

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION, PROBLEM STATEMENT, EXPLANATION OF TERMS, AIMS OF THE STUDY, METHOD AND PROGRAMME OF RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

In South Africa there is serious concern about the breakdown of the culture of teaching and learning in many disadvantaged high schools. Writing a decade before this study, Pacheco (1996:158) noted that “learners’ achievements have dropped, leading to a high failure rate.” This supports the view of Hartshorne (1992:339), who noted that since 1980 there had been a regular pattern of a 50% failure rate, while the highest matriculation pass rate was just 16% and the overall pass rate had fallen to 36.2% by 1990. Hartshorne (1992:339) further states that: “In the whole of Soweto only 460 pupils or 4.8 percent of candidates gained a matriculation.”¹ These statistics are strengthened by Strauss, Van der Linde and Plekker (2000:7), who add that “... the total number of passes with exemption was 68,626 (14.0%) for 2000, compared to 63,725 (12.5%) for 1999.” This indicates that between 1980 and 2000 there was a continual drop in the overall pass rate of learners. Another concern was indicated in the *Sunday World* (2004:4), that there was a decline in the number of matriculants who wrote exams from 511,474 in 1999 to 440,267 in 2003.

At the time of the first democratic elections in South Africa, Du Toit (1996:10) had used World Bank data on education to draw an even bleaker picture of the erosion of the culture of teaching and learning, noting that an additional 1,900 classrooms were required to relieve overcrowding in schools and that approximately 850,000 children of school-going age remained outside the formal school system, requiring 23,000 classrooms or 766 schools to accommodate them. A decade later, the education system in South Africa had undergone many changes, but the culture of teaching and learning in many disadvantaged schools has continued to decline. Surprisingly enough, the above statistics are supported

¹ Hartshorne (1992) referred to the situation in South Africa prior to democratic society where various factors impacted negatively on schooling in the country.

by various authors who had voiced similar concern about the collapse of a culture of teaching and learning in schools long before the democratic elections. For example, Thembela (1991:142) had postulated that most potential learners had dropped out of schools because of the collapse of a culture of teaching due to “over-crowding in classrooms, under-qualified and unqualified teachers, poor instruction, lack of discipline, bad role models and irrelevant curriculum which demotivate teachers.” The same opinion is expressed by Nxumalo (1993:55) when stating: “The anti-academic and destructive attitudes as well as behaviour found amongst many African youth are manifested in the chaos, lack of discipline and demoralisation found in many township schools.” The collapse of the culture of teaching and learning is also reflected in the irregular attendance with high absenteeism by teachers and learners, where, in some cases, they simply stand outside the classroom talking, playing cards and/or smoking.

According to Thembela (1991:142), symptoms that have resulted in the destruction of a culture of teaching and learning within communities include overcrowded schools and under-qualified teachers. It is important to give a brief integrated overview of how such symptoms have impacted on a culture of teaching and learning in schools

1.1.1 RESOURCES

Delius (1996) and Gordon (1997) have realised that disadvantaged schools operate with inadequate teaching and learning resources. Furthermore, a documentation of the inadequacy of resources (The Education Foundation, 2000:57) found that “almost half of all the schools in South Africa do not have electricity and telephones in rural areas.” The study also found that “many schools make use of water sources that are unhygienic, thus a health concern for learners and teachers” (The Education Foundation, 2000:58). Further evidence for this is provided by Maja (1999) and Nxumalo (1993), when arguing in research on township schools that “unconducive environments are a problem in schools.” The *School Register of Needs Survey* (Department of Education, 1997) noted that in Northern Province (Limpopo) 4,244 schools had no water within walking distance. In the Limpopo region alone, it was found that there was a

shortage of 13,670 classrooms, where 47% of the existing buildings were in a very weak condition, and there was only one laboratory for every 2,291 learners.

Resources play an important role in the restoration of a culture of teaching and learning, a point emphasised by the research of Stockard (1980:40), who discovered that “providing adequate resources helps in promoting learners’ achievement, thus enhancing a culture of teaching and learning.” For example if one teaches Economic and Management Sciences as a learning area, its success depends largely on the availability of laboratories and learning teaching support materials. I believe on this note that if schools function without adequate resources there is the likelihood that ineffective teaching and learning will take place, leading to poor academic performance. This is because learners will not be able to perform certain functions that could in turn improve their academic performance. Learners should, therefore, be accommodated in spacious classrooms and have adequate facilities which can create a conducive atmosphere to teaching and learning, thus enhancing effective academic manipulating resources and free movement. Kaplan and Evans (1996:4) report that “a conducive school climate leads to a positive school culture and vice versa.” In schools where there is a positive culture of teaching and learning, understanding between learners and teachers is organised, thus providing commitment to the instruction activities and to the academic process.

