

## **CHAPTER 4: THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLUSTER-BASED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT REFORM**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the perceptions of school principals and lower primary teachers on the implementation of the goals of cluster-based school management reform. In the analysis of the data, the goals of cluster-based school management were grouped into four areas, namely: promoting stakeholder collaboration through shared collaborative and improved school management through committed and competent leadership in schools; increasing sharing of resources; enhancing teacher involvement in school decision-making processes; and improving teaching through local teacher development and training, local pedagogical supervision and support, professional collaboration and learning, and breaking the isolation of teachers.

### **4.2 Promoting stakeholder collaboration and improved school management**

Cluster-based school management reform assumes that cluster centre principals support, guide and supervise the satellite school principals; and improve their management practices by working in close collaboration with a well-managed school (cluster centre school). Cluster-centre principals are required to have skills to manage clusters in a collaborative manner.

Table 2 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the extent to which stakeholder collaboration has been promoted through shared and collaborative leadership as reported by the school principals in the thirty seven primary schools:



Item	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
School managers, teachers and parent collaboration	8	22%	25	68%	4	10%	0	0
Delegation of tasks and responsibilities among satellite schools	10	27%	21	57%	5	14%	1	2%
Principals and teachers work as a team	14	38%	18	49%	4	11%	1	3%

N=37

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of principals' perceptions on the extent to stakeholder collaboration has been promoted through shared and collaborative school leadership in thirty seven primary schools.

The responses of the school principals on the extent of collaboration among school managers, teachers and parents; delegation of tasks and responsibilities among satellite schools and principals and teachers work as a team are as follows:

90% of the 37 school principals said that *collaboration among school managers, teachers and parents* was enhanced through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 10% of the 37 respondents reported that collaboration between schools and parents was enhanced to a very limited extent.

84% of the 37 respondents perceived that *tasks and responsibilities were delegated to satellite schools* through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 14% of the 37 respondents reported that tasks and responsibilities were delegated to satellite schools to a very limited extent and only 2% of the respondents reported that tasks and responsibilities were never delegated to satellite schools.

87% of the 37 respondents said that *principals and teachers worked as a team* through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 10% of the 37 respondents reported that principals and teachers worked as a team to a very limited extent, and only 3% of the respondents stated that principals and teachers did not work as a team.

It can be inferred from the perceptions of the school principals stakeholders' participation has been fostered through shared and collaborative leadership during the implementation of cluster-based school management reform. The extent of collaboration among school managers, teachers and parents, between principals and teachers, and delegation of tasks and responsibilities to satellite schools was reported to be great. To determine the relationship between the background independent variables and the dependent variables and to establish the significance of the differences between groups<sup>7</sup>, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed.

The results of ANOVA revealed that educational qualifications,  $F(1.693)=.188$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.614)=.68$ ,  $p=.5$ , school geographical location,  $F(1.855)=.172$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(5.354)=.10$ ,  $p=.5$  and cluster condition,  $F(2.456)=.126$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(4.180)=.48$ ,  $p=.5$ , were factors influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of delegation of tasks and responsibilities among satellite schools, and collaboration between principals and teachers and the differences between groups were statistically significant. The analysis also showed that the above-mentioned factors did not have significant influence on the ratings of the school principals on the extent of collaboration among school managers, teachers and parents.

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<sup>7</sup> Independent variables were categorised in groups as indicated on the questionnaires for both school principals and lower primary teachers

The results of ANOVA also revealed that years of implementation of cluster-based school management,  $F(1.462)=.246$ ,  $p=.5$ , was a significant factor influencing the ratings of school principals on the extent of school managers, teachers and parent collaboration and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

Table 3 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution on the extent to which cluster-based school management reform promotes stakeholder collaboration through shared and collaborative school leadership as reported by the lower primary teachers in the thirty seven primary schools:

Item	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
School managers, teachers and parent collaboration	9	7%	74	57%	32	25%	15	12%
Delegation of tasks and responsibilities among satellite schools	22	17%	65	50%	28	22%	15	12%
Principals and teachers work as a team	56	43%	48	37%	16	12%	10	8%

*N=130*

*Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of lower primary teachers' perceptions on the extent to which stakeholder collaboration has been promoted through shared and collaborative school leadership in thirty seven primary schools.*

The responses of the lower primary teachers on the extent of collaboration between school managers, teachers and parents; delegation of tasks and responsibilities among satellite schools and principals and teachers work as a team are as follows:

64% of the 130 respondents said that *collaboration between school managers, teachers and parents* was enhanced through cluster-based school management to a large extent and to some extent. However, 25% of the 130 respondents reported that collaboration

between school managers, teachers and parents was enhanced to a very limited extent and 12% of the 130 respondents reported that collaboration between school managers, teachers and parents was never enhanced.

67% of the 130 respondents perceived that *tasks and responsibilities were delegated among satellite schools* through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 22% of the 130 respondents reported that tasks and responsibilities were delegated among satellite schools to a very limited extent and 12% of the 130 respondents reported that tasks and responsibilities were never delegated among satellite schools.

80% of the 130 respondents reported that *principals and teachers worked as a team* through cluster-based school management to large extent and to some extent. However, 12% of the 130 respondents reported that principals and teaches worked as a team to a very limited extent and only 8% of the 130 respondents stated that principals and teachers did not work as a team.

It can be concluded from the data that stakeholder collaboration has been promoted through shared and collaborative leadership and management during the implementation of cluster-based school management. The extent of collaboration between principals and teachers was reported to be greater than collaboration between school managers, teachers and parents; and delegation of tasks and responsibilities among satellite schools.

