education system such as curriculum implementation, human resource management, physical and financial resource management, etc.

### **1.7.5 Education Policies**

Education policies refer to all documents and directives issued by or on behalf of the department of education, from school to national level, in order to provide direction on how each arm/branch of the education system should function in order to achieve optimum teaching and learning in schools.

## **1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The effective implementation and monitoring of education policies in school involves the coordination of various structures of the education department which include the management of interpersonal relationships of such people. In order to foreground this study, Lex Donald's Contingency Theory of Organisations is used. The reason for the focus on effectiveness in contingency theory in the study on 'the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools' is that organisational theory has been concerned with explaining the success or failure of organisations.

According to Donaldson (2001), Contingency Theory of Organisations is a major theoretical lens used to view organisations. The essence of the contingency theory paradigm is that organisational effectiveness results from fitting characteristics of the organisations, such as its structure to contingencies that reflect the situation of the organisation. Such contingencies include: the environment, organisational size, and the organisational strategy.

In the ensuing discussion three contingencies will be discussed

### **1.8.1 The Organisational Size**

Pugh and Hickson (1976) and Pugh and Hinings (1976) argue that the organisational size contingency has an effect on its bureaucratic structure. This implies that the size of an organisation, that is, the number of its employees, affects the degree to which its structure is bureaucratic. The

bureaucratic structure fits a large organisation, because large size leads to repetitive operations and administration so that much decision making can be effected by rules, rendering decision making inexpensive and efficient (Child, 1975; Weber, 1968).

The Moretele district (which has a total of 135 schools) is very large in size and a bureaucratic system of management will best suit it where the operations of the organisation are characterised by impersonal rules that are explicitly stated, responsibilities, standardised procedures and conduct of office holders (district officials), educators and principals. The task and duties of the incumbents of posts within the system are specialised; that is, appointments to these posts are made according to specialised qualifications rather than ascribed criteria. All of these ideal characteristics have one goal, namely to promote the efficient attainment of the organisation's objectives.

### **1.8.2 The Organisational Strategy**

This contingency affects divisional structure. Chandler (1962) and Galbraith (1973) argue that the functional structure fits an undiversified strategy because all its activities are focused on a single product or service. In this study focus is placed on quality teaching and learning through the correct implementation of policies and monitoring the performance of those who are charged with such responsibility so that efficiency is enhanced by the specialisation function of the personnel.

### **1.8.3 The Environmental Stability**

This contingency affects a mechanistic structure. Burns and Stalker (1961) argue that the rate of technological and market change in the environment of an organisation is affected whether its structure is mechanistic [hierarchical] or organic [participatory]. For the study the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in school, stability in the organisation is brought by a mechanistic approach where managers at upper levels of the bureaucracy conduct routine operations to assess and monitor the

performance of those at lower levels. Given the routine nature of operations, the district officials are presumed to possess sufficient knowledge and information to make decisions that will foster efficiency.

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

Goldenberg (1992) argues that methodological principles in the social sciences ensure that we are able to defend our findings, and are those guidelines that researchers agree on, that they rely on to give us acceptable research practices. Methodological principles further enable researchers to attain knowledge by providing the researchers with necessary techniques or tools, (Babbie, 1995; Denzin, 1989; Marson, 1996).

### **1.9.1 Mode of Inquiry**

The study will assume a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research differs inherently from quantitative research designs in that they usually do not provide the researcher with a step-by-step plan or a fixed recipe to follow, whereas in quantitative research the design determines the researcher's choices and actions; in qualitative research the researcher's choices and actions determine the design.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) define qualitative research approach as a research method that presents data as narration with words. They further assert that qualitative research provides explanations to extend our understanding of phenomena, or promotes opportunities of informed decisions for social action. Qualitative research further contributes to theory, educational practice, policymaking, and social consciousness.

This approach – qualitative – will be more ideal in conducting research on the phenomena being studied since reality will be constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation, unlike the quantitative research approach that seeks to establish relationships and causes of changes in measured

social facts by presenting data with numbers and is usually based on social facts with a single objective reality separated from the feelings and beliefs of individuals ( McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

The study on the assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of educational policies in schools will be conducted through employing a case study research strategy of enquiry. Yin (1994) defines case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Case study research further opens the possibility of giving a voice to the powerless and voiceless. This is essential for researchers as it provides them with a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the situation under study.

Maree (2007) further argues that a key strength of the case study method is the use of multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process. The researcher determines in advance what evidence to gather and what analysis techniques to use with the data to answer the research question.

## **1.10 RESEARCH SITE**

The study took place in Moretele District of Education – commonly known as Moretele Area Project Office (APO) – which is situated north-east of the Bojanala Region of the North West Province. The district is predominantly rural. Respondents were selected from the district office, secondary schools and primary schools within the district. The district has a total of 135 schools: 23 high schools (Grades 10 - 12), 71 primary schools (Grades 1 - 6) and 31 middle schools (Grades 7 - 9). The district is further divided into 5 circuits (clusters) and each circuit has a maximum of 5 high schools, 7 middle schools and 16 primary schools.

## 1.11 CONTRIBUTION OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

The findings from this research could be useful to the following:

- National and provincial policymakers when developing quality assurance management programmes at departmental level that will enhance professional competences and growth in education management and policy implementation.
- Regional education managers in focusing on those areas of management that inhibit efficiency and delivery of quality education in schools.
- All departmental officials in conducting a self-introspection that will ultimately lead to improvement in policy implementation and monitoring.

## 1.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the background and the reasons for conducting the study on the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools were discussed. It was also mentioned that the development of the full potential of our learners hinges on the provision of quality education by the education system and that provision of quality education is dependent squarely on the proper and correct implementation of education policies in schools.

The remainder of the study can be outlined as follows:

In Chapter 2 literature on the study the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools will be reviewed.

Chapter 3 will then discuss the research design and methodology employed for the study





In Chapter 4, the results of the study will be presented and discussed.

Chapter 5 covers the conclusion whereby the summary and the discussion of the salient points on the study will be highlighted. It also contains the recommendations flowing from the study by the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF EDUCATION POLICIES IN SCHOOLS**

## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the literature review on the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools. Local and international literature on the phenomenon under study was reviewed. The review focused on the roles of district officials, educators, school principals and the support provided by education departments locally and internationally in enhancing effective implementation and monitoring of policies in schools. Both the positives and the challenges experienced are also explored. The findings are then discussed.

## **2.2 THE ROLE OF THE DISTRICT OFFICIALS**

The current literature on “the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools” in South Africa has been found to be limited. Age (1990) in his dissertation “The optimal functioning of the Inspector of education as educational leader with special reference to curriculum development” argues that because of the relative position of authoritativeness that the Inspector (Superintendent) of education assumes or ought to assume in the teaching hierarchy, he is the obvious person to command a special educational leadership position which can fulfil a particular important liaison, consolatory and facilitation role.

The above-mentioned leadership culminates in a renewed view with respect to staff development, clinical supervision and the maintenance of greater and effective educator professionalism. Although the study brought about

important changes in the role and functions of the inspectors in the pursuit of effective leadership, it was, however, based mainly on the experiences of the education department of the erstwhile House of Representatives which happened to have been more privileged during the apartheid era and it further lacks the basis for recent empirical studies.

The current South African discourse on education districts oscillates confusingly between districts as support centres for schools, and districts as administrative and management arms of the provincial departments of education. The primary purpose of districts, therefore, remains contentious: do districts exist primarily as a base for professional services to schools or are they established to ensure policy and administrative control?

The international literature points to a number of possibilities for the role of the districts – those of active support bases for the schools or those of aggressive school monitoring agents. The literature suggests that districts could, alternatively, play a facilitation role in service delivery and school support or be merely passive mediators between schools and provincial head offices (Emore, 1993b, O'Day & Smith, 1993). It is of course quite possible for districts to undertake, to varying degrees, all of the roles proposed above. However, these roles are distinctive and subject to the vagaries of contesting demands as well as competing priorities and practical realities that districts have to contend with on a daily basis.

Since the dawn of democratic South Africa in 1994 there has been considerable interest in the nature and form of local education in South Africa. Coombe and Godden (1995), as cited by Narsee (2006), undertook a significant initiative in this regard in their research into the local and district governance of education, wherein they explored possibilities for local governance of education. This initiative was followed by a brief period of silence on districts in the education policy agenda, which perhaps led Roberts (1999) to describe districts as the 'orphans' of the education system.

Miller (2004) argues that quantitative and qualitative evidence supports the notion that many principals are not adequately trained to cope with the demands of their positions. In their study; *Making sense of leading schools: A study of the school principal* conducted in the USA, Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, and Gundlah (2003), as cited by Miller (2004), report that “principals generally characterised traditional principal preparation as middle management training which did not include substantive mentorship”. The majority of the principals surveyed for the report noted that most of the skills they needed to run their schools effectively were learned “on the job”.

Complicating matters is the fact that a spate of new federal and state accountability mandates has fundamentally changed the job. No longer are principals simply responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the school. Now they must also be school improvement experts who are able to motivate staff to make any necessary changes.

Miller (2004) argues that in some states in the USA principal preparation programmes have not been revised to reflect the above mentioned changes. At the annual policy forum of Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) it was recommended that districts review their principals’ preparation policies to ensure that they effectively prepare principals to be instructional leaders – leaders who have skills and knowledge that are correlated with increased learner achievement.

Districts might consider tracking the performance of principals who graduate from specific preparation programmes and gauging their success over time. As part of this process districts should review programme design to determine if they include research-based leadership practices correlated to school improvement and learner achievement. Though factors other than preparation also are likely to impact on a principal’s success, compiling data on the components and effectiveness of specific programmes can help districts tailor their preparation policies and programmes to be most effective.

Miller (2004) states that districts' role has emerged as a key issue in shaping the conditions under which principals can do their most productive work. Districts must set their priorities in view of what research has shown to be effective. As part of that process, districts should review the research on effective leadership and determine whether their principals have the authority and support necessary to implement the leadership practices that have been identified as effective.

It is clear from the above discourse that the role of the district office is paramount in the successful implementation of education policies in schools. District offices provide an intermediary role between the schools and the provincial departments of education. It is therefore vital that the district offices be supported extensively by the provincial departments in proper policy implementation and also by the NGOs that have vested interest in school education to enhance quality teaching and learning. Currently the situation at our district offices is far from what the situation is like in the USA in terms of providing the necessary support required for the provision of quality education in schools. It therefore stands to reason that the study is vital in order to identify policy gaps and apply corrective measures in pursuit of quality education for the learners that will match the standards set in the USA.

### **2.3 THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPALS**

Miller (2004) argues that school principals also need support as they enter into their leadership roles. Though principals must be accountable to districts for their performances, districts too must be accountable to their principals; in other words, they must determine what tools and support their principals need to be effective and find ways to provide principals with those supports. A number of state education departments and professional organisations (e.g. administrator associations) have begun to sponsor principals mentoring programmes in which new principals are paired with veteran principals for guidance and support.

Features of effective mentoring programmes, as described in Making the Case for Principal Mentoring (The Education Alliance of Elementary School Principals, 2003), include organisational support, clearly defined outcomes, screening and training of both mentors and protégés as well as learner-centred focus. Studies suggest that implementing mentoring or peer coaching programmes can reduce professional isolation, boost collegiality and encourage reflective thinking. By pairing new principals with veterans, districts are likely to mitigate some of the stresses that beginning principals face which in turn may help reduce turnover (Miller, 2004).

Districts also might tap into resources available from professional organisations. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), for instance, recently instituted a member principal “help line” on its website [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org). Association members can post questions about a variety of topics related to the principalship, which are answered by the cadre of veteran principals who have been trained to staff the help line. Inquiring principals promptly receive a response to their questions, generally within 24 hours. In the alternative, districts might use resources such as this as a model for developing a local, collegial network of their own. These professional groups could provide additional support and much-needed collegiality, particularly in instances where formal mentorship programmes might not be practical – for example, in smaller districts or districts with vast geographical distance between schools.

The situation in our education system with particular reference to the district in which the study on the effectiveness of implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools was conducted is totally different to what is happening in the USA. Principals do not receive that intensified support from the district office in order for them to manage their schools effectively to enhance quality teaching and learning in their schools. Most of the principals are not familiar with the strategic objective of the department of education and that makes it difficult for them to provide proper guidance and direction in their schools. The workshops and other training initiatives by the district office organised for principals in the current form seem not to be adequately

addressing the problems. The study is again vital in that it will help to identify policy gaps in the role of principals in implementing and monitoring education policies in schools.

### **2.3.1 Focusing On Academic Achievement**

It is not only new principals who may benefit from increased support at the district level. Veteran principals may be adept at the juggling act of the principalship, but likely still consider it difficult to find time for each of the many responsibilities they face each school day. A number of districts are addressing this issue by actively re-orienting the principalship toward what matters most. In Talbot County, Maryland, for example, the district has hired “school managers” to handle some management tasks that previously fell to principals. Now principals in the districts are free to focus on tasks such as instruction and professional development.

As districts consider such options, it is important to note that some management tasks are in fact correlated to learner achievement. For example, one of the 66 responsibilities that are part of McREL’s Balanced Leadership Framework is “Order”. This responsibility is defined as “the extent to which the principal establishes a set of standard operating principles and routines” (Waters & Grubb, 2004). The practices associated with this responsibility include providing and enforcing clear structures, rules, and procedures for both learners and educators, and establishing routines for running of the school that educators and staff understand and follow. Given its correlation to learner achievement, this management task should remain in the hands of the principal.

For example, one of the leadership responsibilities identified in McREL’s Balanced Leadership Framework is “Focus”, which is defined as “the extent to which the principal establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school’s attention” (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2004). Practices associated with this responsibility include establishing high,

concrete goals and expectations for learners, curricula, instruction, assessment and the general function of the school – and keeping everyone’s attention focused on these goals.

Marzano (2003), as cited Miller (2004) has documented the importance of establishing a “guaranteed and viable curriculum”; indeed, he identifies it as the most important school-level factor in increasing learner achievement. Principals need district support to attend to this vital task effectively; aligning a curriculum to state standards, for example, is a tremendously time-consuming and detailed process. Requiring each school in a district to undertake this process may be unrealistic. Therefore, whereas the scope, sequencing, and pacing of the curriculum should be district based, the implementation of that curriculum is entirely a school-level focus.

Another example of an area in which districts may need to provide further support to principals relates to the responsibility that McREL calls “Monitors/evaluates”, which is defined as “the extent to which the principal monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on learners’ learning” (Waters & Grubb, 2004). The practices associated with this responsibility include monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school’s curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This practice is wanting in our principals as they are not equipped with the necessary skills to perform such a task. They cannot effectively attend to this responsibility without appropriate support from the district. The district’s role, in this instance, is to create an infrastructure that allows principals access to the data they need to monitor and evaluate curriculum, instruction, and assessment effectively.

Miller (2004) points out that if principals are to create the conditions that lead to improved learner learning, districts must consider the research on school and leadership practices that are correlated to learner achievement. It might be a daunting task for districts at this point for our district to take such an initiative as they are dependent mostly on the instructions provided by the provincial department. However, should such opportunity be presented to district offices in the province, it would make a big difference in the quest for



quality education for all by finding ways to support their principals – by aligning training to job responsibilities, by providing support and freeing up principals to attend to important leadership practices, by making clear and logical distinctions between the responsibilities of the district and the job of the principal, and by ensuring that principals have the resources necessary to get their jobs done – districts will be well on their way to helping principals focus on their most pressing task: helping all learners reach high standards.

## **2.4 THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS**

The role of educators in the implementation and monitoring of policy also requires consideration. Their role as educators has changed considerably within the new system of education, which has led to some confusion. Educators are also expected to play a role in policy, which needs clear clarification and must go beyond vision and platitudes. For example, comments such as ‘Educators should be involved in all levels of decision making’ are counterproductive and insulting if there is no system for them to participate in.

There is also a need on the part of policy makers to understand the beliefs and motivations of educators in their employ and to understand the context in which they work. This includes the nature of training they receive and their understanding of the overall policy intentions of the education department. Once policy is implemented, the responses of educators need to be understood (Karavas-Doukas 1998). It is possible that new policies may be in conflict with some of the initial training that educators received. This difference is particularly apparent in what are considered to be the core tasks and motivation that an educator takes into the classroom (Kiely 1998).

Joyner (2000) also raises the point that it is difficult to demand a lot from educators if they are not given support during implementation. This support needs to be provided by both the DoE and the unions, especially in periods of significant change. This requires an understanding of what policy changes

actually mean in reality for the educator on the ground, especially when there are a number of changes being effected simultaneously.

The identity of educators needs to be taken into account when considering introducing new policy. Jansen (2004a) identifies the educator's professional, emotional and political bases of identity as central. These shaped by experiences of life outside the realm of policy and need to be aligned with new policies that are introduced. From October Household Survey (OHS) data, Crouch and Lewin (2004) identified the following factors as part of the professional identity of educators:

- Educators comprise 20-25% more females than the rest of the labour force.
- Educators work fewer hours per week than the rest of the labour force.
- Educators earn a higher income, even when years of education are taken into account. This increases when based on hourly rates. Over time these differences even out.
- Educators are more educated.
- Educators are being unionised at a faster rate.
- The average age of educators is increasing.
- The proportion of white educators is increasing while in the rest of the labour force this proportion is decreasing.

Training of educators has changed considerably over times. New models have been developed, colleges of education have closed down, many educators have been retrenched, and under-trained educators have been brought back to educational institutions for further training. This draws considerable energy away from the implementation of other policies (Parker 2004).

McDonnell and Elmore (1987) identified four approaches that can be used to direct the implementation of policy in the context of the role of educators taking issues raised by educators into account. These include establishing

rules and regulations, use of conditional financial grants, investment in future capacity and removal of those blocking implementation from positions of authority. Regulations can be enforced by investigations, the reporting of officials and the embarrassment of those who are blocking implementation.

However, a better approach for ensuring the adequate fulfilment of policy is usually to skill educators and administrators and resourcing the context. Stout (1996) recommends motivating educators to participate by offering salary increases, encouraging participation in the development and implementation of policy, and linking participation to career development which could contribute to their classroom technique or to their teaching context.