In summary, issues such as lack of textbooks, teaching and learning aids, overcrowding and unconducive environments, have been a serious concern to the different researchers above and should, therefore, be given preference and be addressed urgently by the Department of Education (DoE), in order to enable effective teaching and learning to take place, develop teachers’ capacity and willingness to work. Taking cognisance of these factors will enable teachers to realise what is essential to restore the culture of teaching and learning in schools.

1.1.2 TEACHERS

Teachers in schools play an important role in imparting knowledge to learners, therefore the degree of learners’ achievements depends on the effectiveness of

their instruction, dedication, commitment, planning, maintenance of discipline, friendliness, knowledge and morale. In this regard it needs to be stated that teachers are expected to be well-organised, prepare and perform their work and manage their classrooms daily, in order to instil confidence in the learners. A well-prepared lesson leads to effective teaching and learning, thus reducing boredom and absent-mindedness. Mwamwenda (1990:225) confirms the above views by adding that “teachers who are well-prepared exude a sense of self-confidence and their learners will perceive them as well-organized.” Apple (1996:173) supports the idea of dedication to work by stating that during the duration of his research in a classroom setting, no class was unattended, even in cases where teachers were on leave, because in such instances, relevant replacement was timeously made so that learners were not left behind with schoolwork. This in turn yields smooth running of school activities and induces a high regard for teaching and learning.

It is apparent from the above discussion that teachers are the foundation of effective teaching and learning only if they are qualified, dedicated, knowledgeable, sociable, explorative, humorous and innovative. This view is supported by the experience obtained by me during a number of teaching practice observation periods in the five years in the North-West Province, where most teachers were punctual and dedicated, and had a sense of responsibility to their schoolwork.

1.1.3 LEARNERS

Every learner in South Africa has the right to be protected from abuse, neglect and maltreatment, as postulated by Section 28(i)(d) of *Right to Human Dignity* (1999). Based on this, teachers should, therefore, be committed to the learners' well-being in the classroom. This is in line with the argument of Cline and Fay (1994:23), that schools play an important role in preparing the child for maturity and citizenship. This is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1994), Act no. 200, 1993, which states that: “All children have the right to a safe and secure environment in which they can learn and play.”

Since teaching and learning are the heart of the educational process, learners should be empowered to make their own decisions, discover their rights and responsibilities in a form of being accountable, and respond to challenges and actions. Everything that happens at school should serve as an opportunity to learners to develop skills and abilities, and to take initiatives and responsibilities for their choices. This can only happen if the value of each learner is acknowledged and a climate of shared responsibility is created.

Kok, Smith and Swart (1992:40-41) acknowledge that through a participative democratic management style, learners will be able to view themselves as important partners and role players in all aspects of the school. This seems not to be true in the disadvantaged schools, where overcrowding, teacher-centred approaches, absence of activities, malnutrition and poor care, and high illiteracy are still in abundance. In such areas, approaches such as learner-centeredness and invitational strategies should be implemented in order to instil a sense of values in learners. Le Roux (1990:30) argues that an invitational climate enables learners "... to take initiative, to take risks and accept responsibilities."

Based on the above, the question arises: do schools really place trust in learners and do opportunities exist for learners to express their abilities to accept responsibility? If the answer is in the affirmative then it means that in such schools effective teaching and learning do take place, thus a culture of teaching and learning is experienced. On this note I see teachers, learners, curriculum and resources as important variables in the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning. Teachers are playing a vital role in the education of learners, because in essence there is no formal schooling without teachers, and thus they are responsible and should be qualified and knowledgeable in order to be able to direct and assess the development of learners, and assist learners to think creatively, critically and independently.

Nkomo (1990:422) supports these views by adding that educating children should not only be the responsibilities of teachers, but should also be seen as a joint responsibility of parents, teachers and other stakeholders. Therefore, through teamwork, together in the teaching and learning situation, a culture of

teaching and learning can definitely be enhanced. In support of the above statement, Molepo (1999:21) and Thembela (1991:142) add that:

... educationists, teachers, parents and learners today realise that education in its present form is only partially successful because of lack of resources, inadequate classrooms and teachers, and parents not being fully empowered to be involved in the education of the children.

