

**The effects of principals' workloads in Limpopo multi-grade primary schools on  
learners' academic performance**

by

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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(Kgomo P.T.)

## DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to the following:

My wife, Catherine Marabe Kgomo (née Modiba) for her endless support throughout the difficult times of my study.

My children, Thabo, Maboyang, Kamogelo, Kgaogelo, Shoki, Modibe and my granddaughter Oratilwe for their courage. My mother, Ramadumetja and my late father, Frans Kgomo.

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## 1. ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in multi-grade primary schools located in Limpopo Province, Capricorn District, Bochum Cluster. The main purpose of the study was to analyse the effects of the principals' workloads on learners' academic performance in multi-grade primary schools in Limpopo Province. Twelve schools with the most multi-grade classes were qualitatively sampled from four circuits of Bochum Cluster (Bochum East, Bochum West, Maleboho Central and Maleboho East) as the target for the study. Multi-grade schools are characterised by low learner enrolment. The departmental model of allocating teachers to schools allocates posts according to the number of learners in a school regardless of grades. The school principal is therefore compelled to teach full-time and carry out other related responsibilities such as administration, professional duties and extra-mural activities. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed to achieve the research goals. The study was based on the research question *How do principals' workloads affect learners' academic performance in multi-grade primary schools in the Capricorn district, Limpopo Province?*

The study findings, based on interviews, observations and documents analysis have revealed that there are some managerial, leadership, curriculum, teaching and administrative challenges that principals in multi-grade schools are faced with. These challenges collectively contribute to principals' heavy workload that eventually affect learners' performance negatively. The researcher therefore concluded that the principals' workload in multi-grade primary schools have a negative impact on learners' performance.

**2. KEYWORDS:** Assessment, Curriculum, Leadership, Management, Mono-grade, Teaching, Multi-grade teaching, Performance, Workload.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS
CAPS	CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT POLICY STATEMENT
DBE	DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION
DoE	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FFL	FOUNDATION FOR LEARNING
LDT	LAWLER'S DISCREPANCY THEORY
SASA	SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT
SA-SAMS	SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL AND ADMINISTRATION MANAGEMENT
IQMS	INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
USA	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND, PROBLEM FORMULATION AND AIMS

#### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Multi-grade teaching has been in existence in many developed and developing countries from long ago. Some of the reasons for its introduction by education systems are outlined by Brunswic and Valerien (2004) as demographic constraints, administration and competition as seen by parents. Demographic factors include the movement of people from rural to urban areas for better living conditions. Administrative considerations include shortage of teachers in a school, while competition as seen by parents refers to a situation where parents would choose popular schools for their children as schools have unequal quality education. Little (2004) supports Brunswic and Valerien by pointing out that some of the conditions that led to the increase in multi-grade schools were areas with low population density and parents sending their children to popular schools. This statement sounds credible because if the population density in an area is low, the resultant enrolment of learners in a school will be low and grades have to be combined. Multi-grade teaching varies from one country to another (Nawab & Baig, 2011) as world countries differ economically, politically, socially and in terms of their educational history.

Most multi-grade schools in South Africa do not qualify for either a deputy principal post or head of department post. According to the Department of Education KwaZulu-Natal province's annual report (2014), a primary school qualifies for a head of department post if it has 150 learners, while for a deputy principal post, a primary school should have at least 520 learners. In schools with fewer learners, the principal is compelled to teach full-time as well as manage the running of the school. Principals in multi-grade schools are caught between the roles of management and teaching. The implication is that principals in multi-grade schools have a higher workload than teachers because of other responsibilities besides teaching; therefore multi-grade teaching is currently assumed to be affecting learners' performance in many schools in South Africa, particularly in rural and farm schools.

This study focuses on the effects of principals' workloads on learners' academic performance in multi-grade schools. The multi-grade teaching system has become a world phenomenon in most rural areas (Abdulraheem, Yekaifa, Arinlade, Abdolrahaman, Olanrewaju, 2010). This type of teaching exists in many African countries, including Namibia, Togo and South Africa; it is recognised as an alternative strategy and practice to reverse negative trends in rural education and to provide access, equity and quality education in previously neglected areas (Taole, 2014). Achieving excellence in managing multi-grade schools in rural contexts remains a challenge for principals. In most South African rural schools principals struggle to manage multi-grade contexts and feel isolated and uncertain about what is expected of them (Taole, 2014).

Multi-grade teaching affects many schools in South Africa, particularly rural and farm schools. According to the national statistics of the Department of Basic Education Report based on Annual Surveys for Ordinary Schools, the number of multi-grade primary schools in South Africa increased from 6 432 in 2008 to 6 619 in 2009, while in Limpopo Province the number increased from 629 in 2008 to 665 in 2009 (Department of Basic Education, 2012). Capricorn District had 102 such schools in 2014 (Limpopo Provincial Government, Capricorn District, 2014). Statistics imply that a large number of learners is affected and if multi-grade schools do not receive the proper attention they deserve from the DBE, education goals may not be achieved in the affected areas.

Multi-grade teaching is a global phenomenon although the concept does not enjoy a common interpretation among world countries (Brown, 2010). The interpretation of the concept *Multi-grade teaching* in the global world depends on the motive for its introduction in each country, which could be either shortage of manpower (teachers) or economic reasons. The following table shows the percentage of multi-grade schools used throughout the world in low population areas, in both developed and developing areas (Mulkeen & Higgins, 2009).

**Table 1.1. Multi-grade schools in developed countries**

Country	Multi-grade schools (%)
---------	-------------------------

Canada	25
England	25
Finland	70
France	34
Ireland	42
The Netherlands	53
Northern Australian territories	40
Scotland	25

**Source:** Adapted from Mulryan-Kyne (2007), Little (2006) and Suzuki (2012)

Table 1.1 shows that a multi-grade teaching system does not exist only in developing countries as some people assume, but even in developed countries. Some developed countries practise multi-grade teaching as a choice because they believe that it is cost effective. The table shows a heavily industrialised Finland with 70% of multi-grade schools. The Netherlands have 53%, Ireland 42%, Northern Australia 40%, France, one of the former historic superpowers, 34%; England, Canada and Scotland each has 25% multi-grade schools.

Table 1.2 shows the developing countries affected by multi-grade teaching. India with 84% such schools is one of the highly affected countries. South Africa falls among developing countries, with 26% multi-grade schools, twenty two years after attainment of democracy.

**Table 1.2. Multi-grade schools in developing countries**

Country	Multi-grade schools (%)
Burkina Faso	36
India	84
Pakistan	58
Peru	78
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>26</b>
Sri Lanka	63
Zambia	26

**Source:** Pridmore (2004), Little (2006), Suzuki (2012) and the Department of Basic Education (2009).

Table 1.2 shows developing countries that practise multi-grade teaching. Most of these countries are Asian and African states. Multi-grade teaching in most of these countries is not a matter of choice, but they are compelled to practise multi-grade teaching in order to provide access to learners with a right to education. Among the developing countries in the table are India, one of the heavily populated countries in the world with 84%, Peru with 78%, Sri Lanka with 63%, Pakistan with 58%, Burkina Faso with 36% and both Zambia and South Africa with 26% each.

Multi-grade teaching is defined in different ways by different authors. Hargreaves, Montero, Chau, Sibli and Thanh (2001) define multi-grade teaching as teaching wherein a teacher has the sole responsibility for two to three grades simultaneously. Sigsworth and Solstad (2005) define multi-grade schools as small schools in which classes with two or more grade levels are taught in the same classroom by the same teacher. Siririka (2011) defines it in the Namibian context as classes with learners of more than one grade taught by the same teacher in the same classroom at the same time. Siririka (2011) further divides multi-grade schools into full multi-grade, where all grades in a school are grouped together and partial multi-grade schools where only certain grades are grouped. Among the views of different authors on the definition of multi-grade teaching, there are common concepts such as *combined grade levels*, *same classroom*, *same teacher*, *different age groups* and *different curricula*. Multi-grade teaching can therefore be defined as the

teaching of two or more combined different grades in the same classroom by the same teacher at the same time.

Multi-grade schools are commonly found in areas where learner and teacher numbers are declining and where, previously, there was mono-grade teaching (Beukes, 2006). Despite the prevalence of multi-grade teaching in many African states, governments tend to focus on improving conventional schools and neglect multi-grade schools. Principals and local communities that house multi-grade schools have had to come up with initiatives (Joubert, 2010). Due to a shortage of teachers, principals in schools are therefore compelled to merge certain grades and share the same workload of subjects with their colleagues. These schools seem to have curriculum overload.

Learners' performance in South Africa has for many years focused on Grade 12 examinations (Department of Education, 2012). Learners' performance in primary schools received little attention for a long time until the introduction of programmes such as the Foundation for Learning (FFL) and Annual National Assessments (ANA) in 2008 for the improvement of learners' academic performance. The Foundation for Learning is a campaign launched in 2008, as the Department of Education realised that most learners could neither read nor write while at Grade 3 level (DoE, 2007). FFL therefore became a departmental call for total commitment to improve the skills of writing and reading of Foundation Phase learners. Annual National Assessments involve testing learners using national tests in languages and Mathematics from Grade 4 to 6 in the Intermediate Phase, Grade 7 to 9 in the Senior Phase and in literacy and numeracy from Grade 1 to 3 in the Foundation Phase (DoE, 2010).

This study supports the findings of Taole and Mncube (2012) that a lack of training for principals and teachers in multi-grade schools is still a major problem. Multi-grade teaching programmes are not included in the curricula of higher education institutions (Joubert, 2010). Teacher training programmes do not include practical issues and techniques for handling aspects of multi-grade teaching, such as time management, teaching skills, lessons preparation, teaching media and instruction and learning. It was therefore assumed that principals in multi-grade schools lack the appropriate skills to deal with the high workload in these schools and this may ultimately affect learners' academic



performance adversely. This study investigates how the principals' workloads affect the learners' academic performance in multi-grade primary schools in Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.

## **1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The principal should play a key role in the school in creating a supportive school culture and ensuring that all teachers feel supported. Principals in multi-grade schools should provide teachers with opportunities to master multi-grade teaching methods, monitor the progress of their implementation and give feedback and suggestions to teachers. The head of the school should be proficient in facilitating positive and cooperative interaction among teaching members (Taole, 2014). However, principals of multi-grade primary schools in South Africa are overloaded with work. They perform several roles, such as being full time teachers in the classroom, executing school administration, monitoring extra-curricular activities and leading and managing the classroom and the whole school (Siririka, 2001). The policy document of South Africa's Department of Basic Education does not make mention of multi-grade schools. Curriculum, teaching media and teacher training are all geared towards mono-grade classrooms. As a result principals of most multi-grade schools in the primary education system are essentially left to fend for themselves (Taole, 2014). Therefore the focus of this study is to investigate the effects of the multi-grade school principals' workloads on learners' academic performance in the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.

## **1.3. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY**

The purpose of this research on multi-grade teaching is to examine learners' performance in multi-grade schools, particularly in subjects that are taught by the principals. The researcher understands that in multi-grade schools principals are full-time teachers. Besides teaching, they are expected to perform extra responsibilities related to management, leadership and administration. The researcher intended to find out whether these principals are able to execute their managerial responsibilities and teach effectively.

The researcher further intended to find out from the multi-grade school principal respondents whether any assistance is received from the Department of Basic Education.

To achieve the purpose of this research, the researcher employed mixed method, qualitative and quantitative research methods to gather and analyse the data.

#### **1.4. RATIONALE FOR THIS RESEARCH**

Every research project should have a rationale suitable to the project. With regard to the researcher's personal experience in teaching in multi-grade schools, his first appointment as a teacher was in a primary school with 26 teachers, comprising the principal, deputy principal and two heads of department. Learner enrolment was 1 120. This school is referred to as School X, and there were no multi-grade classes. Teaching appeared normal, and the allocation of subjects to teachers in the different grades was fairly done according to the teachers' field of specialisation and interest. The management of the school was effective.

The researcher moved to his second school, School Y; this was a secondary school with six teachers and fewer than 250 learners with no multi-grade classes. There was a principal and one head of department. The teaching conditions at School Y differed from those at School X because at School Y core subjects like Mathematics, Life Sciences and Physical Sciences were allocated to teachers with specialisation in those subjects. The remaining subjects were allocated irrespective of specialisation or teachers' interests. The principal and the head of department taught even more subjects than the teachers. Both the principal and the head of department had limited time for performing other school-related responsibilities, such as administration and class visits.

The researcher was then redeployed to a third school, which is referred to as School Z; it was a primary school with four staff members, including the principal and 136 learners. The working conditions at school Z differed markedly from those at School X and Y. The following grades were multi-graded: Grade R and Grade 1, 2 and 3, as well as Grade 5 and Grade 6. The allocation of subjects was a great challenge; subjects could not be fitted into the timetable according to the requirements of the departmental policy document and the principal had no time for administration and other school responsibilities. School principals do not normally cover the syllabus required for a specific term. The principals of the neighboring multi-graded schools used to complain about multi-grade teaching

during circuit and subject meetings and this aroused the researcher's interest in finding out more about multi-grade teaching.

The Department of Basic Education, however, emphasises the need for the provision of quality education in schools (DoE, 2009). It is therefore the prerequisite of the Department of Basic Education to ensure that multi-grade schools have their own approach to curriculum, own conditions of service and own policies to improve learners' performance. This means that the approach to curriculum content and teaching media should accommodate a multi-grade situation. The challenges faced by principals of multi-grade schools in South Africa have been minimally researched (Joubert, 2010). The researcher assumed that the research gap was the effect of the workloads of multi-grade primary schools' principals on learners' performance. Multi-grade school principals are expected to teach full-time and to manage the school. They may not be able to carry out other school-related responsibilities due to a shortage of teachers. The enrolment of learners in most rural schools in South Africa tends to drop due to the high rate of urbanisation in the country (Maponya, 2010). The Department of Basic Education's model for the teacher-pupil ratio seems to be unfairly used regarding teachers in multi-grade schools. Schools with low enrolment are therefore compelled to merge certain grades at the expense of effective instruction and learning. A decline in the admission of learners in rural or farm schools challenges the leadership and management of principals in multi-grade schools.

In his recommendation for further research on multi-grade teaching Brown (2010) suggests that people need to know more about how principals and managers are affected by multi-grade teaching in both the classroom and the school. He supports the notion that the role of the principal and the school governing body in multi-grade schools is unclear.

The district officials who participated in a research study conducted by the Centre for Multi-grade Education agreed that ongoing research on multi-grade education is a necessity (Boonzaier, 2009). The researcher agrees with Joubert (2007) that multi-grade teaching seems to be enjoying little interest from most researchers because they regard it as normal teaching as in mono-grade schools. It is against this background that this study was undertaken.

## **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.5.1. Main research question**

The main research question that guided this study is, *How do principals' workloads affect learners' academic performance in multi-grade primary schools in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province?* The main research question was addressed by the secondary research questions below.

### **1.5.2. Secondary Research Questions**

- To what extent are principals prepared to manage responsibilities of improving learners' academic performance in multi-grade primary schools?
- What challenges do multi-grade principals experience in improving learners' performance?
- How do multi-grade principals overcome challenges of improving learners' performance

## **1.6. ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY**

Hypothesis can be explained as a tentative or possible answer to the problem in research (Wayne, 2010). A good hypothesis has related elements and it should be testable. The hypothesis in this research is *The principals' workloads have no effect on learners' academic performance in multi-grade primary schools in the Capricorn District of the Limpopo Province.* This hypothesis was derived from the main research question. The related variables in this hypothesis are principals' workloads and learners' performance. The researcher suggests that despite the principals' workloads, such as management, administration and other responsibilities that multi-grade primary schools principals are faced with, they still have sufficient time to teach learners in the classroom. The researcher assumed that this hypothesis is testable as principals teaching in multi-grade schools can be interviewed about their workloads and observations can be conducted on the actual setting of multi-grade schools and documents with evidence of learners' performance can be examined.

## 1.7. RESEARCH AIMS

- To determine whether the principals' workloads in multi-grade schools has an impact on learners' academic performance.
- To explore the experiences of principals in multi-grade schools with regard to workload versus learners' performance.
- To explore how principals in multi-grade primary schools overcome workload challenges versus learners' performance.

## 1.8. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

### **Multi-grade schools**

Multi-grade schools are schools characterised by more than one grade in the same classroom, taught at the same time, with more than one curriculum (Abdulraheem et al., 2011). Usually these grades are close to each other, e.g. Grade 1 and Grade R, Grade 2 and Grade 3, 4 and 5 or Grade 6 and Grade 7 (Chaka & Weber, 2011). Multi-grade schools are commonly found in rural areas and on farms where communities are scattered and have a low density of population (Little & Mathot, 2001). Workload challenges are therefore a common factor in these schools since principals in multi-grade schools were not trained on how to manage these schools. This research focuses on multi-grade schools, the combination of grades and the subjects taught by the principals. The researcher took into consideration the fact that multi-grade teaching varies from one country to another (Nawab & Baig, 2011). This implies that the circumstances that led to the introduction of multi-grade teaching in countries may vary from one country to another. Multi-grade settings are not acknowledged in most national policies on education (Little, 2005).

### **Mono-grade schools**

Mono-grade schools are schools that consist of classes where each class comprises learners of the same age moving through the system with peers who started the first grade in the same year, taught by a single teacher at one time (Little, 2005). These are schools where learners of a particular grade are accommodated in the same classroom and taught the curriculum of that particular grade throughout the year. Mono-grade schools are frequently referred to by the researcher as these schools are the direct opposite of multi-grade schools. Mono-grade schools are favoured by the majority of teachers and parents compared to multi-grade schools.

### **Management**

Management involves the structures, strategies and systems that are put in place to support an effective instruction-learning process that leads to enhanced outcomes for learners (Hopkins, Ainscow & West, 1994). Management includes planning, organising, monitoring and support in the teaching context. The school principal should initiate effective management in the school environment. Management itself is a demanding task and it entails strong leadership. In a multi-grade class it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that an atmosphere conducive to instruction and learning is created (Taole, 2014). In this study the researcher deals with the principal as the class teacher; the principal should ensure that effective management is carried out thoroughly in both the classroom and the school. In multi-grade teaching, where the principal's contact time with learners in the classroom is supposed to be 100%, effective management becomes questionable.