The authority of policy documents differs. There are legislations which are promulgated by parliament, regulations and policy documents. The Constitution is the supreme law of the Republic; law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid and the obligation imposed by it must be fulfilled. Second in seniority are the Acts (such as the South African School Act), SASA and other education related Acts are promulgated by parliament and are enforceable and must be adhered to and implemented verbatim. Other policy documents and circulars provide guidelines on operational matters.

In the communication of policies it is not the content of the policy that needs to be made known, but the intention and substance of policy. This allows for a better appreciation of the role and function of the policy and its place within the education system. A formal and fairly detailed approach is required to keep all the stakeholders on board.

Darling –Hammond (2000) summarises this issue well as follows:

In devising new policies for educational change, policy makers need to understand that policy is not so much implemented as it is re-invented at each level of the system. What ultimately happens in schools and classrooms is less related to the intentions of policy makers than it is to knowledge, beliefs,

resources, leadership and motivations that operate in local context (Darling-Hammond 2000).

Therefore to ensure that the aims of policy are realised it is insufficient to just write the policy. The policies makers need to consider what changes need to be effected in the education system as well as the support role that each level – from the provincial offices to the educators in the classroom – needs to play in adding value to the successful implementation of the given policy. This support needs to include changes in structures within the education system, further education and training for the educators, implementing the more difficult tasks in the policy (Manganyi 2001).

In the words of Darling-Hammond (2000) policy makers who want educators to succeed at new kinds of teaching must understand that the process of change requires time and opportunities for educators to reconstruct their practices through intensive study and experimentation.

A number of writers have raised particular criticism of the policy and the development process drawing on a political analysis. De Clercq (2002) is critical of the overly political bias that she feels exists in the appointment of officials, especially as many do not have the bureaucratic experience and skills necessary for their post. This limits both the development of policy and communication through the system. Steele (2004) argues that one of the problems experienced in the implementation of the new policy for the training of educators is that many of the deliverers of educator education are not drawn into the transformation process. He is concerned about the confusion between paradigms that are currently in play and apparent contradictions between policies introduced at different times, particularly in relation to the development of educators.

A concern is that many policy developers assume that most of the educators are political activists wanting to change the society and working hard within the system to develop new and better teaching and learning approaches. While this may apply to some educators, it is difficult to assume as a

generalised position (Fullan, 1985). Even when educators were in the highly politicised environment of the apartheid struggle, there were in fact few changes to educational systems and pedagogic approaches (Jansen, 2004a).

De Clercq (1997) further argues that the relationship between policy formulation and implementation, policy and practice, has been the subject of much debate in the literature. Policy is often presented as a process made up of four distinct stages which follow a logical sequential order: Policy initiation, formulation, implementation and evaluation. More specifically, policy formulation and implementation are conceptualized as two distinct and separate activities that have to be studied in their own right. It is argued that policy formulation is the responsibility of the politicians and their representative institutions and that policy implementation is the rational, technical, administrative activity of a politically neutral bureaucracy whose actions are directed at the achievement of the policy objectives or directives of the politicians.

According to de Clercq (1997) the assumption of this perspective is that the translation of policy into action is an unproblematic and smooth process which requires strong controls to ensure that the bureaucracy executes faithfully the directives of their political bosses. When a discrepancy develops between intended policies and implemented policies, it is attributed to the lack of institutional and resourcing capacities of the state bureaucrats or the inadequate control systems over the bureaucrats.

## **2.5 EFFECTIVENESS, EFFICIENCY AND JOB SATISFACTION**

The ensuing discussion looks at what needs to happen in order for educators to perform to the best of their ability. Policies might be there but it would also need best management strategies that will inspire and motivate subordinates to have those policies effectively implemented.

Coetsee (2001) argues that managers, especially those with a strong autocratic approach, succeed in getting their 'subordinates' (because this kind

of manager often treats his people as subordinates and not as team members) to do things. They achieve this by planning the work of subordinates, by controlling and directing them and by rewarding or punishing them. This kind of manager usually uses his positional power (he pulls rank) to get his subordinates to do things. This can lead to efficiency, because efficiency means to do things. This is the practice of many officials and principals in the district.

Many managers see productivity as doing more in less time, or as increasing production (output) with less waste (breakages, stoppages, waste products). Productivity not focused on goals can at the most be regarded as being inefficient.

The key to management success is not to get subordinates to do things but to create and structure an environment (a school) in which team members want to do right things right. This can be described as the long-short route and that is effectiveness. Effectiveness is not only to do things right – but it is to want to do the right things right. The long-short route implies empowering your team members to want to do the things that have to be done and to do them correctly. This route, the peak performance route, is characterised by an orientation towards longer term goals, shared values, quality and service. The focus is on what is important and not on what is urgent.

Coetsee (2001) further argues that organisational effectiveness or peak performance is the ability of an organisation to:

- adapt to present and future internal and external demands, expectations and constraints;
- inspire actions and create outcomes which satisfy stakeholders (clients, shareholders, owners, employees);
- realise the vision, and
- survive

The internal and external demands and expectations referred to above include the following factors:

Internal (factors within the organisation)

- Quality of manager-leadership;
- Knowledge, skills, commitment of employees;
- Corporate climate and culture
- Processes, structures and technology.

External (factors outside the organisation)

- The economical, socio-political and technological environment;
- Competition;
- Stakeholders, shareholders
- Customers

From the discussion on the difference between effectiveness and efficiency it is clear that motivation – that is to lead people in such a way that they want to do the correct things and keep on doing them – is a key activity of management and supervisory work and is also a prerequisite for being a successful manager-leader. This can be achieved by applying motivational principles to create and maintain a motivating climate.

The effective application of motivation principles makes a motivating climate possible, which then results in making your team members, your organisation and yourself far more successful.

It is often stated in review of policy in South Africa, especially in relation to the education sector, that the policies themselves are wonderful and are intended to provide an excellent, equitable educational service. However, there are problems with the implementation and provision of resources and the DoE has been heavily criticised in this regard (Jansen 2004a; Sayed & Jansen, 2001). While this is a useful general statement and provides the focus for efforts in the immediate future, it belies some of the complexities within the context and the processes underway.

Motala (2001) is critical about many of the current critiques of policy, noting that they do not take structural constraints into account, are restricted to observable and quantifiable measures and do not address process, do not recognise conflicts within the system around policy and are too narrow in their identification of solutions. To develop a better understanding of the current context requires an understanding of policy and the situation that South Africa has found itself in over the last decade. The area of policy review is becoming increasingly essential with a number of references appearing recently and many people working actively in the area.

Policies serve different purposes and are constructed for different reasons. There are distinct linkages between the policies. Some are more detailed strategic plans for the implementation of higher level policy initiative. (See Table 1 below)

To provide order and facilitate an understanding, the “policies” will be divided into a number of categories in terms of their role, status and the nature of their linkage to other policies.

**Table 1: Types of policy documents**

TYPES OF POLICY	POLICIES IN THIS CATEGORY
Acts are designed to guide and facilitate the running of the education system and establish the policy framework for the DoE. These can be divided further into those that take a more visionary and idealistic approach, practical targets for future, and others that take a more practical approach and implement processes to attain these goals. Within these policies will be immediate-term objectives to sustain and maintain the system, and longer-across all	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 Skills Development Act 97



schools in South Africa.

of 1998

South African Qualification  
Authority Act 58 of 1995

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Regulations set precise methods for how certain tasks should be done, what minimum standards are required in terms of education and safety in schools, and guide the immediate maintenance of the school.

Terms and Conditions of  
Employment of Educators;  
Personnel Administrative  
Measures at Schools;  
Regulations for Safety  
Measures.

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The norms and standards for educators are defined in their policy that provides direct guidance as to what is expected of educators in their roles.

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The norms and standards  
for Educators

## 2.6 DESCRIPTION OF POLICIES RELATED TO EDUCATION

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 is the supreme law of the country and all other legislation and policy documents: (i) emanate from and (ii) are subject to its stipulations. Chapter 2, the Bill of Rights, is of cardinal importance to schools. This chapter emphasises the importance of democracy and its contents should at all times be taken into account when formulating and implementing school policies, systems and structures. The rights of the individual are particularly important, since these rights also apply to learners. It is also important for the school leadership to have a good understanding of constitutional values such as democracy, equality, efficiency, accountability, transparency, fairness, integrity and respect for the rule of law.

The National Education Policy Act allows the National Minister of Education to promulgate policy pertaining to educational issues such as facilities, finance and development plans. It also establishes the minimum hours per day, and

the minimum day per year, during which education must be provided at schools. The act covers the management and governance of schools as well as the Norms and Standards of School Funding.

The South African Schools Act promotes access, quality and democratic governance in the schooling system. It makes schooling compulsory for children aged seven to fifteen, or learners reaching the ninth grade, whichever occurs first. It also provides for two types of school – independent schools and public schools.

The South African Qualifications Authority Act serves to promote, enable and manage a common system for assuring quality, as well as a common framework of qualifications, in all educational and training programmes in South Africa.

The Skills Development Act encourages employers to participate actively in skills development; to use the workplace as an active learning environment; to provide employees with opportunities to acquire new skills; and to provide opportunities for new entrants into the labour market so that they may gain work experience.

The Public Finance Management Act regulates the financial management of public institutions (excluding schools), with special emphasis on the accountability of the accounting authority. It sets the duties and responsibilities relating to budgets and budgetary control, reports and reporting, as well as assets and liabilities.

## **2.7 COMPONENTS OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR**

The Constitution has vested substantial power in the provincial legislatures and governments to run educational affairs, subject to a national policy framework. The national department of education is responsible for

formulating policy, setting norms and standards, and monitoring and evaluating all levels of education.

The national department shares a concurrent role with the provincial departments of education for school education, Abet, Early Childhood Development (ECD) and FET colleges. The South African Schools Act of 1996 further devolves responsibility to school level by delegating the governance of public schools to democratically elected school-governing bodies (SGBs) consisting of parents, educators, non-educator staff and (secondary school) learners.

Relations with provincial departments of education are guided by national policy, within which the provincial departments have to set their own priorities and implementation programmes. The National Education Policy Act, 1996 formalised relations between national and provincial authorities and established the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) and the Heads of Education Departments Committee (Hedcom) as intergovernmental to collaborate in developing the education system.

The role of the national department is to translate the education and training policies of government and the provisions of the Constitution into a national education policy and legislative framework.

The department must ensure that:

- All levels of the system adhere to these policies and laws.
- Mechanisms are in place to monitor and enhance quality in the system.
- The system is on par with international developments.

The core activities of the department are to:

- Provide research and policy review
- Provide planning and policy development
- Provide support to the provinces and HE institutions in their implementation of national policy, norms and standards

- Monitor the implementation of policy, norms and standards to assess their impact on the quality of the educational process, and identify policy gaps.

The department of education has six branches:

- Administration
- Systems Planning
- Quality promotion and development
- GET
- FET
- HE

### **Administration**

This branch provides for policy formulation and sound financial management of the Department.

### **Systems Planning**

The Systems Planning Branch provides strategic direction in the development, implementation and monitoring of education policies, programmes and projects.

### **Quality Promotion and Development**

The Quality Promotion and Development Branch provide strategic direction for the development of policies and education programmes to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of learning.

### **General Education and Training**

The GET Branch provides leadership through the management and evaluation of programmes for ECD, school education, learners with special

needs, education management and governance programmes, district development and education human resources. Key priorities of the branch include expanding programmes; providing Grade R to all children; further developing a truly inclusive system of education, including the consolidation of special schools, ensuring that there are no under qualified educators; co-ordinating the implementation and provision of education to children up to the age of four; and successfully implementing the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)

The department must also develop the capacity of district managers to support and ensure quality teaching and learning in schools through its district development programme.

Through this branch the department further aims to remove all barriers to learning so that children with special needs, including the most vulnerable, are able to participate fully.

### **Further Education and Training**

The FET Branch is responsible for the development of policy for Grades 10 to 12 in public and independent schools, as well as in public and private FET colleges. It oversees the integrity of assessment in schools and colleges and offers an academic curriculum as well as a range of vocational subjects. FET colleges cater for out-of-school youths and adults.

The branch also oversees co-ordinates and monitors the system's response to improved learner participation and performance in Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST). It devises strategies aimed at the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and supports curriculum implementation through the national educational portal called Thutong.

## Higher Education

HE is central to the social, cultural and economic development of modern societies. The HE Branch provides strategic direction and institutional support for the development of a single co-ordinated system.

There is an attempt by the DoE to integrate all the different levels so that the department is seen as a single unit. However, there are variations, with core policy being developed at the national level, and the provincial and district offices interpreting and implementing these policies  
(<http://www.info.gov.za/aboutsa/education.htm>)

### 2.8 ISSUES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

There is also a constant message in the literature that policy does not directly translate into practice on the ground (Jansen, 2004b). This is the role of implementation, which also requires extensive development as a process. At the same time policy is important as it guides what people are expected to do and how resources are to be allocated (Lewin, Sayed & Samuel, 2004b). However, the introduction of new policy takes time and often has to coexist with existing practices. This combination of foci is often the key to the confusion and difficulty that comes with implementation of new policy (Lewin et al, 2004b).

In preparing a policy and structure for implementation there are a number of factors that need to be in place. Schwahn and Spady (1998) argue that there are five elements necessary to ensure policy implementation:

- Purpose – a clear and compelling purpose for the desired change.
- Vision – a concrete and inspiring vision of the desired change in ideal form.
- Ownership – strong ownership for the desired change among those affected by it.

- Capacity – broad capacity and skills for implementing the desired change.
- Support – tangible organisational support for making the desired change happen.

Joyner (2000) points out those policy makers need to be aware that often, for a policy to work, there need to be changes at all levels in the system. Otherwise blocks to the implementation will emerge. In an ideal situation, for a policy to be implemented at a systemic level, the following eight contextual elements need to be considered: (1) leadership; (2) political stability; (3) expected levels of co-operation; (4) knowledge of the reform; (5) understanding of processes and relationships; (6) ability and willingness to support the change; (7) overall administration capacity; and (8) fiscal capacity (Joyner 2000). Capacity and motivation at a local level are also essential for implementation. This needs to be led and inspired from a national level.

Many policy analysts have attributed the poor policy implementation and service delivery in schools to the lack of departmental capacity and resources, which puts severe limits on capacity to make adaptations at all levels of the department and schools. Educational bureaucrats have pointed out the problems of policy overload, unfunded mandates, lack of policy prioritisation and strategic planning as well as severe inherited backlogs, inadequate provincial resources and managerial capacity (De Clercq, 2002). This requires a different kind of consideration to the political problems of implementation, as providing the wherewithal can solve the problem of insufficient resources (Gallie 2004).

Sayed and Jansen (2001) raise a number of problems that can occur with implementation. Firstly, there are differences between policy ideas and classroom realities undermining policy right at the formulation stage, so issues of context are inadequately dealt with. This creates particular concerns when policy ideas are imported from other contexts. In addition assumptions of a direct connection between policy intentions, practice and effects mean that policy is not evaluated at all phases and the unexpected situation may not meet the conditions for institutional change. Finally, the authors have realised

that some of the problems may lie with senior bureaucrats in the DoE who are familiar with policy debate, but less well-versed in systems management.

An alternative perspective is that both capacities are required for a readiness for change. This has to be planned strategically and pre-implementation work must be done before the introduction of policy (Welton, 2001). Part of the pre-implementation planning has to be the setting of timelines and short-term objectives. This provides clear indications of progress in the implementation process. The sheer size and complexity of the education sector means that a considerable amount of inertia also has to be overcome in changing the policy environment, especially in South Africa where fundamental changes are being considered.

Once the documents are complete the policy makers are at the mercy of those implementing the policy. A core issue in implementation of policy is the influence of the people in the provincial and district offices, and ultimately in the schools and communities, that have the task of making the policy reality. These individuals and institutions are going to be maintaining their own interests and protecting themselves during the implementation or lack of implementation of policy. Enormous power to block or reinterpret what comes to them lies with those who are implementing policy (Jansen, 2001).

Policy development and implementation are also dependent on a wide web of other policies and legislation, including those outside the DoE, such as the Child Care Act, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Parker 2004).

Soudien, Jaclin, and Hoadley (2001) have identified a number of key continuities and discontinuities between policy formulation and implementation. These include ideology in which social equality is key, finance and economics which decide on resource allocation, and politics which include battles over ideas, especially around the pace and nature of social reconstruction. Even if policy is drawn up to respond to particular ideological positions and set of resources that is defined in the national office, the reality



of the context in the district where it is being implemented, and the set of activities and people that influence this process, mean that policy implementation may not, and will in fact often not, reflect the original intention.

McLaughlin (1987) on the other hand problematises the implementation process in order to explain the inevitable gap that develops between intended and actual policies. For him, implementation is not about automatic transmission but is a process of bargaining and negotiation between the various local and national actors. According to him the implementing bureaucrats will always put their own interpretations and meanings to the intended policies and, in the process, will use their power or discretion to subvert or transform the original goals of the policy makers. Recognising the power of the implementers, the new generation of policy implementation analysts argue that effective policy making should reckon with and anticipate implementation problems in order to strategize accordingly and influence or constrain the agents of the implementation process (Gunn and Hogwood 1982, Sabatier & Mazmanian 1979).

De Clercq (1997) argues that the ability of policy makers to have decisive control over the organisational, social and political processes that affect implementation can never be sufficiently close or rooted in the dynamics on the ground to produce anything but vague, ambiguous recommendations which are in conflict with one another. It could be argued that symbolic or substantive policies are not meant to engage with implementation issues. However, the result is very problematic and confusing for the implementers as they are left with difficult choices and decisions.

Elmor (1980) as cited by De Clercq (1997) believes that the best way to approach policy implementation is through the backward mapping approach which he defines as:

*...backward reasoning from the individual and organisational choices that are the hub of the problem to which the policy is addressed, to the rules, procedures and structures that have the closest proximity to those choices, to*

*the policy instruments available to affect those things, and hence to feasible policy objectives (1980:1).*

Backward mapping starts with the lowest level of the implementation process in order to generate a policy and establish a policy target at that level. It will then back up through the structure of the implementing agencies and be directed by two questions: what is the ability of this unit to affect the behaviour that is the target of the policy? What resources does the unit require to affect this behaviour? In other words, this approach advocates a decentralisation of power and a maximisation of discretion at the lowest point of the implementation process because it believes that the closer one is to the source of the problem, the greater one's ability to influence it.