Teachers, parents and other stakeholders need to work together in education so as to improve a culture of teaching and learning. Oswald, Johnson and Howard (2003:51) highlight the importance of family, school, learners and community working together, an argument strengthened by Drew (2002:18), who wrote that “... the focus has shifted from the individual to a team approach in an attempt to have more impact on the learner’s learning experience.” Both teachers and parents should work together in order to adopt both a learner-focus and integrated approach, which might lead to the achievement of better learning outcomes.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework within which this study is conducted is based on Scheerens’ model (1990) for school effectiveness, a model viewed as complex as it not only takes into consideration variables, but also illustrates different levels. Its complexity is portrayed by the fact that “school effectiveness” is developed when many variables and lower-level systems are satisfied and move to higher level systems. This research integrates well with Scheerens’ model (1990, fig 1.1. below), as it embraces similar factors such as learners’ characteristics, e.g., gender abilities and social economic status; teachers’ characteristics, e.g., rural or urban, resources available and staff members; and, lastly, school policies, e.g., Curriculum 2005. These factors, together with systems such as the family, school, church, community and world of work, form part of larger, inseparable, ecosystems. If these interact positively with one another, a possibility of school effectiveness will prevail, thus providing for a positive culture of teaching and learning. Therefore, on this note, Scheerens’ model (1990) and this research are compatible, as they both focus on the learners, teachers, school, community and

environment for the improvement and quality of education. This in summary means that the interaction between the learners, teachers and other factors within the school context, play an important role in the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning.

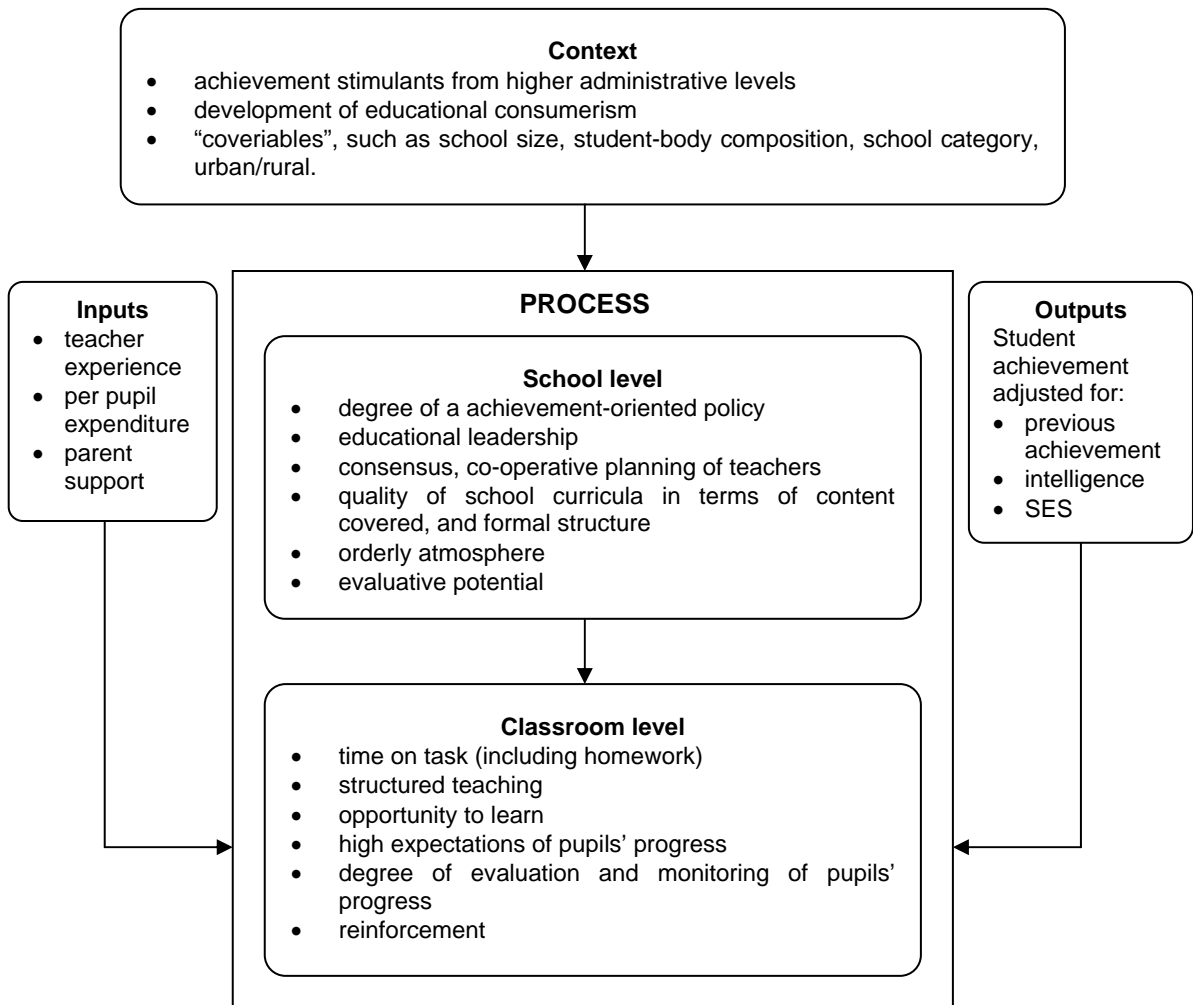


FIGURE 1.1: SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS MODEL AS DEVELOPED BY SCHEERENS (1990:61-80)

