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
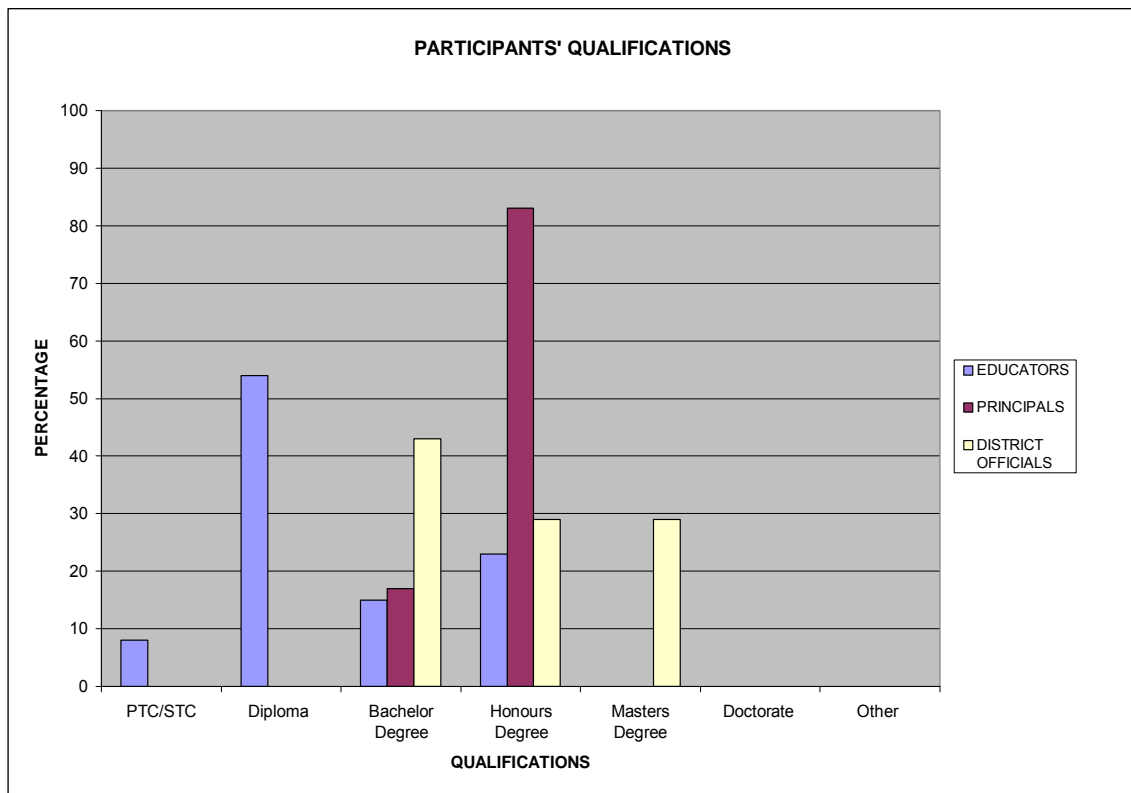
The participants are still pursuing their studies in both education and non-education-related disciplines. 23% of educators (post levels 1 and 2) are currently studying for the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), 