## **2.9 STRUCTURES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The complexities and need for ongoing information during implementation of policy make accurate and holistic evaluation essential. Evaluation has to be continuous and has to begin before the implementation of the policy begins. This allows for continuous feedback and for the original intentions of the policy to be continuously evaluated against the reality of events on the ground. Rapid feedback can also allow for the early detection of problems arising from issues such as lack of information, inadequate resources and the misinterpretation of policy or direct attempts to block its introduction.

Thus far evaluation of policy has not been done systematically within the education sector in South Africa. Review committees have been set up to evaluate some policies after four or five years of implementation (Jansen, 2002). The role and functioning of these review committees needs further understanding but a more systematic process is required if a policy and its implementation are to be adequately evaluated.

Scheerens (2000) makes a key point that policy needs to be evaluated against its specific intentions and aims. This allows for a more accurate

understanding of policy. However, the general impact of policy should still be evaluated as there may be unexpected effects and impacts that also need to be considered, including the context in which implementation is taking place, who is doing the implementation, the issues emphasised in the policy and where the policy is seen as having its impact.

Crouch (1998) identifies three areas of monitoring and evaluation:

- Preventive, i.e. routine use of monitoring: for example, keeping track of dropout and repeater rates to yield a general impression of quality in terms of school retaining its learners and enabling them to progress in their learning.
- Diagnostic use to illuminate identified trends or problems: for instance analysing learners' test answers to identify domains of subjects where educators' content knowledge and/or pedagogic practices need to be strengthened.
- Corrective use to follow up on specific problems: for example, conducting a comprehensive audit of financial management in a school as a basis for disciplinary action.

The monitoring and evaluation approach requires the use of a range of methodologies. Dominantly these would include indicators that comprise quantitative measures taken regularly; qualitative data comprising largely descriptive data including interviews; analysis of documentation, particularly reports and minutes; cross-sectional surveys (which can be kept small) and directed evaluations of specific programmes, resources or events.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

The preceding chapter discusses the literature on the phenomenon under study. Some of the salient points which were argued in the review are that it is difficult to demand much from educators if they are not given support during implementation. This support needs to be provided mainly by the DoE through

their district offices, especially in periods of significant change. This requires an understanding of what policy changes actually mean in reality for the educator on the ground, especially when there are a number of changes being effected simultaneously. It is also argued that it is not always the content of the policy that needs to be made known, but the intention and substance of policy. This will allow for a better appreciation of the role and function of the policy and its place within the education system.

A formal and fairly detailed approach is required to keep all the stakeholders on board. It has also been found that policy makers need to understand the beliefs and motivations of educators in their employ and to understand the context in which they work. This includes the nature of training they receive and their understanding of the overall policy intentions of the education department. The identity of educators needs to be taken into account when considering introducing new policy, (Jansen, 2004a).

During the review it was discovered that much has been written on policy and its, purpose both internationally and locally. Although the local literature is substantial, it is lacking in the implementation and monitoring strategies that will make these policies effective in the teaching and learning process at our schools. This policy gap in implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools will be explored in the study to find ways that could improve teaching and learning in the schools within the Moretele district.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the methodology and sampling employed for the study and at the researcher's epistemological stands. Methodological principles in the social sciences ensure that we are able to defend our findings, and are those guidelines that researchers agree on, that they rely on to give us acceptable research practices. Methodological principles further enable researchers to attain knowledge by providing the researchers with necessary techniques or tools.

#### 3.2 EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE STUDY

**Epistemology** is the branch of philosophy which studies the nature of knowledge and truth – with what and how we know and the limits of human understanding. It comes from the Greek words *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (theory). Epistemologists explore questions such as the following: What is knowledge? What does it mean for someone to “know” something? How much can we possibly know? What is the difference between belief and knowledge, between knowledge and opinion, between knowledge and faith? How do we know that  $2 + 2 = 4$  or that the square root of 49 is 7? Says who, or what? Is there an ultimate ground of knowledge, a world of absolutes? Do we know something from reason or from direct observation, or from a little both?

But no one can “observe”  $2 + 2 = 4$ , so how do we know that the statement (or formula) is true? What is truth? Is truth absolute or relative? What is the relationship between the observer and the observed, the knower and the known? Is there an external world which we can make meaningful statements

about and know? Is an object of knowledge a construction of mind? Is the world my idea of it, as Schopenhauer would say, or does it exist independently of all observers? These are just some of the problems that epistemologists address.

Over and above, **Epistemology** – as a branch of philosophy that studies knowledge – furthermore attempts to answer the basic question: What distinguishes true (adequate) knowledge from false (inadequate) knowledge? Practically, this question translates into issues of scientific methodology: How can one develop theories or models that are better than competing theories? It also forms one of the pillars of the new sciences of cognition, which developed from the information processing approach to psychology, and from artificial intelligence, as an attempt to develop computer programs that mimic a human's capacity to use knowledge in an intelligent way.

When we look at the history of **epistemology**, we can discern a clear trend in spite of the confusion of many seemingly contradictory positions. The first theories of knowledge stressed its absolute permanent character, whereas the later theories put the emphasis on its relativity or situation-dependence, its continuous development or evolution, and its active interference with the world and its subjects and objects. The whole trend moves from a static, passive view of knowledge towards a more and more adaptive and active one.

<http://www.philosophicalsociety.com/epistemology.htm>

<http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/EPISTEMI.html>

In **Plato's** view knowledge is merely an awareness of absolute, universal **ideas** or **forms**, existing independent of any subject trying to apprehend to them. Though Aristotle puts more emphasis on logical and empirical methods for gathering knowledge, he still accepts the view that such knowledge is an apprehension of necessary and universal principles. Following the Renaissance, two main epistemological positions dominated philosophy: **empiricism**, which sees knowledge as the product of sensory perception, and **rationalism** which sees it as the product of rational reflection.

The implementation of empiricism in the newly developed experimental sciences has led to a view of knowledge which is still explicitly or implicitly held by many people nowadays: the ***reflection-correspondence theory***. According to this view knowledge results from a kind of mapping or reflection of external objects, through our sensory organs, possibly aided by different observation instruments, to our sensory organs, possibly aided by different observation instruments, to our brain or mind. Though knowledge has no a priori existence, like in Plato's conception, but has to be developed by observation, it is still absolute, in the sense that any piece of proposed knowledge is supposed to either truly correspond to a part of external reality, or not. In that view, we may in practice never reach complete or absolute knowledge, but such knowledge is somehow conceivable as a limit of ever more precise reflections of reality.

It is further argued that the next stage of development of epistemology may be called ***pragmatism***. Parts of it can be found in early twentieth century approaches, such as **logical positivism**, **conventionalism** and the "Copenhagen interpretation" of quantum mechanics. This philosophy still dominates most present work in cognitive sciences and artificial intelligence. According to pragmatic epistemology, knowledge consists of models that attempt to represent the environment in such a way as to maximally simplify problem-solving.

It is assumed that no model can ever hope to capture all relevant information, and even if such a complete model existed, it would be too complicated to use in any practical way. Therefore we must accept the parallel existence of different models, even though they may seem contradictory. The model which is to be chosen depends on the problems that are to be solved. The basic criterion is that the model should produce correct (or approximate) predictions (which may be tested) or problem-solutions, and be as simple as possible.

The pragmatic epistemology does not give a clear answer to the question where knowledge or models come from. There is an implicit assumption that models are built from parts of other models and empirical data on the basis of

trial-and-error complemented with some heuristics or intuition. A more radical point of departure is offered by **constructivism**. It assumes that all knowledge is built up from scratch by the subject of knowledge. There are no 'givens', neither objective empirical data or facts nor inborn categories or cognitive structures. The idea of a correspondence or reflection of external reality is rejected. Because of this lacking connection between models and the things they represent, the danger with constructivism is that it may lead to relativism, to the idea that any model constructed by a subject is as good as any other and that there is no way to distinguish adequate or 'true' knowledge from inadequate or 'false' knowledge.

We can distinguish two approaches trying to avoid such an 'absolute relativism'. The first may be called **individual constructivism**. It assumes that an individual attempts to reach coherence among the different pieces of knowledge. Constructions that are inconsistent with the bulk of other knowledge that the individual has will tend to be rejected. Constructions that succeed in integrating previously incoherent pieces of knowledge will be maintained. The second called **social constructivism**, sees consensus between different subjects as the ultimate criterion to judge knowledge. 'Truth' or 'reality' will be accorded only to those constructions on which most people of a social group agree.

<http://www.philosophicalsociety.com/epistemology.htm>

<http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/EPISTEMI.html>

In these philosophies, knowledge is seen as largely independent of a hypothetical 'external reality' or environment. As the 'radical' constructivists Maturana and Varela argue, the nervous system of organism cannot in any absolute way distinguish between a perception (caused by an external phenomenon) and a hallucination (a purely internal event). The only basic criterion is that different mental entities or processes within or between individuals should reach some kind of equilibrium.



Though these constructivist approaches put much more emphasis on the changing and relative character of knowledge, they are still absolutist in the primacy they give to either social consensus or internal coherence, and their description of construction processes is quite vague and incomplete. A more broad or synthetic outlook is offered by different forms of evolutionary epistemology. Here it is assumed that knowledge is constructed by the subject or group of subjects in order to adapt to their environment in the broad sense. That construction is an ongoing process at different levels, biological as well as psychological or social.

Construction happens through blind variation of existing pieces of knowledge and the selective retention of those new combinations that somehow contribute most to the survival and reproduction of the subject(s) within their given environment. Hence we see that the 'external world' again enters the picture, although no objective reflection or correspondence is assumed, only equilibrium between the products of internal variation and different (internal or external) selection criteria. Any form of absolutism or permanence has disappeared in this approach, but knowledge is basically still a passive instrument developed by organisms in order to help them in their quest for survival.

We have come very far indeed from Plato's immutable and absolute ideas, residing in an abstract realm far from concrete objects or subjects, or from the naïve realism of the reflection-correspondence theory, where knowledge is merely an image of external objects and their relations. At this stage, the temptation would be strong to lapse into a purely anarchistic or relativistic attitude, stating that 'anything goes' and that it would be impossible to formulate any reliable and general criteria to distinguish 'good' or adequate pieces of knowledge from bad or inadequate ones. Yet in most practical situations, our intuition does help us to distinguish perceptions from dreams or hallucinations, and unreliable predictions ('I am going to win the lottery') from reliable ones ('the sun will come up tomorrow morning'). Neither correspondence, nor coherence or consensus, and not even survivability, is sufficient to ground a theory of knowledge. At this stage we can only hope to

find multiple, independent and sometimes contradictory criteria whose judgement may quickly become obsolete. Yet if we would succeed to formulate these criteria clearly, within a simple and general conceptual framework, we would have an epistemology that synthesises and extends all of the traditional and less traditional philosophies.

<http://www.philosophicalsociety.com/epistemology.htm>

Testimony to the above discourse is **Marx's philosophy** which profoundly influenced political events in Russia and Eastern Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Marx, however, rejects Hegel's **idealism** and notion of truth unfolding towards the Absolute, in favour of a purely atheistic '**dialectical materialism**'. For Marx, the fundamental condition of humanity is the need to convert the raw material of the natural world into the goods necessary for survival. Consequently, production, or in other words economics, is the primary conditioning factor of life.

According to **dialectical materialism**, there is a three-sided conflict between economic classes. The landowners created by feudalism were opposed by the rise of the middle class, forcing a '**synthesis**', that is, a new economic class, the industrial employers of capitalism. However, the new '**thesis**' of capitalism generates the antithetical force of the proletariat, or working classes. The synthesis that Marx envisages from this conflict, the inevitable dialectical outcome, is **socialism**.

Marx's reasons for supposing that socialism is the necessary outcome of the modern economic conflict are not – though such may appear at times to be the case from his passionate revolutionary invective – predicated and ethical judgements about what is best, or right or just. Rather, Marx insists that socialism is necessarily the most efficient means of securing that which human beings strive for, namely the goods required for survival. Since socialism is the most efficient way to ensure productivity, the progress of 'dialectical materialism' has no need for moral sentiments. Socialism is, according to Marx, a natural outcome of the economic conditions operating on the human being.

It is at this point that the reversal of Hegel's idealism in Marx's materialism can be seen in purely philosophical terms. Whereas Hegel's history of ideas insists that it is the dialectic progress of concepts developments in human understanding that fuel social and political change, Marx asserts that it is transformations in economics that give rise to new ways of thinking, to the development of ideas. This reflects Marx's underlying view concerning epistemology and phenomenology. For Marx, the mind does not exist as a passive subject in an external world, as the prevailing empiricist tradition emanating from Locke would have it. Along with **Kant**, Marx shares the view that mind is actively engaged with the objects of knowledge.

Whereas **Kant** only went so far as to propose that our psychological apparatus imposes certain structures on the flux of experience, Marx held that the subject and object of experience are in a continual process of adaptation. We must order our experience in practical ways, so as to make it useful to our survival. In modern terminology what Marx is proposing is a version of instrumentalism or pragmatism, but at the more basic phenomenological level.

In Kant's metaphysics, since the mind imposes certain categories on experience, all that human knowledge can attain to is a complete and systematic knowledge of the phenomena presented to the mind. This leaves the reality behind those appearances, what Khan called 'the nominal world', utterly beyond any possible human conception. It was a result Kant saw as inevitable, but which Hegel found unacceptable.

In **Hegel's** philosophy, ultimate truth is slowly uncovered through the unfolding evolution of ideas. There is an absolute truth which, Hegel claims, is not propositional truth but rather conceptual. This difficult idea is best approached by first understanding Hegel's views on the development of history and thought.

According to Hegel, the fundamental principle of understanding the mind is the commitment to the falsehood of contradictions. When an idea is found to

involve a contradiction, a new stage in the development of thought must occur. Hegel called this process '**dialectic**'.

Hegelian dialectic begins with a **thesis**, initially taken to be true. Reflection reveals that there is a contradictory point of view to the thesis, which Hegel calls the '**antithesis**' that has an equal claim of legitimacy. Faced with two irreconcilable ideas, thesis and antithesis, a new and third position becomes apparent, which he (Hegel) calls the '**synthesis**'. The synthesis now becomes a new thesis, for which an antithesis will sooner or later become apparent, and once more generate yet another synthesis, and so the process continues.

This gradual, and in Hegel's view, necessary unfolding of thought is a progression towards absolute truth, indeed towards an absolute universal mind or spirit. But truth for Hegel is not propositional. In other words truth does not belong to assertions that say the world, or reality, is of such and such a nature. Rather, attainment of truth in Hegelian philosophy is the attainment of completeness, or the transcendence of all limitation. Ideas, or to use Hegel's terminology, concepts, are that which are capable of being false rather than assertions or propositions. Falsehood is merely limitation, the complete understanding of the absolute. This entails that for Hegel falsified scientific theories are not in themselves wholly wrong but merely do not tell the whole story. They are limited conceptions of a more all-embracing truth.

Hegel's dialectic process concludes with a grand metaphysical conception of the universal mind. He tells us; 'The significance of that absolute commandment, 'know thyself', whether we look at it in itself or under the historical circumstance of its first utterance, is not to promote mere self-knowledge in respect of the particular capacities of the single self. The knowledge it commands means that of man's genuine reality – of what is essentially and ultimately true and real – of spirit as the true and essential being'.

The complexities of Hegelian philosophy are manifold and so too, perhaps as a result of both this and the obscurity of his writings, are the many schools

and philosophical influences that arose from his work. Perhaps the most significant influence exerted by Hegelian philosophy, however, is in the work of Karl Marx as alluded to in the preceding discourse.

Furthermore, it is general thought that it was **Engels**, rather than Marx, who developed Hegel's idea that the universe is undergoing a constant process of change and development into the doctrine of 'dialectical materialism'. Unlike Hegel, Engels was a materialist; for him, what was undergoing the dialectic process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis were not ideas but matter. Just as material causes underlie natural phenomena, so the development of society is conditioned by the development of material forces, which he construed as the forces of material production. Since productivity depends on the relations people enter into in order to effect the production of goods, it seemed that this single fact could explain all social phenomena, including laws, aspirations and ideals.

In the light of the above discourse – on different theories and epistemology – I subscribe to the notion that knowledge is not static and that it is the dictates of the circumstances that influence society as to what should be done or not. Therefore, dialectical thinking as advocated by Hegel and further expounded by Karl Marx through theory of 'dialectical materialism' informs my epistemology. I also support the notion that whatever happens is circumstantially based, and that we need to engage in dialogue in order to improve or augment on the knowledge base in pursuance of improving the societal practices and circumstances that we find ourselves faced with as human beings. Dialectical materialism as theory of nature of knowledge will therefore inform this study or research. Modern societal behaviour is materially inclined and, therefore, it cannot divorce itself from natural phenomena of dialectical materialism.

This argument has relevance in education in that educators look at the benefits before accepting their responsibilities that go hand-in-hand with the requirements of their jobs and also the imbalances caused by the previously

inequitable distribution of resources in the education system which still have an adverse effect in the previously disadvantaged schools.

There is a prevailing view or perception that most educators are lazy and like to blame or point fingers whenever there is some kind of a glitch in the implementation of policies and more often than not seem to be, first, informed by personal or material gain – at the expense of policy and practices in education, the Constitution of the Republic of South African and mission and vision of Department of Education in particular – before applying themselves meaningfully.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No 108 of 1996) provides ‘the basis for curriculum transformation and development in contemporary South Africa’. The preamble to the Constitution states that the aims of the Constitution are to:

*Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;*

*Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;*

*Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and*

*Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.*

In the light of the above, the Constitution envisages that educators at all levels are key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa. Educators have a particularly important role to play. The National Curriculum Statement envisions educators who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring and who will be able to fulfil the various roles outlined in the norms and standards for educators without considering first, their material needs.