From this model on school effectiveness, I argue that if all the levels appearing in the figure were positively met, there would be higher academic achievement from learners and thus a better culture of teaching and learning. If the environment in which a learner finds him/herself, e.g. home, school and community at large, is conducive to learning, such a learner would have a positive attitude to learning. Christie (2001:47) argues that “learning environments that are inviting, challenging and motivating, improve the quality of learning in schools”, that is, if

there is a positive atmosphere at school, home and community, there is the likelihood that a culture of teaching and learning could be promoted.

1.3 THE FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

I believe that in South Africa the majority of disadvantaged schools would have achieved equilibrium of above-average academic performance measured in terms of parameters of excellence, defined to assess the quality of schooling taking place in the country. This applies specifically to the quality of teaching taking place in the classrooms, as well as the performance of learners in the different grades, specifically in the final Grade 12 examinations. However, this is often not the case and many schools have remained alien environments of highly unproductive teaching and learning practices, where dropout remains high in the lower grades and the pass rate of final grade learners in the Grade 12 examinations is well-below provincial and national norms. When one takes into consideration the resources that have been channelled towards the upgrading of teachers' qualifications, the replenishment of resources, the maintenance of schools and classrooms, the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), alternative measures of assessment and evaluation, and the improvement of the quality of management at schools, then it becomes evident that there might be unaccounted variables influencing the outcomes envisaged and expected from schools. The dynamic interaction of different variables impacting on the performance of teachers and learners in any learning environment is a complicated matter, demanding the exposition of the management / teaching / learning activities of such environments, in order to produce a closer understanding of the variables impacting on the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in them.

Further evidence that the culture of teaching and learning is being eroded, is provided by Fleisch (2002:49), who states that: "despite the amount of over one hundred million Rand spent on school improvement initiatives in South Africa since 1994, the results are not overly promising." Smith (1994:68) had already traced a similar trend, notably that "the performance of students in the 1991 exams' main problem was that students were not prepared to learn, most answer

sheets were blank.” Since the matriculation results are still not satisfactory, it may be that this situation continues to be a contributory factor.

On the grounds of the above observations by different authors, it is evident that teachers play an important role in creating a culture of teaching and learning in the school setting. I argue that teachers should be dedicated to work and be responsible in order to make this culture positive. On the other hand, principals should work in harmony with their subordinates and encourage them towards the attainment of such a culture. Honeyford (1982:142) remarks that: “teachers should have knowledge about learning and teaching in order to be effective, because they are the foundation of formal education of pupils.”

On this note, I concur with Maslow (in Mwamwenda, 1990:225) that parents as primary teachers also play a role in creating a culture of teaching and learning, meeting their children’s basic needs, for example physiological, safety, belonging and love. A relaxed atmosphere will therefore be experienced, which is the foundation of a positive culture of teaching and learning in the classroom. Teachers, parents and learners are the most important people in the community in terms of contributing to the development of a co-operative education environment at home, at school and in the community at large. Parents, teachers and learners should therefore work collaboratively and have discussions with their children about school matters and attend school meetings in order to be updated about the school progress. Learners, on the other hand, should know that their primary responsibility is to learn, and they should, therefore, be active, independent, motivated, self-disciplined, co-operative and supportive.

In this study, however, the variables contributing towards a culture of teaching and learning are taken as the point of departure, and are going to be investigated in full in the next chapter. Little and only limited research has been conducted in the North-West Province as far as the issue of variables contributing towards a culture of teaching and learning is concerned. An example is Nxumalo (1993:55-60), who researched Kwa-Zulu schools on learning culture, while Masitsa (1995:125) explored a study on the establishment of a learning culture in

Gauteng schools. This shows that many researchers concentrated on other provinces, to the exclusion of North-West Province.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Against the above background, the research question for this thesis can be formulated as follows:

What are the variables contributing towards the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in high schools?

Finding answers to this core research question will contribute towards a better understanding of the problems, whilst sub-questions are also stated in this research. This form of questioning is suggested by Baloyi (1991:5-6), where: “A clear way of formulating a research question is to ask related questions because they are possible preconditions for planning research procedures and for problem analysis.” Therefore, for the purpose of clarity in this study, the following further research sub-questions could be asked:

- What are the variables impacting on the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in high schools, and their relationship with specific reference to the tasks and functions of the school management teams, teachers, parents and learners?
- How do different variables interact with one another when comparing the cultures of teaching and learning at different schools, and how should the outcomes be used in improving the quality of teaching and learning in disadvantaged schools?