The results of ANOVA revealed that educational qualifications,  $F(1.075)=.372$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.294)=.63$ ,  $p=.5$ , school geographical location,  $F(2.272)=.107$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.610)=.77$ ,  $p=.5$ , years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform,  $F(2.117)=.125$ ,  $p=.5$ ;

$F(1.934)=.149$ ,  $p=.5$  and teacher support,  $F(2.056)=.154$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(4.846)=0.30$ ,  $p=.5$ , were factors influencing the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of delegation of tasks and responsibilities among satellite schools and collaboration between principals and teachers and the differences between groups were statistically significant. The analysis revealed also that the above-mentioned independent variables did not have significant influence on the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of collaboration among school managers, teachers and parents.

Overall, educational qualifications, years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform and school geographical location were factors which influenced the ratings of both the school principals and the lower primary teachers on the extent to which shared and collaborative leadership was enhanced through cluster-based school management reform and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

Table 4 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the extent to which the school management reform enhances committed and competent leadership through capacity building of the school principals in facilitating and managing change and in collaborative decision-making processes as reported by the school principals in the thirty seven primary schools:



Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Preparation of roles and responsibilities in implementing the reform	13	35%	23	62%	1	3%	0	0
Professional support in facilitating and managing change	12	32%	20	54%	5	14%	0	0
Trained in collaborative decision-making, problem solving	10	27%	21	57%	4	11%	2	5%

N=37

Table 4: *Frequency and percentage distribution of principals' perceptions on the extent to which cluster-based school management reform enhances committed and competent leadership through capacity building of the school principals in the thirty seven primary schools.*

The responses of the school principals on the extent of school principal preparation of tasks and responsibilities; professional support in facilitating and managing change and training in collaborative decision-making and problem solving are as follows:

97% of the 37 respondents reported that *principals were prepared for their roles and responsibilities* in implementing the reform to a large extent and to some extent. Only 3% of the 37 respondents reported that principals were prepared for their roles and responsibilities in implementing the school management reform to a very limited extent.

86% of the 37 respondents reported that *principals received training in facilitating and managing change* through cluster-based school management to a large extent and to some extent. However, 14% of the 37 respondents reported that principals did not receive professional support in facilitating and managing change.

84% of the 37 respondents reported that *principals received training in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving* through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 11% of the respondents thought that principals received training in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving to a very limited extent and only 5% of the respondents stated that principals never receive training.

It can be inferred from the perceptions of the school principals that capacity of school principals was built through cluster-based school management reform, and the extent of preparation for roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the reform; training in facilitating and managing change and in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving, according to the data, was great.

The results of ANOVA revealed that educational qualifications,  $F(1.515)=229, p=.5$ , was a significant factor influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of training in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving, while school geographical location,  $F(3.062)=.60, p=.5$ ;  $F(3.667)=.36, p=.5$ , and cluster condition,  $F(9.699)=.04, p=.5$ ;  $F(12.144)=.01, p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of training in facilitating and managing change and in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving and the differences between groups were statistically significant. The analysis also revealed that the above-mentioned background independent variables did not have significant influence on the ratings of the school principals on the extent of school principal preparation for their roles and responsibilities.

Table 5 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the extent to which the school management reform enhances committed and competent leadership through capacity building of the school principals in managing change and facilitating collaborative



decision-making and problem solving as reported by the lower primary teachers in the thirty seven primary schools:

Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Preparation of roles and responsibilities in implementing the reform	45	35%	52	40%	23	18%	10	8%
Professional support in facilitating and managing change	37	28%	57	44%	22	17%	14	11%
Trained in collaborative decision-making, problem solving	28	21%	62	48%	15	12%	25	19%

N=130

Table 5: Frequency and percentage distribution of lower primary teachers' perceptions on the extent to which cluster-based school management reform enhances committed and competent leadership through capacity building of the school principals in thirty seven primary schools.

The responses of the lower primary teachers on the extent of school principal preparation for roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the reform; training in facilitating and managing change and in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving are as follow:

75% of the 130 respondents reported that *principals were prepared for their roles and responsibilities* to implement the reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 18% of the 130 respondents said that principals were prepared for their roles and responsibilities to implement the reform to a very limited extent, and only 7% of the respondents reported that principals were not prepared to implement the reform.

72% of the 130 respondents reported that *principals received professional support in facilitating and managing change* through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 17% of the 130 respondents reported that

principals received professional support in facilitating and managing change to a very limited extent and 11% of the 130 respondents reported that principals never received professional support.

69% of the 130 respondents reported that principals received *training in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving* through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 12% of the 130 respondents reported that principals received training in collaborative decision-making and problem solving to a very limited extent and problem-solving and 19% of the 130 respondents perceived that principals did not receive training in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving.

It can be inferred from the data that capacity of school principals was built through cluster-based school management reform and the extent of school principal preparation for roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the reform; training in facilitating and managing change and in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving, according to the data, was great.

The results of ANOVA showed that years of teaching experience,  $F(1.706)=.153$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(3.187)=.016$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.593)=.040$ ,  $p=.5$ , school geographical location,  $F(1.968)=.144$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.458)=.090$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.754)=.177$ ,  $p=.5$ , years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform,  $F(1.676)=.191$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.958)=.56$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.968)=.144$ ,  $p=.5$ , cluster condition,  $F(1.909)=.152$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(4.661)=.011$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.894)=.155$ ,  $p=.5$ , and teacher support,  $F(7.286)=.008$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(10.770)=.001$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(6.204)=.14$ ,  $p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of school principal preparation for roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the reform; training in facilitating and managing change and in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving and there were significant differences between groups.