It is further argued that the promotion of values is important not only for personal development or gain, but also to ensure that a national South Africa identity is build on values different from those that underpinned apartheid education. Central to this discourse is the learner. The kind of learner envisaged is the one who will be imbued with the values and act in the interest of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice.

Education aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. It seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate and multi-skilled, compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.

### **3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework of the study, the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools, is informed by the integration of Max Weber's Bureaucratic model, Henri Fayol's Administration model and Lex Donaldson Contingency theory's model. In the ensuing paragraphs I will briefly describe these theories and their relevance to the study.

According to Weber, bureaucracy is the most logical and rational structure for large organisations such as the department of education. This is premised by the fact that bureaucracies are founded on legal or rational authority which is based on law (education legislations), procedures and rules (policy and departmental regulations). Positional authority of a superior over a subordinate stems from legal authority.

Efficiency in bureaucracies comes from clearly defined and specialised functions; use of legal authority; hierarchical form; written rules and procedures; technically trained bureaucrats; appointment to positions based

on technical expertise; promotions based on competence; and clearly defined career paths.

Furthermore, Fayol's theories of administration on the other hand, dovetail into the bureaucratic superstructure described by Weber as discussed in the preceding paragraphs. Fayol focuses on the personal duties of management at a much more granular level than Weber did. While Weber laid out principles for an ideal bureaucratic organisation, Fayol's work is more directed at the management layer.

Fayol believed that management has five principle roles: to forecast and plan, to organise, to command, to co-ordinate and control. Forecasting and planning is the act of anticipating the future and acting accordingly. Does our education department have the staff that is anticipative and that are able to deal with the challenges faced by our education system efficiently and effectively?

Organisation is the development of the institution's resources, both material and human. Commanding is keeping the institution's actions and processes running. Co-ordination was the alignment and harmonization of the groups' efforts. Lastly, control means that the above activities are performed in accordance with appropriate rules and procedures.

Fayol developed fourteen principles of administration to go with management's five primary roles. These principles are enumerated below:

- Specialisation/division of labour
- Authority with responsibility
- Discipline
- Unity of command
- Unity of direction
- Subordination of individual interest to the general interest
- Remuneration of staff



- Centralisation
- Scalar chain/line of authority
- Order
- Equity
- Stability of tenure
- Initiative

Donaldson (2001) argues that the reason for the focus on effectiveness in contingency theory is that organisational theory has been concerned with explaining the success or failure of organisations. However, organisational effectiveness can have a broad meaning that includes efficiency, profitability, employee satisfaction, or innovation rate.

According to Donaldson (2001) the Contingency Theory of Organisations is a major theoretical lens used to view organisations. The essence of the contingency theory paradigm is that organisational effectiveness results from fitting characteristics of the organisations, such as its structure to contingencies that reflect the situation of the organisation.

Such contingencies include the environment, organisational size and the organisational strategy. In the ensuing discussion, the three contingencies will be discussed for a better understanding of these concepts:

### **3.3.1 The Organisational Size**

Pugh and Hickson (1976) and Pugh and Hinings (1976), as cited by Donaldson (2001), argue that the organisational size contingency has an effect on its bureaucratic structure. This implies that, the size of an organisation, that is, the number of its employees, affects the degree to which its structure is bureaucratic. The bureaucratic structure fits a large organisation, because large size leads to repetitive operations and administration so that much decision making can be by rules, rendering decision making in expensive and efficient.

An unbureaucratic or simple structure, which is not rule-governed and centralised, fits a small organisation, because top management can make almost all the decisions personally and effectively. A large organisation that seeks to use the misfitting, simple structure will find top management overwhelmed by the number of decisions it needs to make, so that the organisation becomes ineffective. The latter argument on organisational size is the one the Education department cannot afford to apply due to its large size.

### **3.3.2 The Organisational Strategy**

This contingency affects divisional structure. Chandler (1962) and Galbraith (1973), as cited by Donaldson (2001), argue that the functional structure fits an undiversified strategy because all its activities are focused on a single product or service so that efficiency is enhanced by the specialisation function. However, the divisional structure fits a diversified strategy because it has diverse activities serving various product-markets; coordinating each product or service in its own division enhances effectiveness.

An organisation with diversified strategy that seeks to use the misfitting, functional structure will find top management overwhelmed by the number of decisions and also suffer lack of responsiveness to markets, so that the organisation becomes ineffective (Chandler 1962; Galbraith 1973). The divisional structure contingency relates more relevantly to the education system because it has a diversity of activities which need to be served by different people, so as to enhance effectiveness through coordination of those activities relevant to teaching and learning by educational authorities.

### **3.3.3 The Environmental Stability**

This contingency affects a mechanistic structure. Burns and Stalker (1961) as cited by Donaldson (2001), argue that the rate of technological and market

change in the environment of an organisation is affected whether its structure is mechanistic [hierarchical] or organic [participatory].

The mechanistic structure fits a stable environment, because a hierarchical approach is efficient for routine operations. Given the routine nature of operations, the managers at upper levels of the hierarchy possess sufficient knowledge and information to make decisions, and this centralised control fosters efficiency. The organic structure on the other hand, fits an unstable environment as a participatory approach is required for innovation. Knowledge and information required for innovation are distributed among lower hierarchical levels and so decentralises decision making, which fosters ingenuity.

Donaldson (2001) further argues that the Contingency theory is to be distinguished from universal theories of organisations, which asserts that there is 'one best way' to organise, meaning that maximum organisational performance comes from the maximum level of structural variables. For example, Specialisation classical management is an earlier organisational theory that argues that maximum organisational performance results from maximum formalisation and specialisation, and therefore it is a universalistic type of theory.

The foregoing brief discussion on the contingency theory of organisations raises several questions about our education system, i.e. about the way it is structured, and as to whether it supplies us with the required or expected outputs. Is it well coordinated? Do primary clients [learners] receive quality service that will help them to realise their potential?

### **3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The study assumes a qualitative research approach. A qualitative research approaches differ inherently from quantitative research designs in that they usually do not provide the researcher with a step-by-step plan or a fixed

recipe to follow. Whereas in quantitative research the design determines the researcher's choices and actions, while in qualitative research the researcher's choices and actions determine the design.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) define a qualitative research approach as a research method that presents data as narration with words. They further assert that qualitative research provides explanations to extend our understanding of phenomena, or promotes opportunities of informed decisions for social action. Qualitative research further contributes to theory, educational practice, policymaking and social consciousness.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) refer to three important methodological paradigms in the social sciences which are the quantitative, qualitative and participatory action paradigms respectively. As indicated above it was decided that a qualitative paradigm would be most appropriate for the study. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding rather than explaining human behaviour.

In a similar vein, Merriam (2002) indicates that the purpose of qualitative research is to conduct a basic interpretive study in order to understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences. Therefore this indicates that a qualitative study is conducted in a natural (rather than experimental) setting and the main concern is to understand the social problem or phenomenon under study.

Welman and Kruger (2001) argue that, according to phenomenologists, what the researcher observes is not reality as such, but an interpreted reality. We cannot detach ourselves from the presuppositions of our cultural inheritance, especially concerning the philosophical dualism (between the observable body and the intangible mind) and our glorification of technological achievements. As a result, the positivists and the anti-positivists interpret the researcher's role differently.

While natural scientists have nothing in common with their research objects (plants, gases, minerals, and so on), human behavioural scientists are in reality members of the group being studied. This enables direct understanding which implies that the researcher can understand the circumstances of the object of study because they can picture themselves in the latter's shoes something that is naturally not possible with natural scientific research. A positivist researcher withdraws as far as possible from the research situation to avoid being biased; the anti-positivist researcher becomes absorbed in the research situation. The anti-positivist approach is most clearly evident in participant observation in which the researcher, by taking part in the activities of the group, strives to become part of the group.

The natural – scientific approach (logical positivism) strives to formulate laws that apply to populations that are universally valid and that explain the causes of objectively observable and measurable behaviour. According to the anti-positivists, it is inappropriate to follow strict natural-scientific methods when collecting and interpreting data. They hold that the natural-scientific method is designed for studying molecules, organisms and other things and is therefore not applicable to the phenomena being studied in the human behavioural sciences.

The different points of view held by the positivists and anti-positivists are reflected in their definitions of their fields of study and their quantitative versus qualitative research aims; the positivists define their approach as the study of observable human behaviour, while according to some anti-positivists, it must deal with the experiencing of human behaviour.

Valle, King and Halling (1989), as cited by Welman and Kruger (2001), express the unity between humans and their world as follows:

*In the truest sense, the person is viewed as having no existence apart from the world and the world as having no existence apart from persons. Each individual and his or her world are said to co-constitute one another.*

A person derives his or her true meaning from his or her life-world, and by existing he or she gives meaning to his or her world. By life-world we mean the world as lived by a person and not some entity separate from or independent of him or her. The person is dependent on his or her world for his or her existence and vice versa.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that qualitative methods can be used to gain a new perspective on things that are already known, gain in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively and to understand phenomena about which little is known.

In the light of the above discourse a qualitative research approach seems to be the most appropriate to explore the phenomena under study. This will allow the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges facing the educators, principals and district officials in the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools in its original form, i.e. as conveyed or viewed or described by the participants that are sampled for the study. The problems or challenges which they encounter in the process and how they think the situation could be remedied will be explored.

Their experiences both positive and negative and solutions to the problems will help me to have an understanding of the challenges facing the department of education as a system in the Moretele (APO) and the educators, principals and district officials, and how to generate better solutions that will improve efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) attest that qualitative studies are important for theory generation, policy development, educational practice improvement, illumination of social issues and action stimulus.

### **3.5 SAMPLING**

Understanding what purpose research will serve should be a decisive factor in selecting a qualitative sample. A researcher has many sampling choices available that may stem from theory, method, or simple practicalities, such as time and money. Therefore a sample is chosen purposefully and many sampling strategies can be used.

#### **3.5.1 The research sample**

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for the study. It is incumbent on the researcher to describe the sample in regards to gender, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic class and any other relevant criteria so that research consumers can understand how and why the particular sample was chosen.

Qualitative researchers view sampling processes as dynamic and ad hoc rather than static or a priori parameters of populations. While there are statistical rules for probability sample size, there are only guidelines for purposeful sample size (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

In the light of the above, for this study, 13 educators (PL1), 6 principals, and 7 District Officials in the Moretele APO of the Bojanala District were sampled by employing a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select participants who have known characteristics that are related to the research topic. The participants provided relevant information as they were affected by or faced the problem investigated.

#### **3.5.2 Reasons for selecting the sample**

Since the study assumed a qualitative mode of enquiry, sampling under this enquiry is generally based on non-probability and purposive sampling rather than probability or random sampling approaches. Purposive sampling

therefore, in contrast to probabilistic sampling, was used to select the participants because of some of their defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for study (Maree, 2007).

The sample that was selected therefore consists of educators, principals and district officials in the Moretele APO – as a site selected for the study – who are teaching and managing schools according to policy directives in the education system. They are therefore responsible to implement and monitor education policies in the district and their respective schools, a phenomenon which the study is investigating.

They are also relevant as they have the experiences and daily grapple with challenges to implement and monitor educational policies effectively in their schools, classrooms and district offices as the department would deem fit. In other words, this sample is knowledgeable and informed about the phenomena the researcher is investigating.

The participants have been in the employ of the education department for more than ten years. They also have the experience of having worked both under the apartheid regime and also under the new democratic regime even though the study is not about comparing the two regimes' approaches towards education. This makes them relevant to share their dilemmas and experiences as they are responsible for ensuring that there is effective policy implementation and monitoring in schools and the district.

### **3.5.3 Sampling method(s) used**

The logic of purposive sampling is that a few cases studied in depth yield many insights into the topic, whereas the logic of probability sampling depends on selecting a random or statistically representative sample for generalisation to a larger population. Probability sampling procedures such as simple random sampling or stratified sampling may be inappropriate when generalisability of the findings is not the purpose (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). A case type sampling method was employed for this study. McMillan



and Schumacher (2001) explain that “case” refers to an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon and not the number of people sampled.

Examples of sampling by case type are extreme-case, intensive-case, typical-case, unique-case, reputational-case, critical-case and concept/theory-based sampling. The latter example is the one that was specifically employed in this study. It is described as selection by information-rich persons or situations known to experience the concept or to be attempting to implement the concept/theory.

The main goal of qualitative research is to increase understanding of phenomenon as opposed to generalising data extrapolated from the sample to the population at large. Qualitative researchers have an onus of richly describing the findings so they can be transferred to other situations.

## **3.6 THE RESEARCHER**

### **3.6.1 Background training**

I completed my University Diploma in Education in 1990 with the University of the North West; I then enrolled for a Further Diploma in Education specialising in Education Management with the University of Pretoria, which I completed in 2000. Thereafter I studied for a B.Ed. Degree also specialising in Education Management with the same University (UP) which I completed in 2002.

Parallel to my B.Ed. Degree studies, I enrolled for an Advanced Certificate in Labour Law at the same university in the Faculty of Law in 2002, which I completed in the same year (2002). Subsequent to My B.Ed. studies, I registered for a M.Ed. Degree in Education Management, Law and Policies Studies at the University of Pretoria.

### **3.6.2 Work experience**

I have been an educator (PL1) at Ramabele Secodary School since 1991, and a part-time lecturer at the University of Pretoria in the Faculty of Education, Department of Education Management and Policy Studies, responsible for Organisational Management (401 Module) since 2003.

I have been active in education trade union politics since 1993; I have been the National Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, Full-Time Shop Steward and founder member and NEC member of ITUSA respectively.

During the 1994 transitional processes, I served in the North West provincial forum that was tasked with the integration of all the erstwhile racially structured departments of education into a single non-racial department of education of the province that upholds policy directives as expounded in the new policy documents and the Constitution of the country.

I also served as the Provincial Secretary of NAPTOSA North West Provincial Unity Committee (PUC) that was responsible for overseeing and coordinating the amalgamation processes of NAPTOSA affiliates in the North West Province.

I was subsequently appointed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of amalgamated NAPTOSA in North West Province, a position I relinquished at the end of 2007.

I also have served in the medical aid schemes industry as the acting chairperson, Chairperson and board member of a Board of Trustees respectively of one of the Open Medical Aid Schemes in the country since 2004.

### 3.6.3 Research Experience

I studied research methodologies (qualitative and quantitative) in my B.Ed. Studies and further continued with these modules in my M.Ed. studies as part of my course-work.

Over and above my responsibilities as the Secretary General and subsequent CEO, I represented the union in the North West Advisory Board for Educator Education in the province. This body was made up of the employer (department of education), trade unions and institutions of higher learning in the North West province. Its mandate was to research and advise the department of education in the province on educational challenges with regard to educators' development –amongst others– in the province.

I also worked as a part-time research co-ordinator at the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), Policy Analysis Unit (PAU), responsible for the co-ordination of the study entitled: *The right returns to investment in education: Measuring investment efficiency in Early Childhood Development, Foundation Phase (Primary) and FET phase (Secondary) of the South African Education System* in the North West Province.

### 3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

- The project:  
The research was conducted in the Moretele district which is rural. The schools in the district are vastly scattered and the researcher found it difficult to reach more schools as this was a self-sponsored project. The sample might not be a balanced representation of the total population of the district. This might present itself as a limitation of this study due to the reasons mentioned.

- The process:  
The research process was a very challenging one as the researcher most of the time had to depend on his own limited experience during the research processes. The absence of a dedicated team for the study – where expertise amongst team members might be shared to produce a better result – might also have some limitations for this research.
- Research instruments:  
The questionnaires and the interview schedule that were used to collect data were designed by me and were verified only by the study supervisor. The respondents might have found it difficult to complete the questionnaires or even giving accurate answers during the interviews as a result of the ambiguity of questions that might have emanated from the interviews. These possible limitations are accepted as this was my first experience in conducting research.
- The Researcher:  
I wish to declare that there might be instances where I might have been biased in the research project and also been subjective either during data collection process or during the analysis and discussion of the results due to lack of adequate experience in dealing with research-related issues.

### **3.8 DATA GATHERING METHODS**

Padget (1990) mentioned three methods of data collection in qualitative research: observation (of the respondents, the setting and oneself), interviewing and review of documents or archival materials. People's words and actions represent the data of qualitative inquiry. Stake (1995) and Yin (1994) identified six sources of evidence in case studies, which are documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participation observation and physical artefacts. This research used semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to collect data from the participants.

### **3.8.1 Document Analysis**

The researcher also intended to conduct document analysis in order to gather more information for the study. This was aimed mainly at the district officials. Section B of the questionnaire for district officials, Question 10 and 11 to be more specific, request respondents to attach policy documents that would substantiate their responses.

The purpose of this section was to assess district officials' understanding of education policy implementation and monitoring. Unfortunately respondents did not attach any document(s) and this made it impossible for the researcher to do document analysis for the study.

### **3.8.2 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are an inexpensive way to gather data from a potentially large number of respondents. They are often the only feasible way to reach a number of reviewers large enough to allow statistical analysis of the results. A well-designed questionnaire that is used effectively can gather information on both the overall performance of the test system as well as information on specific components of the system.

13 questionnaires for the educators (PL1), 6 for principals and 7 for district officials were hand-delivered to selected respondents in the schools and at the APO offices in the Moretele Area Project Office.

Three questionnaires were designed. These questionnaires were designed in line with the type of respondents the study had targeted. In terms of the study, three types of participants were targeted: educators (PL1), principals, and officials from the district offices of education in the Moretele APO. Questionnaires were then designed accordingly. The ensuing discussion will then elaborate on each of the questionnaires.

### **3.8.1.1 Questionnaire for District Officials**

This questionnaire is divided into two sections (Section A and B). The purpose of section (A) was to gather biographical data that will be used to answer questions in the research study. These data will help the researcher in analysing responses, drawing conclusions and making recommendations in accordance with the responses in this section.

The second part is Section B; the purpose of this section is to assess the district officials' understanding of education policy implementation and monitoring. The section contains questions such as; rate your level of involvement in policy implementation and monitoring in line with specifically formulated sub questions (i) How often do you visit schools to monitor the implementation of policies? ;( ii) To what extent do you give schools support and motivation? In all of these questions participants were requested to give at least two practical examples in the provided spaces in the questionnaire and to attach copies of policy documents, meeting schedules etc. Data drawn will also help in making informed conclusions and recommendations.