The above research sub-questions are intended to make a contribution towards the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in high schools. Attempts to answer them will employ a literature review in chapter two. The research design and methodology will be described in chapter three. Interpretation of the data and the findings will be presented in chapter four. A conclusion will be

drawn, with recommendations, in chapter five. It should be noted the findings of this research are not the only ones that can contribute towards the enhancement of a culture of teaching and learning in schools, and this makes the study both dynamic and complex, thus calling for more researchers to explore the following topics: Teachers' roles in the teaching and learning situation; learners' roles in the teaching and learning situation; classroom environment; teaching and learning resources; classroom teaching, with specific reference to lesson preparation and teaching methods; and parental involvement. As these factors contribute towards the culture of teaching and learning, it is worth highlighting certain points, a full discussion of which will be carried forward to the next chapter.

It is evident that no school can function effectively without teachers, learners, teaching and learning resources, lesson preparation, parental involvement, good classroom climate and appropriate teaching methods. Therefore, any school is viewed as a unit where learning takes place. Learning is a process that occurs in mutual relationship between a teacher and a learner in a conducive atmosphere. Positive social relationships in the school lead to effective schooling, thus an established culture of teaching and learning will prevail. In supporting the above idea, Jacobson (1996:23) advocates that "... good social relationships are central to situated learning." This means that learning can occur where teachers and learners feel safe, free and motivated to learn. Van der Westhuizen (1991:632) writes that "... where there is a positive relationship between the teachers and learners, learners have a reason to commit and attach meaning to the academic process." A positive school culture implies absence of problems in the school and the presence of problems in turn implies absence of learning, thus ineffective schooling with poor education outcomes. This denotes that factors influencing the culture of teaching and learning may either be negative or positive.

The culture of teaching and learning is of importance not only to educationalists, but also to psychologists and politicians in South Africa. This has led to many debates in education, which in turn have led to the formulation of external evaluators, such as Whole School Evaluation Framework and a number of White Papers on Education. The recommendations of the Committee on Education

(DoE, 1996) clearly indicate that there is a need for communities to influence the cultural ethos of their schools, with a view to promoting a sense of national common purpose. This implies that there is a need for a culture of teaching and learning, which is the responsibility of all, but in particular the teachers who deal with the education of the growing child on a daily basis in a formal situation. Sonnekus (1984:50) writes that the child is educated by an adult to change, thus to learn from an early age through educative instruction. To achieve this, teachers should be dedicated and responsible.

On the other hand, principals should work in harmony with their subordinates and encourage them towards the attainment of a positive culture of teaching and learning. Asmal (*Pretoria News*, 21 February, 2000:3) stated that “the Education Department was involved in a number of initiatives, such as South African Council of Teachers (SACE), established in 1994”, its function being to improve the conditions of the teaching fraternity, since it is both a disciplinary tribunal and professional body. This regulatory body will help in enhancing a culture of teaching and learning because, as Asmal further states, “Teachers who are found guilty of misconduct by the South African Council of Teachers (SACE) will not be allowed to practice as teachers in any South African schools.”

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine, in the first place, variables impacting on the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in selected high schools in the North-West Province. In an attempt to achieve this aim, I wish to address the following objectives through qualitative and quantitative approaches. The approaches which will be discussed in detail in the proceeding chapters:

- To determine which variables impact on the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in high schools with reference to the tasks and functions of the school management teams, teachers, parents and learners.
- To investigate how different variables interact with one another when comparing the cultures of teaching and learning in different schools, and

how the outcomes should be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools.

1.6 EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS

This section explains the meaning of concepts with an aim of giving the reader a clear understanding of the research purpose and to indicate that it is to understand the terminology applicable to the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in schools. Therefore, the following number of key terms and concepts used in this research need to be clarified.

1.6.1 THE PHENOMENON OF TEACHING

The concept of teaching has been seen as mediation of learning by teachers, along the lines of Farrant's (1986:168) view of teaching as "a process that facilitates learning." Landman, Van der Merwe, Pitout, Smith and Windell (1990: 90) see teaching as that which makes the content of instruction meaningful to the pupil. Learners are able to open up into different perspectives of reality, developing in them an understanding of all learning matters. Therefore, teaching can be seen as a process in which teachers have an important role to play because they act as catalysts, actively stimulating learning. A good teacher is perceived as one who has a good understanding of what learners need to learn and is able to judge how much is needed in intervening in each learner's learning, as well as knowing the most effective way of providing this assistance. Thus the skill of teaching lies in knowing who, what and how to teach, and also being able to judge when. In this study, teaching is therefore perceived as a facilitating tool that offers support in the learning process of learners.