8% are pursuing Bachelor's degrees while 31% are pursuing Honours degrees. 8% of the 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
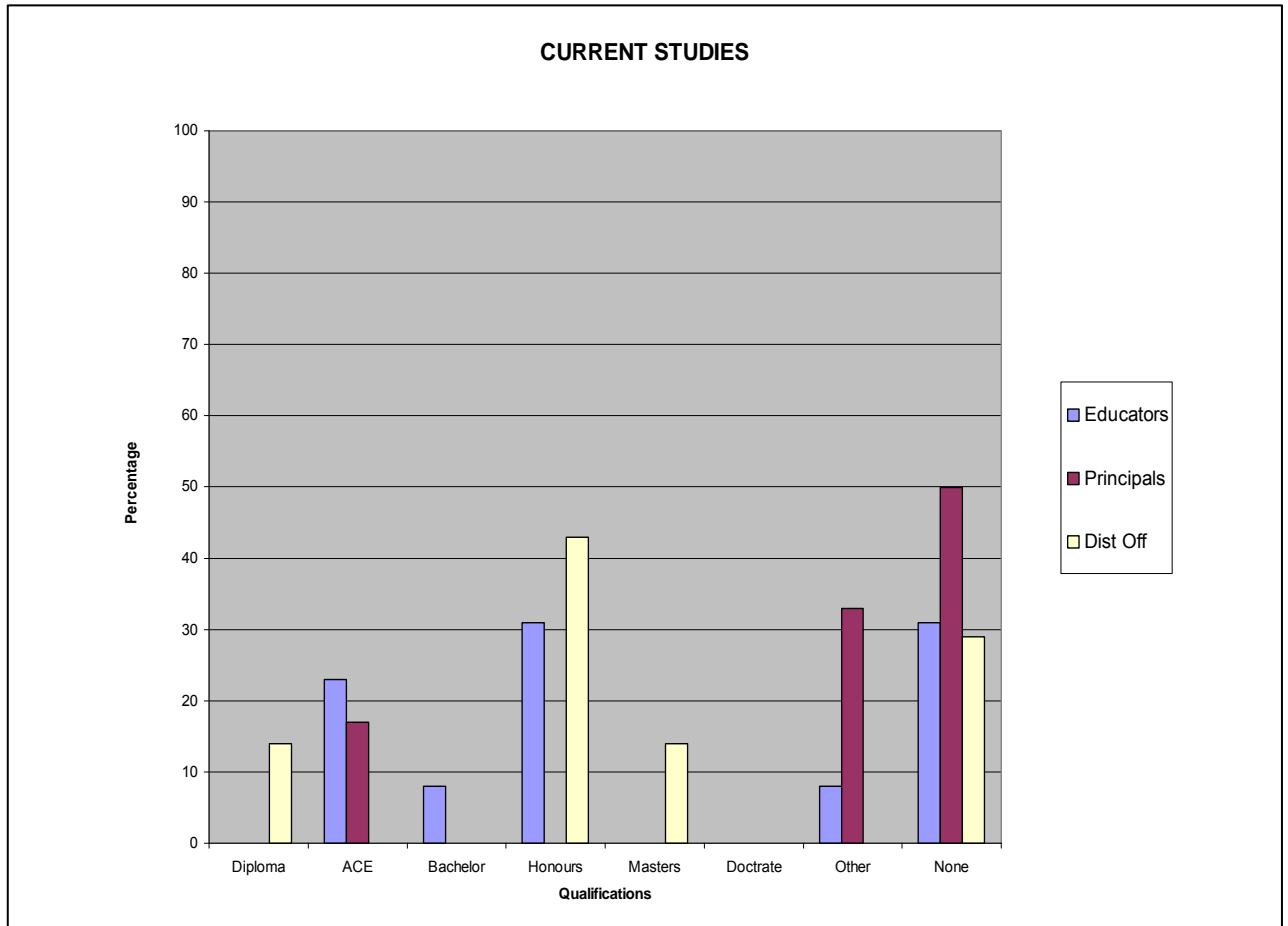
The study was conducted in the Moretele Area Project Office, which is also predominantly rural. 