### **3.8.1.2 Questionnaire for School Principals**

The questionnaire for school principals is divided into three sections (Section A, B and C). The purpose of section A, as for the district officials, is to gather biographical data that will be used to answer questions in the research study. These data will help the researcher in analysing responses, drawing conclusions and making recommendations in accordance with the responses in this section.

Section B of the questionnaire is based on policy understanding and implementation. The purpose of this section is to investigate principals' knowledge of education policies and their implication for effective teaching and learning. Principals were asked to respond to sub-questions in this section, using a particular scale that was provided in the questionnaire.

Section C is based on monitoring and support. The purpose is to investigate the degree or extent of monitoring and support the schools receive from the district offices. The researcher wanted to determine the role of the provincial and district offices in implementing policy in schools. There are sub-questions which respondents have to answer using a provided scale. Data drawn will also help in making informed conclusions and recommendations.

### **3.8.1.3 Questionnaire for Educators**

The questionnaire for educators is divided into two sections (Section A and B). The purpose of section A as for the district officials and the school principals is to gather biographical data of the participants used to answer questions in the research study and give the researcher a clearer understanding of the participants in terms of their biographical information. These data will help the researcher in analysing responses, drawing conclusions and making recommendations in accordance with the responses in this section.

Section B of the questionnaire is based on policy understanding and implementation. The purpose of this section is to investigate educators' knowledge of education policies and their implications for effective teaching and learning. Educators were asked to respond to sub-questions in this section using a particular scale that was provided in the questionnaire. Data drawn will also help in making informed conclusions and recommendations.

### **3.8.1.4 Development of Questionnaires**

Three questionnaires were designed. These questionnaires were designed in line with the type of respondents the study had targeted. In terms of the study, three types of participants were targeted: educators (PL1), school principals, and officials from the district offices of education in the Moretele APO.

The three named groups are perceived to be fundamentally related with the phenomenon, effective implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools. As these people hold different positions and their job responsibilities

differ substantially, questionnaires had to be developed in line with the responsibilities and expectations that are attached to their work (posts). This was done primarily to avoid confusing the respondents.

#### **3.8.1.5 Distribution and feedback (collection and response rate)**

A total of 26 questionnaires were produced and hand-delivered within a period of five days to selected participants at their places of work and some to their respective homes. To be more specific: 13 questionnaires for the educators (PL1), 6 for principals and 7 for district officials were hand-delivered to selected respondents in the schools and at the APO offices in the Moretele Area Project Office.

During the distribution we also discussed and agreed on suitable time-frames for completion and collection of the questionnaires. Most of the respondents requested a week as they mentioned other personal and work commitments and that they wanted to give the questionnaires their full attention. This request was granted and they were also willing to give me their contact numbers to check and remind them or to agree on where and what time to come and make a collection.

#### **3.8.1.6 Problems experienced**

All the participants responded positively and the researcher went to collect the questionnaires. This was, however, not an easy exercise. Some we had to extend the time-frames agreed upon as they could not meet the agreed deadline due to a number of reasons; or they had misplaced the copy and requested a new one; or they had experienced unforeseen circumstances that needed their urgent attention; some had left or forgotten them at work or at home.



### 3.8.1.7 Semi-structured Interviews

Patton (1990) refers to three types of qualitative interviewing: (1) informal, conversational interviews, (2) semi-structured interviews and (3) standardised, open-ended interviews. In this study the researcher employed semi-structured interviews to gather information. Semi-structured interviews are qualitative data gathering techniques designed to obtain information about people's views, opinions, ideas and experiences. By using this method the researcher was free to follow up ideas, to probe responses, and to ask for clarification or further elaboration.

The researcher formulated the interview guide in consultation with the study supervisor. The interview schedule or guide is a list of questions or general topics that the interviewer wants to explore during the interview. An interview guide ensures good use of limited time, and helps to keep interactions focused. In keeping with the flexible nature of qualitative research designs, interview guides were modified to focus attention on areas of particular importance and to exclude questions the researcher found to be unproductive for the goals of the research.

Conducting an interview is a more natural form of interacting with people than making them fill-in a questionnaire. Mischler (1986) indicates that an interview is a joint product when interviewees and interviewers talk together. Through the use of semi-structured interviews the researcher had an opportunity to get to know the participants quite intimately and this led him to understand how they think and feel.

Patton (1990) in Arksey and Knight (1999) argues that one of the techniques in good interviewing is the use of probes. Three types of probes were identified that a qualitative interviewer can use in order to have a good interview: detail-oriented probes, elaboration probes and clarification probes. The researcher used these probes to make sure that information given by the participant is valid and reliable. With detail-oriented probes, I, the researcher, raised follow-up questions to fill in the picture of whatever I was trying to

understand, for example, what should be done to improve the standard of policy implementation and monitoring?

In terms of elaboration probes, interviewees were asked to tell more about their situation following the answers they had provided. Clarification probes were also used as the researcher wanted to have a clear understanding of what the participants had said or mentioned. Probing helped the researcher to understand the situation of the participants. Arksey and Knight (1990) assert that researchers using semi-structured interviews are advised to probe and prompt participants' responses.

Before conducting actual interviews with the participants selected for the study, the researcher conducted a pilot study. The pilot study helped the researcher to test whether the questions and themes were relevant to the study. It emerged from the pilot study that a number of questions were not clear or specific to the participants, which made it difficult for them to give relevant answers. The researcher then rephrased some or changed the questions and formulated them in such a way that the participants could easily understand. By conducting a pilot study the researcher was able to get more meaningful responses.

In order to receive the interviewees' consent, I informed them about the aims of the study and requested them to sign a consent form. At the beginning of each interview the interviewer gave the interviewees the opportunity to warm up by asking them general questions in order to make them feel comfortable. The establishment of rapport was very important in the interview sessions and it had to be developed before commencing with the interviews.

A basic decision going into the interview process is how to record interview data. It is the researchers' preference to choose the method of data recording. In this study the researcher employed audio taping to capture the data. Audio taping is probably the most popular method of recording qualitative interviews. Patton (1990) says that a tape recorder is "indispensable" while Lincoln and Guba (1985) do not recommend recording except for unusual reasons.

Recordings have the advantage of capturing data more faithfully than hurriedly written notes might and it also makes it easier for the researcher to focus on the interview.

The tape recorder provides an accurate, verbatim record of the interview, capturing the language used by the participants including their hesitations and tone in far more detail than would ever be possible with note-taking. It helps the researcher to capture the whole conversation during interviews with the participants. By using a tape recorder the interviewer is allowed to devote his full attention to the interviewees and to probe in-depth. Arksey and Knight (1999) argue that a tape recorder demonstrates to participants that their responses are being treated seriously. Terre'Blanche and Kelly (2002) confirm that tape recording shows interviewees that the researcher takes their views seriously.

### **3.9 STORAGE OF DATA**

Data will be stored in the University archives and the University regulations on data storage will be adhered to.

### **3.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

The title of the research was informed by concerns I had and still have on the way education policies are implemented and monitored by the educators, principals and the district officials in our schools. This is by no means – whatsoever – exonerating the provincial and national departments of education from the equation. The concerns are aggravated more by what is happening on the lower implementation level of the education system.

It is both common sense and scientifically evident that if policies are implemented in the way they were meant to be by those who crafted them, the system – educational or otherwise – is bound to yield the intended results of

producing learners who will be able to participate meaningfully in society by leading creative, critical and productive lives as adults.

The research followed a qualitative approach whereby I conducted semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to educators, principals and district officials in the Moretele Area Project Office (APO) of the Bojanala Region in the North West Province. The approach I took implies that educators (post level 1 and 2 educators), principals (including acting principals) and district officials were interviewed using a common interviewing instrument that asks the same questions to all participants irrespective of the positions they are holding. The ensuing discourse is then more informed by what has been found in the interviews rather than by the information gathered in the questionnaires.

To collect these data I used a digital tape recorder to record every interview and thereafter I transcribed the data into my computer. Twelve participants were interviewed (five post-level 1 educators, three principals and four district officials). I also distributed a table which formed part of the interview instrument – question 3 of the interview instrument to be more specific – whereby participants were requested to complete in order to provide me with their understanding with regard to categories of policies in terms of their roles, status and how they are related to other policies.

The next I did was to listen to the interviews and captured in my computer key words, phrases and sentences in all interviews under each question which I asked during the interview.

### **3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Permission for conducting this research project in Moretele APO, which is in the North West Province, has been duly granted by the Head of Department of Education in the Province. The Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria has furthermore granted a clearance certificate for the research to be

conducted. All other ethical requirements were also adhered to when selecting the participants for the research.

### **3.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter looks at the research design and the methodology employed. The design of the data collection instruments is discussed. Three sets of questionnaires for the sampled grouped were looked into. The sampling method used for the study was also discussed. The following chapter looks at the presentation and discussion of the findings.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the research design and methodology used for the study. In this chapter the method used to analyse data from the interviews and the questionnaires will be discussed. A description of the participants will also give a broader view of the participants in the study. The findings will then be discussed.

The researcher employed a qualitative research mode of enquiry as the methodology that guided the study. Semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and documents and artefact collections were chosen as data collection strategies. The inductive nature of this qualitative methodological approach and its emphasis on participant perspectives cause researchers in this mode to search for the ways that those being studied make sense of their experiences. Qualitative researchers assume that people act on the basis of the interpretations of their experiences. Hence they are interested in what the subjects experience and how they interpret these experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

Data were collected by means of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews respectively. Three questionnaire instruments were developed for the three groups sampled. The development of the questionnaires was guided by and focused on the groups' specific job responsibilities in relation to the phenomenon being researched. A common interview guide that was semi-structured was developed and used to collect data in all the groups.

The whole process of identifying the setting for the study, gaining permission from both the Provincial Education Department and the participants and the

data collection processes were done over a period of three months in the Moretele Area Project Office, which is in the Bojanala Region of the North West Province. I need to indicate at this point in time that the study also intended to collect and do an analysis on all the policy documents which the participants from the group of district officials used in executing their respective responsibilities. Unfortunately, when questionnaires (that contained a section requesting the attachment of such documents) were collected, they did not have any attachments of such copies as had been requested. In the light of this an analysis of such documents could not be done.

## **4.2 PARTICIPANTS**

For the purpose of this study participants were selected by means of applying a purposive sampling technique and three groups of participants were sampled. I will therefore provide a detailed description of the participants in the ensuing paragraphs for more clarity and understanding of the respondents. The information was extracted from the biographical data on the questionnaires that were distributed for the research.

The first group was made up of participants who are categorised as post levels 1 and 2 educators; these are participants who by virtue of their post levels spend most of their time in the actual teaching and learning environments in their respective schools. The second group was made up of principals; these are participants who spend most of their time grappling with management and administrative issues in their respective schools.

The third group was made up of educators who are based in the district offices and are referred to as district officials. These are participants who are responsible for providing support and guidance on issues related to management and administration and to teaching and learning in schools in their districts to say the least.

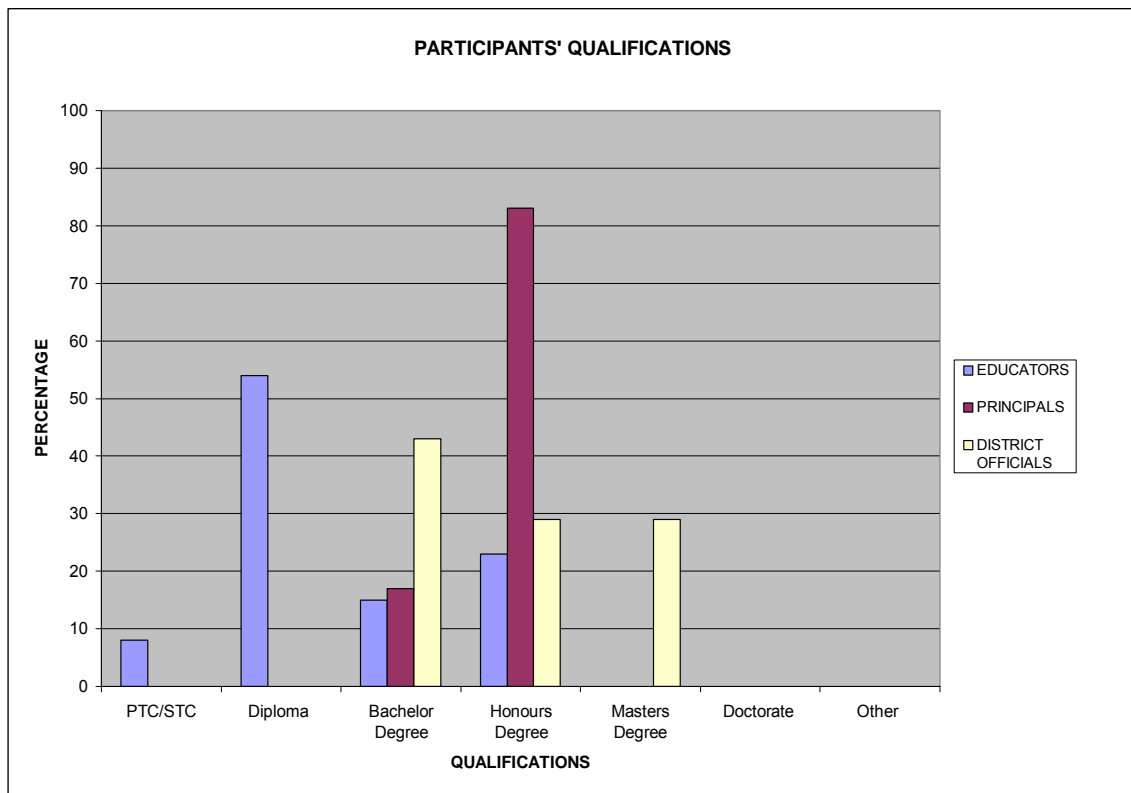
Starting with the educators' group, 23% of participants are heads of departments (post level 2) and 77% are educators on post level (1). From the principals' group, 67% are principals (duly appointed), and 33% acting as principals but their official appointment positions are those of deputy principals. From the district officials, 14% are chief education specialists and 86% are senior education specialists.

These participants have different years of employment experience. In the educators group 8% has experience of between 10 - 15 years; 46% 15 - 20 years experience; 31% 20 - 25 years experience and 15% of 25 - 30 years experience as educators (post level 1). In the principals group experience also varies, 17% has 15 - 20 years experience; 50% 20 - 25 years experience and 33% 30 - 35 years experience. In the district officials group 71% has less than 10 years experience in their current positions, while 29% has between 10 - 15 years experience.

The participants' ages range from 30 to 60 years. Participants from both gender groupings were sampled for the study to give a broader perspective on the group of the participants. The participants have a variety of education qualifications. From the educators (post levels 1 and 2) sampled, 8% hold PTC/STC as their highest education qualification and 54% diplomas, 15% B.A. degrees and 23% Honours degrees. From the Principals' group 17% hold B.A. degrees as the highest qualification and 83% Honours degrees. The district officials include 43% with B.A. degrees, 29% with Honours degrees and another 29% with Masters Degrees (see table 2 below).



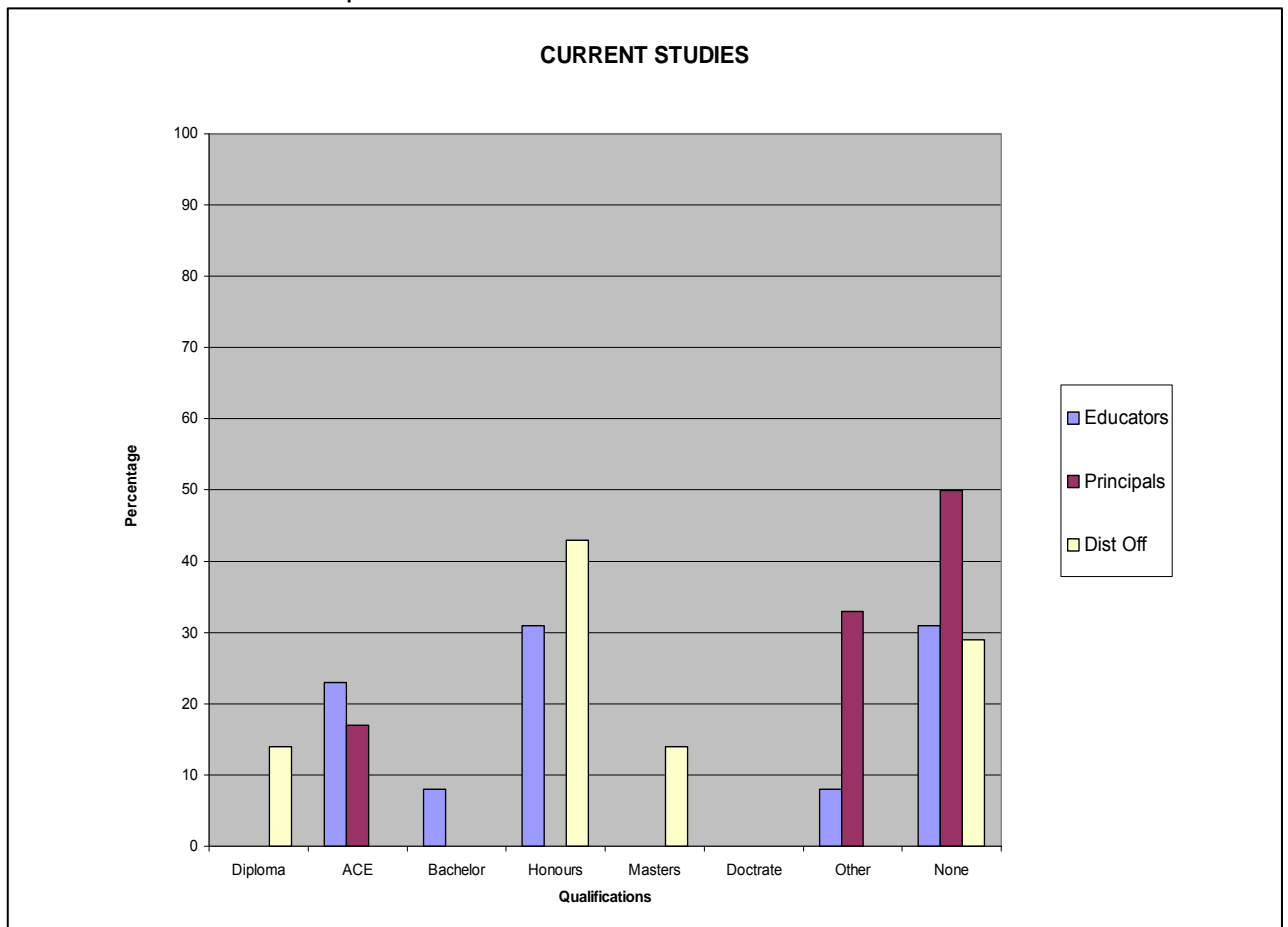
**Table 2: Participants' qualifications**



The participants are still pursuing their studies in both education and non-education-related disciplines. 23% of educators (post levels 1 and 2) are currently studying for the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), 8% are pursuing Bachelor's degrees while 31% are pursuing Honours degrees. 8% of the educators are pursuing disciplines that are not related to education and 31% are not studying at all.