1.6.2 TEACHING CULTURE / FACILITATION CULTURE

Before defining the concept of 'teaching culture', it is necessary to define culture so as to bring about more understanding of the phenomenon. Drennan (1992:3) refers to culture as "how things are done around here", while Preedy (1993:151) defines it as "shared influences and beliefs within a society." Lambert (1988:54)

also defines the concept of culture as “... the set of beliefs, assumptions and attitudes held by a given set of people during a given period of time”.

These definitions are viewed by me to a large extent as applicable to a school culture, which Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:42) believe to be “the ethos or climate of the school, affected obviously by its outer context.” Since a school is part of the community, the school culture describes the roles that the participants in the teaching and learning situations are supposed to play in order to achieve stated goals. For example, the school's culture consists of what people believe, what works and what does not, and how teachers, learners and parents should treat one another in order to establish a positive environment at school. Therefore, one should start with culture in order to understand teaching and learning conditions at schools.

1.6.3 THE SCHOOL AS LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The school and classroom environment are intertwined, because if a positive atmosphere prevails in them, teaching and learning will be maximised. For the sake of clarity, school environment is defined by Eckermann (1994:31) as “an unique social system including social, cultural, physical and economic aspects.” Wright (1996:53) on the other hand, sees school environment as “the learning centre where cultural values are nurtured.” My understanding of the above definitions is that a school environment is a prerequisite for the acquisition of knowledge and skills, communication of values and norms; as well as cultural, economic and political empowerment.

It is, therefore, important for teachers to create a positive school environment in order to establish a positive school culture in the teaching and learning situation. It is in this type of climate that learners' needs should be met and catered for. Van der Westhuizen (1991:632) sees a good school as one “where there is a positive culture, understanding exists between learners and teachers, and teaching is organised around relationships”. Meanwhile, Pitout, Smith and Windell (1992:5-7) believe that: “Effective schooling is possible where there is authority and obedience.” The GDE (2002:192), during a conference convened in

Warmbaths, believed "... a good school is that which encourages pupils to achieve to the best of their ability, with good leadership, high expectations, promote good teaching by all who work in the school, and have vibrant community with learning as its focus." Jordaan (2004:14) sees effective schools as those showing "concern for the health and safety of learners and invariably have policies related to these issues ... and also having effective procedures for dealing with absence, late coming and truancy."

1.6.4 ECOSYSTEM

According to Arends (1997:17), ecosystems are "ecological systems in which a set of inhabitants (teachers and students and others) interact within a highly interdependent environment for the purpose of completing valued tasks." This means that if the system is not ecologically positive and permeable, the intended outcomes and tasks will be difficult to actualise.

1.6.5 CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Stockard (1980:40) sees a classroom environment as a place where "adequate resources and teacher training is provided in order to promote learners' achievement." The classroom environment is a specially designed learning environment where most teaching and learning occurs. Thus, the more a classroom allows free movement and access to resources, within a positive atmosphere, the more likely it is to foster academic achievement. I see a positive classroom environment as a place where learners are provided with adequate seating, writing and various resources that enable learners and teachers to cover a large amount of work within a prescribed time.

1.6.6 MANAGEMENT

According to Robbins and Coulter (1996:8), management is a process of "getting activities completed effectively and efficiently through the usage of human resources." Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:32) see it as "the discipline required to ensure that the school does things right or functions well." Referring to the field of

educational management, Van der Westhuizen (1991:55) defines management as “a specific type of work in education which comprises those regulative tasks or actions executed by a person of authority in a specific field of regulation so as to allow formation education to take place.” Management is a process of doing things in order to satisfy the needs of an organisation. In this context, the principal is the manager in a school who leads in order to bring forward an effective school, thus a positive culture of teaching and learning.

1.6.7 LEARNING

Amongst the many definitions of learning, Klausmeier’s (1985:57) is of a process that results in relatively permanent changes in knowledge, skill or other behaviour based on practice. Chibnall (1987:52) views learning as “the process that requires communication between the person who wants to learn and the potential source of the new knowledge, this may be the teacher or a book.” Bender (1994:55) sees learning as “a complex phenomenon which refers to far more than merely the acquisition of knowledge and skills”, while Mwamwenda (1990:121) maintains that “learning is a continuous process from birth to death.” It can be drawn from these definitions that learning, as a process whereby attitudes, knowledge, skills, understanding and capabilities are acquired and retained, cannot be attributed to inherited behavioural patterns or physical growth. Capacity and rate of learning, therefore, depend on both inherited and environmental factors. Without teaching and learning there will be no culture of teaching and learning, since these two concepts are interwoven, and also without interaction with teachers, other learners, media and society, learning cannot take place.