Overall, school geographical location and cluster condition were factors influencing the ratings of both the school principals and the lower primary teachers on the extent to which capacity of school principals was built through cluster-based school management reform and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

### 4.3 Increasing resource sharing

The second argument for school clustering in the Namibian context was to promote resource sharing. The advocates of cluster-based school management reform argue that efficient use of resources would be made if schools share resources. It is argued that through cluster-based school management reform the administrative tasks in circuits would be efficient if coordinated through the cluster centre, therefore saving time and transport costs. It is also assumed that teaching improves when teachers share good teaching practices and teaching resources. Table 6 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the extent to which cluster-based school management reform enhances resource sharing as reported by the school principals in the thirty-seven primary schools:

Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Teachers share teaching and learning materials	4	11%	23	62%	8	22%	2	5%
Under-resourced schools benefit from resourced schools	2	5%	22	59%	8	22%	4	11%
Cluster-centres equipped with additional facilities	3	8%	18	49%	12	32%	4	11%

N=37

Table 6: Frequency and percentage distribution of school principals' perceptions on the extent to which cluster-based school reform enhances resource sharing in the thirty seven primary schools.

The responses of the school principals on the extent of teachers sharing teaching and learning materials; under-resourced schools benefiting from resourced schools and the provision of cluster-centres with additional facilities are as follow:

73% of the 37 respondents reported that *teachers shared teaching and learning materials* to a large and some extent through cluster-based school management reform. However, 22% of the respondents said that teachers shared teaching and learning materials to a very limited extent and only 5% reported that teachers never shared teaching and learning materials.

64% of the 37 respondents reported that *under-resourced schools benefited from resourced schools* through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 22% of the respondents said that under-resourced schools benefited from resourced schools to a very limited extent and 11% of the respondents said that under-resourced schools never benefited from resourced-schools.

57% of the 37 respondents reported that *cluster-centres were equipped with additional facilities* through cluster-based school management to a large extent and to some extent. However, 32% of the respondents reported that cluster-centres were equipped with additional facilities to a very limited extent and 11% of the respondents said that cluster-centres were never equipped with additional facilities.

It can be inferred from the data that cluster-based school management reform increased sharing of resources. The extent of teachers sharing teaching and learning materials and under-resourced schools benefiting from resourced-schools, according to the data, was greater than the extent of provision of cluster-centres with additional resources.

The results of ANOVA revealed that school geographical location,  $F(4.962)=0.13$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.518)=.96$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.705)=.197$ ,  $p=.5$ , was a significant factor influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of teachers sharing teaching and learning materials, under-resourced schools benefiting from resourced-schools and provision of cluster-centres with additional resources and the differences between groups were statistically significant. The analysis also revealed that years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform,  $F(2.225)=.124$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.339)=.276$ ,  $p=.5$ , and cluster condition,  $F(8.917)=.005$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(9.428)=.004$ ,  $p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of teachers sharing teaching and learning materials and provision of cluster-centres with additional resources and the differences between groups were significant. However, these factors did not have significant influence on the ratings of the school principals on the extent of under-resourced schools benefiting from resourced schools.

Table 7 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the extent to which cluster-based school management reform resource sharing as reported by the lower primary teachers in the thirty seven primary schools:

Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Teachers share teaching and learning materials	17	3%	58	45%	33	25%	22	17%
Under-resourced schools benefit from resourced schools	16	12%	66	51%	30	23%	18	14%
Cluster-centres equipped with additional facilities	25	19%	48	37%	31	24%	26	20%

N=130

Table 7: Frequency and percentage distribution of teachers' perceptions on the extent to which cluster-based school management reform enhances resource sharing in thirty seven primary schools.

The responses of the lower primary teachers on the extent of teachers sharing teaching and learning materials; under-resourced schools benefiting from resourced-schools and the provision of cluster-centres with additional facilities are as follow:

58% of the 130 respondents reported that *teachers shared teaching and learning materials* through cluster-based school management reform to a large and some extent. However, 25% of the respondents said that teachers shared teaching and learning materials to a very limited extent and 17% reported that teachers never shared teaching and learning materials.

63% of the 130 respondents reported that *under-resourced schools benefited from resourced-schools* through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 23% of the respondents said that under-resourced schools benefited from resourced-schools to a very limited extent and 14% of the respondents said that under-resourced schools never benefited from resourced-schools.

56% of the 130 respondents reported that *cluster-centres were equipped with additional facilities* through cluster-based school management to a large extent and to some extent. However, 24% of the respondents reported that cluster-centres were equipped with additional facilities to a very limited extent and 20% of the respondents said that cluster-centres were never equipped with additional facilities.

It can be concluded from the data that cluster-based school management reform enhanced resource sharing. The extent of teachers sharing teaching and learning materials; under-resourced schools benefiting from resourced-schools, according to the

data was reported to be greater than the provision of cluster-centres with additional facilities.

The results of ANOVA revealed that educational qualifications,  $F(1.685)=.158$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.345)=.58$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.786)=.136$ ,  $p=.5$ ; school geographical location,  $F(1.801)=.169$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(7.422)=.001$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(6.324)=.002$ ,  $p=.5$ , years of implementation of cluster-based school management,  $F(.687)=.505$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(4.990)=.008$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.717)=.184$ ,  $p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of teachers sharing teaching and learning materials; under-resourced schools benefiting from resourced-schools and the provision of cluster-centres with additional facilities and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

Overall, school geographical location and years of implementation of cluster-based school management were factors influencing the ratings of both the school principals and the lower primary teachers on the extent to which resource sharing was enhanced through cluster-based school management reform and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

#### **4.4 Enhancing teacher involvement in school decision-making processes**

Teacher involvement in decision-making processes is a key feature of cluster-based school management reform. School clustering emphasises the importance of devolving decision-making to teachers, parents and community, because of the claim that the education system improves by involving those who are closest to schools in decision-making processes. It is assumed that through cluster-based school management reform, teachers are involved in decision-making processes and teachers' knowledge and experience are included in key school decisions.