### **Leadership**

Yukl (2002) defines leadership in schools as a process of social influence where influence is exerted by one person over others. Yukl further indicates that the purpose of influencing is to structure the activities and relationships in the organisation or school in the context of this study. Leadership deals with influencing and giving direction to those who are led. In this study the researcher concentrates on the effect of the principals' leadership on learners' performance in multi-grade schools. Leadership involves having a vision. Multi-grade school leadership therefore requires a visionary leader. In leading the persons in charge, particularly the principals of multi-grade schools, are expected to assist the

teachers in the school. Unfortunately it is assumed that principals of multi-grade schools are so overloaded that they may not be able to give direction to other school members.

## **Workload**

Workload refers to the amount of work to be done by someone or a particular organisation (Mbunda, 2006). In the context of this study workload refers to the amount of work to be done by the school principal in a multi-grade school. In multi-grade schools, principals' workload involves teaching, administration, monitoring, mentoring, management and leading. As such principals' contact time with learners appears insufficient. Learners' performance, particularly in the subjects taught by the principals, may be negatively affected as principals' attention may become divided as they may be called from the classroom by other responsibilities.

## **1.9. RESEARCH METHODS**

The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches, otherwise known as mixed method research in the study. He realised that each research approach has its advantages and disadvantages with regard to the review of the data collection process, the bias that can be caused by the researcher and the proximity of the participants to natural setting. Bowen (2003) supports the notion of combining the two approaches in research by indicating that the combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches should be viewed as an acceptable methodological approach. The concept is supported by Creswell (2003) who suggests that in a mixed methods approach, the researcher is able to incorporate methods of collecting or analysing data from the quantitative and qualitative research approaches in one study. The researcher therefore, at some stage, collected the data qualitatively and presented the same data quantitatively. The mixing of two approaches enabled the researcher to achieve the aims of the research.

### **1.9.1. Qualitative approach**

A qualitative approach emphasises processes, qualities and the meanings that are measured in terms of amount, quantity and intensity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The researcher considered the characteristics of a qualitative approach as outlined by Creswell (2009) and aligned these characteristics with the study:

- The research was conducted in the field to allow direct interaction with the participants. In this case the schools served as field of study.
- The researcher collected data by observation, interviewing the participants and examining documents.
- The researcher reviewed data, made sense of it and organised it into themes across all the sources.
- The meaning of the participants was put at the forefront in comparison to the meaning made by the researcher.
- The research findings emerged in response to the setting.
- The researcher successfully developed a complex of the problem by reporting multiple perspectives.

The researcher therefore found a qualitative approach to be the best fit for the study in employing the qualitative techniques that were the most appropriate in collecting data. It was through the qualitative approach that face-to-face interviews were conducted with the principals of the multi-grade schools to explore their experiences with regard to workload and learners' performance (Murchison, 2010). Observations and document analysis were also used as qualitative techniques in collecting data from the timetables, school schedules, files and ANA schedules.

#### **1.9.1.1. Phenomenology**

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) recommend five qualitative research methods: grounded theory, content analysis, ethnography, case study and phenomenology. The researcher found phenomenology to be the most appropriate qualitative method to be used in this research because the purpose of phenomenology, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2001) is to understand experience from the participants' point of view. The researcher therefore intended to understand the concept *effects of the principals' workloads on*



*learners' academic performance in multi-grade schools* from the experience and the viewpoint of the principals as the participants in this event.

### **1.9.2. Quantitative approach**

A quantitative approach is numeric. The researcher considered a quantitative approach appropriate to the study due to its nature of using numbers. He chose a quantitative approach because he intended to make a graphic numeric representation. Some of the characteristics of a quantitative approach that assisted the researcher in this study are summarised as follows by Williams (2007):

- Quantitative research responds to the research question by providing numerical data. The researcher felt that the presentation of data on a graph by means of numbers would be required.
- The research can be used in response to questions related to variables within the research. The variables that exist in the study are principals' workloads and learners' performance.
- The research intended to establish, confirm or validate relationships. The researcher wanted to establish whether there is a relationship between the two variables.
- The findings in quantitative research can be predictive, explanatory and confirming.
- The research is independent of the researcher. The researcher does not intend to influence the outcomes of the research in either way; the outcomes are free from bias.
- Data in quantitative research can be objectively used to measure reality.

The researcher presented the qualitatively gathered data, particularly data from the analysed documents, in the form of numbers (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2000). This enabled the researcher to interpret the issue of principals' workload versus learners' performance better.

The application of both approaches assisted the researcher in answering the research questions.

### **1.9.3. Data collection strategies**

The researcher found the most appropriate methods of data collection in this study to be interviews, observations and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals of multi-grade primary schools to explore their understanding of the relationship between workload and learners' performance (Edwards & Holland, 2013). A questionnaire was prepared with questions relating to qualifications, years of experience as teaching principal, workload, personal feelings regarding multi-grade teaching, the challenges experienced, learner assessment and performance.

The existing literature that reflects learners' performance, particularly school schedules, was analysed. The schools' timetables and duty allocation list for the distribution of non-teaching duties were examined. Data was further collected through observations where the researcher observed aspects such as discipline of learners, time management and grading of learners in the classroom. The next section presents the theoretical framework that guided the study.

### **1.9.4. Data analysis and interpretation**

Maree (2010) suggests that all data collected electronically or in any way, including non-verbal data, should be transcribed. Data collected by the researcher through interviews, observations and document analysis was therefore transcribed, categorised and themes were identified for the purpose of analysis.

In analysing the data open coding was used and the process of reading data carefully, line by line, was followed. The researcher then categorised the data into organised themes.

## **1.10. CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH**

Credibility refers to the idea of internal consistency, where the core issue is how the researcher ensures rigour in the research process and how he or she communicates to others how the research was conducted (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The researcher achieved credibility through a prolonged engagement with the participants after the interviews, observations or document analysis. According to Graneheim and Lundman

(2004) credibility is established when the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data with the correct interpretation of their original views.

In this study the researcher ensured credibility by playing the recordings to the participants for the approval of their validity after the interviews before data could be analysed and interpreted. The checking of the recordings with participants ensured that the voices of the participants were included in the data analysis and interpretation to eliminate researcher bias when analysing and interpreting the research results (Anney, 2014) so that the results are trustworthy. The researcher later asked each respondent to comment on the observation report on filing, time management, discipline in the classroom and grading of learners. The respondents were also asked to comment on the researcher's document analysis report that included timetable, duty allocation list, school schedules, IQMS and meetings. This was done to make the study credible.

#### **1.11. RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH**

Reliability in research is of paramount importance. Scot and Morrison (2006) define reliability as a measure that provides the same results on two or more occasions when an assumption is made that the object being measured has not changed. Phelan and Wren (2005) refer to reliability as the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results. In this study the researcher was consistent when reporting the results of the research. The same interview questions were asked to the respondents in all the sampled multi-grade schools. Probing questions depended on the response from the respondents. Triangulation methods were utilised.

#### **1.12. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The study was limited to twelve sampled principals of multi-grade primary schools in Bochum Cluster (Bochum West, Bochum East, Maleboho Central and Maleboho East circuits), Capricorn District in Limpopo Province. The researcher did not encounter challenges in contacting the principals of multi-grade schools as their contact numbers appeared on the list of multi-grade schools obtained from the district office.

The challenge met was of two principals who decided to decline after the protocol had been explained to them; they were intimidated by the community members that warned them to refrain from any activities related to multi-grade teaching. Principals indicated that community members feared that their schools might be merged or closed. The communities were therefore against the merging or closure of the school due to a shortage of teachers and learners. The researcher was obliged to respect those principals' feelings and ceased with the research in those schools.

### **1.13. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN RESEARCH**

Ethical considerations play a significant role in the research process, particularly when dealing with human participants. Ethical considerations should be observed and followed rigorously in all stages of the research process (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Participants should provide informed consent of participation, particularly in the interview process. This ensured the protection of their rights and maintaining anonymity and confidentiality.

The researcher successfully defended the research proposal and applied for ethical approval by the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee. Approval was granted to proceed with fieldwork. Permission to conduct the research was requested from the Limpopo Department of Education, Capricorn District and was granted. Letters requesting to conduct the research were sent to the circuit managers of Bochum Cluster (Bochum West, Bochum East, Maleboho East and Maleboho Central) and the request was granted. Principals of the sampled multi-grade schools in Bochum Cluster were approached and requests for permission to conduct the research were submitted. The aims of the research were explained to the principals and the response was positive. The researcher was granted permission to proceed with the research in their schools. The consent forms were issued to the principals and dates were scheduled for the visits to schools.

#### **1.13.1. Anonymity and confidentiality**

The researcher took all precautions to maintain the principle of anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research process. Meetings were arranged with the participants at their venues. The purpose of the research was explained to the

participants. Participants were assured that pseudonyms would be used to safeguard their identity and that if the results of the research were disclosed their identity would remain unknown (Olivier & Fishwick, 2003). Olivier and Fishwick point out that the crux of anonymity and confidentiality is to ensure that the privacy of the participants is not invaded.

### **1.13.2. Honesty**

The researcher ensured that honesty was observed throughout the research and that the research results represent the true data obtained from the participants. He further ensured that he had no influence on the deliberations of the participants.

### **1.14. SETTING OF THE STUDY**

The setting of the study was the sampled twelve multi-grade schools in Bochum Cluster, Capricorn District, Limpopo. Principals of the sampled schools were interviewed in their schools using a questionnaire. Observations were conducted and documents were examined. Most of the data collection was done in the principals' offices.

### **1.15. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research is of special importance. The researcher assumed that the study could assist in creating an in-depth understanding of the principals' role in multi-grade schools. Principals may be assisted or supported in their daily workload challenges in multi-grade schools. Multi-grade schools may be provided with resources such as manuals and other texts that may assist in addressing the workloads of principals, either in the classroom or in the school as a whole. Workshops for principals on how to improve performance in multi-grade primary schools may be an alternative. Improved management and leadership may ultimately assist in changing the current perceptions most principals have of multi-grade schools. The idea is supported by findings by Brown (2010) that in developed countries, parents have a negative attitude to multi-grade teaching while in South Africa a negative attitude is found among the teachers. Teaching practices in multi-grade schools may improve with motivated principals, teachers and learners. More research studies need to be conducted on multi-grade schools.

### **1.16. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

The following structure outlines the format of the research according to chapters:

## **Chapter 1**

This chapter commences with the introduction. It includes the background to multi-grade schools where the topic is introduced together with the reasons for the introduction of multi-grade teaching in both developed and developing countries; it provides the problem statement, research aims, rationale for the study, research questions, research methods followed, significance of the research, limitations of the study and a conclusion.

## **Chapter 2**

The existing literature on the topic is reviewed in this chapter. The literature review has been divided into an introduction, themes and there is a conclusion for the chapter. The researcher reviewed literature on the effects of multi-grade teaching in this chapter and researched the literature gap on the effects of principals' workloads on learners' academic achievement.

## **Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 presents the methodological procedures followed by the researcher, data collection procedures and methods employed, data analysis and ethical procedures adhered to. The research methods employed by the researcher and how they were applied in the research are explained in detail. The researcher outlines how data was collected through a qualitative approach, analysed and presented quantitatively.

## **Chapter 4**

This chapter presents the data analysis, including the methods and interpretation and conclusion. It explains how data was divided into themes, the methods employed to analyse the data and the interpretation by the researcher.

## **Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 consists of a summary of the findings, recommendations for future research, the conclusion, references and appendices. The researcher categorised the findings, presents the findings from the data analysis and makes recommendations emerging from the interviews, observations and document analysis.

### **1.17. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion this chapter focuses on the background to the topic, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the rationale for the study, the research questions, hypothesis, research aims, definitions of the main concepts in the study, research design and methodology employed in the study and how data was collected.

Chapter 2 focuses on reviewing the existing literature on the effects of multi-school principals' workloads on learners' academic performance.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The review of literature on the effects of the principals' workload on learners' academic performance is limited because the topic has been minimally researched. Most literature

reviewed deals with the effects of multi-grade teaching on learners' academic performance, and not specifically the effects of multi-grade principals' workloads on the learners. In the literature review the researcher concentrated on the views of authors on how the multi-grade principals' workloads affect the learners' academic performance. Findings from the literature revealed two sides of almost the same strength with regard to the effects of multi-grade school principals' workloads on learners' academic performance. The research findings by Veenman (1995) from the 45 studies indicate that there were no significant differences between the academic performance of learners in multi-grade groupings and mono-grade groupings.

Veenman argues that the academic performance in a school is dependent on the quality of education offered by the teachers and not on the organisational structure of the school, but that the teachers' negative attitude to multi-grade teaching has a detrimental effect on learners' performance. He further indicates that being in a multi-grade or mono-grade school has no effect on learners' academic performance. These findings are supported in the research conducted by Proehl, Douglas, Elias, Johnson and Westsmith (2013) in USA in Catholic schools; their findings indicate that multi-grade teaching does not have an impact on learners' academic outcomes. Brown (2010) supports the idea by indicating that the research evidence showed that academic performance of learners was not affected by being in a multi-grade classroom. Miller (1990) reviewed 13 experimental studies assessing the learners' academic achievement in both mono-grade and multi-grade schools and concluded that there was no significant difference in the academic achievement of the learners in the two groupings.

The findings of the studies that conclude that multi-grade teaching does not have an effect on learners' academic performance are criticised by Mason and Burns (1996) who conclude that Veenman's methodology of analysis was flawed. Mason and Burns (1996) therefore maintain that the learners' performance in multi-grade schools is low compared to performance in mono-grade schools. Mason and Burns are supported by Wilkinson (1998) who carried out a study in New Zealand and concluded that learners in multi-grade schools performed less well in some aspects of reading and Mathematics compared to their counterparts in mono-grade schools. Lloyd (2002) conducted a study in Australian



rural schools on the effect on learners' academic achievement and his findings support Wilkinson that those learners in multi-grade schools perform less well compared to their counterparts in mono-grade schools. Findings by Beukes (2006) underscore the negative effects of multi-grade teaching on learners' academic performance. Beukes indicates that some of the contributing factors to learners' poor performance in multi-grade schools are divided teaching time, poorly attended subjects and non-completion of the syllabus. The researcher suggests that the teaching of two, three or sometimes even four grades with different curricula by one teacher at the same time may contribute negatively to learners' performance due the larger workload of the teacher.

This study suggests that the previous studies on learners' performance were not limited to the principals' role but the whole school's performance. This research fills in the gap posed by Brown (2010) that future research studies should examine how principals and managers are affected in multi-grade schools. Effective teaching is required in multi-grade schools for quality education as well. The unique teaching skills can be acquired through efficient management strategies of the principals so that the core business of education can be accomplished in these schools. Multi-grade teaching may therefore be more demanding to managers than mono-grade teaching due to a smaller number of teachers found in multi-grade schools. In multi-grade schools it is assumed that the workload of the whole school is equally shared among all the teachers available in the school, including the principal. When studying multi-grade schools one should consider that some of these schools consist of a maximum of two or three teachers with grades ranging from Grade R to Grade 7. In view of this the literature review for this study covered aspects such as management and leadership, classroom teaching, learners' assessment, time management and supervision.

## **2.2. THEMES**

### **2.2.1. Principals' workloads**

In terms of the Employment Educators Act (1998), teachers' workloads are divided into formal school day activities and outside formal school day activities. Activities during the formal school day include scheduled teaching time, extra and co-curricular duties, pastoral, administrative, supervisory, professional and managerial duties. Outside formal

school day activities include planning, extra and co-curricular as well as professional duties. The workload of a principal in a multi-grade school, according to Mulryan-Kyne (2004), includes teaching as well as having other responsibilities, such as leadership, management and administration.

The principal in a multi-grade school is therefore duty bound to carry out both types of responsibility – formal school day activities and outside formal school day activities – due to the limited number of teachers available in the school. The research finding by Mulryan-Kyne (2004) has revealed that the workloads of principals in multi-grade schools are considered “impossible,” particularly regarding the juggling of administration, leadership and teaching tasks that causes considerable frustration and stress. The notion of multi-grade schools’ principals’ overload of work is supported by Brown (2010) and by Brunswic and Valerien (2004) and Little (2006) that indicate that the teaching workload and the administration overload required of a principal in multi-grade school results in stress.

The work overload in multi-grade classes occurs as a result of multiple roles to be performed by principals (Educational Research for Social Change, 2014). This implies that principals have to do proper planning for two to four classes in the same classroom in thirty minutes or one hour so that all learners can receive education. Other responsibilities besides teaching also need attention.

The principals’ workload in multi-grade schools is assumed to be so heavy that it may have a negative impact on learners’ performance.

### **2.2.2. Management and leadership roles**

The effectiveness of instruction and learning is dependent on good management. Multi-grade schools generally seem to be characterised by a complex management system. Their classes therefore require unique skills of management. In his research findings Hargreaves (2001) states that multi-grade classrooms are characterised by poor discipline and disorderliness. This notion is assumed to be valid because in a multi-grade school learners of different grades and age levels are found in the same classroom where the school principal is also a class teacher.

McEwani (1998) supports Hargreaves by stating that classroom management is a demanding setting for the teacher, particularly in a class of diversity. A multi-grade class consists of different grades, therefore careful planning and organisation are required. Principals in multi-grade schools are faced with the management of both the school and the classroom. All learners in the class should be engaged at all times, particularly primary school learners (Thomas & Shaw, 1992). With other responsibilities outside the classroom, the teaching principals in multi-grade schools may become frustrated and overworked. These principals are likely to experience challenges due to their frequent absenteeism from the classroom to attend both administrative and professional duties outside the classroom. Learners may therefore be left on their own and this may lead to their poor academic performance.

In their findings Gronn and Rawlings-Sanaei (2003) indicate that school leadership is a form of servitude where expectations and demands on leaders are high.