85% of participants (from the educators' group) teach in primary schools and 15% in secondary schools. Of the principals group, 50% head primary schools and 50% secondary schools. From the district officials 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
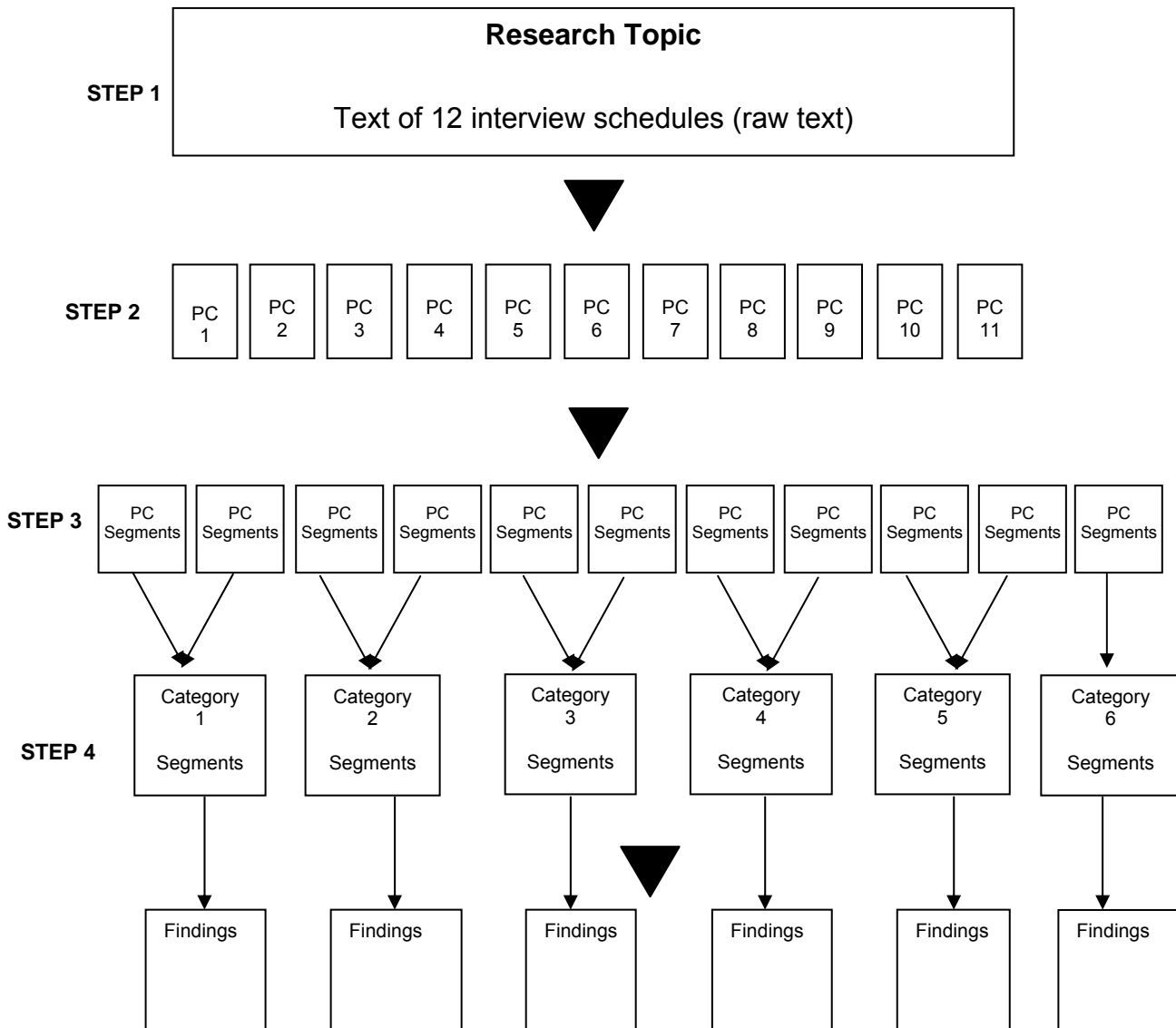6. Improvement suggestions