Table 8 below shows the frequency and distribution of the extent to which teacher participation in school decisions was implemented as reported by the school principals in the thirty-seven primary schools:

Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Teacher involvement in decision-making processes	12	32%	20	54%	5	4%	0	0
Teachers' knowledge and experience included in key school decisions	12	32%	21	57%	4	11%	0	0
Teachers and school managers work together for school improvement	16	43%	18	49%	3	8%	0	0

N=37

Table 8: Frequency and percentage distribution of school principals' perceptions on the extent to which teacher participation in school decisions was implemented through cluster-based school management reform in the thirty-seven primary schools.

The responses of the school principals on the extent of teacher involvement in decision-making processes, teachers' knowledge and experience included in key school decisions and teachers and managers work together for school improvement are as follows:

86% of the 37 respondents reported that *teacher involvement in decision making* was implemented through cluster-based school management to a large extent and to some extent. However, 14% of the respondents reported that teacher involvement in decision-making was implemented to a very limited extent.

89% of the 37 respondents reported that *teachers' knowledge and experience* were included in key school decisions through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 11% of the respondents said that teachers' knowledge and experience were included in key school decisions to a very limited extent.



92% of the 37 respondents reported that *teachers and school managers worked together for school improvement* through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 8% of the respondents reported that teachers and school managers worked together for school improvement to a very limited extent.

It can be inferred from the perceptions of the school principals that teachers were involved in decision-making processes through cluster based school management reform. The extent of teacher involvement in decision-making processes, teachers' knowledge and experience being included in key school decisions and teachers and school managers work together for school improvement, according to the data, was great.

The results of ANOVA revealed that years of school management experience,  $F(1.240)=.314$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.667)=.182$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.132)=.359$ ,  $p=.5$ , school geographical location,  $F(2.475)=.099$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.325)=.113$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.902)=.165$ ,  $p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of teacher involvement in decision-making processes, teachers' knowledge and experience being included in key school decisions and teachers and school managers work together for school improvement and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

Table 9 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the extent to which teacher participation in school decisions was implemented as reported by the lower primary teachers in the thirty seven primary schools:



Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Teacher involvement in decision-making	43	33%	60	46%	22	17%	5	4%
Teachers' knowledge and experience included in key school decisions	35	27%	57	44%	32	25%	6	5%
Teachers and managers work together for school improvement	35	27%	57	44%	35	24%	6	5%

N=130

Table 9: Frequency and percentage distribution of lower primary teachers' perceptions on the extent to which teacher participation in school decisions was implemented through cluster-based school management reform in the thirty-seven primary schools.

The responses of the lower primary teachers on the extent of teacher involvement in decision-making processes, teachers' knowledge and experience being included in key school decisions and teachers and school managers work together for school improvement are as follow:

79% of the 130 respondents reported that *teacher involvement in decision making* was implemented through cluster-based school management to a large extent and to some extent. However, 17% of the respondents reported that teacher involvement in decision-making was implemented to a very limited extent and 4% of the respondents said that teacher involvement in decision making was never implemented.

71% of the 130 respondents said that *teachers' knowledge and experience* were included in key school decisions through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 25% of the respondents said that teachers' knowledge and experiences were included in key school decisions to a very limited extent and 5% of the respondents reported that teachers' knowledge and experience were never included in key school decisions.

71% of the 130 respondents said that *teachers and school managers worked together for school improvement* through cluster-based school management reform to a large extent and to some extent. However, 25% of the respondents reported that teachers and school managers worked together for school improvement to a very limited extent and 5% of the respondents reported that teachers and school managers never worked together for school improvement.

It can be inferred from the data that teacher participation in school decisions was implemented through cluster based school management reform. The extent of teacher involvement in decision-making processes, teachers' knowledge and experience being included in key school decisions and teachers and school managers work together for school improvement, according to the data, was great.

The results of ANOVA showed that educational qualifications,  $F(1.649)=.166$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(3.677)=.007$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.127)=.347$ ,  $p=.5$ , years of teaching experience,  $F(1.980)=.102$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.365)=.250$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.074)=.372$ ,  $p=.5$ , school geographical location,  $F(2.893)=.059$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.381)=.097$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.005)=.139$ ,  $p=.5$ , years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform,  $F(2.121)=.124$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(3.930)=.022$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.812)=.168$ ,  $p=.5$ , and cluster condition,  $F(1.773)=.174$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.570)=.212$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.465)=p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of teacher involvement in decision-making processes, teachers' knowledge and experiences being included in key school decisions and teachers and school managers work together for school improvement and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

Overall, school geographical location was a factor influencing the ratings of both the school principals and the lower primary teachers on the extent to which teacher

involvement in school decisions was fostered through cluster-based school management reform and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

#### 4.5 Improving teaching

Like other forms of decentralisation reforms, cluster-based school management claims to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Cluster-based school management reform assumes that teaching improves when cluster-centre principals and subject facilitators monitor, supervise and support teachers. The reform also claims that teaching improves when: (1) a professional learning community for teachers is created; (2) there is ongoing support for teachers in learning new forms of pedagogy; (3) isolation of teachers is broken; and (4) schools themselves are the owners of efforts to improve teaching and learning. The school management reform has introduced teacher support strategies such as cluster-based management committees, cluster-based subject groups and cluster subject facilitators.

Table 10 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the extent to which cluster-based school management fosters supervision and support as reported by the school principals in the thirty-seven primary schools:

Item	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Cluster-centre principals visit and support satellite schools	3	8%	17	46%	12	32%	5	14%
Cluster subject facilitators supervise and support teachers	1	3%	20	54%	14	38%	2	5%
Schools identify their own training programs	8	22%	21	57%	7	19%	1	3%

N=37

Table 10: Frequency and percentage distribution of school principals' perceptions on the extent to which cluster-based school management fosters supervision and support in thirty seven primary schools.