Besides human resource management, multi-grade schools principals have to manage the schools' physical resources due to insufficient teachers at the school. Although the learners might be given tasks to work on during the principals' absence from the class, such classes are likely to be characterised by noisemaking and disorderliness. Tsolakidis, Sotirious and Koulouris (2005) regard this time, during which learners are not productively engaged, as 'dead time' in the classroom. It may not be easy to reduce 'dead time' in the classroom because most multi-grade primary schools are found in disadvantaged and under-resourced communities.

### **2.2.3. Classroom teaching**

Teaching two or more grades in the same classroom at the same time is likely to require extraordinary teaching skills. The teacher is expected to teach more than two different curricula at the same time. Sufficient time is required for planning and preparation of lessons to generate effective teaching. The preparation for more than one grade in the same classroom at the same time and the actual presentation may frustrate the teaching principals, particularly in South Africa where multi-grade school teaching principals are not trained for a multi-grade teaching system. In most cases the teaching principals are likely to teach the topic they prefer or subjects they regard as important (Besong, 2014).

The tasks that are expected to be covered per grade per subject may be too demanding for multi-grade school principals. The principals' competency and productivity in the classroom may be negatively affected.

The findings of Siririka (2011) indicate that teaching in a multi-grade school is a difficult task because it may happen that while the teacher is explaining to one group, the other group becomes disorderly. The implication is that teaching may become ineffective and affect the learners' performance negatively. This notion is supported by Vithanapathirana (2006) who declares that teaching in multi-grade schools is more challenging than in mono-grade schools.

#### **2.2.4. Learner assessment**

Teaching is always accompanied by learner assessment. Learners need continuous assessment in the classroom (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The DBE expects each school to formulate its policy on written work wherein each teacher should give learners a certain number of tasks per term, depending on the requirements of each subject. The tasks include formal activities (tests) and informal activities (classwork, homework, assignments and projects).

Besong (2014) points out that although learners in the same classroom may be taught the same topic, they should be assessed differently according to the levels of their grades. Due to time constraints experienced by multi-grade school teaching principals, the quality of assessment tasks given to learners may be questionable as assessment also requires sufficient time from the principal.

#### **2.2.5. Time management**

Effective time management is essential in the instruction-learning situation. With regard to the principals of multi-grade schools, there are many activities that need attention. Considering the duties the principal of a multi-grade school has to perform, proper and sound planning is required. However, the principal's daily plans may easily be interrupted (Lunenbourg, 2010). Both district and the circuit officials may visit the school unannounced when the principal's attention will be required. Learners' parents, approaching the principal with school-related matters, may also have an effect on the principal's planned

time. Learners' cases, which teachers are incapable of solving, followed by disciplinary processes may require the principal's attention. This is underscored by Carr (2003) who states that teaching principals find it particularly difficult to cope with levels of interruption.

The interruptions may adversely affect the principal's proper time management. He or she may find it difficult to complete the syllabus on time, which may eventually lead to learners' poor academic achievement.

### **2.2.6. Supervision**

Supervision adds another burden to multi-grade schools principals' work load. The school has a legal duty of taking care of learners (South African Schools Act, 1996). The school principal as the manager of a school is further duty bound to supervise both learners and teachers in a school. Learners' safety and engagement in school work is a necessity. Teachers need to be supervised and mentored in their teaching and in other programmes, such as IQMS to ensure that quality teaching is executed in the schools (DBE, 2003). The principal has to ensure that teachers' files and record sheets are in order and that quality instruction is offered. In the classroom a multi-grade school principal, as the subject teacher, has to ensure that learners' group activities, writing and reading activities are monitored. According to Berry (2001) learners in multi-grade schools perform better in reading than those in mono-grade schools. These research findings are based on the overall performance of learners in a school and not on overloaded principals' performance. It is safe to agree with Siririka (2011) who says that it is difficult to monitor the work of learners in a multi-grade school because the difficulty of monitoring may be due principal's extra responsibilities.

It is also the responsibility of a multi-grade school teaching principal to ensure that the level of supervision in the class equals that of a parent, particularly of primary school children that still need more care.

### **2.2.7. Participation in extra-curricular activities**

The DBE urges schools to encourage learners to participate in extra-curricular activities such as athletics, music and sports (SASA, 1996). Participation in extra-curricular activities is bodily healthy and these activities unlock learners' talents. Learners also get

the opportunity of associating with their counterparts from their school and other schools (Darling, Caldwell and Smith, 2005). The problem of participation of multi-grade schools in extra-curricular activities seems to lie with a shortage of sufficient teachers. In a two- or three-teacher school, the principal might be the only teacher with an interest in sport. The principal's management and administrative commitments may hinder learners' active participation in sports activities.

### **2.2.8. Curriculum management**

The management of curriculum is a prominent role in the school. In most multi-grade schools the principals are tasked with this role of supervision as there is neither a deputy principal nor a head of department. Vincent (1999) is of the opinion that, in a multi-grade school, the principal's leadership role is to foster common vision and to build a supportive environment for multi-grade programmes to be implemented. The curriculum management strategies applied by principals of multi-grade schools are designed for mono-grade schools. In most cases the type of curriculum followed by multi-grade school principals depends on their own discretion.

Besong (2014) discovered that none of the participants in the study he conducted managed to cover the curriculum according to curriculum statement requirements. Some of the strategies applied by multi-grade schools principals in administering the curriculum may retard the learners' performance.

### **2.2.9. Administrative duties**

In addition to managing curricula, the principal also perform administrative duties. Multi-grade school principals are also responsible for daily school administration. According to Hornby (2001), administration can be defined as the activities that are carried out with a view to organising or planning to run a school or an institution. An effective principal is therefore one who plans and organises school activities by assigning subjects and other duties to teachers according to their interests and specialisation. He or she is further expected to keep proper records of documents, administer admissions, plan for the whole school, draw up timetables and control some registers, depending on the demands of an individual school. The incompetency of the available teachers on the staff in a multi-grade

school may even worsen the situation with regard to delegation of some responsibilities by the principal as the workload may even increase.

According to the findings of Besong (2001) the effectiveness of the principal is instrumental for the school to achieve its goals. The work overload of principals in multi-grade schools may influence learners' academic achievement.

### **2.3. CONCLUSION**

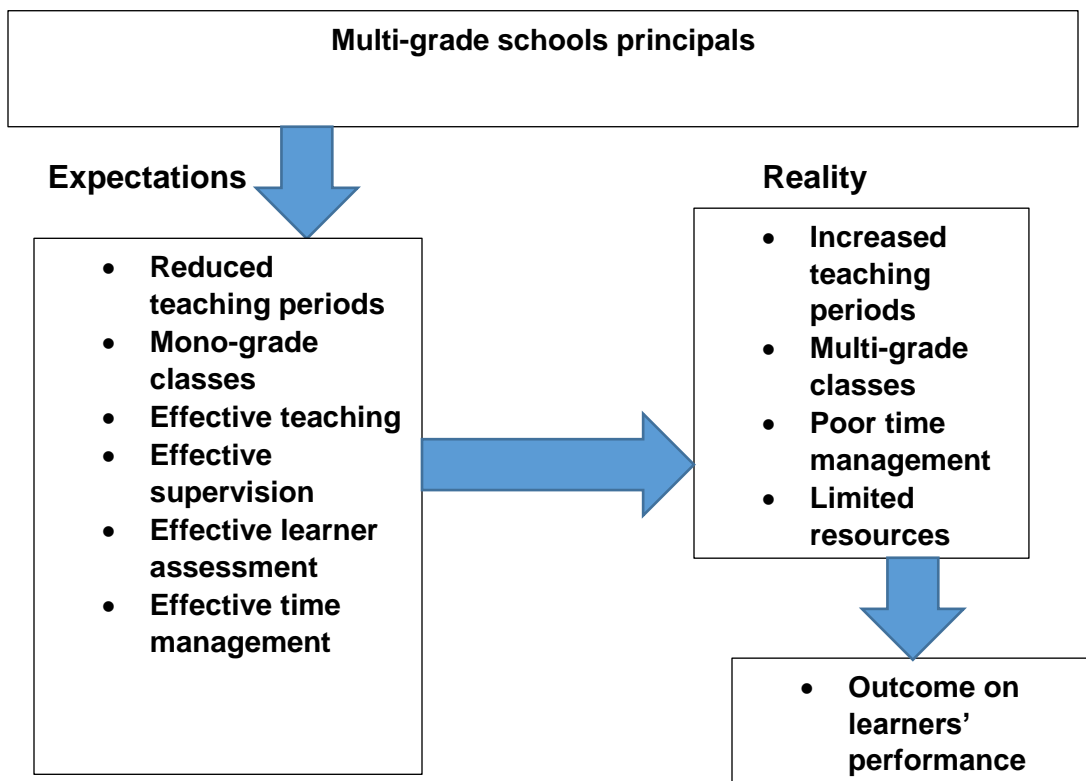
Chapter 2 focuses on whether there is a significant difference in the academic performance of learners in multi-grade schools compared to those in mono-grade schools. The principals' workloads in multi-grade primary schools are addressed and it has been revealed that principals fail covering all the work expected because of work overload. They are expected to keep files, manage the school, prepare lesson plans, programmes of assessment and assessment tasks for different subjects and grades as there are fewer teachers in the school than in mono-grade ones.

The researcher's literature study has revealed that previous research on learners' academic performance left a gap with regard to the impact caused by multi-grade schools' principals' workload. Previous research focused on the performance of the school in general. The research findings in the next chapters indicate whether the principals' workloads, which include teaching, administrative duties, learners' assessment, participation in extra-mural activities, curriculum management, management and leadership affect learners' academic performance in multi-grade schools.

### **2.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A theoretical framework entails a theory the researcher chooses to be guided in a research. Sitwala (2014) defines theoretical framework as a set of concepts drawn from the same theory to explain an event in a particular research problem. The study was informed by Lawler's Discrepancy Theory (LDT) (Man, Modrak, and Dima 2011). The theory is based on what employees are expecting and what they are getting from the working environment. Lawler's Discrepancy Theory entails elements such as perceived expectations of an individual, reality, user satisfaction and perceived performance or productivity.

The theory was applied by the researcher to analyse the relationship between the expectations of principals in multi-grade schools and learners' academic performance. The analysis has revealed that there is a gap between the expectations of multi-grade schools principals and what they find in reality. Some of the newly appointed principals' expectations in schools were teaching learners in mono-grade classes, where there was availability of resources, a reduced number of teaching periods, and effective instruction and learning for improved learners' performance. The reality principals find in new schools is multi-grade classes, inadequate resources, an increased number of teaching periods and poor time management. A great discrepancy exists between expectations and reality. Taries et al. (2006) say the greater the difference between expectations and reality, the larger the gap to which an individual should respond by taking action. Based on the researcher' understanding of Discrepancy Theory, the researcher developed the following figure as paradigm for the study:





### **Figure 2.1. Conceptual framework showing the relationship between variables**

In Figure 2.1 the researcher illustrates the expectations of newly appointed principals in schools. When teachers are promoted to become principals, they normally anticipate reduced periods of contact teaching time in the classroom because of expected extra responsibilities as principal. When a teacher applies for a principalship in a new school, one of the expectations of such a teacher is to work in mono-grade classes. Other aspirations of newly appointed principals are effective teaching, effective supervision, effective learner assessment and effective time management. When such teachers are appointed in schools with low enrolments, they may become disillusioned. Reality sets in with multi-grade classes, increased contact teaching time in the classroom, poor time management and limited resources in most cases as such schools are usually found in rural areas. The researcher attempted to determine how reality in multi-grade schools affects learners' academic performance. The Discrepancy Theory indicates that once a gap emerges between expectations and reality, someone should respond by taking action to reduce the gap. So, the gap that emerges between expectations and reality in multi-grade schools caused by workload should be reduced.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Research methodology reflects the procedures that were followed by the researcher in conducting research. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2002) refer to methodology as the approach or paradigm that underpins the research. Methodology therefore serves as the framework of the research.

#### **3.2. PARADIGM ASSUMPTIONS**

Paradigm assumptions refer to the framework that guides the researcher to understand, explain and interpret the concepts. In this study the researcher assumed that principals' workloads in multi-grade primary schools has an effect on learners' academic

performance. Tichapondwa (2013) points out that assumptions are situations that are taken for granted by the researcher although these situations should not affect the results of the study. The researcher therefore took care that the assumption that principals' workloads in multi-grade primary schools affect learners' academic performance did not influence the results of this study so that a better understanding of the concept could emerge from the findings.

### **3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This is described as a plan or blueprint for conducting research (Babie & Mouton, 2008). The researcher used a research design as the framework for the study. The research design focused on the strategies chosen by the researcher that fit the ontological and epistemological frameworks, the methods (interviews, observation and document analysis), approaches (qualitative and quantitative) and technologies (cellular phone) used by the researcher to collect and analyse data (Briggs, Coleman & Morrison, 2012). The chosen strategies assisted the researcher in attaining the research goals. This notion is supported by Leedy and Ormrod (2010) who indicate that the research design is applied so that suitable methods are used to attain the goals and objectives of the research. This study adopted an interpretive-positivist paradigm with combined qualitative and quantitative approaches of inquiry to represent the results of the learners' performance quantitatively in graphs from qualitatively collected data (Creswell, 2009). The aspects that influence a mixed methods approach in a research study that should also be considered when applying mixed methods have been stated (Creswell, 2009). The researcher selected three that fit the study, namely timing, weighting and mixing and they are detailed in the paragraphs that follow.

#### **3.3.1. Timing**

This is the timing of qualitative and quantitative approaches in data collection, whether data is collected in phases (sequentially) or at the same time (concurrently). In this study the researcher collected data roughly at the same time to avoid rescheduling other dates with the participants.

#### **3.3.2. Weighting**

Weighting refers to the situation whereby the researcher applies both approaches equally or emphasises one approach compared to the other. In this study the researcher put more emphasis on a qualitative approach than on a quantitative one. The quantitative approach was used to support the qualitative approach by presenting the qualitatively collected data on graphs and assisted in analysing and interpreting data.

### **3.3.3. Mixing**

The two approaches, quantitative and qualitative, can be mixed in a study. The researcher mixed them in data presentation, analysis and interpretation in merging the two data sets.

## **3.4. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH**

A qualitative research approach assists in understanding the processes and social contexts that underlie behavioural patterns (Maree, 2007); a qualitative approach enables the researcher to interact with the participants in the real setting (multi-grade schools principals), particularly in their natural environment, focusing on the participants' interpretations. The researcher, guided by a qualitative approach, used interviews, observations and document analysis to establish findings on the effects of principals' workloads on learners' performance in multi-grade primary schools in Capricorn District, Limpopo Province. Multi-grade school principals were interviewed. Departmental and school-based documents were treated as existing literature. In this model, the researcher used literature deductively as a framework for the research hypothesis (Cresswell, 1998). Data was gathered from the documents such as the principals' timetables, staff's duty lists, quarterly schedules and schools' ANA schedules for the past five years. Observations were conducted on how the principals managed their daily roles. These aimed at verifying the data in the documents and enhancing the trustworthiness of the respondents. Observations occurred in the setting of multi-grade activities during the session. Some of the aspects that were observed were the grading of learners in different grades in the classroom, discipline in the classroom, time management and 'dead time', the principals' filing, the presentation of different curricula in the same classroom at the same time and the principals' handling of administration. The documentation strategies that were used by the researcher were explored during observations and document analysis. An example of such documentation was a diary. Handwritten notes were taken

in case technology failed. The researcher further avoided the voluminous accumulation of notes in the diary.

### **3.5. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH**

A quantitative research approach was used to explain the phenomenon by collecting numerical data that was analysed using mathematical methods (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2000). In this study the researcher focused on establishing the relationship between the principals' workloads and the learners' performance in multi-grade primary schools by using numbers. The researcher presented data qualitatively in column graphs per researched school. The graphs reflect performance in the principals' subjects per school. The aim was to establish the statistical relationship between principals' workload and learners' academic performance in multi-grade schools.

The integration of both the qualitative and the quantitative results assisted the researcher in completing the research.

### **3.6. SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

The researcher used stratified sampling for the quantitative approach to select the population for the study. Her chose to make use of stratified sampling because the researcher stratifies the population according to certain characteristics that guarantee that the sample will include specific characteristics the researcher requires to include in the sample (Creswell, 2012). This notion is underscored by Leedy and Ormrod (2010) who state that the researcher should select the participants who would provide the best information regarding the research topic. The researcher in this regard obtained a list of multi-grade primary schools from Capricorn District, Limpopo. The specific common characteristic within the population was multi-grade classes.

In conducting sampling, the researcher selected the participants in the study (Cresswell, 1998; Maxwell, 2005) so that they could assist in gaining the most needed information (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The relevant cases in this study were twelve schools principals in one Limpopo Province district with a common feature of multi-grade classes. Initially

the researcher intended to select 12 schools from the population of multi-grade schools in the Capricorn District by dividing the total number by 12, counting from one to the given number. Each school counted on the given number in the list would be sampled, e.g. if there were 72 schools, 72 would be divided by twelve and each number 6 school would be sampled in order to give each school an opportunity of being selected. The researcher requested a list of multi-grade primary schools from the Limpopo Department of Education, Capricorn District. It was discovered from the list that there were 102 multi-grade primary schools across the Capricorn District in 2014 (Limpopo Provincial Government, Capricorn District, 2014). The researcher realised that the population was large and that Capricorn District is sparsely distributed with 24 circuits, and more time would be consumed by data collection.

The researcher then limited the study by reducing the population of Capricorn District to Bochum Cluster that comprises 4 circuits with 39 multi-grade schools. The list reflected the classes that are multi-graded in each school. An imbalance was identified because some schools had more multi-grade classes than others. The three schools with the largest number of multi-grade classes were sampled from each circuit to make up 12. The researcher continued to conduct the research in 12 multi-grade primary schools sampled from Bochum Cluster, in Capricorn District. Twelve principals of sampled multi-grade schools were regarded by the researcher as the most resourceful participants who could assist with first-hand information regarding the effects of the principals' workloads on learners' academic performance. Table 3.1 below shows the sampled schools.