From the principals group 17% are studying for the ACE, 33% are pursuing other studies – not education related – while 50% are not studying at all. From the district officials 14% are studying for diplomas; 43% are busy with Honours degrees, 14% with Masters' Degrees and 29% are not studying at all (see Table 2 below). All the participants are of a black racial group. The word 'black' as used here has no negative racial connotations whatsoever, but it is only used for the purposes of further describing demographics within which the study was conducted.

**Table 3:** Participants' current studies



The study was conducted in the Moretele Area Project Office, which is also predominantly rural. 85% of participants (from the educators' group) teach in primary schools and 15% in secondary schools. Of the principals group, 50% head primary schools and 50% secondary schools. From the district officials group 14% of the participants are from the General Education and Training unit, 71% from Subject Advisory Units and 14% from Professional Support Services Unit.

### 4.3 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

#### 4.3.1 Interviews

An inductive analysis method which is predominantly used in qualitative research was applied in analysing the data that were collected for the study. Interviews which were semi-structured were conducted in the three groups sampled, using a common interview guide developed for the study.

To capture data in the interviews I used an audio digital tape recorder and compiled some notes during the process. Twelve respondents were interviewed. As part of the interview guide and data collection strategy, respondents were requested to answer question 3 by completing a table that was distributed after the interviews. After conducting the interviews, I transcribed the interviews from the audio-tape into my computer. I further captured all the interviews in word format (in my computer) by listening to and typing the conversations.

Thereafter I condensed all the interviews into one copy using the questions used in the interview guide as my preliminary categories to help me to divide and classify my data and to determine categories. For example, the question, *“What is your understanding of the concept policy?”* is the question that was included in the interview guide. This question was then classified as category (1) and all the responses by interviewees to this question were then captured under this question to form a category. The same process was then used for all questions of the guide.

I then printed one consolidated copy of all interviews guided by the above mentioned process and 12 copies of all individual interviews for comparison and checking for the original wording by the interviewees which might be lost in the consolidated copy.

The consolidated copy, which I labelled “summary of interviews” copy, was used as my working document. In other words, it is where I underlined

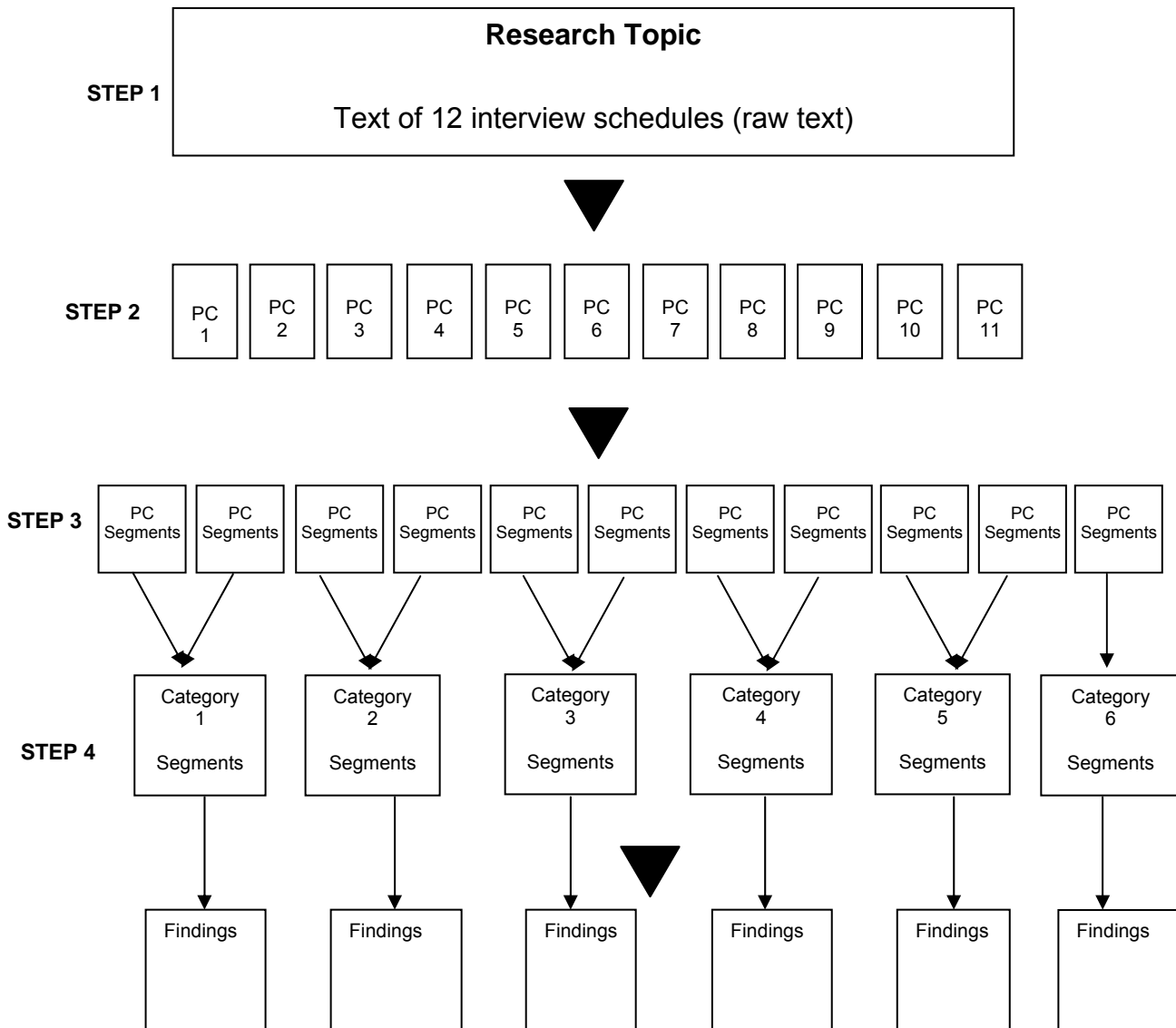
significant words, phrases and sentences to identify patterns that seemed to be explaining the respondents' understanding and experiences of the phenomenon. The words, phrases and sentences with a similar line of thought were marked with a specific colour pen.

Subsequent to the above process, 11 categories emerged. I then read the consolidated transcript carefully and also marked significant words, phrases and sentences as they were said by the respondents to determine their relationships. I also replayed the interviews in my computer and carefully listened to the interviews to get a clearer and better understanding.

Significant relationships were identified and that also helped to reduce my initial categories from 11 to 6 by comparing and contrasting each topic and category to determine the distinctive characteristics. For example, similarities were identified in the responses that were given in question (1) which read: *What is your understanding of the concept **policy**?* And question (2) which read: *What is the purpose of policy?*

I will discuss the following families that have been derived from the above process in the paragraphs below:

1. Policy and its purpose
2. Status of policies within the education system
3. Communication and decision making
4. Department's capacity and support mechanism in ensuring effective policy adherence
5. Challenges in policy implementation and monitoring
6. Improvement suggestions



**Figure 1: Analysis of data (interviews)**

### 4.3.2 Questionnaires

Three sets of questionnaires were designed for the study. These questionnaires were designed according to the three groups of respondents that had been sampled. One set was designed for educator groups; the second one for the principals group and the third one for district officials. Before analysing and interpreting these questionnaires I employed a short procedure of classifying data from the questionnaires.

I first started by determining the exact total number of each set of questionnaires. After determining the total number of each set, I then consolidated each by adding similar and different responses according to the questions in the questionnaires. Thereafter I converted the number of responses into percentages by dividing the actual number of responses by the total number of the questionnaires and multiplied by hundred to convert it into a percentage. The findings in the questionnaires were then interpreted using percentage numbers. The following is a summary of the above process:

- $\frac{\text{Actual}}{\text{Total}} \times 100 = \%$

The above process was applied to all the questionnaires. The findings are presented below.

## 4.4 FINDINGS

### 4.4.1 Interviews

#### 4.4.1.1 Policy and its Purpose

Participants were asked to give their own understanding of the concept *policy*. It emerged that they understood *policy* to be a set of guidelines or regulations that are formulated to give directions on how certain issues should be managed in an institution. Policy is also viewed as a set of agreements reached between the department and other stakeholders in education for purposes of common approach towards executing responsibilities. Their responses could be generally interpreted to mean that they are responsible for the implementation of policies and that they are the people who should be getting intensive

guidance on the policies in order to execute their responsibilities effectively as they are at the implementation level in the system.

One respondent from the principals' group said that "policies are guidelines or a framework on how to manage our schools or institutions". This statement indicates that schools cannot be managed arbitrarily by principals; there are parameters that are set by the powers that be that should be adhered to by all to achieve the intended outcomes and that should not be overstepped. Educator respondents also agree and one of them said that "policies are agreements or guidelines provided by the department of education for us as educators to apply so that we are in line with curriculum directives". Some referred to policy as guiding documents that are there to guide one how to implement curricular activities in school. Policies are documents that are sent by the department to schools from time to time. When I probed them to elaborate as to what they mean by 'documents' from the department, most of them were able to express in more detail that it is the responsibility of the department of education to develop and distribute these policies.

They were also asked to respond on the purpose of policy. What they said – most of them – was that the purpose of policy was to help in the management of organisations such as schools in that policy gives assistance by showing how to carry out activities in that particular school and draw boundaries within which people in the institution should operate to avoid transgressions that might lead to disciplinary processes by the department.

Policy applies to all areas such as administration for principals, teaching and learning for educators and support services for district officials. One respondent from the district officials further said, "The purpose of policy is to give guidelines and directives as to how schools should operate to prevent deviations by members of the staff or institution". A respondent from the principals said "The purpose of

policy is to help in ensuring that there is consistency in managing the affairs of the school as required by the provincial and national departments of education”. Purpose of policy is also to ensure that everyone in the school or district knows what is expected of him or her in order to achieve the strategic goals set by the department.

#### **4.4.1.2 Classification and status of policies within the education system**

The researcher here wanted to measure the respondents’ knowledge and understanding of different policy documents by asking them to classify and give the purpose of each policy they mentioned. It was found that most of the respondents from the three groups are able to classify policies according to their levels. There were those who returned their forms incomplete in some columns. This suggested that they either did not know the policies or they just did not want to complete those sections.

On the purpose of those policies, different answers were indicated that were more or less related to the policy they had cited. There were again those who did not respond to this section. There were also policies that were mentioned as being both national and provincial policies. These policies are:

- HIV & AIDS Policy
- NEPA
- EEA
- SASA
- IQMS
- National protocol on assessment
- National Curriculum Statement
- Religion policy
- Labour law
- Financial policy



Participants were asked to give their understanding of the standing of these policies within the education system. Most of them agree that policies do not have the same standing. They indicated that there are policies that are applicable nationally, provincially and at district and school level. This implies that national policies direct or dictate to provincial policies and district policies direct to school. National policies must be followed by all the provinces. Provincial policies should be for that particular province and district policies for that district, all guided by national policies.

When developing policies at provincial, district and school level, guidance should always be drawn from the national policies. Respondents mentioned that the reason for this is to avoid contradictions or policy conflict. They do, however, agree that there are some policy overlaps. National policies are the umbrella guiding documents and policies from the subsequent levels depend on these and should not contradict them.

The different standings of policies do not make them isolated from one another; the aim or intention is the same, namely to have an effective coordinated education system from the national department to schools. One of the respondents on the latter statement had this to say, “All policies are equally important but cannot have the same standing. They are interdependent”. A relatively small number of the respondents were not sure about the standing of different policies. However they held a general view that all policies are equally important, since different policies address different issues.

#### **4.4.1.3 Communication and Decision making at Institutional Level**

On how their institutions communicate with them on policy matters, respondents commented. Some educator participants indicated that they are issued with copies of various policy documents by the school

management to peruse and apply; they indicated that this is to avoid conflict as far as implementation is concerned. However, there is no detailed clarity on how to implement such policies.

One participant from the district – in voicing out his frustrations about communication – had this to say: “We are called into a meeting to be briefed on policies by senior officials and thereafter we are left alone to see to it on our own how to cascade that information down to schools and to ensure that schools implement them, e.g. alternatives to corporal punishment policy; it is not clear to educators what is expected of them”. Some participants indicated that in their institutions meetings are called to discuss new policies that are sent by the department. Some participants from the principals indicated that they encourage educators to share their experiences and understanding of policies with fellow educators.

The method of issuing of circulars – be it at school or at the district level – was found to be popular with all the groups of the respondents. One respondent from the principals had this to say: “They communicate with us through circulars and those circulars are given to relevant HODs in the school for implementation”. Respondents from the district officials also confirmed this: “Communication is through issuing circulars directly to us in the unit; unfortunately interpretation is left to individuals”. It was also found that the effectiveness of this communication method is dependent on the time at which the circulars are sent. “If they are sent on time they receive the necessary attention but those sent late will not be adhered to”, as one respondent put it.

It was also found that meetings are used as another method of communicating policy related issues to all the groups. A respondent from the district officials had this to say: “We are provided with copies of policy documents and later get into a meeting or workshop to discuss those policies for purposes of common understanding”. Another respondent mentioned that in some instances a delegation

from the district office is sent to either national or provincial workshops to be trained on how particular policies are to be implemented and then after that information is filtered down to provinces and districts until it reaches schools. In some schools policies are attached on the school notice board for everyone to see and read.

Respondents were again asked to explain how decision making is done at their schools or by the district office during their day-to-day activities. Some respondents mentioned that there is nothing that they do without first consulting policy documents on related issues. Their reasons for this are that they are very careful not to flaunt policies as they fear what the department or the union might do to them should it be found that they had transgressed. This element of fear and uncertainty was expressed mostly by the respondents from the principals groups. In some instances discussions – on a matter that needs to be decided on – are held first before deciding on it. This could be interpreted to mean that decisions are taken collectively. It was also found that some respondents do not rely much on policy when making decisions. Some decisions are taken without consulting policy.

#### **4.4.1.4 Department's Capacity and Support Mechanism in Ensuring Effective Policy Adherence**

With regard to their opinions with regard to the department's capacity and its support mechanism to ensure that there is effective policy adherence by all, it was found that respondents seemed not to be convinced that the department is doing its best to support them. This opinion was, however, different according to the position in which the respondents are placed. For example, principals and educators are putting the blame on the district officials as they regard them as the department on the ground. The district officials, on the other hand, put the blame for lack of support on the provincial education department.

Some of the principal respondents had this to say: “To be honest, the department is struggling to implement and monitor policies”; “The departmental officials like to act on hearsay or rumours. They just pounce on us and that frustrates. It is not fair.”

Another interesting finding was that respondents themselves indicated that the department takes for granted that they seriously read and implement these policies that are given to them. This is not always the case. In most cases educators go against what the policy prescribes. There is no effective monitoring by the school management or the district office, as one respondent put it.

It was, however, found that there are a number of educators pretending to be representing unions who are also deliberately trying to fail the education department’s efforts for effective policy implementation. This view was equally echoed by most of the respondents from the three groups.

There are many policies as a result some are being compromised by not correctly implementing them. One respondent in support of the previous statement had this to say: “There are serious problems with the department’s assessment policies; officials who are supposed to be supporting us by giving us training are themselves not knowledgeable or clear on this policy and they expect us to implement it effectively”.

The other finding about why the respondents believe that the department lacks capacity is that most of the departmental officials are appointed on political affiliation and not on their abilities or skills needed to perform the tasks they are appointed for. One respondent had this to say: “Implementers are not clear about policy; the department must get relevant people to support schools as the current ones do not have an understanding of what is to be done”.

Furthermore on the support mechanisms respondents from the district official's group believe that the department has manpower but officials do not work as a team. "They are working individually and that affects effective implementation by the division. No support, no meetings and we write reports but we do not get feedback with regard to our frustrations".

Respondents in this group further indicated that they normally encourage school heads of departments (HODs) to hold meetings with their educators to discuss policies affecting their different learning areas. They also occasionally call educators to the district office to discuss policy issues that affect them.

Respondents from the principals group indicated that they support their schools by encouraging HODs of various learning areas to hold meetings with educators to enforce policy implementation. One of them said that they have a deputy principal responsible for curriculum matters and to monitor subjects' policy formation and this is working.

In some schools principals give support by going through policies to have some understanding. This is done through discussion of policies by all at the school. The lack of resources at the district offices was also found to be affecting the support mechanisms that are to ensure that policies are effectively implemented.

#### **4.4.1.5 Challenges in Policy Implementation and Monitoring**

Respondents were asked to share the problems which they experience when coming to policy implementation. It was found that there is quite a vast interesting range of problems that are experienced; some respondents indicate that there is a lot a paper work that needs to be completed when implementing some policies. This to them is time consuming and impacts on their actual teaching. Some indicate that

they are given lots of documents to study and implement; unfortunately they just put them away as they are too big and complicated to understand and work on their own as they do not understand what should be done. This practice affects the implementation as required in terms of policy directives with regard to the objectives of the country's education system in this democratic dispensation.