The responses of the school principals on the extent of the support of cluster-centre principals and cluster-subject facilitators to schools and teachers and the extent of schools identify their own training programs are as follow:

54% of the 37 respondents reported that *cluster-centre principals* visited and supported satellite schools to a large extent and to some extent. However, 32% of the respondents said that cluster-centre principals visited and supported satellite schools to a very limited extent and 14% of the respondents reported that cluster-centre principals did not visit and support schools.

57% of the 37 respondents said that *cluster subject facilitators* supervised and supported teachers to a large extent and to some extent. However, 38% of the respondents reported that cluster subject facilitators supervised and supported schools to a very limited extent and only 5% of the respondents said that cluster subject facilitators did not supervise and support teachers.

79% of the 37 respondents reported that *schools identified their own training programs* to a large extent and to some extent. However, 19% of the respondents said that schools identified their own training programs to a very limited extent and 3% of the respondents reported that schools did not identify their own training programs.

It can be inferred from the data that cluster-based school management fostered supervision and support to schools and teachers. However, the extent of schools identifying their own training programs, according to the data was greater than the extent of the support of cluster-centre principals and cluster subject facilitators. It seems that the

school principals considered the support within schools to be greater than the one from outside.

The results of ANOVA showed that years of school management experience,  $F(1.444)=.242$ ,  $p=.5$ , and years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform,  $F(2.297)=.116$ ,  $p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of schools identifying their own training and there were significant differences between groups; while school geographical location,  $F(2.119)=.136$ ,  $p=.5$ , and cluster condition,  $F(2.519)=.121$ , were factors influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of the support of cluster-centre principals and the differences between groups were significant. The analysis revealed that school geographical location and cluster condition did not have significant influence on the ratings of the school principals on the extent of the support of subject facilitators.

Table 11 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of lower primary teachers' perceptions on the extent to which cluster-based school management reform fosters supervision and support:

Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Cluster-centre principals visit and support satellite schools	31	24%	31	24%	33	25%	35	27%
Cluster subject facilitators supervise and support teachers	25	19%	46	35%	44	34%	15	12%
Schools identify their own training programs	41	32%	54	42%	26	20%	9	7%

*N*=130

Table 11: *Frequency and percentage distribution of lower primary teachers' perceptions on the extent to which cluster-based school management fosters supervision and support in thirty seven primary schools.*

The responses of the lower primary teachers on the extent of the support of cluster-centre principals and cluster-subject facilitators to schools and teachers and schools identify their own training programs as follow:

48% of the 130 respondents reported that *cluster-centre principals* visited and supported satellite schools to a large extent and to some extent. However, 25% of the respondents said that cluster-centre principals visited and supported satellite schools to a very limited extent and 27% of the respondents reported that cluster-centre principals did not visit and support schools.

54% of the 130 respondents said that *cluster subject facilitators* supervised and supported teachers to a large extent and to some extent. However, 34% of the respondents reported that cluster subject facilitators supervised and supported schools to a very limited extent and 12% of the respondents said that cluster subject facilitators did not supervise and support teachers.

74% of the 130 respondents reported that *schools identified their own training programs* to a large extent and to some extent. However, 20% of the respondents said that schools identified their own training programs to a very limited extent and 7% of the respondents reported that schools did not identify their own training programs.

It can be inferred from the data that cluster-based school management reform fostered supervision and support to schools. The extent of schools identifying their own training programs, according to the data was greater than the extent of the support of cluster-centre principals and cluster subject facilitators. As in the case of the school principals, the

lower primary teachers seem to consider the support within schools to be greater than the one coming from outside.

The results of ANOVA showed that educational qualifications,  $F(1.420)=.231$ ,  $p=.5$ , was a significant factor influencing the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of the support of cluster-centre principals, while years of teaching experience,  $F(1.313)=.269$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.014)=.403$ ,  $p=.5$ , was a significant factor influencing the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of the support of cluster-centre principals and subject facilitators and there were significant differences between groups. The analysis revealed that the above-mentioned background variables did not have significant influence on the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of schools identifying their own training programs.

The analysis further revealed that school geographical location,  $F(.653)=.522$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.855)=.061$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(3.611)=.030$ ,  $p=.5$ , years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform,  $F(4.875)=.009$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.151)=.320$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(4.436)=.014$ ,  $p=.5$ ; cluster condition,  $F(3.673)=.028$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(5.888)=.004$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.739)=.180$ ,  $p=.5$ , and teacher support,  $F(1.232)=.269$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(6.624)=.011$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(8.981)=.003$ ,  $p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of schools identifying their own training programs, and the support of cluster-centre principals and subject facilitators and there were significant differences between groups.

Overall, school geographical location and years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform were the factors influencing the ratings of both the school principals and the lower primary teachers on the extent to which cluster-based school management



fostered school supervision and support and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

Cluster-based school management reform also assumes that the quality of teaching in schools improves when teachers are provided with opportunities to meet in cluster subject groups to share experiences and skills. It is assumed that subject groups may foster a culture of sharing, professional collaboration and learning; openness and mutual support as well as provides a framework for in-service training and a point of contact for advisory teaching services. Implicit in this assumption is that teachers: (1) value collaborative learning and teamwork; (2) and are competent and have expertise in their subject areas and skills in facilitating, sharing of knowledge and skills.