**Table 3.1. The sampled school name, learner enrolment, number of posts allocated to school through staff establishment and grades combined in the school**

School name	Enrolment	No. of posts	Grades combined
School A	107	3	Grade R - Grade 3; Grades 4 and 5; Grades 6 and 7.
School B	97	3	Grade R and Grade 1; Grades 2 and 3, Grades 4 and 5; Grades 6 and 7.
School C	35	2	Grade 1 - Grade 3; Grades 4 and 5; Grades 6 and 7.
School D	79	3	Grade R - Grade 3; Grades 4 and 5; Grades 6 and 7.

School E	158	5	Grade 1 and Grade 2; Grades 4 and 6.
School F	109	3	Grade R and Grade 1; Grades 2 and 3; Grades 4 and 5; Grades 6 and 7.
School G	97	3	Grade R and Grade 1; Grades 2 and 3; Grades 4 and 5; Grades 6 and 7.
School H	65	2	Grade 1 and Grade 2; Grades 3 and 4; Grades 5 and 6.
School I	75	2	Grade R - Grade 3; Grades 4 and 5; Grades 6 and 7.
School J	140	4	Grade R and Grade 1; Grades 2 and 3; Grades 4 and 5; Grades 6 and 7.
School K	130	4	Grade R and Grade 1; Grades 5 and 6.
School L	96	3	Grade R – Grade 3; Grade 4 and 5; Grades 6 and 7.

The table reflects the schools, enrolments of learners and staff establishment in each school. Enrolments were generally low, with a minimum of 35 and a maximum of 158 learners. The number of teachers in each school was also generally low, yet the number of subjects and grades were the same as their counterparts in mono-grade schools. The researcher discovered that the combination of grades in the schools was not uniform. He further learnt from the combination of grades that in School H, Grade 3, which is in the Foundation Phase, was combined with Grade 4 in the Intermediate Phase. In almost all schools, except Schools E, H and K, Grades 6 and 7 were combined with the Intermediate Phase (Grade 6) and the Senior Phase (Grade 7). Among the schools there were two schools, Schools C and H without Grade R. The principals indicated that the schools did not admit learners in Grade R due to a shortage of learners.

### **3.7. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

Data collection methods such as interviews, observation and document analysis were employed. The researcher used these methods to collect data.

#### **3.7.1. Researcher's role**

The researcher maintained objectivity by being detached from the study and not influencing the study results either through personal experience, beliefs or values when collecting and analysing the data collected from interviews, observation or document analysis. This perspective is underscored by Fink (2000) who indicates that data about phenomena should not be connected to the researcher collecting them.

### **3.7.2. Interviews**

Murchison (2010) describes an interview as an interchange of ideas between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. Merriam (2005) defines an interview as a procedure aiming at gaining information from the participants. An interview can therefore be described as a way of sharing ideas between two or more people. Interviews are generative in the sense that new knowledge or thoughts can be created through interviews (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). A semi-structured interview schedule was prepared and used to collect data. The aims and the significance of the study were explained to the principals of the sampled multi-grade schools. Interview protocol was observed, whereby the researcher read the interview protocol to the interviewee, making the interviewee aware that the interview was voluntary and the interviewee might withdraw any time he or she might feel uncomfortable. The interviewees had to sign the informed consent form before the interview started. Interviews were audio-recorded using a cellular phone, once the participants had granted permission for such recording. The interviewees were later asked semi-structured questions to explore their understanding of how their workloads affect learners' academic performance (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Questions were based on the research questions; responses sometimes encouraged the interviewer to probe the interviewee with follow-up questions. The interview questions included participants' biographical information, multi-grading of classes, learner assessment, principals' workloads and challenges in improving performance and management of multi-grade schools. The researcher took notes during the interview session where necessary to avoid the embarrassing situation in case the cellular phone failed the researcher during transcription. Notes were recorded. The interviewer used the same set of questionnaire throughout the sessions.

#### **3.7.2.1. Semi-structured interviews**

The interview questions included participants' biographical information, multi-grading of classes, learner assessment, management of multi-grade classrooms, principals' workloads and challenges in improving learners' performance. The researcher avoided complexity by formulating the interview questions to avoid biased responses from the respondents. Interview questions excluded presupposition.

### **3.7.2.2. Purpose of the interviews**

The purpose of the interviews was to gain in-depth information about a particular subject and that could be interpreted through the meaning the interviewee brought to it (Barbour & Schostak, 2005). The interviews explored the views, experiences and motivations of people regarding certain matters. Interviews are assumed to bring a deeper understanding of a phenomenon, e.g. the effects of principals' workloads on learners' performance in multi-grade schools.

### **3.7.2.3. Advantages of using interviews**

Opdenakker (2006) summarises the advantages of using interviews in research as follows:

- The researcher is able to gather more information that can be added to verbal responses from the interviewee's social prompts, such as intonation, voice and body language.
- Interviews are time saving as they pose a question and illicit a spontaneous dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee.
- The interview report can be more accurate than a written report as the interview can be recorded, provided the interviewee grants permission.
- Termination of a face-to-face interview is easily compared to other methods of interview because the interviewee can see that the interview is nearing its end.

### **3.7.2.4. Disadvantages of using interviews**

Opdenakker (2006) points out the following as disadvantages of using interviews in research:



- Interviews can be time consuming, particularly when transcribing notes from the tape recordings.
- Interviews are regarded as costly as the interviewer sometimes has to travel long distances to reach the interviewee.

Brown (2001) adds the following disadvantages of interviews:

- Interviews can be used in small scale study only.
- They are normally never 100% anonymous, as researchers have a tendency to be tempted to disclose the identity of participants.
- Interviewers have a potential for subconscious bias.
- Interviews sometimes have the relative potential to be inconsistent.

Although interviews have some disadvantages they are still a widely used tool in qualitative research.

### **3.8. DATA PRESENTATION, CODING AND ANALYSIS**

#### **3.8.1. Observations**

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) indicate that field observations provide a rich description of the research site, the people as well as actions. An observation schedule was therefore used to observe items such as resources, time management, discipline and multi-grading of learners in the classroom. The researcher had the opportunity to observe things as they occur in their natural setting, namely the environment of the multi-grade school (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Observer bias occurs when the researcher manipulates the results of the study (Colman, 2006). The researcher therefore avoided observing what he liked to observe in order to avoid bias in the study results.

#### **3.8.2. Document analysis**

The existing literature related to the principals' workloads was analysed to understand and get its substantive content (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Documents such as timetables, duty allocation lists, mark schedules, Integrated Quality Management Systems reports and Annual National Assessment results were examined. Objectivity was observed in

collecting data, following the principles of the interpretative approach in the qualitative research method.

### 3.8.2.1. Annual National Assessments

ANA tests are standardised national assessments for languages and Mathematics in both the Foundation and the Intermediate Phases (Grade 1 - 6) in primary schools and the Senior Phase (Grade 9) in secondary schools (DBE, 2015). The ANA results of twelve systematically sampled multi-grade schools were analysed. The researcher focused on the results for the subjects taught by the principal. The analysis was based on ANA results from 2010 to 2014. The learners' academic performance was related to the principals' workloads.

**Table 3.8.1. Grade 6 ANA results 2010 - 2014**

School	Subject	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	Average %
A	Maths	19	21	24	36	25	125	25
	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B	Maths	27	33	23	24	38	145	29
	English	34	29	36	36	30	165	33
C	Maths	18	25	34	31	32	130	26
	English	24	28	36	33	24	145	29
D	Maths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
E	Maths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
F	Maths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
G	Maths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
H	Maths	23	25	33	38	26	145	29
	English	31	26	31	20	27	135	27
I	Maths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
J	Maths	49	51	68	66	51	285	57
	English	55	68	50	68	69	310	62
K	Maths	33	30	35	29	28	155	31
	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
L	Maths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	English	36	43	39	31	36	185	37

Table 3.8.1 reflects Grade 6 learners' performance in ANA from 2010 to 2014. The first column on the extreme left shows the name of the school, followed by the subjects that were assessed. Only subjects that were taught by the principal were recorded. The blank spaces indicate that Mathematics and English were not taught by the principal. The researcher recorded learners' performance in Mathematics and English from 2010 to 2014, added the totals for 2010 to 2014 and calculated the average per subject per school.

### 3.8.2. Grade 4 ANA results 2010-2014

School	Subject	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	Average %
A	Maths	23	23	27	29	33	135	27
	English	22	20	23	26	29	120	24
B	Maths	24	28	26	25	27	130	26
	English	31	34	36	27	32	160	32
C	Maths	16	17	19	18	20	90	18
	English	23	27	26	26	28	130	26
D	Maths	28	24	31	27	25	135	27

	English	27	24	19	23	32	125	25
E	Maths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
F	Maths	23	27	33	38	24	145	29
	English	20	24	26	25	30	125	25
G	Maths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	English	34	33	28	35	30	160	32
H	Maths	18	21	16	16	19	90	18
	English	21	25	23	27	24	120	24
I	Maths	38	29	34	31	28	160	32
	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
J	Maths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
K	Maths	29	32	27	33	24	145	29
	English	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
L	Maths	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	English	27	30	26	25	37	145	29

Table 3.8.2 indicates Grade 4 ANA performance from 2010 to 2014. Only subjects that were taught by the principal have been included. The processes and calculation applied in Table 3.8.1 have also been applied in Table 3.8.2.

### 3.8.2.2. Principals' personal timetable

Documents that reflected the principals' workloads were examined. Some of these documents were personal timetables, administration timetables, management timetables, community engagement timetables and extra-mural activity timetables.

### 3.8.2.3. Performance appraisal of principals

The Department of Basic Education has introduced an instrument for the measurement of performance of teachers, namely Integrated Quality Management Systems. The tool can be applied to measure the principals' performance as well. The researcher analysed the IQMS reports of principals of sampled multi-grade schools and attempted to establish from the principals whether IQMS reports had any effect on their workloads and learners' performance.

### 3.8.2.4. Schedules

The schools' quarterly schedules, particularly end of year schedules, were examined. The researcher concentrated on the subjects that were taught by the principals. The performance of learners in those subjects was examined to establish whether there was any correlation between the principals' workload and the learners' performance.

### 3.8.2.5. Checklist schedule

A checklist schedule was used to verify the availability of documents such as timetables, duty allocation lists, quarterly schedules, ANA schedules (2010 - 2014) and Minutes Books (First meeting of the year, 2010 - 2014). A tick was used for the available items while a cross was placed for items not available.

## 3.9. BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The twelve qualitatively sampled participants were from Limpopo Province, Capricorn District, Bochum Cluster. Eleven participants were appointed principals in multi-grade primary schools, with one acting as principal. They were all interviewed and data collected included teaching experience as principals, highest qualifications, subjects and grades taught. The profiles of the principals are presented anonymously in Table 3.9.1

**Table 3.9.1. The names of participants (unreal names), participants' qualifications, field of study, experience in years as principal and subjects and grades taught by the participant**

Note: \* indicates a pseudonym

Participant	Highest qualification	Field of study	Experience as principal	Subjects and grades taught
*Ricky	Degree	Management	5 years +	Grades 4 7;SS,Sep,Maths.
*Joy	Degree	Management	5 years +	Grades4 - 7; Eng & Maths. Grade 4 - 6; NS & Tech. Grade 7; NS and Tech.
*Carl	Degree	Management	1 - 2 years	All subjects Grades 4 – 7
*Sam	Degree	Management	5 years +	Grades 4 - 7 Maths. Grades4 - 6; NS and Tech. Grade 7; NS, EMS , Tech.
*Cane	Degree	Management	3-4 years	Grade 3; all subjects. Grade 2 Maths. and LS.

*Lenn	Degree	Management	1-2 years	Grades 4 - 7 Maths. and Sep. Grades 4 - 6; LS Grade 7 Tech.
*Lesedi	Degree	Management	5 years +	Grades 4 – 7 Eng. and SS. Grades 4 - 6 LS.
*Reeva	Degree	Management	5 years +	Grades 4 - 7 all subjects.
*Patty	Degree	Management	5 years +	Grades R - 3; all subjects. Grade 4; Maths. Grade 7 EMS.
*Bob	Diploma	Management	5 years +	Grades 6 - 7 Eng., Maths. and SS. Grade 6 NS and Tech. Grade 7 NS. Tech, EMS.
*Bell	Degree	Special needs	5 years +	Grades 4 - 7; Maths Grades 5 - 6; LS Grade 7; Maths. and Tech.
*Cole	Degree	Management	5 years +	Grade 4 - 7; Eng. Grades 4 - 6; NS and Tech Grade 7; NS and Tech

\*Note: Sep – Sepedi

NS – Natural Sciences

Eng. – English FAL

SS – Social Sciences

Maths – Mathematics

NS & Tech – Natural Sciences and Technology

Tech – Technology

EMS – Economic and Management Sciences

LS – Life skills

*Ricky* was a male principal interviewed at primary school A. He had been appointed as principal for five years. His highest qualification was a degree in management. He taught the following subjects and grades: Social Sciences Grades 4 - 7, Sepedi Grades 4 - 7; Mathematics Grades 4 and 7.

*Joy* was a male principal appointed at primary school B. He had been appointed as principal for five years and more. Joy's highest qualification was a degree in management. Joy taught Mathematics Grades 4 - 7; English Grades 4 - 7; Natural Sciences and Technology Grades 4 -6; Technology Grade 7 and Natural Sciences Grade 7.

*Carl* was an acting female principal at primary school C for one to two years. Her highest qualification was a degree in management. Carl taught all subjects in both the Intermediate and Senior Phases (Grades 4 - 7).

*Patty* was a female principal and had been teaching at primary school I for five years and, taught all the subjects from Grade R to 3; Mathematics Grades 4, 5 and 7 and Economic and Management Sciences Grade 7. She held a degree in management.

*Bob* was a male principal at primary school J and had been teaching for five years. His highest qualification was a diploma in management. He taught English Grades 6 and 7, Mathematics Grades 6 and 7, Social Sciences Grades 6 and 7, Natural Sciences and Technology Grade 6 and Natural Sciences Grade 7.

*Reeva* was a female principal appointed at primary school H and had been teaching for five years. She held a degree in management. She taught Mathematics Grades 4 - 7, Natural Sciences and Technology Grades 4 - 6, Life Skills Grades 4 - 6, Sepedi Grades 4 - 7, Social Sciences Grades 4 - 7, English Grades 4 - 7, Natural Sciences Grade 7, Economic and Management Sciences Grade 7, Life Orientation Grade 7 and Technology Grade 7.

*Sam* was a male principal at primary school D and had been teaching for five years. His highest qualification was a degree in management. Sam taught Mathematics Grades 4 - 7, Natural Sciences and Technology Grades 4 - 6, Natural Sciences Grade 7, Technology Grade 7 and Economic and Management Sciences Grade 7.

*Lenn* was a male principal at primary school F and had been teaching for one to two years. His highest qualification was a degree in management. He taught Mathematics Grades 4 - 7, Sepedi Grades 4 - 7, Technology Grade 7 and Life Skills Grades 4 - 6.

*Lesedi*, was a male principal at primary school G and had been teaching for five years. He had a degree in management. He taught English Grades 4 - 7, Social Science Grades 4 - 7 and Life Skills Grades 4 - 7.

*Cane*, a female principal at primary school E, had been teaching for three to four years; her highest qualification was a degree in management. She taught all Grade 3 subjects, Mathematics Grade 2 and Life Skills Grade 2.

*Bell* was a female principal at primary school K and had been teaching for five years. Her highest qualification was a degree in Educational Psychology. She taught Mathematics Grades 4 - 7, Life Skills Grades 5 and 6, Mathematics Grade 7 and Technology Grade 7.

*Cole* was a male principal at primary school L and had been teaching for five years. His highest qualification was a degree in management. He taught English Grade 4 - 7, Natural Sciences and Technology Grades 4 - 6, Natural Sciences Grade 7 and Technology Grade 7.

### **3.10. DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is referred to as the process whereby the mass of words generated through interviews or observational data is described and summarised (Lacey & Luff, 2001). The researcher analysed data gathered from the interviews, observations and documents examined in the principals' offices, based on principals' workloads and learners' performance. Hoyle (2002) indicates that in analysing data, the researcher should arrange data in such a way that a problem can be easily detected. The notion is supported by Hesse-Bieber (2010) who indicates that in data analysis the researcher should be driven by the research questions. Therefore the researcher's research question, *How do the principals' workloads affect learners' academic performance in multi-grade schools?* together with the secondary research questions were always observed in data analysis. Data was grouped into themes and findings were compiled.

### **3.11. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, multi-grade teaching should be acknowledged as a reality in both rural and farm schools. The onset of the democratic era in South Africa accelerated the rate of



migration from rural areas to both urban and suburban areas for better living conditions. Rural schools are consequently drained by this process and this increases the number of multi-grade schools in these areas. Principals' workloads increase and this may affect learners' performance. A review of the existing literature on the effect of the principals' workload in multi-grade primary schools on the learners' academic performance discussed in Chapter 2.

The next chapter details data presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings.