One respondent from the educators group confirmed this by saying: "We only check policies when we are told about something that is in the policy and also when we are told that someone from the district office or higher offices will be visiting our school": There is also a lack of interest from educators to study policies as they do not understand them". Some cited the lack of resources as another contributing factor to the problem of implementation as they do not have the required teaching and learning materials which some policies dictate should be used in the implantation process.

It was also found that the training workshops which are organised by district officials or provincial departments to empower educators on policies are not effective as they are not well organised. To support this statement one respondent from the educators' group had this to say: "Schools send one or two staff members to attend a workshop and the member is then expected to come and cascade information to all staff members. The problem is that the member is now expected to become an expert as she/he is expected to teach others to do what was said at a half-day workshop on a job that could last for at least six months".

Inconsistent or ever-changing directives by the district offices also contribute to the ineffective implementation of policies. Educators receive contradictory instructions about what to do and not do on a daily basis. This affects their plans and finally leads to a situation whereby everyone does as it pleases him or her. One respondent had this to say: "Every time we introduce a new method and later on we are

forced to change and start all over again; we spend a lot of time on studying new policies and paper work rather than teach learners”.

The deteriorating teaching morale amongst educators was also found to be contributing to the failure to implement policies effectively. There are a number of factors believed to be contributing to this. Some that were cited are that policies or education is being over politicised. Policies in education are used to push the agendas of trade unions and poor educators and the learners are caught in the cross-fire as a result of this.

The implementation of the admission policy was raised as one of the policies that are difficult to implement; one respondent from the principal’s group had this to say: “We tell learners that we want to admit and the problem we find is that there are no classes to accommodate those new learners; we then end up refusing to admit them”. Policies on the conditions of service and code of conduct for educators are also not being consistently implemented. Principals implement these policies unevenly at their schools for various reasons. Amongst those that were cited are; educator absenteeism as well as late coming and failure to do the work. When asked what the reasons for this reluctance by principal could be, it was found that some principals do not want to provoke the unions and that they do not want to hurt their educators.

Respondents were also asked to share the problems they experience with regard to monitoring of policies. Some respondents from the district officials indicated that the problem is caused by the fact that they are supposed to monitor policies they themselves do not understand. For instance, one respondent from the educators group had this to say: “There is policy on assessment to be implemented and monitored at schools. Most of the time officials do not know what it is that they should monitor concerning assessment. At cluster meetings some officials show a clear lack of knowledge on how to monitor assessment and this renders the department ineffective in this regard”.

Some respondents from the district officials group indicated that there are no monitoring instruments to be followed when they are visiting schools. “Everyone does as he wishes when it comes to monitoring the performance of schools” one respondent from the district official said.

It was also mentioned that most of the time officials come to schools when there is a directive from head office that head office will be visiting schools in the area. Educators will then start to run up and down to try to cover-up.

One respondent said that they only see visible monitoring by district officials when schools open at the beginning of the year or when there is a strike action by unions, other than that officials are rarely seen visiting schools.

Some respondents from the principals and educators groups however indicated that they do monitor the performance of the educators at their schools by collecting learners’ books to check if educators are implementing what was agreed upon in their respective departments. One respondent who is a head of department had this to say: “In my department which is languages, we agreed that we must, at least, have two tests in a term, dictation on a daily basis, and I check educators’ work regularly to see whether policy is followed”.

“Department has somewhat the capacity to implement and monitor these policies, but at times the monitoring process is lacking and ineffective because there are no coordinated plans of monitoring schools. Itineraries of different units which are not aligned and the difficulty experienced – due to lack of transport when trying to reach the schools where you have to visit – are some of the issues that aggravate the monitoring problems”, as it was put by one respondent from the district officials.



#### 4.4.1.6 Improvement Suggestions

Respondents were also asked to generate possible suggestions for improving the standard of policy implementation and monitoring. Most of them indicated that the problem is caused by the fact that the department of education just gives out policies without proper well coordinated workshops on those policies. They cited the IQMS policy as an example; most of the officials are also not clear of what IQMS is all about. The department needs to have organised intensive training for all stakeholders who will be affected by this policy. Every workshop on policy must have a follow-up management plan and the criteria that will be used during monitoring should be clear to all. This follow-up plan will help officials to evaluate the performance of educators on the implementation of those particular policies without fear or favour.

One respondent from the district officials also suggested that “different units or sections of the district office should work as a team by meeting at least once on a monthly or quarterly basis to draft a common itinerary for the district and also to discuss and share ideas on the challenges that they meet in the schools and that the provincial office or head office should accelerate the processing of subsidised cars for those district officials who qualify so that they can be able to visit schools”. The above suggestion was echoed by a good number of respondents from the district officials.

Respondents from both the principal and educators groupings further suggested that they must be involved in the initial stages of policy formation. They feel that their non-involvement when policies are developed – policies that affect them directly – somehow undermines them; as a result they become unenthusiastic to execute their responsibilities.

One respondent from the educators suggested that “policies should be simplified by making them easy to read and that they should be

practical and easily applicable. There has to be demonstrations by experts to show that policies – especially those that deal with classrooms teaching – can really be applicable. The provincial departments must therefore establish model or pilot schools where these demonstrations can be presented for schools in the vicinity to learn from so that they can implement them in their schools”.

The following suggestions were common from all the groups that “all stake- holders should know or have a detailed understanding of each one’s role in policy implementation” and that “policies should be popularised so that educators could be accustomed with them and that sessions should be created for educators not the unions to deliberate and have common interpretation over policies. “Policies should also be mounted on the classroom and staffroom walls for everyone to see and read.

“Organise intensive workshops on policy issues in order to increase the knowledge of educators on this issue. The duration should be increased; for argument sake a year’s work can not be taught in 2 hours or in a day. There should be follow-ups to monitor the performance on what has been presented at the workshops and to provide assistance where necessary”.

The department should also allow policies to last for some time before it changes them as this is confusing and frustrating educators. One respondent in support of the latter statement had this to say: “The department must have at least a minimum of 5 to 10 years before introducing something new; we find ourselves confused. It must stick to one policy and must look for the advantages and disadvantages in stead of changing them overnight whenever someone new is appointed or elected”.

It was also suggested that the department get its priorities right. Resources must be equitably distributed in all schools.

The department must also move away from appointing people on political affinity; the ability or skills of a person must be the determining factor when appointing personnel.

#### 4.4.2 Questionnaires

In the questionnaires it was found that the rate of visiting schools to monitor the implementation of policies by district officials varies. For instance, 43% of district officials visit school once a week, 29% visit fortnightly while 29% once a term. This rate of visits could be attributed to a variety of reasons: the unavailability of transport to move officials around and also the huge number of schools that should be visited. However, respondents from the district officials who are working with schools that are close to the district office are able to visit two to three schools per week.

On the issue of giving schools support and motivation, the following was found: 86% work as a team with schools while 14% only provide school support when they are requested to do so.

In executing their daily duties district officials consult a wide-spread variety of documents: 86% of them consult Acts, 43% official publications, 86% regulations, 14% books, 86% departmental circulars and 14% other sources.

The frequency in visiting the library or document centre in their district somewhat differs. In the questionnaire participants from the district offices were asked to use a tick next to the appropriate box to show their frequency in visiting the library and/or the document centre. In response 43% ticked 'last week' which could be interpreted to mean that almost half the number of participants regularly use the library to find information which they need in executing their responsibilities.

29% ticked 'last month'; this could be interpreted to mean that participants do not regard information centres as important support structures or information

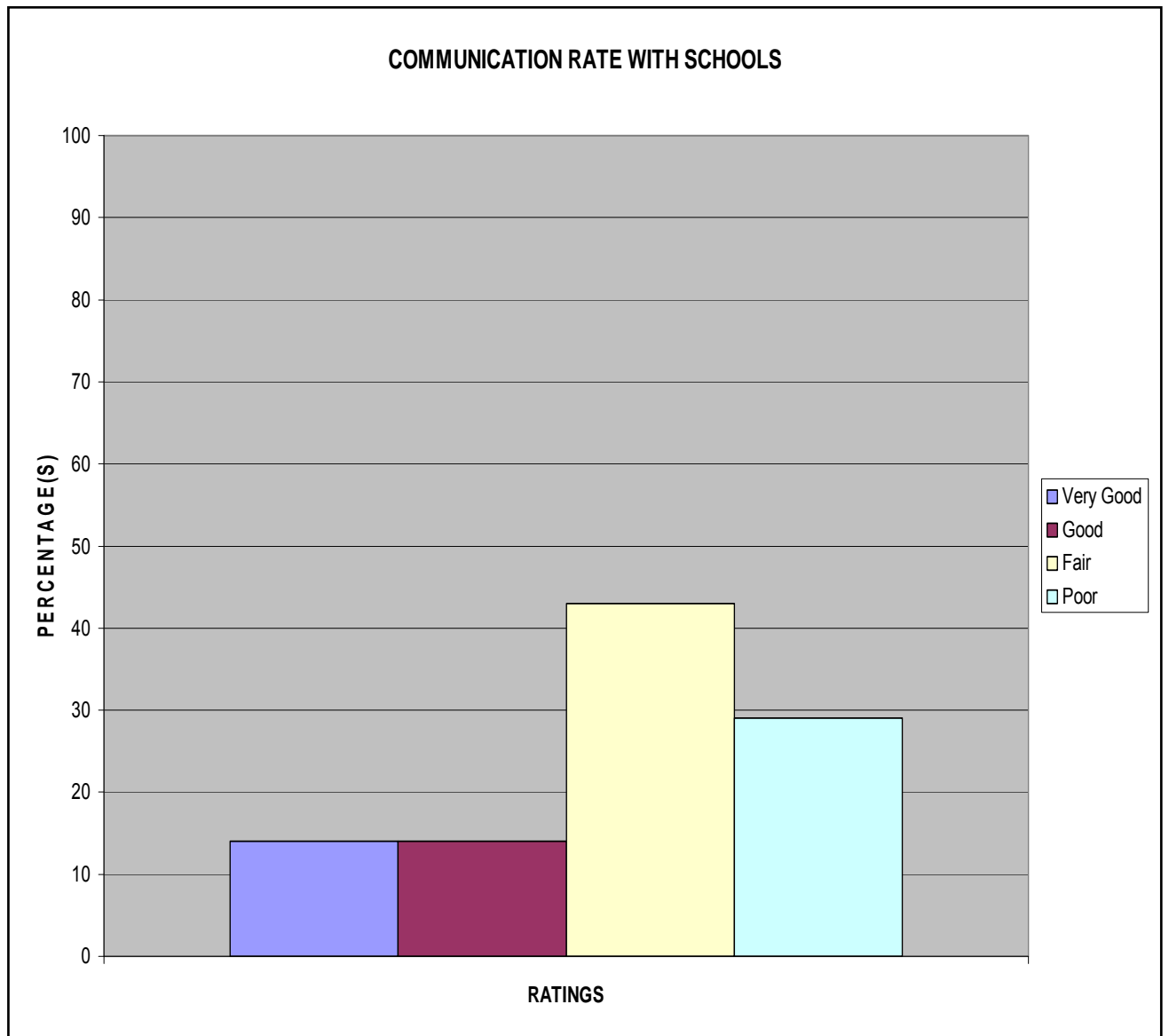
resources to be used in assisting them to provide the appropriate support for schools, while 28% seldom or never visit the library at all as they do not regard them as useful sources of information needed in executing their responsibilities.

The foregoing assertion further echoes the fact that the library is inadequately equipped with policy reference material and that most of the information in these libraries is outdated; 29% of the respondents indicated that the library is fairly equipped; 42% indicated that the library is not very well equipped while 29% indicated that the library is not equipped at all.

Respondents from the district officials were also asked to respond on the communication rate with the schools in their district. 14% regard communication between the district office and the schools to be very good; the other 14% says it is good. 43% say the communication system is fair while 29% indicated that there is a poor communication system with schools (see Table 4 below). 29% of respondents from the district office indicated that when it comes to policy understanding, they are very good while 71% just said that they are good (did not want to commit themselves).

The provincial department's intervention strategies in supporting and empowering officials on policy implementation and monitoring was rated as being both valuable (43%) and helpful (57%).

**Table 4:** Communication rate with schools by district officials



The study also looked at different participants’ levels of policy understanding and their capacity to implement them by asking respondents to answer questions using the scale that was provided. The following findings emerged:

- from the educators respondents:

The findings revealed that 8% of the educators are familiar with the current policies, 15% not sure if they are familiar with the policies and 46% are confident that they are familiar with current policies. Educators were also asked to indicate whether they are able to describe different types of policies and it was found that 46% of the selected respondents are able to describe

the different policies. Only 23% were not sure if they are able to do that. Only 8% indicated that they will find it difficult.

Concerning their understanding of the process of developing policies, 8% indicated that they never understand the policy development process. 31% indicated that educators rarely understand the process while 46% indicated that educators sometimes understand the process. 8% indicated that educators never understand the significance of policies on their teaching. 15% rarely understand the significance and 46% of educators always have an understanding of the significance of policies in their teaching.

On the department's support in training them on policies in education, 15% say the department never supports them, 54% say the department sometimes does train educators on policy issues. However, they feel that the department's rate of consultation during the policy development process is not enough; only 23% indicated that they are always consulted during policy development processes. 38% say the department never consults them (See Table 5 below).

**Table 5:** Level of policy understanding by educators

	<b>N</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>A</b>
Educators' familiarity with current policies in education	8%	15%	30%	46%
Educators' ability to describe different types of education policies.	8%	23%	23%	46%
Educators' understanding of the policy development process.	8%	31%	46%	15%
Educators have an understanding of the significance of policies on their teaching work.	8%	15%	30%	46%
The DoE's support to educators by training them on policies in education.	15%	16%	54%	15%
Consultation of educators by the DoE during policy development processes.	38%	8%	30%	23%

Scale: N = Never

R = Rarely

S = Sometimes

A = Always

- from the principal respondents:

45% of the principal respondents say that principals never have adequate knowledge and understanding of policies in education. 15% rarely have knowledge and understanding while only 15% say that they always have that knowledge and understanding. 48% say schools are never resourced to implement policies effectively while 25% say they are resourced. 18% of respondents further say that principals never give sufficient support to educators with regard to policy implementation, 22% say they sometimes do that and 25% say they always do that. On the other hand, 36% say principals never get sufficient training and support on policies from the department. 26%, however, say that they sometimes do get training. Only 20% say they always get training. (See Table 6 below)

**Table 6:** Level of policy understanding and implementation by principals

	N	R	S	A
Principals have adequate knowledge and understanding of policies in education.	45%	15%	25%	15%
Schools are well resourced to implement policies effectively.	48%	12%	15%	25%
Principals give sufficient support to educators with regard to policy implementation.	18%	30%	22%	30%
Principals are given sufficient training and support on policies.	36%	18%	26%	20%
Principals are guided by policy when executing their management duties.	12%	42%	23%	23%



Principals are comfortable with the degree of support which they receive from the district on policy matters.	45%	22%	23%	10%
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Scale: N = Never

R = Rarely

S = Sometimes

A = Always

- from the district officials respondents:

47% of the respondents say schools are never resourced properly to implement policies. 23% say that they are rarely resourced and only 14% say they are always resourced. 33% say policy documents are distributed to all schools while 34% say they are sometimes distributed and 25% say they are never distributed. Concerning communication 33% say the communication between schools and the district office is never effective. 13% say it is sometimes effective and 30% say it is always effective. 56% of respondents say schools receive reliable feedback from the district officials while 12% say the feedback they send to schools is never reliable. 46% respondents further say that officials visit schools to monitor and give support on policies; 8% say they never do that. On holding workshops, 48% say the district never have a well coordinated plan on presenting workshops while 20% say the district always has a plan that is coordinated. (See Table 7 below)

**Table 7:** Involvement of district officials in implementing and monitoring policies

	N	R	S	A
Schools are well resourced to implement policies.	47%	23%	16%	14%
Policy documents are distributed to all schools.	15%	18%	34%	33%
There is an effective communication system between schools and district office.	33%	24%	13%	30%
Schools receive reliable feedback from the district	12%	22%	10%	56%



officials on policy matters.				
District officials visit schools to monitor and give support on policies.	8%	24%	22%	46%
District officials have a well coordinated plan on holding workshops on policy matters.	48%	14%	18%	20%

Scale: N = Never

R = Rarely

S = Sometimes

A = Always

#### 4.4.3 Conclusion

From the discussions above it is clear that much still has to be done in order to improve on effective policy implementation and monitoring in the schools. Educators have shown that they are aware of the concept *policy* and its purpose. There are, however, challenges identified in terms of implementing these policies and effective communication by the district offices and the schools. The findings from the questionnaires reveal that there is a serious communication problem between district and schools.

The analysis on the interviews conducted in the study has further shown that policy as a concept is well entrenched within the minds of educators. It has emerged, as discussed in this chapter, that educators do have an understanding of what policy is and also what are its intentions in the education system of our country are. Testimony to this is that in the findings respondents were able to give a generic description of policy to be a set of guidelines or regulations which are formulated to give direction on how certain issues are to be done. This finding lays a good foundation for the department to know where to start when building on the policy process with regard to implementation and monitoring as educators, principals and district officials already have a basic knowledge of policy.

The study also found that educators are aware of the different authoritative roles held by policies in the education system. They were able to give examples of policy documents that have national authority, provincial authority, and district and school authority. Educators have an abundance of information on different policies in education. What seems to be still lacking is the effective application of that theoretical knowledge when executing their duties.

Educators are being flooded with policies from the national all the way down to the school level and the department has no reliable monitoring and intervention strategies in place to check through the officials on a regular basis if educators are implementing policies. The Communication system between the district office and the schools is still a matter of grave concern in the district. The study has found that although there have been attempts by both the schools and the districts to communicate, that communication has not been effective either due to poor technological infrastructure – telecommunication system – between district and schools or the shortage of transport to ferry officials around the district in order to monitor schools on a regular basis. The analyses further showed that some of these problems may be created by the provincial department of education.