Table 12 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the extent to cluster-based school management fosters localised teacher development as reported by the school principals in the thirty-seven primary schools:

Item	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Teachers learn new teaching skills through cluster meetings	1	3%	19	51%	13	35%	4	11%
Cluster meetings increase teachers' understanding of subject content & methods	2	5%	9	24%	18	49%	8	22%
Follow up support to teachers at classroom level	1	3%	9	24%	13	35%	14	38%

N=37

Table 12: Frequency and percentage distribution of school principals' perceptions on the extent to which cluster-based school management supports teacher development in thirty seven primary schools.

The responses of the school principals on the extent to which teachers learn new skills through cluster meetings, cluster meetings increase teachers' understanding of subject content and methods, and follow-up support to teachers at classroom level are as follow:

54% of the 37 respondents reported teachers learned *new teaching skills* through cluster meetings to a large extent and to some extent. However, 35% of the respondents said that teachers learned new teaching skills through cluster meetings to a very limited extent and 11% of the respondents reported that teachers did not learn new teaching skills through cluster meetings.

29% of the 37 respondents said that *cluster meetings increased teachers' understanding of subject content and methods* to a large extent and to some extent. However, 49% of the respondents reported that cluster meetings increased teachers' understanding of subject content and methods to a very limited extent and 22% of the respondents said that cluster meetings did not increase teachers' understanding of subject content and methods.

27% of the 37 respondents reported that there was *follow-up support* to teachers at classroom level to a large extent and to some extent. However, 35% of the respondents reported that there was follow-up support to teachers at classroom level to a very limited extent and 38% of the respondents said that there was no follow-up support to teachers at classroom level.

It can be inferred from the data that cluster-based school management fostered localised teacher development. The extent of the support of cluster meetings for teachers to learn new teaching skills, according to the data, was greater than the extent of the support of cluster meetings to increase teachers' understanding of subject content and methods and

the extent of the follow up support to teachers at classroom level. While 35% of the respondents thought that the support of cluster meetings for teachers to learn new teaching skills was minimal, 49% of the school principals reported that the support of cluster meetings for increasing teachers' understanding of content and methods was little and 22% said that cluster meetings did not increase teachers' understanding of content and methods. As far as the follow-up support to teachers at classroom level was concerned, 35% of the school principals thought that follow-up support to teachers at classroom level was minimal, and 38% of the school principals said that there was no follow-up support to teachers at classroom level.

The results of ANOVA showed that educational qualifications,  $F(1.127)=.352$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.045)=.386$ ,  $p=.5$ , was a significant factor influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of the support of cluster meetings for teachers to learn new teaching and increase their understanding of content and methods and the differences between groups were significant, while years of school management experience,  $F(3.120)=.028$ ,  $p=.5$ , was a significant factor influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of the support of cluster meetings to increase teachers' understanding of content and methods, and the differences between groups were significant. The analysis also showed that years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform,  $F(2.116)=.136$ ,  $p=.5$ , was a significant factor influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of the follow-up support to teachers at classroom level and the differences between groups were significant.

Table 13 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the extent to which cluster-based school management fosters localised teacher development as reported by the lower primary teachers in the thirty seven primary schools:



Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Teachers learn new teaching skills during cluster meetings	16	12%	49	38%	17	13%	48	37%
Cluster meetings increase teachers' understanding of subject content & methods	22	17%	42	32%	19	15%	47	36%
Follow up support to teachers at classroom level	19	15%	32	25%	37	28%	42	32%

N=130

Table 13: Frequency and percentage distribution of lower primary teachers' perceptions on the extent to which cluster-based school management supports teacher development in the thirty seven primary schools.

The responses of the lower primary teachers on the extent to which teachers learn new skills through cluster meetings, cluster meetings increase teachers' understanding of subject content and methods, and follow up support to teachers at classroom level are as follow:

50% of the 130 respondents reported teachers learned *new teaching skills* through cluster meetings to a large extent and to some extent. However, 13% of the respondents said that teachers learned new teaching skills through cluster meetings to a very limited extent and 37% of the respondents reported that teachers did not learn new teaching skills through cluster meetings.

49% of the 130 respondents said that *cluster meetings increased teachers' understanding of subject content and methods* to a large extent and to some extent. However, 15% of the respondents reported that cluster meetings increased teachers' understanding of subject content and methods to a very limited extent and 36% of the respondents said that cluster meetings did not increase teachers' understanding of subject content and methods.

40% of the 130 respondents reported that there was *follow-up support* to teachers at classroom level to a large extent and to some extent. However, 28% of the respondents reported that there was follow-up support to teachers at classroom level to a very limited extent and 32% of the respondents said that there was no follow-up support to teachers at classroom level.

It can be inferred from the data that cluster-based school management supported teacher development. The extent of the support of cluster meetings for teachers to learn new teaching skills, increase teachers' understanding of subject content and methods and that of the follow-up support at classroom level, according to the data, was great. However, 37% of the respondents said that teachers did not learn new teaching skills through cluster meetings and 36% of the respondents reported that cluster meetings did not increase teachers' understanding of content and methods, and 32% of respondents reported that there was no follow-up support to teachers at classroom level. It is evident that a number of the lower primary teachers thought that cluster meetings did not provide pedagogical support to teachers. It can be concluded that localised teacher development has little or no influence on improving teaching.

The results of ANOVA showed that educational qualifications,  $F(2.559)=.042$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.194)=.073$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.171)=.327$ ,  $p=.5$ , years of teaching experience,  $F(2.211)=.071$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.196)=.073$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.483)=.047$ ,  $p=.5$ , school geographical location,  $F(.785)=.458$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(3.047)=.051$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1,453)=.238$ ,  $p=.5$ , and years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform,  $F(5.469)=.014$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(7.109)=.001$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(3.654)=.029$ ,  $p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of the support of cluster meetings for teachers to

learn new teaching skills, increase their understanding of content and methods and follow-up support to teachers at classroom level and the differences between groups were significant.