## **CHAPTER 4**

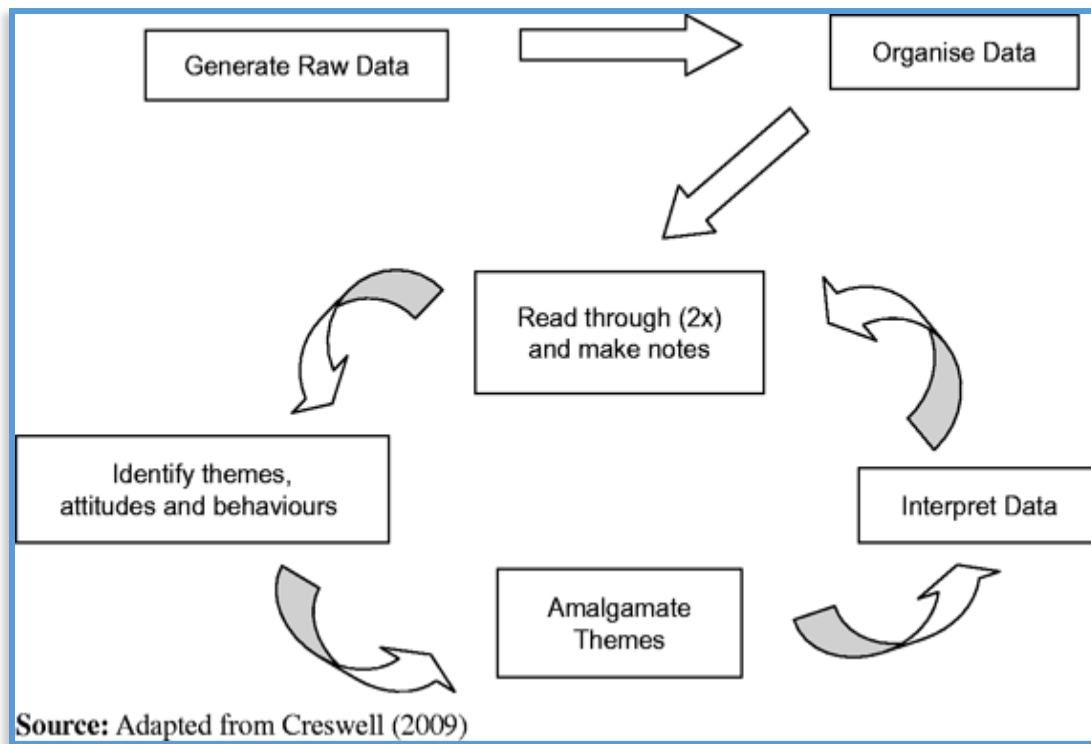
### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

Guided by the stages of Richie and Spencer (1994) the researcher transcribed data from the interviews onto hard copy, and became familiarised with the transcription of the interviews conducted (generated data) on multi-grade school principals by reading and understanding it. Data was organised for identification, coded considering anonymising the sensitive data of the names of schools, using the letters A to L and pseudonyms for the names of principals who participated in the interviews (Carl, Reeva, Lesedi, Ricky, Patty, Sam, Cane, Lenn, Cole, Bob, Joy & Bell), identifying the themes and categorising data into core themes with regard to principals' workloads versus learners' performance. The data was finally interpreted as the findings of the study.

#### **4.2. DATA ANALYSIS**

The diagram that follows in figure 4.2.1 adapted from Creswell (2009) summarises how data analysis was conducted in this study.



**Figure 4.2.1. Digrammatical representation of data analysis**

Creswell (2009) indicates that raw data should firstly be generated by the researcher through data collection. Data collected has to be organised into ideas. The researcher read the notes twice or more and identified the themes, attitudes and relevant behaviour. Ideas should be categorised into themes and interpreted. The researcher therefore collected data through interviews, observation and document analysis, and read through data collected to have a clear picture and developed themes.

### 4.3. THEORY OF DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher analysed data in this study through Framework Analysis Theory (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). The systematic and visible stages of analysing the transcription of the interviews on principals' workloads versus learners' performance in multi-grade primary schools were provided (Lacey & Luff, 2001). The researcher followed the key stages in Framework Analysis, such as familiarising oneself with the transcription of the interviews conducted with the principals of multi-grade schools, observations and document analysis identifying and refining the themes derived from the transcription through coding, and

charting by using each theme across the respondents (principals) as illustrated in Table 4.4.1.

#### 4.4. THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**Table 4.4.1. Research questions and themes**

Research question	Theme
1. How do the principals' workloads affect learners' performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workload</li> <li>• Learners' performance</li> </ul>
2. How do principals manage responsibilities in improving learners' performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for extra teachers or administrator</li> <li>• Merging of multi-grade schools</li> </ul>
3. How do principals overcome the challenges in improving learners' performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Timetables</li> </ul>
4. To what extent are principals prepared to work in multi-grade schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principals' attitude to multi-grade teaching</li> </ul>

Table 4.4.1 shows the themes identified by the researcher when data from the interviews, observations and document analysis was analysed.

The following themes emerged: Greater workloads faced by principals in multi-grade schools on a daily basis; a demand for extra teachers or merging of schools as alternative measures to manage responsibilities in improving learners' performance; the attitude of principals to multi-grade schools, particularly those who are engaged in this concept on daily basis.

#### 4.5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The data collected from interviews, observations and document analysis was analysed and categorised into themes. The researcher applied the Framework Analysis Theory

(Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) to analyse the data and categorised it in accordance with the research questions.

## **4.6. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The researcher succeeded in identifying the following findings from the presented and analysed data: Management, principals' workloads, multi-grading of classes, learners' performance, challenges in improving learners' performance, time management and the principals' attitude to multi-grade teaching. These themes are discussed in detail in the next paragraphs.

### **4.6.1. Qualitative research findings**

#### **4.6.1.1. Findings that emerged from the interviews**

##### **4.6.1.1.1. Management and leadership roles**

The researcher assumed that multi-grade schools are characterised by a complex management system and therefore unique skills are required to manage these schools. It was revealed by the respondents that although management is difficult during the principals' absence from the class, management strategies are administered in different ways<sup>1</sup>:

Carl said: *"If I know that tomorrow I will not be available at school, I just give them a lot of work to keep them busy."*

Bob responded: *"Well, eh, we utilise (coughing) the learners with ability, I mean the gifted learners help those that are less gifted during our absence and on coming back we supervise."*

The responses indicate that principals did their best to keep learners busy in the class during their absence from the class due to other responsibilities. The workload is likely to affect principals' management adversely because principals are not sure of what will be happening in the class during their absence from the class. Learners who are not willing

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<sup>1</sup> Responses are provided verbatim and have not been edited for grammar errors.

to work on their own remain with incomplete work. These learners are likely to perform poorly in tests and examinations.

#### **4.6.1.1.2. Classroom teaching**

When teaching various grades in the same classroom at the same time the available period was shared among all grades. Joy explained:

*“I just, eh, group the related topics together from various grades and teach them at the same time. Like, eh, in a language. The problem arises where there are no related topics for the grades, like in NS and Tech.”*

A mono-grade curriculum is designed according to learners’ cognitive developmental levels. Multi-grade schools apply curriculum designed for mono-grade schools. With insufficient teaching time principals have in class, the lower grade in a multi-grade class is likely to be disadvantaged. Teaching principals are likely to teach the curriculum for the higher grade as one principal indicated. Most principals pointed out that the 30 minutes period available is used for the higher grade as the lower grade would repeat the same topics the following year. This indicates that there is a curriculum gap for a lower grade in a multi-grade class, particularly in the content subjects like Natural Sciences and Technology.

#### **4.6.1.1.3. Learners’ assessment**

The researcher discovered that two to three sets of assessment on the same content differing in level of difficulty were presented to learners of different grades at the same time in the same classroom. Learners’ performance in the lower grade was not always satisfactory. Performance improved during either the second or the third year in the same class, in a different grade. The average performance of learners was fair according to the participants:

Reeva: *“... Eh, I just present sets of questions on the same content but with questions that differ in the degree of difficulty according to grades.”*

Cole responded: *“Eh, mm, I just set the same questions, and give them to the learners to write because it is time consuming to differentiate according to the grades”.*

Patty: “... *the general performance of learners in tests and examinations is fair.*”

The literature review showed that there are scholars who say that there was no significance difference between the performance of learners in mono-grade and those in multi-grade classes. The researcher discovered from the participants that only a few participants set two to three sets of question papers for different grades in the same class. The majority of participants set one question paper for all grades due to their workload. Participants indicated that more than one question paper was time consuming as they had other responsibilities. Learners in the lower grades in multi-grade classes therefore perform poorly compared to the higher grades because the question papers are set above their cognitive developmental level.

#### **4.6.1.1.4. Time management**

Time management was a general problem, particularly for the teaching principals in multi-grade schools. It was revealed that principals of multi-grade schools find it difficult to cope with levels of interruption due to meetings and other professional obligations. There was no uniform strategy among the principals to handle time management problems. Different ways were used to recover the time lost due to professional commitments. These are some of the responses:

Joy:” ...*time recovery, it is not possible at all.*”

Lesedi: ”... *there is no way to recover it, that is why I say it is a problem, there is no way we can recover it.*”

Ricky:”... *sometimes, I conduct morning and afternoon lessons, not always.*”

Patty: “... *hey, even if I don't have anywhere to go, I am unable to manage time for teaching.*”

Time management turned out to be a major challenge to the majority of teaching principals. Most of them indicated that they hardly operated according to their work plan due to daily interruptions, such as meetings, unannounced visits and unplanned departmental workshops. They emphasised that recovering time lost in the classroom is

not always possible due to long travelling distances while only a few indicated the use of morning and afternoon lessons.

#### **4.6.1.1.5. Supervision**

In the interviews it was revealed that most principals did not have sufficient time to supervise the work of their subordinates due to other responsibilities. Participants responded as follows in this regard:

Patty: *“As we are only two at school, if I go to a meeting, the other teacher must take care of my learners.”*

Cole: *“Well, since I do not have enough time to dwell on my own work, how will I supervise the work of my colleagues? There is definitely no time to supervise, instead we just work. Mock supervision of my colleagues’ work may be done sometimes, maybe once a month”.*

Most principals indicated not to have sufficient time to supervise the work of their learners too. Principals often engaged their subordinates and other learners (peer tutoring) for the supervision of their learners. Lack of proper supervision of work was revealed to be caused by the workload experienced by teaching principals in multi-grade schools due to the shortage of sufficient teachers.

#### **4.6.1.1.6. Participation in extra-curricular activities**

Extra-curricular activities were not given much attention. Learners in most cases took part in these activities during circuit competitions. These are some of the responses relating to learner participation in extra-curricular activities:

Lenn: *“More attention is given to covering the syllabus for the term, even the time scheduled for extra-curricular activities according to the time-table is used for pushing the syllabus.”*

Carl: *“We are only two at school, and our learners are too few to compete with learners of our neighbouring schools. To add to that, as females, we would not manage to coach the boys in soccer.”*

The literature review showed that the Department of Basic Education propagates learners' participation in extra-mural activities and underscores the importance of extra-mural activities in learners' health. The insufficient number of teachers was pointed out as a factor that hamper learners' participation in extra-mural activities. The findings have revealed that extra-mural activities are neglected owing to the limited number of learners and the principals' workloads. It was also discovered that time scheduled for extra-mural activities in multi-grade schools is used for covering the syllabus.

#### **4.6.1.1.7. Administrative duties**

It was discovered that administrative duties contribute much to the principals' absence from the classroom. Most principals pointed out that the Department of Basic Education should employ an administrative officer for each multi-grade school. The following responses are relevant:

Bob: *"The admin work in general, it is affecting my teaching time adversely."*

Bell: *"I sometimes feel tempted to employ my personal assistant whom I will pay from my salary. If the Department indeed needs quality education, they must supply multi-grade schools with administrative clerks."*

Reeva: *"... attention is given to the admin documents that are demanded by the circuit manager for submission to secure learners' learning time. There is definitely no time for admin work."*

Besong (2001) points out that the effectiveness of headmasters is instrumental in the school achieving its goals. The findings have revealed that administrative duties take up much of principals' teaching time. The general opinion of the participants was that the Department of Basic Education should employ administrative clerks in these schools. Administrative work is obligatory for all school principals, irrespective of the school being multi-grade or mono-grade. Unfortunately the limited number of teachers in multi-grade schools compels teaching principals to spend more time on administrative work than teaching learners in the classroom.



The researcher discovered that more time was spent by teaching principals on performing administrative duties, and this makes it difficult for the learners to learn in a multi-grade class as supported by Mosha et al. (2007).

#### **4.6.1.1.8. Curriculum management**

Participants confirmed that curriculum management strategies used in multi-grade schools have been designed for mono-grade schools. It was revealed that assessment in multi-grade schools does not accommodate two to three grades in the same class in such limited time. The formation of subject committees has been revealed to be another major challenge since in almost all schools, one teacher is responsible for teaching one subject, e.g. Mathematics from Grade 4 to Grade 7. The following are some of the responses:

Lesedi: *“... eh, you cannot expect three grades in the same class to be on the same pace with one in class, there is no way that our learners can perform the same as learners in mono-grade classrooms.”*

Sam: *“Managing the curriculum in a multi-grade classroom is my greatest challenge because more time is required for everything, preparation and teaching included.”*

Cole: *“...I am the only teacher for English from Grade 4 to Grade 7, and I do not have anyone to share ideas with in this subject; whether I am on the right track or not, I am not certain.”*

The literature review shows that curriculum management strategies applied in multi-grade schools have been designed for mono-grade teaching. Participants implied that curriculum management was one of their greatest challenges, particularly syllabus coverage. The education system should therefore develop management strategies that are in line with multi-grade schools.

#### **4.6.1.2. Findings that emerged from observations**

##### **4.6.1.2.1. Multi-grading of classes**

The researcher observed that there was no uniform method that was followed in multi-grading the grades. Each school applied its own discretion to accomplish the needs of the individual school. When asked about the motivation for combining the grades, the

common response in all schools was shortage of teachers. It was also revealed that in some instances, a Foundation Grade class was combined with Intermediate Grade classes, e.g. in school H, where Grades 3 and 4 were merged. The researcher realised that combining Grade 3 and Grade 4 could create confusion for the learners, particularly as the language of instruction and learning in Grade 3 is mother tongue while in Grade 4 it is the first additional language. In some schools the combination of Grade 4 and 5 retarded the progress of the Grade 4 learners. These are some of the responses:

Ricky: *“... when looking at past results, we realised that the previous year we made a mistake of multi-grading Grade 4 and Grade 5 because the Grade 4 learners were doing many subjects for the first time, so they were experiencing problems; we therefore tried Grade 5 and 6.”*

The majority of responses indicated that participants had no uniform method of combining the grades in multi-grade schools. The Department of Basic Education will therefore be required to intervene by developing policies that can assist the multi-grade schools principals in combining the grades. Convenient guidelines may bring uniformity in combining different grades.

#### **4.6.1.2.2 .Discipline in the classroom**

Classroom discipline was generally fair in most of the visited schools. The researcher realised that during the principals' absence from classes, learners were either moved to another class to be taken care of by another teacher or a learner was chosen by the principal to be in charge. This implies that an alternative method of keeping learners busy should be developed because learners normally do not take orders from their peers. Moving learners to another classroom to be taken care of by another teacher may disrupt all classes involved.

#### **4.6.1.2.3. Principals' filing**

Although in a few cases filing was good, filing in most offices was fair because the basic school files like IQMS, teachers' personal files and school files were available. Participants confirmed that they did not have sufficient time for administrative work. Principals suggested that as filing was part of administrative duties, administrative officers

should be employed by the Department of Basic Education in multi-grade schools so that principals could have enough time for teaching learners in the classroom. The officers should be employed particularly for handling the newly introduced SA-SAMS system in schools, which implies more work to the principals.

#### **4.6.1.3. FINDINGS THAT EMERGED FROM THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

##### **4.5.1.3.1. Timetables**

Timetables were available, but they were not CAPS compliant. The responses from the participants indicated that drawing up a timetable for a multi-grade school is a complex task. Fitting in all the subjects into the time allocated for a particular grade was revealed to be challenging, and subjects could not be allocated teaching time according to the requirements of CAPS. In most cases Mathematics and languages were prioritised. Some participants responded as follows:

Joy: *“... You can draft it, but you cannot follow it, it cannot even be CAPS compliant.”*

Bob: *“... we are unable to follow it as it appears, because we have many hands, I also wanted to tell you that the timetable is there, but it is symbolic because you try to follow it, you won't achieve anything. You get into class, you must make sure that you cover the work for the week within a day or two. When you are changing from that class to another one, do the same.”*

The majority of participants indicated that the time-table for merged grades is one, yet they had to teach more than one grade in one class. This sounded impractical because principals indicated not to have been trained on how to prepare a multi-grade timetable. This revealed that multi-grade teaching confuses both teachers and learners, particularly the lower grades in a multi-grade class. Learners' performance is therefore negatively affected because principals do not have sufficient time for planning due to other responsibilities. The researcher suggests that if more research can be conducted in this field, alternative ways of developing timetables for multi-grade classes can be developed.

##### **4.6.1.3.2. Allocation of subjects**

Allocation of subjects is another area where principals revealed that major challenges were experienced. The literature review indicated that there should be an equitable distribution of workload among teachers according to post levels in the school; instead subjects are randomly allocated without considering teachers' expertise or specialisation. Principals were in most cases the ones who taught most subjects as some teachers sometimes complained of neither having knowledge nor expertise in teaching certain subjects, e.g. Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology and English First Additional Language. Sometimes teachers complained of being overloaded with subjects.

#### **4.6.1.3.3. School schedules**

The researcher intended to examine the quarterly schedules of the school, focusing on the learners' performance in subjects taught by principals during the fourth quarter of the year and assuming that the performance would assist in establishing the relationship between the workload and learners' performance. The researcher was informed by the principals of the multi-grade schools that learners' marks are normally inflated after moderation to promote more learners to the next grade. It was therefore realised that academic performance is not a reliable measure to establish the relationship between learners' performance and the principals' workloads as compared to ANA performance whereby raw marks are submitted to the district.