STEP 1

Research Topic
Text of 12 interview schedules (raw text)

▼

STEP 2

PC 1	PC 2	PC 3	PC 4	PC 5	PC 6	PC 7	PC 8	PC 9	PC 10	PC 11

▼

STEP 3

PC Segments	PC Segments	PC Segments	PC Segments	PC Segments	PC Segments	PC Segments	PC Segments	PC Segments	PC Segments	PC Segments

STEP 4

Category 1 Segments	Category 2 Segments	Category 3 Segments	Category 4 Segments	Category 5 Segments	Category 6 Segments

▼

Findings	Findings	Findings	Findings	Findings	Findings

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:

- **Actual**   **X 100 = %**
  Total

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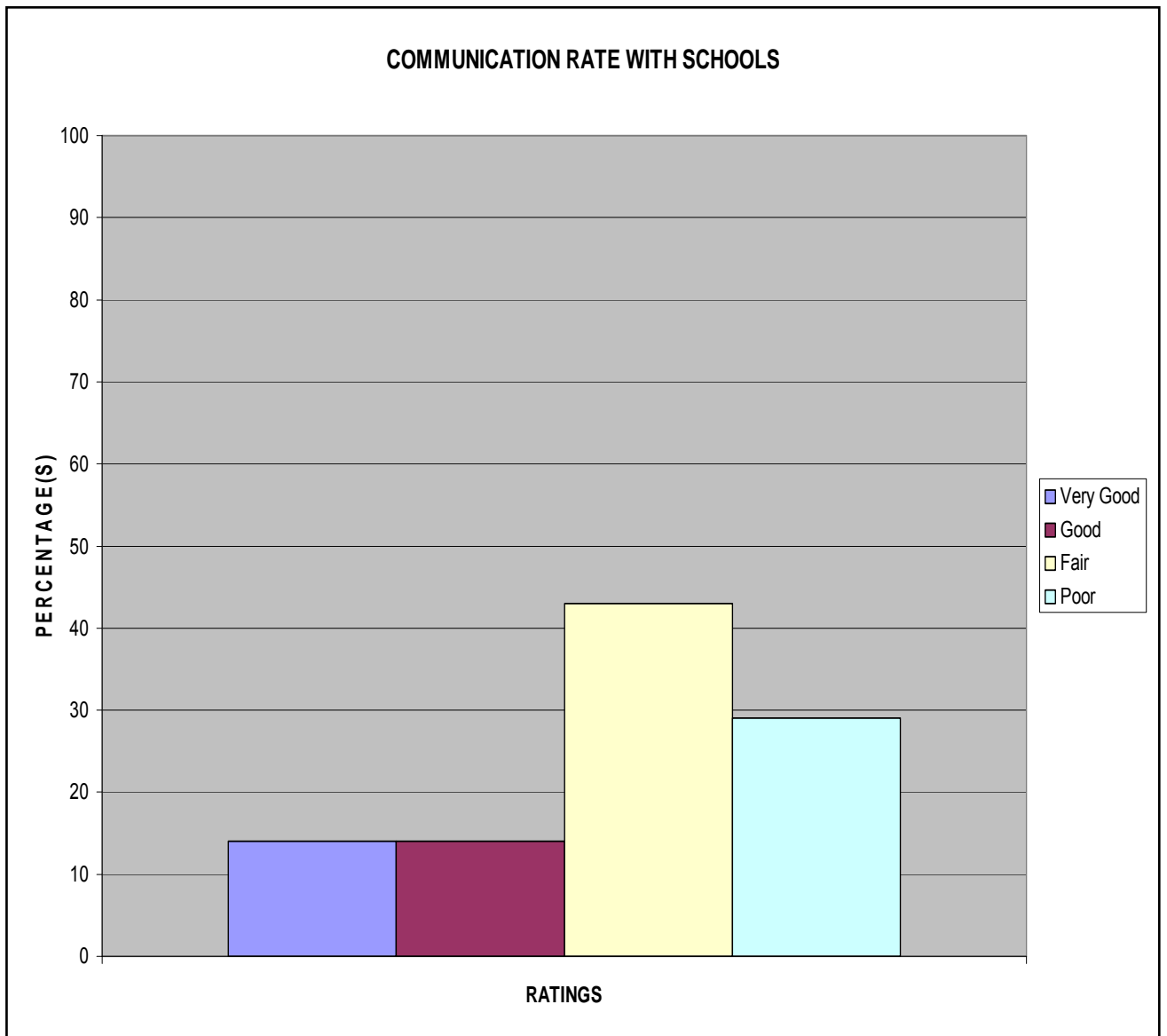
The study also looked at different participants' levels of policy understanding and their capacity to implement them by asking respondents to answer questions using the scale that was provided. The following findings emerged:

- 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

	N	R	S	A
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%

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%

	N	R	S	A
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 rational 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.