1.6.8 POWERFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

According to De Corte, Verschaffel and Schrooten (1990:240), a powerful learning environment is an environment characterised by “a good balance between discovery learning on one hand and systematic and guidance on the other.” Arends (1997:287) defines a powerful learning environment as “the overall climate and structures of the classroom that influence how students respond to

and remain engaged in learning tasks .. the context in which teaching and learning acts are carried out.” This implies that the environment has to be conducive so that both teachers and learners can be able to perform their duties as expected.

1.6.9 LEARNERS

According to the South African School’s Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996:5), the term ‘learner’ means “any person receiving education or obliged to receive education.” A learner is, for the purpose of this study, a person regardless of age, who engages himself or herself in a learning activity. There will be certain instances where authors will use the word ‘student’ as a synonym of the word “learner”.

1.6.10 CONSTRUCTIVISM

Ducret (2001:165) defines constructivism as the term that “deals with the creation of concepts and reflection” while Kruger and Adams (2002:73) define it as “a central idea of knowledge construction is that learners develop their own understanding that makes sense to them, they do not merely receive knowledge from outside sources.” This term refers to the process of helping a learner to construct and acquire his own knowledge. In other words, a learner, through interaction with teachers and others, can be able to construct meaning from their experience.

1.6.11 COMMUNITY

Community, according to Magqaza (2000:18), in the school situation suggests “parents”. In the community environment, all stakeholders work together, as the schools do not exist in isolation. For example, schools receive financial aid, and human and physical resources from the community, whose positive commitment towards schools relies on the positive modelling and attitudes of teachers, principals and parents. If a school has a positive culture of teaching and learning, there is that likelihood of influencing the attitudes of the community to be positive.

1.6.12 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT)

According to the Guide of School Management Team (DoE, 2000:24), a School Management Team (SMT) is defined as “a group of individuals who perform day-to-day responsibilities for the professional and operational management of the school.” For example, a head of department can teach a subject or learning area and also administer numerous duties entrusted to him/her in the department. This requires a positive relationship between the principal, the SMTs, and teachers, encouraging a culture of teaching and learning in schools without which SMTs and teachers will not act professionally.

1.6.13 CULTURE OF LEARNING

Chisholm and Vally (1996:2-3), write that: “Restoring a culture of teaching and learning is simply about bringing the conditions and discipline of compulsory schooling to teachers and learners.” A culture of learning and culture of teaching are two inseparable phenomena. It is imperative to define culture of learning because without it teaching outcomes will not be actualised. According to Jaccaci (1989:50), a culture of learning is defined as a collaborative creativity in all contexts, relationships and experiences. These are the basic purposes of the culture, where the measure of success is the combined wisdom of groups and synergy, leadership and service of the organisation as a whole. Henry (1993:39-40) sees culture of learning as “shared meanings where people acknowledge one another as 'belonging' towards the attainment of the set goal.” Masitsa (1995:125) defines culture of learning as “a culture which gives a positive meaning to the schools' educational programme.” The *Sowetan* (28 March, 1996:6), on the other hand, describes culture of learning as “a culture that is supportive to learning and achievement with improved physical resources, democratic structures, effective planning and efficient administration”, while Nxumalo (1993:55-60) defines it as “a social integration of bringing parents, teachers and students together to establish strict regulations for convenient and successful learning and teaching.” Smith and Pacheco (1996:163) embrace the above definitions of various authors by stating that a culture of learning is determined by the following “the learner and his personal characteristics, factors

in the family and immediate living environment, school-related factors such as the classroom atmosphere, management and teachers and macro-societal factors such as economical and political factors.”

All the above definitions emphasise positive co-operation and consultation, with an aim of achieving a desired outcomes. On this note, a culture of learning can be viewed as a positive atmosphere at school where learners learn, parents participate actively in their children’s schoolwork and teachers facilitate and mediate teaching and learning. The positive aspect of the above therefore contributes towards the creation of a culture of teaching and learning in schools, in an atmosphere of efficiency at schools, where learners can learn and teachers teach.

1.6.14 THE LIFE OF THE CHILD-IN-EDUCATION

The life of the child-in-education needs to be explained in full because a child is viewed as a point of departure in this research study. Without the child, no teaching and learning will take place. Therefore, the life of the child refers to the child-being-education; the child’s initiatives and active participation in learning, teaching and development. It is important to answer the question: Who is the child? because this determines the viewpoint of the teacher for the choices of approaches to teaching in order to improve teaching, thus establishing a culture of teaching and learning which in turn leads to the child’s academic achievements. It is therefore important to note that the teachers play a role in the life of learners because, without teaching support, learners would not actualise proper potential nor develop into fully responsible adults. Teachers play a role in accompanying learners affectively, cognitively and normatively towards adulthood.