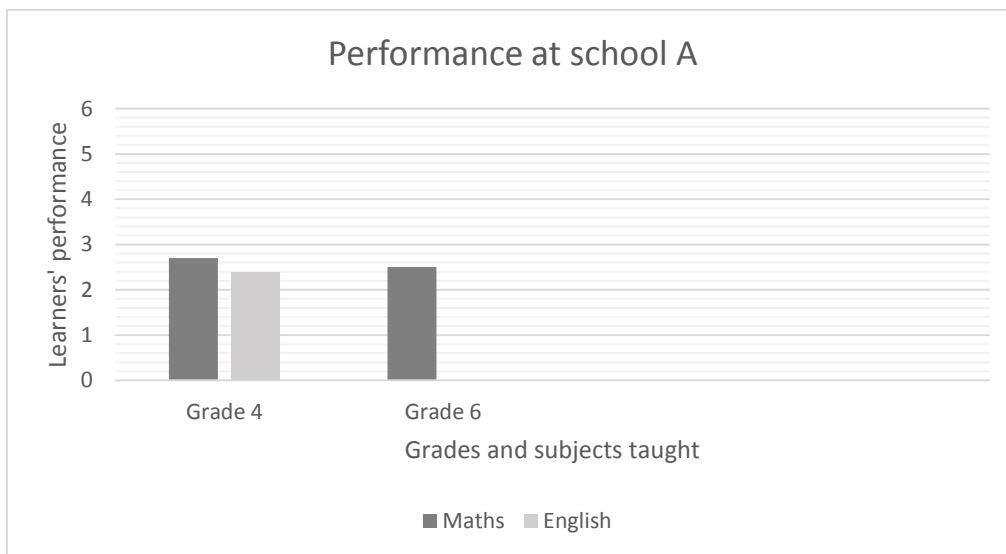
#### **4.6.1.3.4. Performance appraisal of principals**

The IQMS reports, including documents for the appraised principals, were available. Principals acknowledged that IQMS were carried out in schools although it was not efficiently done. They complied simply because it was obligatory. The workloads they were faced with prevented those principals from making follow-ups to the School Improvement Plan, School Development Plan and the Educator Improvement Plan. The principals confirmed that IQMS do not achieve their appraisal purpose effectively in multi-grade schools.

#### **4.6.1.3.5. ANA schedules**

Learners' ANA results for the past five years (2010 - 2014) for each school were examined and an average was calculated by adding the totals and dividing them by five. The researcher considered only the subjects that are taught by the principals. As ANA is grounded in improving the performance of numeracy (Mathematics) and literacy (Language), the researcher concentrated on ANA subjects that are taught by each principal. In a school where the principal taught one ANA subject, only that subject will be reflected on the graph. ANA was limited to the Foundation and Intermediate Phases with more emphasis on Grade 3 and Grade 6 as the exiting grades. In the Foundation Phase the researcher considered Mathematics and Sepedi while Mathematics and English were considered in the Intermediate Phase. The researcher included Grade 4 for a reasonable number of variants. Grade 7 performance was not included as ANA was initially administered from Grade 1 to Grade 6. The data gathered quantitatively from the documents was qualitatively presented on graphs. The graphs show the grades and the subjects that were taught by the principals and the average performance of the learners during the stated years. The performance in each school has been summarised.

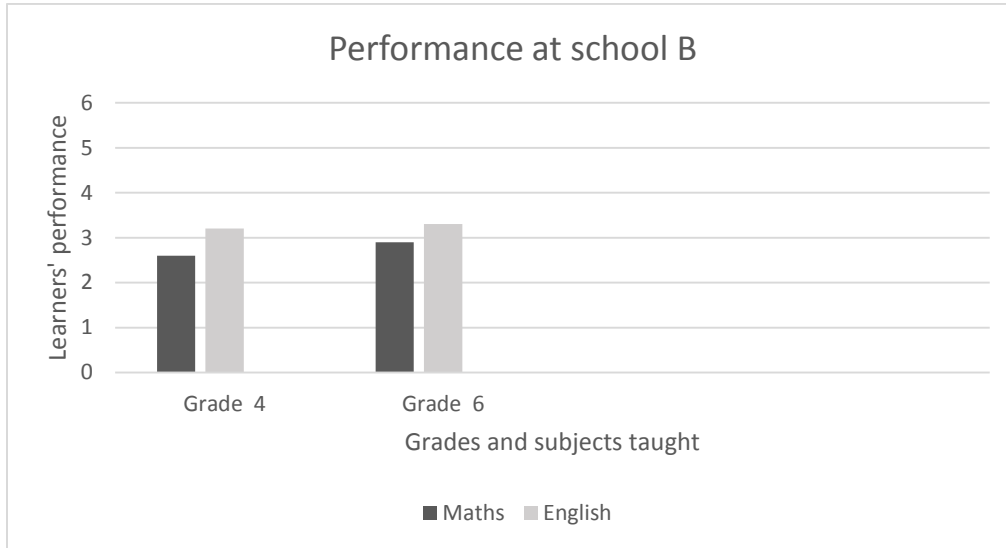
**Scale 1:10%**



**Source: ANA Result 2010 - 2014**

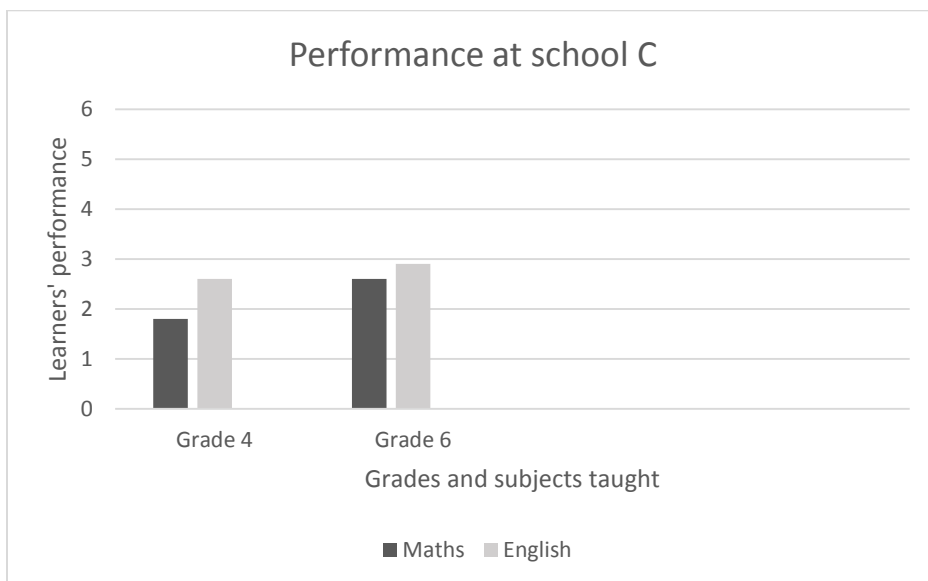
The principal at this school taught Grade 4 and Grade 6. Subjects taught by the principal in school A included, among others, Mathematics Grade 4, English Grade 4 and

Mathematics Grade 6. The average performance in five years was as follows: Grade 4 Mathematics 27% and English 24%; Grade 6 Mathematics 25% .The performance of ANA in both Mathematics and English was not satisfactory.



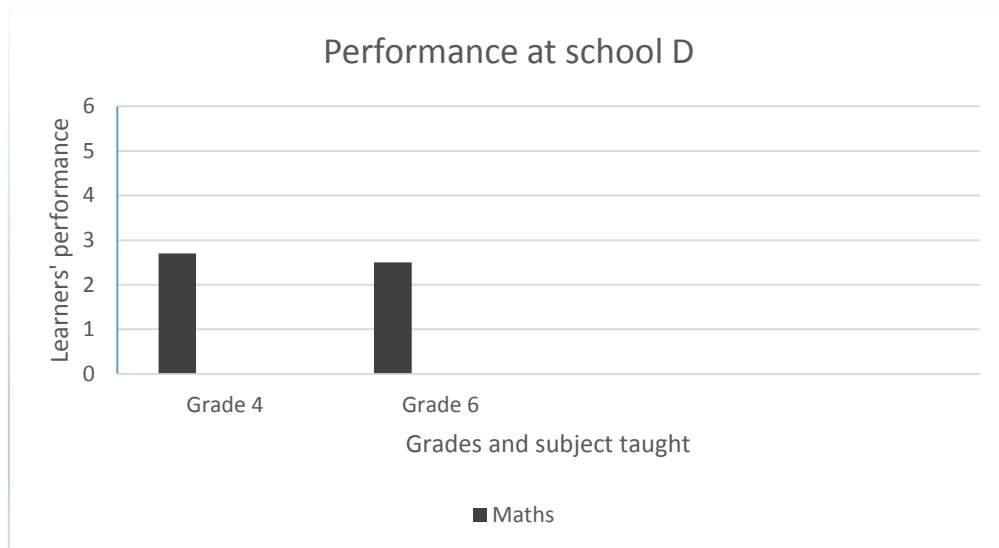
**Source: ANA Result 2010 - 2014**

The principal taught, Grade 4 and Grade 6. The subjects taught by the principal in school B included English and Mathematics for Grade 4 and English and Mathematics for Grade 6. ANA performance was Grade 4 Mathematics 26% and English 32%; Grade 6 Mathematics, 29% and English 33%.



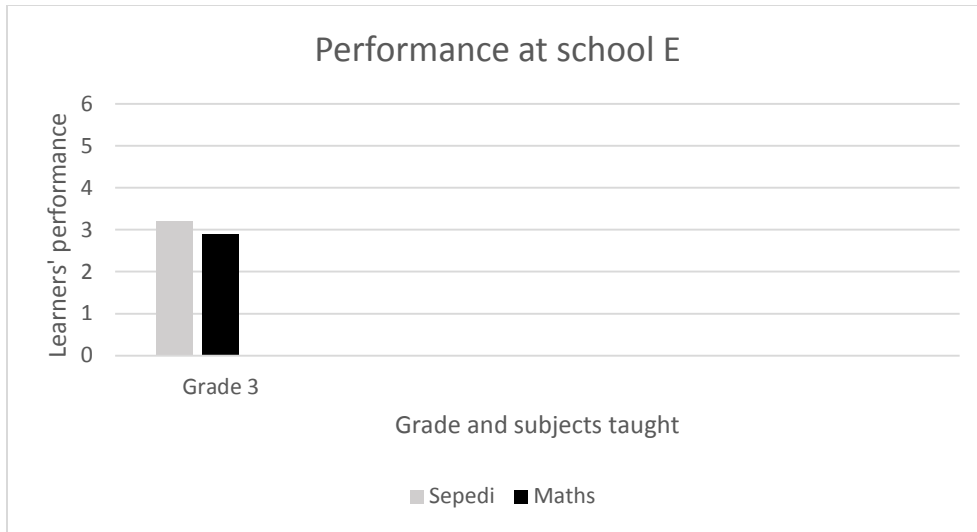
**Source: ANA Result 2010 - 2014**

Grades taught by the principal in school C included Grade 4 and 6. Subjects taught were English and Mathematics in both grades. Learner ANA performance was Grade 4 Maths 18% and English 26%; Grade 6 English 29% and Mathematics 26%.



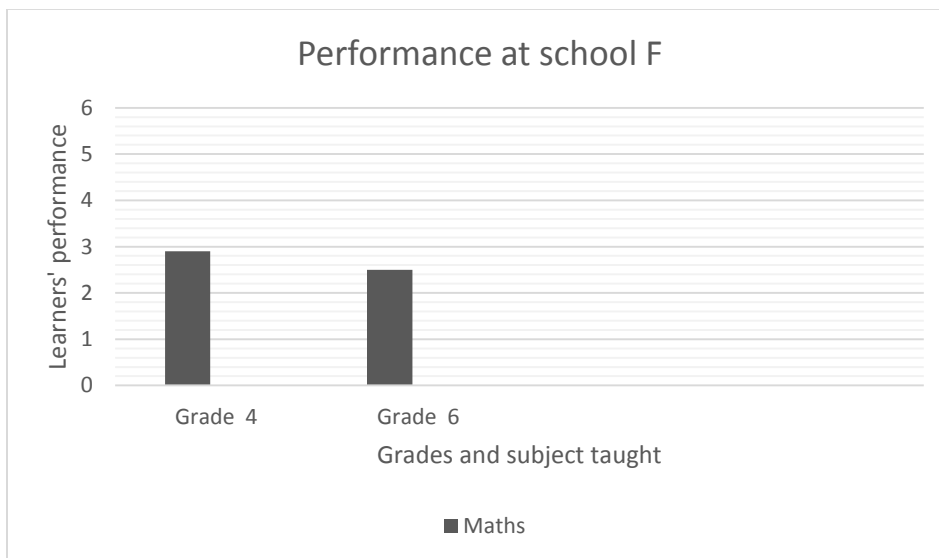
**Source: ANA Result 2010 - 2014**

The grades taught by the principal in school D included Grade 4 and Grade 6. The subjects included Mathematics in both grades. Learners' ANA performance in the principal's subjects was Grade 4 Mathematics 27% and Grade 6 Mathematics 25%.



**Source: ANA Result 2010 – 2014**

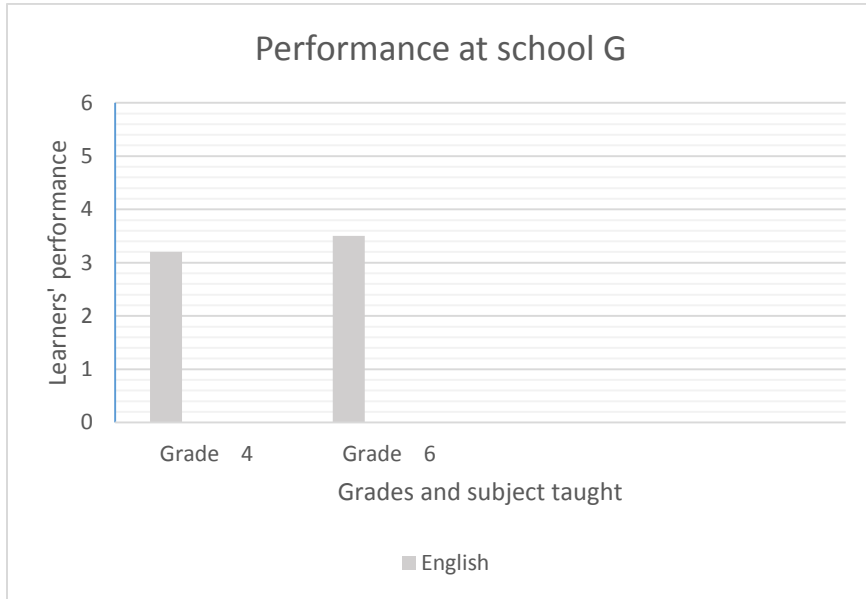
The principal in school E taught grade three among other grades. The subjects taught included Mathematics and Sepedi in numeracy and literacy in the Foundation Phase. Learners' performance in the principals' subjects was Mathematics 29% and Sepedi 32% in the same grade.



**Source: ANA Result 2010 - 2014**

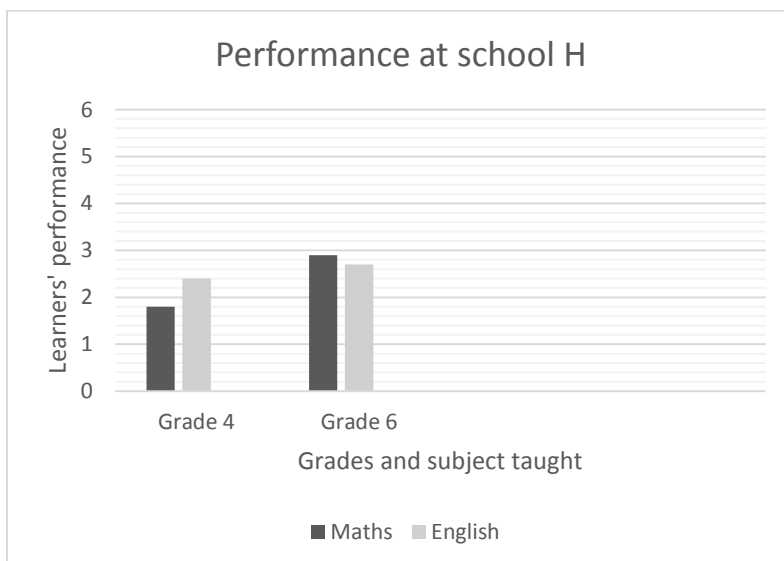


The principal at school F taught Mathematics Grade 4 and 6 among other grades. Mathematics was taught in both grades. Learners' performance in the ANA was Grade 4 Mathematics 29% and in Grade 6 25%.



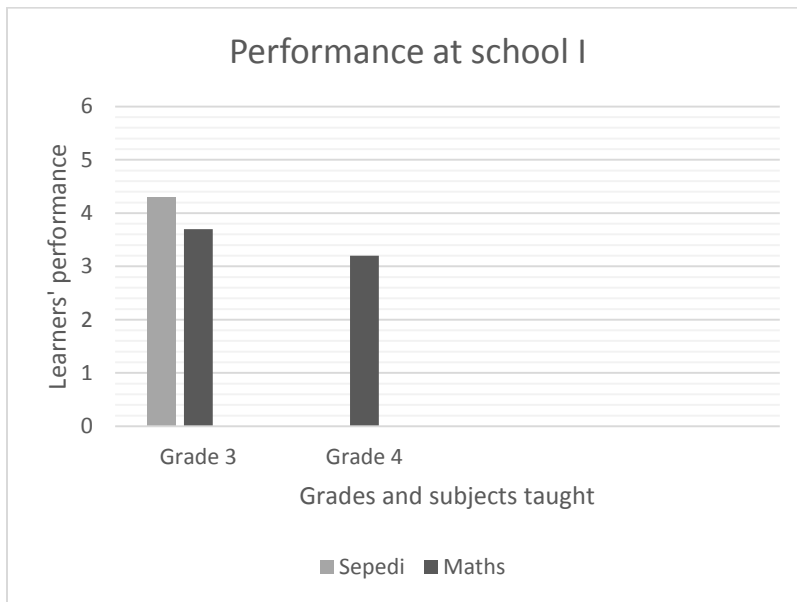
**Source: ANA Result 2010 - 2014**

The grades taught by the principal in school G were Grade 4 and 6, while the subject taught was English in both grades. Learners' performance in ANA was Grade 4 English 32% and Grade 6 English 35%.