One of the salient issues that were found in the analyses of the questionnaires is that libraries in the district offices are not adequately utilised by officials. Information centres are not seen by some officials as important support structures providing information that will assist officials in preparation of their duties. This could be attributed to an inadequate supply of relevant information in the library. The following chapter will supply the recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER 5

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools has been explored. This research aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools by the educators, principals and the district officials. This chapter presents an overview of the study, with reference to the background, the rationale for the study, the aim, the current literature, the method of research as well as the analysis of the findings. Recommendations are also discussed.

The purpose of the study was to investigate from a generic perspective the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring educational policies by educators, principals and district officials in schools. The study focused on their understanding of the concept policy and its purpose, since policies serve different purposes and are constructed for different reasons.

In Chapter 1 it was pointed out that the new education system aims at developing the full potential of each learner (rural and urban) as citizens of a democratic South Africa. The system further seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate and multi-skilled, compassionate, with respect for the environment, and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen. The obstacles on the way of this vision informed the rationale for the study, wherein quality teaching and learning has been compromised by extra or core curricular activities which are poorly organised during teaching and learning time without consideration of applicable policies. The aim of the study was also outlined and the conceptualisation of the study was done; operational terms for the study were

defined under the theoretical framework, research design and methodology were outlined.

Chapter 2 then dealt with the literature review which was undertaken to discuss the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring of education policies in schools focusing on the educators, principals and district officials. International literature points to a number of possibilities for the role of district offices. The literature suggests that districts could, alternatively, play a facilitation role in service delivery and school support. Miller (2004) argues that the district's role has emerged as a key issue in shaping the conditions under which principals can do their most productive work. Districts must set their priorities in view of what research has shown to be effective. As part of that process, districts should review the research on effective leadership and determine whether their principals have the authority and support necessary to implement the leadership practices that have been identified as effective. The review has resulted in the creation of a good foundation for further empirical investigation.

In Chapter 3 the research design and methodology employed for the study were discussed. Methodology refers to the rules and procedures of a research work (Collins, et al. 2001). Goldenberg (1992) argues that methodological principles in the social sciences ensure that we are able to defend our findings and are those guidelines that researchers agree on and that they rely on to give us acceptable research practices. Methodological principles further enable researchers to attain knowledge by providing the researchers with the necessary techniques or tools.

Chapter 4 focused on the analysis of the data collected and the discussion of the findings of the study. An inductive method of analysis was used. Data in the interviews – which has been collected through the use of a semi-structured interview guide and the questionnaires – were analysed. Marshall and Rossman (1990) define data analysis as a process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. They see it as a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating process. Data analysis is an ongoing and interactive process in qualitative research. Data analysis

consists of sorting the data into categories, formatting the data into a coherent story and writing the qualitative text (Mouton, 1996).

In the light of the above it is clear that our education system is still far from turning the tide, much still has to be done by education officials in terms of ensuring an effective system in the implementation and monitoring of education policies, from the perspective of the respondents – educators, principal's and the district officials – it has been overwhelmingly established that implementation and monitoring of policies is still a great challenge and the situation is extremely dire for our educators if the findings of the study are anything to go by.

If we need our education to be responsive to the needs of society of developing critical and creative future adults, authorities must as a matter of urgency review and improve the way teaching and learning is implemented and monitored by considering and subsequently implementing the recommendations of research studies conducted. The system can only improve if scientific methods of gathering knowledge are embraced by the department of education.

It is apparent according to the findings of the study that different people assign different meanings to the concept *policy*. Policy is understood to mean amongst others a set of rules that govern the specific institution, i.e. guiding document(s) on how to implement activities in schools or in an institution. What is common among the respondents is that they understand policy as more of a guideline rather than rigid set of rules that must be applied with flinch.

Respondents regard the purpose of policy as providing guidance on how activities in a school or institution are supposed to be done. My reading was that according to them policy implementers are permitted to apply their discretionary power when grappling with matters related to policy. The purpose of policy is to give directions as to who should be doing what – setting up parameters – in order to avoid conflicts that might arise as a result of not knowing who should be doing what. This will ensure that everybody

knows what is expected of them and that will make the system to be more effective.

Policies serve different purposes and are constructed for different reasons. There are distinct linkages between the policies. Some are more detailed strategic plans for the implementation of higher level policy initiative. Policies must be analysed and evaluated in different ways. There are substantive policies that reflect what the government should do, and procedural policies that spell out who is going to take action and through which mechanisms.

For educators to understand productivity and realise that education is not a charity, considerable effort needs to be spent in training. In other words, an amount of time equal to that spent by education leaders trying to understand the policies should be spent empowering the educators on how policies should be implemented.

The following paragraphs focus on the recommendations of the study:

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.2.1 Recommendation 1**

The department should produce a policy workbook for all educators that contains simplified versions of education policies. It has been found that most policies in their current forms are too academic which makes it difficult for educators to read and understand. Such a document should further be able to emphasise the relationship between different policy documents in schematic form and indicate the links with the vision and mission of the DOE and the Constitution of the country in particular.

### **5.2.2 Recommendation 2**

The department should establish fully-fledged research and development units up to district level that will focus mainly on the analysis of the implementation and monitoring of policies and recommend and advise the provincial department, the district officials and schools on what is working or not working on a continuous basis through applying scientific methods.

### **5.2.3 Recommendation 3**

The provincial education department must establish in-service training centres in every district for developing educators who are already in the service.

### **5.2.4 Recommendation 4**

The department must negotiate partnership deals with institutions of higher education to broaden the scope of educator development.

### **5.2.5 Recommendation 5**

Stake-holders must refrain from blaming the system as they are the system and they must start to embrace accountability, responsibility, discipline and solution-driven practices for the benefit of the learners.

### **5.2.6 Recommendation 6**

Every workshop on policy issues must be well prepared with clear aims and objectives and must also be accompanied by a follow-up management plan and the criteria or the tool that will be used during monitoring should be clear to all well in advance. The element of 'surprise-surprise' by officials should be avoided as it does not benefit the education system; instead, it only serves to intensify the hostile attitudes.

### **5.2.7 Recommendation 7**

Appointments should be based strictly on proven competency.

### **5.2.8 Recommendation 8**

The department must ensure that district offices have state of the art information centres or libraries where district officials and educators can access information.

### **5.2.9 Recommendation 9**

The campaign to recruit young and enthusiastic educators with recent educational qualifications into the system should be intensified before they are lost to the corporate world.

### **5.2.10 Recommendation 10**

Coordinated motivational talk seminars should be arranged regularly to lift the morale of the disgruntled educators in the system.

### **5.2.11 Recommendation 11**

The provincial department must focus on improving communication system between schools and district offices for monitoring purposes.

In South Africa today the challenge is to redress past inequalities and transform the education system to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities. The education system must lay the foundation for the development of a learning society that can stimulate, direct and mobilise the creative and intellectual energies of all the people towards meeting the challenges of reconstruction and development. A society without a proper education system, living history, heritage and pride is a non-society.



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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MORETELE  
AREA PROJECT OFFICE (North West Province)



**education**

Lefapha la Thuto  
Onderwys Departement  
Department of Education  
**NORTH WEST PROVINCE**

First Floor,  
Garona Building  
Private Bag X2044,  
Mmabatho 2735  
Tel.: (018) 387-3429  
Fax: (018) 387-3430  
e-mail: [ptyatya@nwpg.gov.za](mailto:ptyatya@nwpg.gov.za)

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**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL**

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Enquiries: Mpiliso Tyatya  
Tel: 018 387 3429  
Fax: 018 387 3430  
E-mail: [sgedu@nwpg.gov.za](mailto:sgedu@nwpg.gov.za)

7 February 2008

**To: Mr. Asser Mhlongo**  
**Student No: 9925331**

**From: Mr. H.M. Mveli**  
**Acting Superintendent-General**

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF  
EDUCATION AUTHORITIES IN IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING EDUCATION  
POLICIES**

Receipt of your correspondence regarding the afore-going matter is hereby acknowledged. The content is noted and to this end permission is granted for you to conduct research into the effectiveness of education authorities in implementing and monitoring education policies at bojanala region in the province. Please note that the relevant Regional Manager in the area of the affected region has accordingly been informed and the onus rests with your good office in terms of making necessary logistical arrangements with the region.

I trust that the above meets your expectations.

Yours Sincerely

**MR. H.M. MWELI**  
**ACTING SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL**

**Cc: Mr. M.A. Seakamela – Deputy Director General**



**APPENDIX B**

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA'S ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE  
 CERTIFICATE TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
 FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
 RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**CLEARANCE NUMBER : EM08/07/02**

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

M.Ed Educational Leadership and Policy  
 The Effectiveness of the Implementation and Monitoring of  
 Education Policies in Schools.

**INVESTIGATOR(S)**

A Mhlongo - 9925331

**DEPARTMENT**

Educational Management and Policy Studies

**DATE CONSIDERED**

15 August 2008

**DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE**

APPROVED

*This ethical clearance is valid for  years from the date of consideration and may be renewed upon application*

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS  
 COMMITTEE**

Dr S Human-Vogel

6 November 2008

CC

Mr Jean van Rooyen  
 Mrs Jeannie Beukes

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

**APPENDIX C**  
**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**Topic: “The Effectiveness of the Implementation and Monitoring of Education Policies in Schools”**

1. What is your understanding of the concept ‘*policy*’?
2. What is the purpose of policy?
3. Please complete the following table by giving examples of policy documents at the different levels that you are familiar with:

Level	Example	Purpose
National Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	
Provincial Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	
District Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	





School Policy	1.  2.  3.	

4. Do all policy documents have the same standing?
5. How does your institution communicate with you on policy matters?  
Comment on the effectiveness of this process.
6. Briefly explain how decision-making is guided by policy at your institution?
7. Express your opinion on the department's capacity to implement and monitor education policies? Please substantiate your view.
8. What support mechanisms do you have in place to ensure effective policy adherence?
9. What are the problems you experience with regard to effective policy implementation?
10. What are the problems you experience with regard to policy monitoring?



11. What, in your opinion, should be done to improve the standard of policy implementation and monitoring? (provide at least three suggestions)



## APPENDIX D

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDUCATORS

#### A. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The purpose of this section is to gather biographical data to answer questions in the research study. Data drawn will help in making conclusions and recommendations.

##### Instructions:

Answer each question by putting a cross on the appropriate number.

##### 1. What is your current position?

School principal	
Deputy Principal	
Head of Department	
School Management Team Member	
Educator	

##### 2. How long have you been teaching?

Less than 10 years	
10-15	
15-20	
20-25	
25-30	
30-35	
35 and above	

##### 3. How old are you?

Below 25	
25-30	
30-35	
35-40	
40-45	
45-50	
50-55	
55 and above	



**4. What is your gender?**

Male	
Female	

**5. What is your highest academic qualification?**

Grade 12	
PTC/STC	
Diploma	
Bachelor degree	
Honours degree	
Masters degree	
Doctorate	
Other	

**6. What are you currently studying?**

Diploma	
ACE	
Bachelor degree	
Honours degree	
Masters degree	
Doctorate	
Other (specify)	
None	

**7. What is your racial group?**

Black	
Indian	
Coloured	
White	
Other	

**8. In which area is your school?**

Urban	
Semi-urban	
Metropolitan	
Rural	
Semi-rural	

**9. What type of school is your school?**

Early Childhood Development Centre	
Pre-school	
Primary school	
Secondary school	
Further education and training college	



## B. POLICY UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this section is to assess educators' knowledge of education policies and their implications to teaching and learning.

### 10. What is the level of policy understanding by educators?

Use the following scale to the following statements:  
1=Never (N), 2=Rarely(R), 3=Sometimes (S), 4=Always (A)

	N	R	S	A
Teachers are familiar with the current policies in education				
Teachers can describe different types of education policies				
Teachers understand the process of policy development				
Teachers understand the impact of policies on their teaching work				
Teachers are given training on policies in education by the DoE				
Teachers are consulted in policy development process				



## APPENDIX E

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

#### A. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The purpose of this section is to gather biographical data to answer questions in the research study. Data drawn will help in making conclusions and recommendations.

##### Instructions:

Answer each question by putting a cross on the appropriate number.

##### 1. What is your current position?

School principal	
Deputy Principal	
Head of Department	
School Management Team Member	
Educator	

##### 2. How long have you been teaching?

Less than 10 years	
10-15	
15-20	
20-25	
25-30	
30-35	
35 and above	

##### 3. How old are you?

Below 25	
25-30	
30-35	
35-40	
40-45	
45-50	
50-55	
55 and above	



**4. What is your gender?**

Male	
Female	

**5. What is your highest academic qualification?**

Grade 12	
PTC/STC	
Diploma	
Bachelor degree	
Honours degree	
Masters degree	
Doctorate	
Other	

**6. What are you currently studying?**

Diploma	
ACE	
Bachelor degree	
Honours degree	
Masters degree	
Doctorate	
Other (specify)	
None	

**7. What is your racial group?**

Black	
Indian	
Coloured	
White	
Other	

**8. In which area is your school?**

Urban	
Semi-urban	
Metropolitan	
Rural	
Semi-rural	

**9. What type of school is your school?**

Early Childhood Development Centre	
Pre-school	
Primary school	
Secondary school	
Further education and training college	

## B. POLICY UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this section is to investigate principals' knowledge of education policies and their implications to teaching and learning.

### 10. What is the level of policy understanding by Principals?

Use the following scale to the following statements: 1=Never (N), 2=Rarely(R), 3=Sometimes (S), 4=Always (A)

	N	R	S	A
Principals have adequate knowledge and understanding of policies				
Schools are well resourced to implement policies				
Principals give sufficient support to educators in applying policies				
Principals are given sufficient training and support on policy implementation				
Principals are guided by policy when executing their administrative duties				
Principals are comfortable with the degree of support which they receive from the districts on policy matters				

## C. MONITORING AND SUPPORT

The purpose of this section is to investigate the degree of monitoring and support the schools receive from the provincial and district offices.

### 11. What is the role of the provincial and district offices in implementing policy in schools?

Use the following scale to the following statements:  
1 = Never (N), 2 = Rarely(R), 3 = Sometimes(S), 4 = Always (A)

	N	R	S	A
Schools are well resourced to implement policies				
Policy documents are distributed to all schools				
There is effective communication system between schools and districts				
Schools receive reliable feedback from the district officials on policy matters				
District officials visit schools to monitor and give support				
District officials have a well coordinated plan on holding workshops for promotion of educational policies.				





## APPENDIX F

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DISTRICT OFFICIALS

#### A. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The purpose of this section is to gather biographical data to answer questions in the research study. Data drawn will help in making conclusions and recommendations.

##### Instructions:

Answer each question by putting a cross on the appropriate box.

##### 1. What is your current position?

Director General	
Deputy Director General	
Director	
Deputy Director	
Assistant Director	
Senior Manager	
Chief Education Specialist	
Senior Education Specialist	
Education Specialist	
Any Other	

##### 2. How long have you been in your current position?

Less than 10 years	
10-15	
15-20	
20-25	
25-30	
30-35	
35 and above	

##### 3. How old are you?

Below 25	
25-30	
30-35	
35-40	
40-45	



45-50	
50-55	
55 and above	

**4. What is your gender?**

Male	
Female	

**5. What is your highest academic qualification?**

Grade 12	
PTC/STC	
Diploma	
Bachelor degree	
Honours degree	
Masters degree	
Doctorate	
Other	

**6. What are you currently studying?**

Diploma	
ACE	
Bachelor degree	
Honours degree	
Masters degree	
Doctorate	
Other (specify)	
None	

**7. What is your racial group?**

Black	
Indian	
Coloured	
White	
Other	

**8. In which area is your district office?**

Urban	
Semi-urban	
Metropolitan	
Rural	
Semi-rural	



**9. In which directorate are you employed?**

General Education and Training	
Further Education and Training	
Human Resource Management	
Subject Advisory	
Labour Relations Services	
Logistics	
Administration	
Any Other	

**B. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

The purpose of this section is to assess District Officials' understanding of education policy implementation and monitoring.

**10. Please rate your level of involvement in policy implementation and monitoring.**

10.1 Please state how often you visit schools to monitor the implementation of policies?

*Tick appropriate box*

Once a Week	
Every fortnight	
Once a month	
Once a term	
Twice a year	
Once a year	
Never	

10.2 To what extent do you give schools support and motivation?

*Tick appropriate box*

Work as a team with schools	
Provide advice, but schools do their own thing	
Do counselling on regular basis and schools take it up from there	
Provide occasional support	
Provide support when requested to do so	
Not involved at all	



10.3 Which policy documents do you refer to?

*Tick appropriate box (es)*

Acts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Official Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Books	<input type="checkbox"/>
Departmental Circulars	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other reports	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.4 When did you last use the document centre/library?

*Tick the appropriate box*

Yesterday	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last Week	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last Month	<input type="checkbox"/>
Last Year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.5 How is your District office/library equipped with policy reference material?

*Tick the appropriate box*

Fully equipped	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairly well equipped	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not very well equipped	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not equipped at all	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.6 How would you rate communication between your office and schools?

*Tick the appropriate box*

Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.7.1 How would you rate yourself in terms of policy understanding?

*Tick the appropriate box*

Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Good	<input type="checkbox"/>



10.7.2 How would you rate yourself in terms of policy implementation?

*Tick the appropriate box*

Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Good	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.7.3 How would you rate yourself in terms of policy monitoring?

*Tick the appropriate box*

Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Good	<input type="checkbox"/>

10.8 How would you rate the provincial department's intervention strategies in supporting and empowering officials on policy implementation and monitoring

*Tick the appropriate box*

Very effective	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpful	<input type="checkbox"/>
Useful	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wasteful	<input type="checkbox"/>

**11. Use the provided space to give at least two practical examples to substantiate your responses in 10 above. Attach copies where possible. e.g. meeting schedules**

11.1 How often do you visit schools in your district?

11.2 To what extent do you give schools support and motivation in the implementation of policy?



11.3 Which policy documents do you refer to?

11.4 When did you last use the document centre/library and what was the purpose?

11.5 How is your District office/library equipped with policy material?

11.6 How would you rate communication between your office and schools?



11.7 How would you rate your self in terms of policy understanding?

11.8 How would you rate your self in terms of policy implementation?

11.9 How would you rate your self in terms of policy monitoring?

11.10 How would you rate the provincial department's intervention strategies in supporting and empowering officials on policy implementation and monitoring?