Affective accompaniment involves teachers displaying love, respect and trust in the process of educative instruction, because this affective education strengthens the child’s life in such a way that the exploration of the ideal world will be with confidence. Kok, *et al.* (1992:40-41) and Wayson (1986:230) write that “learners should be considered and treated as valuable, important and reasonable stake-

holders of the school in order to obtain their full co-operation.” This will in turn encourage the child to respond positively to the teacher's educative upbringing. The child who experiences affective upbringing does not withdraw from learning tasks and this paves the way for the adequate cognition of the child, thus the success of a culture of teaching and learning.

For teachers to establish a culture of teaching and learning, the knowledge, guidance, help and understanding of the child in his/her being is of importance, as this will help them to accompany the child on the path to adulthood. For example, teachers should provide answers to questions and explain certain actions while bearing in mind the child's level of development so that the child will be able to actualise, master and possess the content of education for future use.

1.6.15 TEACHER

According to the employment of Educators Act (1998:1), the term teacher means “any person who provides educational services, including professional therapy and education psychological services at any public school or further education training institution.” The word teacher means any person who teaches, trains or educates people because, to me, to teach is to give information to a person. In this study the term “teachers” will be used interchangeably with the word “educator”.

1.6.16 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement, according to Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1997:148) can be defined as “the active and significant involvement of the parent in all aspects, non-curricular as well as curricular.” This means that the responsibility of parents in their child's education is important.

1.7 RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

In order to reach the aims and objectives mentioned in the previous section, I opted to base this study on mixed methods where both a quantitative and

qualitative design are used in which a comparative study of variables contributing towards the culture of teaching and learning in three high schools will be investigated. These mixed methods can attempt to cover areas which other methodologies cannot cover, thus providing better ideas on the study under investigation. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) add to the above statement by stating that mixed methods can answer questions which other methodologies in isolation cannot. A comparative study in three high schools in Makapanstad area project office (circuit office) in the North-West Province is therefore made in this regard, based on the school's academic performance history over a period of the past five years and a detailed report will be done in chapter three (see par. 3.1.3).

1.7.1 THE DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCATION OF THREE SAMPLED SCHOOLS

I feel it fit to conclude this section by describing the location of three sampled schools with an aim of understanding, supporting or opposing the argument within the thesis. School A, (with approximately 100 Grade 12 learners, 18 teachers and 100 parents as respondents) which is assumed to be one of the best school in the area of Makapanstad over the period of five years in terms of matriculation pass rate results, is situated next to the tarred road, and is also nearer to the post office, shops, churches, bus stops and the Makapanstad Area Project Office (circuit office). School B (with approximately 180 Grade 12 learners, 180 parents and 18 teachers as respondents) is further away from School A, serving another population within Makapanstad. This school resembles more or less the same characteristics as School A, except the fact that it is far from the Makapanstad Area Project Office. In contrast to the two schools, School C (with approximately 50 Grade 12 learners, 50 parents and 18 teachers as respondents) which is the poorest school in as far as the Grade 12 results are concerned over the consecutive period of five years, is situated in a remote dry area where there is no sign of better infrastructures such as those mentioned above. All the three schools are more than 28 km away from Hammanskraal, a small town in the borders of North-West and Gauteng Provinces. More of the discussion of these schools will be dealt with in the methodology chapter.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The research consists of five chapters which are presented as follows:

CHAPTER 1

Chapter one serves as a theme analysis and consists of explanation of terms, statement of the problem, research questions, aim of the study, research approach and methods as well as the structure of the research.

CHAPTER 2

Chapter two provides a discussion based on the variables contributing towards the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning, together with other related factors such as teaching methods, parental involvement, teaching and learning resources as well as classroom climate. More information will be obtained from reviewing relevant research literature.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter three is based on the discussion and rationale for the research design and methodology. This focuses on identifying the population, sampling procedures, research instruments, data collections and analyses procedures.

CHAPTER 4

Chapter four deals with data analyses, and interpretation of the research results.

CHAPTER 5

Chapter five consists of the summary of the most important findings of the research, arising from the literature study, conclusion and recommendations for further research are made.

Appendices, which include references, research instrumentation are inserted towards the end of the research study.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter serves as an introductory orientation of the study, stating the research problem, the aims and objectives of the study, clarification of concepts, research design and structure of the research. The proceeding chapter deals with an in-depth study of the research topic “variables contributing towards an establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in high schools”, and relevant literature is used to investigate this study in detail.

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