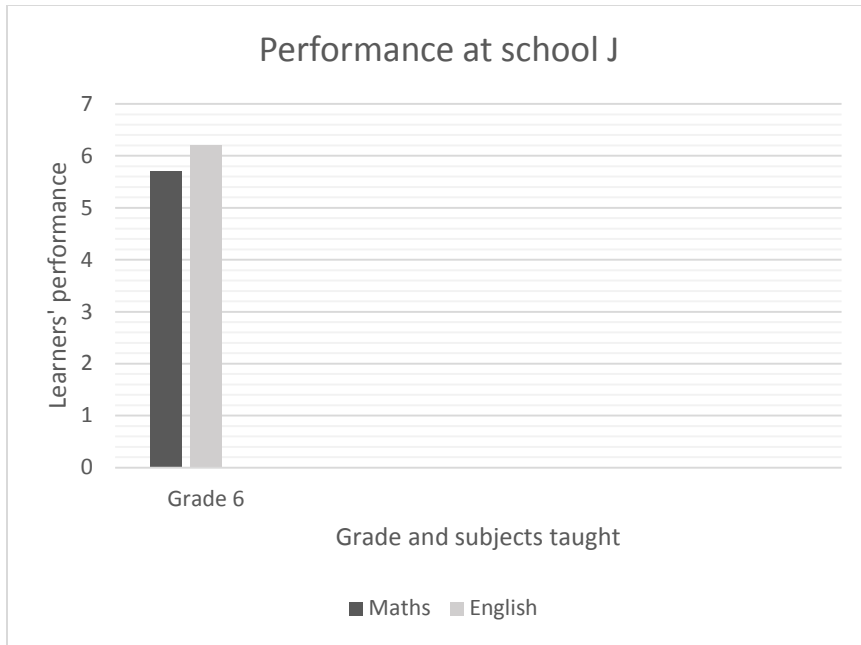
**Source: ANA Result 2010 - 2014**

The principal in school H taught both Grade 4 and Grade 6 among others. The subjects taught by the principal in those grades were Mathematics Grades 4 and 6 and English in both grades. Learners' performance in ANA was Grade 4 Mathematics 18% and English 24%; n Grade 6 Mathematics 29% and in English 27%.



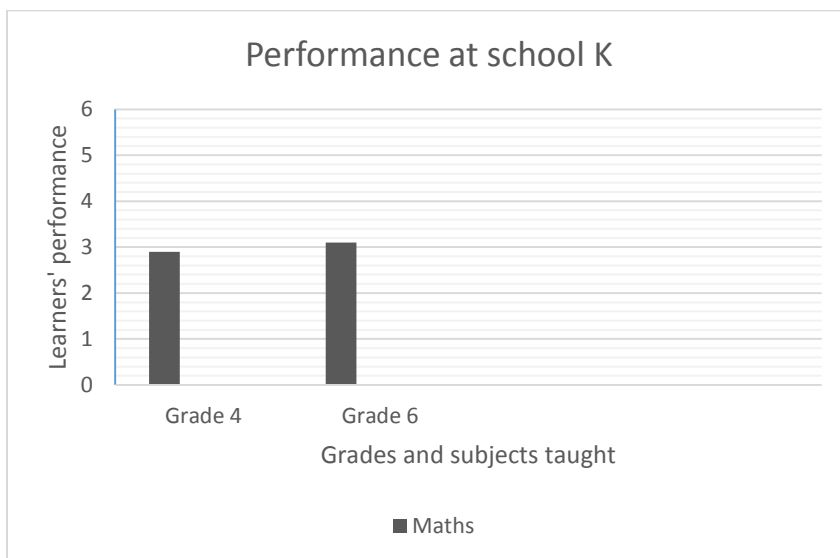
**Source: ANA Result 2010 - 2014**

The grades taught by the principal in school I included Grade 3 and Grade 4. Subjects were Sepedi and Mathematics for Grade 3 and Mathematics for Grade 4. Learners' performance in ANA was Mathematics 37% and Sepedi 43% in Grade 3 and 32% in Grade 4 Mathematics.



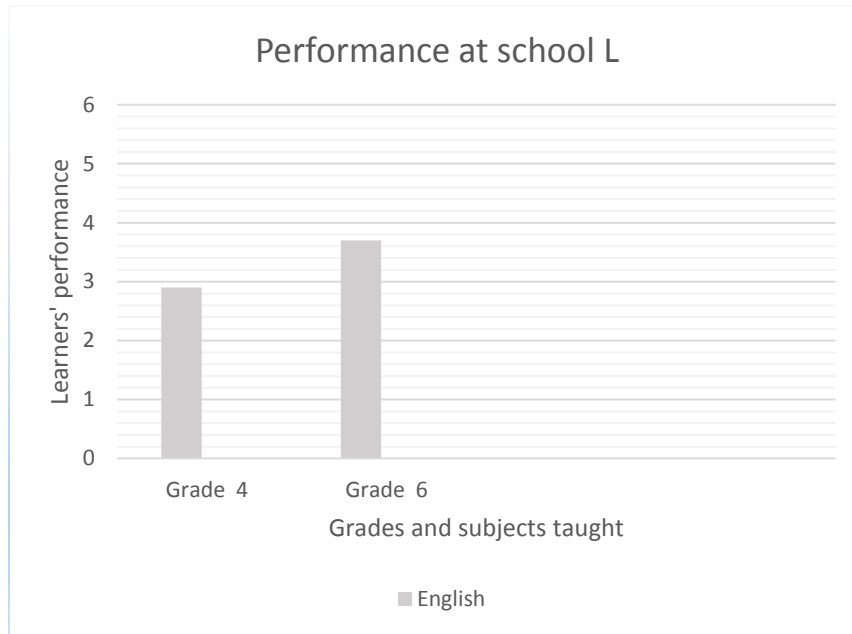
**Source: ANA Results 2010 - 2014**

Grades taught by the principal in school J included Grade 6. Subjects included Mathematics and English in the same grade. Learners' performance was the highest compared to all other schools visited. The Mathematics average was 57% while that in English was 62% in the same grade.



**Source: ANA Result 2010 - 2014**

The principal in school K taught Mathematics in both Grade 4 and Grade 6 among others. Subjects taught included Mathematics in both grades. Learners' performance was 29% in Grade 4 and 31% in Grade 6.



**Source: ANA Result 2010 - 2014**

The principal in school L taught English in both Grade 4 and Grade 6, among others. The learners' performance in English in both grades was 29% in English Grade 4 and 37% in Grade 6.

#### **4.6.1.3.5.1. Summary of learners' performance in ANA**

The quantitative representation of learners' performance in the form of a graph revealed that the average performance of learners in subjects taught by principals was generally low, about 30%. Principals indicated that the low performance was contributed to the workloads they are faced with in multi-grade schools as teaching principals. Among the schools school J had an exceptionally high performance, 57% in Mathematics and 62% in English. The principal of school J indicated that he agreed that principals' workloads affect the learners' performance in multi-grade schools. He therefore always walked the extra mile by teaching learners on his free Saturdays and public holidays to recover the time lost during the normal school hours due to attending meetings and other professional

commitments. He kept the culture going for years and his school was always at the top of the ANA performance in the circuit.

#### **4.6.2. Principals' workloads**

It was revealed in the interviews that principals in multi-grade primary schools are overloaded with work. These schools are allocated fewer teachers according to learners' enrolment, whereas the number of subjects remains the same as in mono-grade schools. Table 4.3 shows that multi-grade schools principals teach full time and that a larger percentage of their time should be dedicated to teaching learners in the classroom. Multi-grade school principals do not have enough time for other school-related responsibilities such as administration, supervision, monitoring and other commitments that remove them from the classroom. In this regard a larger percentage of interviewed principals recommended that the current teacher-pupil model should be reviewed and a new model should be developed, designating the minimum of teachers in a school to be six or seven.

#### **4.6.3. Managing responsibilities for improving learners' performance**

With regard to improving learners' performance, most interviewees shifted responsibility to the Department of Basic Education. Suggestions were that the DBE should either provide the multi-grade schools with extra teachers or merge these schools. These are some of the responses:

Ricky: "... by merging multi-grade schools or coming up with a better teacher-pupil ratio model."

Most participants felt that the DBE does not support them in this regard and that they are unable to perform and fulfil their responsibilities as principals. Consensus was that the DBE should provide each school with sufficient teachers because most principals do not have time in the mornings and afternoons to attend to learners due to long travelling distances and common means of transport used by teachers.

#### **4.6.4. Challenges in improving learners' performance**

It was revealed that different multi-grade school teaching principals experience almost similar challenges in their schools regarding improving learners' performance. Challenges are insufficient time, principals offering subjects they did not specialise in, low parental involvement, presentation of two or three curricula at the same time in the same classroom, administration in general and lack of human resources. Responses in this regard are provided below.

Joy: *"... it is very difficult, eh, very difficult to present three curricula at the same time in the same classroom."*

Ricky: *"... there is low parental intervention in the school. Even when we invite them to the meetings, only a few will respond."*

Sam: *"... subject specialisation, teachers are just allocated subjects, including, eh, those they never studied in colleges or universities."*

Reeva: *"... time management, no room for remediation, time is just insufficient."*

Patty: *"We don't have enough time to finish the syllabus, we don't have enough time to attend to learners individually, we have a lot of office work together with teaching."*

Len: *"Eh, most learners are staying with their grannies at home and there is nobody to help them. Eh, I do not have enough time at school to attend to them individually."*

Participants found it difficult to implement the curriculum that they felt was designed for mono-grade classes. There was a strong feeling that for quality education and improved learners' performance, multi-grade schools should have their own curriculum that is independent of the curriculum in mono-grade schools. .

#### **4.6.5. Principals' attitude to multi-grade teaching**

When asked about their preparedness to work in a multi-grade school and their recommendation of multi-grade teaching to other schools, most of the principals responded that they were not at all prepared to work in these schools due to the workload and the low motivation level of learners:

Cole: *“I am actually not prepared to work in a multi-grade school at all, and, eh, fortunately I am left with only few years to retire, otherwise I would still be applying for posts in a mono-grade school to get out of this school.”*

Reeva: *“I do not recommend it to any school in the country.”*

It was revealed that most participants had generally already developed negative attitudes to multi-grade teaching although they were practising it. The participants’ attitude may demoralise the learners in these schools. If workshops could be presented by the Department of Basic Education in which these principals are addressed by the experts in the field of multi-grade teaching, their attitude to multi-grade teaching would change.

## **4.7. SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY**

### **4.7.1. Introduction**

The existing literature on learners’ performance in multi-grade schools focuses more on comparing learners’ performance in mono-grade schools and multi-grade schools. The researcher discovered that there is a gap with regard to the effects of the principals’ workloads on learners’ performance in multi-grade primary schools. The findings from the literature review indicated that multi-grade teaching demands more from the teacher than mono-grade teaching. The situation in a multi-grade classroom together with the workload in those classes affects learners’ academic performance adversely (Mason & Burns, 1996).

The learners’ performance issue in multi-grade schools is challenged by Poisson (2002) and labelled as dissatisfactory in most cases. Legislation for multi-grade schools is challenged. Researchers point out that legislation has been promulgated for mono-grade schools and not for multi-grade schools. Researchers suggest that there should be policies specifically for multi-grade schools, e.g. the pupil-teacher ratio. The researcher has discovered that most authors are interested in how principals cope in multi-grade schools. The notion is supported by Titus (2004) who wanted to know how principals cope in multi-grade schools. Titus was particularly concerned about the workloads of the principals in multi-grade schools. Although little is said in literature about the relation between principals’ workloads and learners’ performance concerns have been raised

regarding the phenomenon. The researcher therefore had to focus on the effects of principals' workloads on learners' performance in multi-grade schools.

#### **.4.7.2. Findings from the interviews**

##### **4.7.2.1. Management and leadership roles**

It was discovered that although teaching principals in multi-grade primary schools are overloaded with work and do not have sufficient time, management and leadership efforts do exist. Several management and leadership strategies were applied to keep these schools going. Some of them were preparing more work for learners a day in advance in case the principal anticipated a meeting to be attended the following day; peer tutoring in which bright learners were given tasks to assist those experiencing some difficulties was implemented, and learners were often moved to another class to be taken care of by a teacher colleague. Learners thus, in a way, always had something to do. Despite the efforts that were taken, efficiency was still not achieved because peer tutoring was not always possible as most learners would not comply with the instructions from their peers. When learners were moved to another grade, the teacher would be concentrating on a day programme that differed from that of the visiting grade. In school C there were only two teachers, one for the Foundation Phase and the other one for the Intermediate and Senior Phases. The Foundation Phase teacher was not conversant with the Intermediate Phase and the Senior Phase curricula, and it may not be easy for the teacher to keep the learners of all the grades in a school busy at the same time.

##### **4.7.2.2. Classroom teaching**

The researcher discovered that in most multi-grade classes learners were taught the curriculum of the senior grade. In a situation where Grade 5 and Grade 6 were combined, the Grade 6 curriculum was the one taught to both groups. In cases where Grades R to Grade 3 were combined, emphasis was placed on the Grade 3 curriculum. This happened because of the insufficient time principals had due to workloads. Teaching principals also realised that even the Department of Basic Education concentrates on Grades 3 and 6 as the exit grades. It was only in Mathematics and languages that related topics could be grouped together and taught at the same time.



#### **4.7.2.3. Learners' assessment**

It was confirmed from the interviews that the classroom performance of the first time grade or junior grade was poor compared to the second time grade or senior grade. The reason for the poor performance of the junior grade was that the level of teaching and the standard of assessment in the classroom were aligned with the senior grade. In the class where Grade 5 and Grade 6 were combined, the emphasis was on Grade 6.

#### **4.7.2.4. Time management**

Time management was a common problem among all the interviewees, particularly because of frequent interruptions in their work. It was revealed that more time was lost to their removal from the classroom and both syllabus coverage and recovery of lost time was not always possible. Time management had an effect on learners' performance because they were often assessed on content that could not be covered during normal teaching sessions. Even principals who wished to cover the syllabus during the morning and afternoon sessions could not always do so because of long distances from home to school.

#### **4.7.2.5. Supervision**

It was revealed that supervision in multi-grade schools was not always possible because of workloads. Principals used all available time to recover the time lost during their absence from the classroom to teach learners, yet time was not sufficient. Supervision of learners was not efficient.

#### **4.7.2.6. Administrative duties**

Principals confirmed that there was much paper work that demanded a great deal of their time. Much teaching time was lost while they attended to school administration. That was why most of them suggested that the DBE should employ administrative officers for multi-grade schools.

#### **4.7.2.7. Curriculum management**

The researcher discovered that management strategies applied in multi-grade schools were designed for mono-grade schools. Principals confirmed that the formation of subject

committees was not possible as in most cases there was only one person teaching one subject either from Grade R to Grade 3 or from Grade 4 to Grade 7. Sometimes the principal taught the subject because there was no other teacher who could teach the subject available. If the teacher was not competent, the learners' performance in that subject was poor.

### **4.7.3. Findings from observations**

#### **4.7.3.1. Multi-grading of classes**

There was no uniform method of combining grades. Each individual school applied its own method according to the needs of the school. The common challenge among these schools was an insufficient number of teachers. In some schools learners were merged from Grade R to 3. In a two-teacher school the merged grades were Grades 4 and 5 and Grades 6 and 7. When the teacher taught Grades 4 and 5, Grades 6 and 7 were without a teacher. In another school both Grades 3 and 4 were merged, i.e. Foundation and Intermediate Phases. It was discovered that there was little room for remedial education for slow learners in multi-grade schools as more emphasis was placed on assessment. The junior grade learners in the classroom were disadvantaged as they could not compete with the senior grades learners who would be repeating the curriculum of the previous year.

#### **4.7.3.2. Discipline in the classroom**

The researcher assumed that a multi-grade classroom would be characterised by disorderliness and noisiness. It was discovered from the interviews that due to small numbers of learners in the classroom, maintaining discipline was not a challenge. Principals revealed that they knew all learners in the classroom and their characteristics, so it was easy for them to engage learners with problematic behaviour in tasks and responsibilities during their absence from the classroom. Discipline therefore proved to have a negligible impact on learners' performance in a multi-grade classroom.

### **4.7.4. Findings from document analysis**

#### **4.7.4.1. Timetables**

The finding with regard to developing a multi-grade school timetable was that subjects clash on the timetable due to insufficient teachers. All teachers involved, including the principals, were overloaded. Subjects could not be allocated teaching time according to the requirements of CAPS. In most cases principals were the ones teaching more periods than other teachers. In some schools, where the principals taught all the subjects from Grade R to Grade 3, the timetable could not be followed. The reduction of the required teaching hours made it impossible to cover the required syllabus during each term. The multi-grade timetable therefore had to be flexible.

#### **4.7.4.2. Duty allocation list**

It was discovered that teachers in multi-grade schools were randomly allocated subjects to teach. Most principals indicated that they taught some of the subjects because other teachers were not ready to teach them. In most cases the skills, knowledge or ability of teachers were not considered in allocating subjects to teachers. Principals confirmed that their workload with regard to teaching subjects affected learners' academic performance negatively.

#### **4.7.4.3. ANA schedules**

Considering the subjects taught by the principals for the previous ANA results, the researcher found that learners' academic performance was not satisfactory. Principals acknowledged that the poor performance in their subjects was due to the impact of the workloads they had.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the research was to analyse the effects of principals' workloads on learners' academic performance in multi-grade schools. The researcher interviewed twelve principals in multi-grade schools for this purpose. The principals served in multi-grade schools for a period of between two and more than five years. In Chapter 1 the researcher outlined the background to the study, which included the topic of the study, problem statement, research questions, research aims, the theoretical framework, limitations of the study and conclusion of the chapter. In Chapter 2 the researcher reviewed the existing literature related to learners' academic performance in multi-grade primary schools versus principals' workloads. Chapter 3 of the study outlines the methodology used in the study; the researcher included the research design and research approaches, research methods that included data collection, data analysis, reliability, credibility and trustworthiness of the research. Chapter 4 focuses the data presentation, analysis and interpretation and significant findings from the study. Chapter 5 provides the summary of the study, makes recommendations and presents a conclusion.

## **5.2. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY FINDINGS**

### **5.2.1. Qualitative findings**

This study has revealed the factors that contribute to the principals' workloads in multi-grade primary schools that affect learners' academic performance negatively. The factors were identified from the data collected through interviews, observation and document analysis.