Overall, educational qualifications and years of implementation of cluster-based school management reform were factors influencing the ratings of both the school principals and the lower primary teachers on the extent of the support of cluster meetings to teachers improve their teaching practices and the differences between groups were statistically different.

Table 14 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the extent to which teachers engage in collective planning activities as reported by the school principals in the thirty seven primary schools:

Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Teacher collaboration in interpreting syllabi	11	30%	25	67%	1	3%	0	0
Teachers compile common schemes of work	14	38%	20	54%	2	5%	1	3%
Teacher collaboration in designing teaching and learning activities	10	27%	17	46%	10	27%	0	0

N=37

Table 14: *Frequency and percentage distribution of school principals' perceptions on the extent to which teacher collective planning was implemented in thirty seven primary schools.*

The responses of the school principals on the extent of teacher collaboration in interpreting syllabi, compiling common schemes of work and designing teaching and learning activities as follow:

97% of the respondents reported that *teachers collaborated in syllabi interpretation* to a large extent and to some extent, 3% of the respondents said that teachers collaborated in syllabi interpretation to a very limited extent.

92% of the respondents said that *teachers compiled common schemes of work* to a large extent and to some extent, and only 5% of the respondents reported that teachers compiled schemes of work to a very limited extent and only 3% of the respondents said that teachers did not compile common schemes of work.

73% of the respondents reported that *teachers collaborated in designing teaching and learning activities* to a large extent and to some extent. However, 27% of the respondents said that teachers collaborated in designing teaching and learning activities to a very limited extent. It can be inferred from the data that teacher collective planning was implemented through cluster-based school management reform. The extent of teacher collective planning in syllabi interpretation; compiling common schemes of work and in designing teaching and learning activities, according to the data, were great.

The results of ANOVA revealed that years of management experience  $F(1.949)=.126$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.435)=.245$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.143)=.354$ ,  $p=.5$ , school geographical location,  $F(3.189)=.054$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.404)=.106$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(7.914)=.002$ ,  $p=.5$ , and cluster condition,  $F(6.034)=.019$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(6.217)=.018$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(6.624)=.014$ ,  $p=.014$ ,  $p=.5$ , were factors influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of teacher collective planning

in syllabi interpretation; compiling common schemes of work and in designing teaching and learning activities and there were significant differences between groups.

Table 15 shows the frequency and distribution of the lower primary teachers' perceptions on the extent to which teacher collective planning was implemented in thirty seven primary schools:

Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Teacher collaboration in interpreting syllabi	42	32%	52	40%	20	15%	16	13%
Teachers compile common schemes of work	47	36%	47	36%	23	18%	13	10%
Teacher collaboration in designing teaching and learning activities	43	33%	48	37%	31	24%	8	6%

N=130

Table 15: *Frequency and percentage distribution of lower primary teachers' perceptions on the extent to which teacher collective planning was implemented in thirty seven primary schools.*

The responses of the lower primary teachers on the extent of teacher collective planning in interpreting syllabi, compiling common schemes of work and designing teaching and learning activities are as follow:

72% of the respondents reported that *teachers collaborated in syllabi interpretation* to a large extent and to some extent. However, 15% of the respondents said that teachers collaborated in syllabi interpretation to a very limited extent and 13% of the respondents reported that teachers did not collaborate in syllabi interpretation.



72% of the respondents said that *teachers compiled common schemes of work* to a large extent and to some extent. However, 18% of the respondents reported that teachers compiled schemes of work to a very limited extent and 10% of the respondents said that teachers did not compile common schemes of work.

70% of the respondents reported that *teachers collaborated in designing teaching and learning activities* to a large extent and to some extent. However, 24% of the respondents said that teachers collaborated in designing teaching and learning activities to a very limited extent and only 6% of the respondents reported that teachers did not collaborate in designing teaching and learning activities.

It can be inferred from the lower primary teachers' perceptions that teacher collective planning was implemented through cluster-based school management reform. The extent of teacher collective planning in syllabi interpretation; compiling common schemes of work, and in designing teaching and learning activities, according to the data, was great.

The results of ANOVA showed that school geographical location,  $F(1.129)=.326$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.584)=.209$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.304)=.104$ ,  $p=.5$ , and cluster condition,  $F(3.937)=.022$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.916)=.151$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.289)=.001$ ,  $p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the differences in the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of teacher collective planning in syllabi interpretation; compiling common schemes of work, and in designing teaching and learning activities and there were significant differences between groups.

Overall, school geographical location and cluster condition were factors influencing the ratings of both the school principals and the lower primary teachers on the extent to which

collective planning was enhanced through cluster-based school management reform and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

Table 16 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of perceptions of the school principals on the extent to which teacher collegiality was implemented in the thirty seven primary schools:

Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Teachers work in a supportive environment	5	14%	26	70%	6	16%	0	0
Teachers share ideas and are open to one another	11	30%	21	57%	5	14%	0	0
Teachers' morale and confidence in teaching is boosted as they work together with colleagues	9	24%	20	54%	8	22%	0	0

*N=37*

Table 16: *Frequency and percentage distribution of the school principals' perceptions on the extent to which teacher collegiality was implemented in thirty seven primary schools.*

The responses of the school principals on the extent of teachers working in a supportive environment, sharing ideas and teachers' moral and confidence in teaching being boosted through cluster-based school management reform are as follow:

84% of the respondents reported that teachers worked in a supportive environment to a large extent and some extent. However, 16% of the respondents said that teachers worked in a supportive environment to a very limited extent.

87% of the respondents said that teachers shared ideas and were open to one another to a large extent and some extent. However, 14% of the respondents reported that teachers shared ideas and were open to one another to a very limited extent.