#### **5.2.1.1. Interviews**

The interviews with the principals revealed that principals of multi-grade primary schools are faced with added workloads. These principals have less contact time with learners for teaching. Much of their teaching time is lost while attending other responsibilities outside the classroom, particularly administrative duties and it is not convenient for them to recover the lost teaching time. Principals' workloads withhold them from performing their tasks as well as departmental pace setters in their subjects. In most cases they lag behind in completing the syllabuses. Learners' assessment is therefore not carried out efficiently because learners are sometimes assessed on syllabus concepts not properly treated during teaching sessions. The principals' workload creates difficulties for them in managing time for school activities because of unplanned meetings that involve school governing bodies and professional matters organised by the circuit office and the district office. The researcher also learnt from the principals that curriculum management is not properly done in multi-grade primary schools due to an insufficient number of teachers in these schools. The interviews' findings underscore the notion that principals' workloads in multi-grade primary schools has a negative impact on learners' academic performance.

#### **5.2.1.2. Observations**

The method used to merge grades in some multi-grade schools was discovered to be unsatisfactory. Each school applied its own method in merging the grades, considering the school's existing circumstances. The common motive for merging is an insufficient number of teachers. Some principals felt that research should be conducted on a convenient method for merging the grades in a multi-grade school.

#### **5.2.1.3. Document analysis**

The researcher discovered that developing a timetable for a multi-grade school is a difficult task. The number of periods does not match the number of teachers in a given phase (Foundation or Intermediate). In a multi-grade school where the teacher (principal) teaches all subjects to Grades R to Grade 3, the number of hours prescribed for each subject does not correspond with the requirements of CAPS. The allocation of subjects and other responsibilities is also unsatisfactory. The examining of previous years' performance in ANA results reflects poor learners' performance.

### 5.2.2. Quantitative findings

**Table 5.2.2.1.** Summary of ANA performance in subjects taught by the principals of the sampled schools

School	Grade	6		4		3	
		Subjects	Maths	English	Maths	English	Maths
A		25	-	27	24	-	-
B		29	33	26	32	-	-
C		26	29	18	26	-	-
D		-	-	27	25	-	-
E		-	-	-	-	29	32
F		-	-	29	25	-	-
G		-	35	-	32	-	-
H		29	27	18	24	-	-
I		-	-	32	-	37	43
J		57	62	-	-	-	-
K		31	-	29	-	-	-
L		-	37	-	29	-	-
Totals		197	223	218	276	66	75
Average		33%	37%	27%	35%	33%	38%

Twelve multi-grade primary schools were sampled from the Bochum cluster. The researcher focused on the grades and subjects taught by the principals. Subject results were retrieved from ANA results from 2010 to 2014 and an average for each school was calculated.

Table 5.2 reflects the schools, subjects taught by the multi-grade school principals, total of marks per subject, school, grade and average performance per subject. The total for

Mathematics Grade 6 was 197 and its average was 33%. The Grade 6 English total was 223 with an average of 37%. The Mathematics Grade 4 total was 218 with an average of 27%. The Grade 4 English total was 276 with an average of 35%. The Mathematics Grade 3 total was 66 with an average of 33% and Sepedi Grade 3 had a total of 75 and an average of 38%. The researcher noticed the following from learners' ANA results:

The learner average performance in Mathematics (33%) and English (37%) for Grade 6 was low.

The learner average performance in Mathematics Grade 4 was very low: 27%.

The learner average performance in Mathematics Grade 3 was low: 33%.

School J performed well; 57% in Mathematics and 62% in English.

Most principals taught Mathematics and English in the Intermediate Phase.

### **5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY**

In the light of the findings of this study on how the principals' workloads affect the learners' performance in multi-grade primary schools, the following is recommended:

- The current pupil-teacher ratio model should be reviewed by the DBE. Most interviewed principals suggested that the DBE should develop a model that will prescribe a minimum number of teachers in a primary school, e.g. six or seven teachers. They argued that even when the number of learners declines, the number of subjects remains the same and the demands of the curriculum remain the same as those in mono-grade schools.
- The DBE should employ administrative officers in multi-grade schools. It is assumed that this will assist in reducing the workloads principals in multi-grade schools are faced with, particularly administration, so that principals have sufficient time to address the core business of a school, namely instruction and learning.
- Smaller schools should be merged with their neighbouring schools to reduce workload challenges experienced by principals of multi-grade schools; the DBE should ensure that a reliable transport means is established to convey the learners to school. The affected communities should be informed accordingly as this may

meet with opposition from these communities; they may regard the process as giving away their legacy of having a school in the community.

- By virtue of the differences between multi-grade and mono-grade schools, there should be multi-grade schools policies that differ from mono-grade schools.
- A multi-grade teaching programme should be included in the programmes of teacher training institutions to prepare teachers for both mono-grade and multi-grade teaching in schools.

#### **5.4. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY**

The researcher assumes that the results of the research will add to the existing body of knowledge on learners' performance in multi-grade schools – particularly the effect of the principals' workloads on learners' academic performance.

The number of multi-grade schools in our country is increasing and worldwide challenges are experienced by principals engaged in the implementation of such systems. The study could therefore encourage the Department of Basic Education to prepare more programmes to assist principals in the practice of multi-grade teaching. The study findings could further prepare the newly appointed principals during induction to cope with multi-grade teaching challenges

#### **5.5. CONCLUSION**

With reference to the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that the principals' workloads in multi-grade primary schools do affect learners' academic performance. Principals are frequently compelled to move out of the classroom due to administrative, management, leadership, professional, supervision and extra-mural activities factors. Learners, particularly primary school learners who are not yet at the stage of fully undertaking self-study, will therefore not cope in performing well as the findings revealed that these learners are in many occasions left to fend for themselves. These factors inform that school principals have a certain workload, multi-grade schools principals therefore



become overloaded with work. The findings of this study have revealed that principals in multi-grade classes are overloaded with work. The workloads include teaching time, curriculum management, school management, administration, supervision and monitoring. The findings have further revealed that multi-grade schools principals do not have sufficient contact teaching time in the classroom due to extra responsibilities resulting from an insufficient number of teachers in these schools. With regard to evidence from principals' interviews, researcher's observations and the analysis of school documents and departmental documents, the researcher finally concludes that the principals' workloads in multi-grade primary schools affect learners' performance negatively.

## **5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

In this study, the researcher focused on the effects of the principals' workloads on learners' academic performance in multi-grade schools. The study is limited to the subjects that are taught by the principals in multi-grade schools. The researcher therefore recommends that for future research, a comparative study should be conducted on the effects of the workloads of principals in multi-grade schools and those in mono-grade schools on learners' academic performance. The research may also increase the number of schools.

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## **5.8. APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: Ethics clearance certificate

APPENDIX B: Proof of editing

APPENDIX C: Approval to conduct research from Ethics Committee University of Pretoria.

APPENDIX D: Letter of request to Limpopo Department of Education (Capricorn District).

APPENDIX E: Permission to conduct research from Limpopo Department of Education (Capricorn District).

APPENDIX F: Letter of request to school principals for permission to conduct research.

APPENDIX G: Consent form to school principals.



APPENDIX H: Interview schedule.

APPENDIX I: Observation schedule.

APPENDIX J: Checklist for availability of documents.

APPENDIX K: Approval of study extension

APPENDIX A



RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

**DEGREE AND PROJECT**

**INVESTIGATORS**

**DEPARTMENT**

**APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY**

**DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

CLEARANCE NUMBER: EM 16/02/02

MEd

The effects of principals' workloads in Limpopo multi-grade primary schools learners' on academic performance

Phuti Thompson Kgomo

Education Management and Policy Studies

01 August 2016

10 December 2016

**Please note:**

For Master's application, Ethics Clearance is valid for 2 years  
For PhD application, Ethics Clearance is valid for 3 years

**CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE:** Prof Liesel Ebersöhn



**CC**

Bronwynne Swarts  
KS Adeyemo

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This Ethics Clearance Certificate if issued subject to the following conditions:

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

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries

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Cell: 082 303 5415

Tel: 012 343 8412

Email: [tinus.kuhn@gmail.com](mailto:tinus.kuhn@gmail.com)

Address: 180 Smith Street, Muckleneuk, Pretoria, 0002

9 December 2016

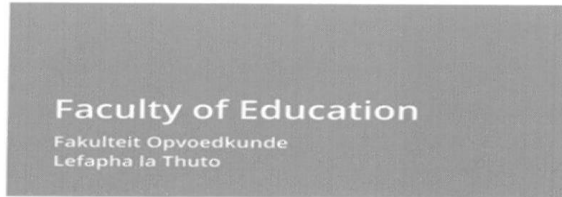
### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the dissertation titled **The Effects of Principals' Workloads in Limpopo Multi-grade Primary Schools on Learners' Academic Performance** by **Kgomo Phuti Thompson** has been edited for grammar errors. It remains the responsibility of the candidate to effect the recommended changes. Appendices have not been edited.



Prof. Tinus Kühn

APPENDIX C



Ethics Committee  
01 August 2016

Dear Mr Kgomo

REFERENCE: EM 16/02/02

We received proof that you have met the conditions outlined. Your application is thus approved, and you may **continue with your fieldwork**. Should any changes to the study occur after approval was given, it is your responsibility to notify the Ethics Committee immediately.


Please note that this is **not a clearance certificate**. Upon completion of your research, you need to submit the following documentation to the Ethics Committee:


- Integrated Declaration Form (Form D08),
- Initial Ethics Approval letter and,
- Approval of Title.

Please note:

- ***Any amendments to this approved protocol need to be submitted to the Ethics Committee for review prior to data collection. Non-compliance implies that the Committee's approval is null and void.***
- ***Final data collection protocols and supporting evidence (e.g.: questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules) have to be submitted to the Ethics Committee before they are used for data collection.***
- ***Should your research be conducted in schools, please note that you have to submit proof of how you adhered to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) policy for research.***
- ***Please note that you need to keep to the protocol you were granted approval on should your research project be amended, you need to submit the amendments for review.***
- ***The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education does not accept any liability for research misconduct, of whatsoever nature, committed by the researcher(s) in the implementation of the approved protocol.***
- ***On receipt of the above-mentioned documents you will be issued a clearance certificate. Please quote the reference number: EM 16/02/02 in any communication with the Ethics Committee.***

Best wishes

  
Prof. Liesel Ebersöhn  
Chair: Ethics Committee  
Faculty of Education

  
Dr. Mantumeleng Ntho  
Ethics Assistant

## APPENDIX D



Faculty of Education  
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde  
Lefapha la Thuto

05 August 2016

Enquiries: Kgomo P.T.

Cell: 0824282207

Email: [kgomoo@webmail.co.za](mailto:kgomoo@webmail.co.za)

The District Senior Manager

Capricorn District

POLOKWANE

0700

Dear Sir

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I, **Phuti Thompson Kgomo**, a MEd (Educational Leadership) registered student at the University of Pretoria, request for permission to conduct research in Multi-grade public schools in Capricorn district, Limpopo province.

My research topic is: **How principals' workload in Limpopo multi-grade primary schools affects learners' academic performance?**

Participants in this regard will be required to be interviewed. The target group for the research will be 12 sampled principals of multi-grade schools in Capricorn district, Limpopo. Participation in this study will be voluntary and both anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research session.

My Supervisor is Dr. K.S. Adeyemo

Tel: 012 42 04279

Cell: 071 273 9046

Hoping that this request will receive your positive response

Yours faithfully

Kgomo P.T. (MEd Student)

APPENDIX E



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 9711  
POLOKWANE  
0700  
Tel: 015 285 7300  
Fax: 015 285 7499

DEPARTMENT OF

**EDUCATION**

**CAPRICORN POLOKWANE DISTRICT**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Ref: 3/5/5 Enq: Mphaphuli AJ Tel No.:015 285 7410 Date: 11 August 2016 Email: [MphaphuliAJ@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:MphaphuliAJ@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

To : **Kgomo PT**  
P. O. Box 1013  
SENWABARWANA  
0790

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN POLOKWANE DISTRICT.**

**TITLE: HOW PRINCIPALS' WORKLOAD IN LIMPOPO MULTI- GRADE PRIMARY SCHOOLS AFFECTS LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.**

1. The above matter refers.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct a research has been approved.
3. The following conditions should be considered.
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implication for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with both the circuit offices and school concerned.
  - 3.3 The conduct of research should not anyhow disrupt the academic programs at schools.
  - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time examinations especially the fourth term.
  - 3.5 During the study, the research ethics should be practiced, in particular the principle voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
  - 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with Department.

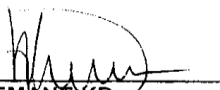
Cnr Blaauwberg & Yster Street, Ladanna

**"We Belong, We Care, We Serve"**

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN POLOKWANE DISTRICT.**

4. Furthermore you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend to conduct your research as evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.
5. The Department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wish you success in your research.

Best wishes

  
MR MOTHEMANE KD  
ACTING DISTRICT DIRECTOR

12/08/2016  
DATE

Cnr Blaauwberg & Yster Street, Ladanna

**"We Belong, We Care, We Serve"**

APPENDIX F



Faculty of Education  
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde  
Lefapha la Thuto

Enquiries: Kgomo P.T.  
Cell: 082 428 2207  
Email: [Kgomo@webmail.co.za](mailto:Kgomo@webmail.co.za)

Date:

The Principal/SGB members

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY.**

I, **Phuti Thompson Kgomo**, a MEd (Educational Leadership) student at the University of Pretoria, requests for your participation in the research study to be conducted at your school.

My research topic is: **How principals' workload in Limpopo Multi-grade primary schools affects learners' academic performance?**

The research procedure will be as follows:

- ❖ Research will be conducted during August 2016.
- ❖ Principal's interview will be administered.
- ❖ Interview will be conducted at the time suitable for the principal not to disrupt the smooth running of the school.
- ❖ An interview will not last for more than an hour.
- ❖ An interview schedule will be used.
- ❖ Interview will be recorded.
- ❖ Office documents such as timetable, duty list and learners' schedules will be examined.
- ❖ Integrated Quality Measures Systems (IQMS) reports will be examined.
- ❖ Notes will be taken during the process.

The purpose of the research is to establish whether the principal's workload affects learners' academic performance.

Participation in this research is voluntary and both anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research session and after.

Hoping that this will meet your positive response

Yours faithfully

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kgomo P.T. (Student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. K.S. Adeyemo (Supervisor)



## APPENDIX G



## Faculty of Education

Fakulteit Opvoedkunde  
Lefapha la Thuto

Enquiries : Kgomo P.T.  
Cell : 082 428 2207  
Email : [kgomoo@webmail.co.za](mailto:kgomoo@webmail.co.za)

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

### INFORMED CONSENT

I (Surname and full names)\_\_\_\_\_ gives consent to participate in this research study voluntary. I participate in the research study on condition that my confidentiality and anonymity shall not be disclosed to the public. Should it happen, I will decline from the research study without been neither victimized nor intimidated.

I therefore declare that I fully understand the research topic, purpose of the research and the significance of the research to the education system.

Participant : \_\_\_\_\_ Signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher : \_\_\_\_\_ Signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX H

Ref no: EM 16/02/02

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. For how long have you been engaged in multi-grade teaching?

1-2 years     3-4 years     5 years and more

2. What is your highest qualification?

Certificate     Diploma     Degree

3. What was your field of study?

4. Briefly describe how classes are multi-graded in your school.

5. What motivated you to apply the method used to merge the classes?

6. How did you get involved in multi-grading the classes?

7. How are you involved in teaching?

8. What sources are available in the school to assist teachers in multi-grade teaching?

9. Have you and your colleagues encountered any resistance to multi-grade teaching?

10. What assessment techniques are telling you the most about learners' performance?

11. How is learners' assessment used to improve learners' performance?

12. How do you engage learners during your absence from the class due to professional commitments?

13. How do you recover the teaching time lost during your absence from the class?

14. Are you able to cover the syllabus scheduled for each Grade during a particular term?

Yes     No     Not certain

15. In your opinion what is the motivation level of learners in a multi-grade class?

Low     Average     High     Very high

16. How do learners generally perform in tasks and examinations?

    95

Poor

Fair

Good

Very good

17. In your opinion does the principal's workload affect learners' performance in a multi-grade class?

Yes

No

Not certain

18. To what extent are you prepared to work in a multi-grade school?

Not at all

Moderately

Highly

Strongly

19. What challenges do you experience in improving learners' performance?

20. How can challenges of improving learners' performance be overcome?

21. What opportunities are experienced by the teaching principals in multi-grade teaching?

22. What assistance do you receive from the Department of Basic Education in managing multi-grade teaching?

23. In your opinion how can the Department of Basic Education assist in overcoming the challenges experienced by the teaching principals in multi-grade teaching?

24. How would you recommend multi-grade teaching to schools?

Not at all

Fairly

Good

Strongly

**Thank you for your participation in this interview session**

.....

Ref no: 16/02/02

## **OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Not satisfactory</b>
1.Principal's filing			
2.Time management			
3.Learners' discipline in the class			
4.Grading of learners in the class			

NB: A cross (X) will be put in the appropriate column

APPENDIX J

## CHECKLIST FOR AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

The following items will be checked if they are available and those available or not, a **cross(X)** will be put in the relevant box:

	Yes	No
1. Timetables		
2. Subject allocation		
3. School schedules (2010 – 2014) Fourth term		
4. Subject analysis		
5. ANA schedules (2010 to 2014)		
6. IQMS reports		
7. Minutes book (First meeting of the year) 2010-2014		

29 August 2016

Dear Dr. K.S. Adeyemo

**APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION OF STUDY PERIOD**

Sir, on the 25th February 2016, I have been granted extension for study period up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016 to complete my MEd degree in Educational leadership.

I could not complete my degree within the given time-frame because since the granting of extension, I have been waiting for Ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria. I applied for Ethical clearance on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and received approval to proceed with fieldwork on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

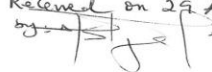
Since the receipt of the approval, I have taken a two weeks leave from work to collect data, and I am done with chapter 4. I am starting with chapter 5 now, and hopefully I will not make it within the granted extension.

I therefore apply for extension beyond August, hopefully December to compile and complete the report of my Research study.

Kind regards


Kgomo P.T. (MEd student)

Student n0 : 25514670

Received on 29 August 2016  
by 

Dear Prof Weber,

Above request refers please. Looking forward to your approval.

Dr Ks Adeyemo   
Supervisor

Approved: E.WEBER



14 Sept 2016