78% of the respondents reported that teachers' morale and confidence in teaching was boosted as they worked together with colleagues to a large extent and to some extent. However, 22% of the respondents reported that teachers' morale and confidence in teaching was boosted as they worked together with colleagues to a very limited extent.

It can be inferred from the data that teacher collegiality was implemented through cluster-based school management reform. The extent of teachers working in a supportive environment, sharing idea and teachers' moral and confidence in teaching being boosted, according to the data, was great.

The results of ANOVA showed that school geographical location,  $F(3.146)=.056$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.484)=.241$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(4.962)=.013$ ,  $p=.5$ , cluster condition,  $F(12.750)=.001$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(4.638)=.038$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(8.917)=.005$ ,  $p=.5$ , and teacher support,  $F(1.505)=.236$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.973)=.155$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.225)=.124$ ,  $p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the school principals on the extent of teachers working in a supportive environment, sharing idea and teachers' moral and confidence in teaching being boosted and there were significant differences between groups.

Table 17 below shows the frequency and distribution of the perceptions of lower primary teachers on the extent to which teacher collegiality was implemented in the thirty seven primary schools:



Items	Ratings							
	To large extent		To some extent		To very limited extent		Never	
Teachers work in a supportive environment	32	25%	69	53%	18	14%	11	8%
Teachers share ideas and are open to one another	59	45%	48	37%	12	9%	11	8%
Teachers' morale and confidence in teaching is boosted as they work together with colleagues	41	32%	60	46%	14	11%	15	12%

N=130

Table 17: Frequency and percentage distribution of the lower primary teachers' perceptions on the extent to which teacher collegiality was implemented in thirty seven primary schools.

The responses of the lower primary teachers on the extent of teachers working in a supportive environment, sharing ideas and teachers' moral and confidence in teaching being boosted through cluster-based school management reform are as follow:

78% of the respondents reported that teachers worked in a supportive environment to a large extent and some extent. However, 14% of the respondents said that teachers worked in a supportive environment to a very limited extent and 8% of the respondents reported that teachers did not work in a supportive environment.

82% of the respondents said that teachers shared ideas and were open to one another to a large extent and some extent. However, 9% of the respondents reported that teachers shared ideas and were open to one another to a very limited extent and only 8% of the respondents reported that teachers did not share ideas and were not open to one another.

78% of the respondents reported that teachers' morale and confidence in teaching was boosted as they worked together with colleagues to a large extent and to some extent.

However, 11% of the respondents reported that teachers' morale and confidence in teaching was boosted as they worked together with colleagues to a very limited extent and 12% of the respondents reported that teachers' morale and confidence in teaching was not boosted.

It can be concluded from the perceptions of teachers that teacher collegiality was implemented through cluster-based school management reform. The extent of teachers work in a supportive environment, share ideas and are open to one another and teachers' moral and confidence in teaching being boosted as they work together with colleagues, according to the data, was great.

The results of ANOVA showed that educational qualifications,  $F(3.473)=.010$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(2.814)=.028$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.685)=.158$ ,  $p=.5$ , school geographical location,  $F(4.468)=.013$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(5.442)=.005$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(1.801)=.169$ ,  $p=.5$ , and cluster condition,  $F(6.970)=.001$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(5.311)=.006$ ,  $p=.5$ ;  $F(4.643)=.011$ ,  $p=.5$ , were significant factors influencing the ratings of the lower primary teachers on the extent of teachers work in a supportive environment, share ideas and are open to one another and teachers' moral and confidence in teaching being boosted as they work together with colleagues and there were significant differences between groups.

Overall, school geographical location and cluster condition were factors influencing the ratings of both the school principals and the lower primary teachers on the extent to which teacher collegiality was fostered through cluster-based school management reform and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

Drawing on the perceptions of the school principals and the lower primary teachers, it can be concluded that the goals of cluster-based school management reform were implemented in the sampled primary schools. The data revealed that the goals of improving stakeholder collaboration through shared collaborative leadership and management, promoting improving school management through competent leadership, teacher involvement in decision making and resource sharing. The data revealed that cluster-based school management fostered professional collaboration and learning, broke the isolation of teachers and that local school supervision and support was provided to schools and teachers. Although the data revealed that localised teacher development and training through cluster meetings was provided to teachers, it appeared that cluster meetings had little or no influence on improving teachers' understanding of content and methods as well as improving their teaching skills. The data also revealed that follow up support to teachers at classroom level had been insufficient or non-existent. The evidence from the survey research indicates that the relationship between cluster-based school management reform and improving teaching is poorly discernible.

The data revealed that there were variations in the perceptions of the school principals and the lower primary teachers on the implementation of school management reform in the sampled primary schools. The data also revealed that the school principals as well as the lower primary teachers rated various dependent variables differently. For example, the ratings of the school principals and the lower primary teachers on stakeholder collaboration, teacher involvement in decision-making, teacher collegiality and teacher collective planning were higher than the ratings on the support of cluster meetings. It

seems 'political' objectives of the reform have been achieved more adequately than pedagogical objectives.

The analysis of variance revealed that school geographical location was the most influential factor on the ratings of both the school principals and the lower primary teachers on the extent to which the goals of cluster-based school management reform were implemented and the differences between groups were statistically significant.

The data in this chapter were drawn exclusively on survey research. Survey, however are flawed in relying too much on opinion-based data such as user perspectives which, while they may be useful in gaining first-hand accounts of 'what works', are also limiting by not providing in-depth understanding of the implementation of the school management reform, contextual realities and how it was constrained or ignored. The following four chapters present data drawn from qualitative methodologies and therefore illuminate how schools respond to the introduction of the school management reform and the extent to which the findings from the implementation of the reform explain the relationship between the school management reform and improving teaching.