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Educators' experiences and perceptions of peer observation

by

A. W. Mudau

Student No.: 14255783

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Supervisor: Professor Chaya Herman

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation, *Educators' Experiences and Perceptions of Peer Observation*,is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

..... ……..

Mrs A.W. MUDAU **DATE**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late parents Willy and Ester Mushaisano.

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I wish to specially thankthe following:

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how educators experience the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), a quality and performance management system that was introduced into South African schools in 2005. The extent to which the Integrated Quality Management System has contributed to the development of schools in their entirety has been largely unchartered. The objective of this dissertation was to investigate the perceived experiences of educators concerning the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System.

A qualitative research paradigm was employed in order to gather data for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with educators; data collected from the interviews was compared and integrated with data collected from the documentsthat were studied. The data gathered was analyzed using the theory of collegiality in order to explore how educators experience peer observation as a component of the IQMS during its implementationas well as what impact it had on collegiality

The findings revealed that teachers are given an opportunity to select their peers during peer observation implementation which, however, leads to an inconsistent and subjective allocation and rating of scores in order to get a 1% pay progression. The study found that the peer observation part of the IQMS is an effective tool for teachers' development as it helps them identify areas that need to be developed in order to improve on their teaching practice. The study's findings also revealed that if favourable conditions for peer observation are created, peer observation enhances collegiality among teachers.

Key words: Collegiality, peer observation, Integrated Quality Management System, Performance management sytem.

DECLARATION OF EDITING

31 March 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I have language edited and proof-read the dissertation of **Mrs A W Mudau** entitled:

EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF PEER OBSERVATION.

The language editing/proof-reading process included the checking of spelling, punctuation, syntax and expression. An attempt was made to simplify complex sentences and, where necessary, combine short sentences to clarify meaning. Attention was given to the use of various language elements, such as prepositions, consistency in language usage and formatting as well as tenses, capital letters and punctuation.

Prof. Walter Greyvenstein (D Litt et Phil; TTHD; LTCL)
44 Second Street
Linden
Johannesburg 2195

Tel. No.: +27 11 782 6174
E-mail: wgreyven@lantic.net

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DSG	Development Support Groups
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HE	Higher Education
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System.
NCS	National Curriculum Statements
PD	Professional Development
PGP	Personal Growth Plan
PM	Performance Management
POLT	Peer of Learning and Teaching
POT	Peer Observation of Teaching
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SADTU	African Democratic Teachers' Union
SDT	Staff Development Team
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMT	School Management Team
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) was introduced into South African schools by the Department of Education in 2003 to create an appraisal system for use in the assessment of the performance of educators and to assist in the planning and production of professional development programmes for educators. The IQMS aims to enhance and monitor the performance of educators in the education system and to identify the specific needs of educators, schools and district offices in terms of support and development (RSA, 2003a).

The IQMS is the integration of three programmes, namely: the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS), Performance Management (PM) and Whole School Evaluation (WSE). Each component of the IQMS has a different function. The objective of Developmental Appraisal (DA) is to assess individual educators in a manner which is transparent with a view to determining their individual strong and weak points and to design programmes for their individualgrowth. The objective of the Performance Measurement (PM) is to assess individual educators for advancement in terms of salaries, grade progression, endorsement of appointments and for incentives and bonuses. The objective of the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) is to assess the general effectiveness of a school and takes into consideration the approval provided by the District, the management of the school, infrastructure and educational resources as well as the standard of teaching and learning (Weber, 2005).The Education Labour Relations Council (2003a) cites the following individuals and structures as role players in the implementation of the IQMS at school level: principal, educators, school management team (SMT), staff development team (SDT), development support groups (DSG), district offices and WSE units. The principal's duties include being responsible for the development of staff training programmes which are school-based, school-focused and externally directed and which assist educators - particularly new and inexperienced educators - in developing and achieving educational objectives in terms of the needs of the school. Each educator must self-evaluate his/her performance and identify a personal development support group (DSG) which consists of a peer and an immediate supervisor. He/she must

also develop a personal growth plan (PGP). The democratically elected SDT, comprising SMT members and a Post Level 1 educator, is tasked with initiating, coordinating and monitoring the appraisal in terms of a management plan.

According to the South African Council of Educators (SACE, 2004), an educator selects his/her own support group within the school-based on needs that have been prioritized. For each educator the DSG should consist of the educator's immediate senior and one peer educator. The educator selects his/her peer on the basis of the appropriate phase, learning area or subject expertise - not on friendship. This selection of a DSG takes place after an educator has completed an IQMS first self-evaluation and has reflected on his/her strengths as well as areas that need development.

The Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) (2003a) indicates that the DSG is there to perform the following roles and responsibilities:

- Monitor and support;
- Assist the educator in the development and refinement of his\her personal growth plan (PGP) and work with the SDT to incorporate plans for the development of an educator in terms of the school improvement plan (SIP);
- Be responsible for the baseline evaluation of the educator as well as the summative evaluation at the end of the year for PM; and
- Verify that the information provided for PM is accurate.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Before 1994 South Africa's education system of appraisal was largely inspectorial and bureaucratic. Maphutha (2006) is of the opinion that, as with all other aspects of the education bureaucracy, the education system in South Africa in the past shared a top-down, closed, hierarchical and authoritarian character where educators were expected to carry out instructions without question. Squelch and Lemmer (1994) maintain that before 1994 education was limited to the occasional classroom visit - often unannounced - or the

principal, possibly, completing and filing an evaluation form on an educator's performance without, necessarily, showing it to the teacher. According to Maphutha (2006), this system of evaluation is referred to as an autocratic, judgmental and summative system which does not consider the differing contextual factors that affect an educator's work. The majority of educators want appraisals to be an essential part of their professional development, not a mechanism for enforcing state control. The IQMS aims to provide such appraisal mechanisms; however the IQMS is marked by various challenges during implementation. In his study of the IQMS, Legethe (2009) maintains that the DAS implementation was problematic despite its claims of accountability, needs assessment and individual development. Teachers describe it as a dubious process that was intimidating, stressful and a waste of manpower. Mavhunda (2012) believes that WSE was as cumbersome and disempowering for educators; 50% or more of the supervisor's time was spent observing lessons and only a short time was set aside for discussion and joint reflection. Despite claims to the contrary, the system appears to have been top-down and non-democratic. Although it is said that the policy of WSE was the outcome of discussions involving representatives from a range of stakeholders, it immediately met with resistance from unions and educators who felt that there had not been sufficient consultation (Legethe, 2009).

The IQMS is set out in a complex and unclear document where the language is ambiguous. The wayin which the steps and processes involved in the DAS and PM components are described are long-winded and difficult to follow. However, it acknowledges that some documents have been simplified since 2003 and that the document used for IQMS training is slightly clearer, but it is still a long bureaucratic exercise.

The IQMS combines development appraisal and performance management appraisal using the same evaluation tool or instrument which produces a tension because contradictory messages are conveyed; the purpose of appraisal is to develop schools and teachers and improve the quality of education but it also measures and judges schools and teacher performance (Makgalane, 1997).

Peer observation as an important part of the IQMS which can be a tool for professional development. Karagiorgi (2012) maintains that peer observation is a powerful vehicle for professional teacher development. According to Karagiorgi (2012), the power of peer observation resides in its developmental and collegial orientation through the exposure of colleagues to affirmation, constructive criticism and the experience of the various, different

teaching approaches used by others. Peer observation provides feedback which is necessary for the development of instructional skills. Pereira (2014) feels that an appropriately structured programme for peer observation of teaching provides valid feedback and has a positive effect on teaching and learning. However, Poumellec, Parrish and Garson (1992) are of the opinion that peer observation can be ineffective and counterproductive if observers lack training and experience in observation and feedback which, in turn, can have a negative impact on collegiality. While peer observation is part of the IQMS, there is little research in South African that explores the impact of the peer observation conducted by the DSG. Is it a tool for development and affirmation - as intended by policy - or is it an ineffective process that negatively impacts on educators' collegiality and relationships?

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research question for this study was: *How do educators experience the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS)?*

The research sub-questions that would inform the main question were the following:

- *How do educators choose their peers?*
- *What are educators' perceptions of the influence of peer observation on their development?*
- *What are the benefits of peer observation?*
- *What are the challenges faced by educators during peer observation?*
- *To what extent does peer observation enhance or impede collegiality?*

1.4 RATIONALE

Since 2003 when the IQMS was introduced as a policy to monitor teachers' development and their performance, it seems that it has not produced the intended results. Schools conduct the IQMS assessments every year but they are often done only for the sake of policy compliance. The Development Support Groups (DSGs) do not conduct an authentic evaluation as they serve the purpose of helping educators qualify for salary progression (Bisschoff&Mathye, 2009). The IQMS gives the educator who is to be observed an opportunity to choose his/her

peer to be part of the DSG which will assist in his/her development. As a researcher, it led me to think about exactly what role a peer plays as a part of a DSG in the implementation of the IQMS.

As noted in the introduction, the DSG should consist of the educator's immediate senior and one other peer educator who will assist in providing support; in monitoring; and in the development of the educator who is being appraised. In my experience, a selected educator who serves as a peer is there only to comply with policy; the peer seems to have no impact on the process and plays only an insignificant role during observation. In my experience the principal and the immediate senior are the ones who are actively involved during the observation and even in the post-evaluation discussion. However, in this study this conclusion was tested against other teachers' experiences and it was the factor that compelled me, as a researcher, to conduct a study on the peer observation of teaching in order to obtain responses to the question: *How do educators experience the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS)?* How peer observation is implemented in schools; establishing teachers' perceptions of the impact of peer observation on their professional development; peer observation challenges and their impact on collegiality was explored.

This form of teacher development is common in higher education around the world; internationally, it is present in Australian universities, in British higher education and in English medium universities in the Gulf. Bell (2002), Robinson (2010) and Engin and Priest (2014) have all reportedon the effectiveness of this form of observation in educator development. The relevant available literature contains very few studies on the peer observation of teachers in primary and secondary schools. Most studies conducted on peer observation as a professional development tool are related to institutions of higher learning, like universities and colleges (Pereira, 2014). Research is conducted for various reasons, such as developing instructional skills; securing a job; revealing hidden teaching behaviour; addressing known problems in teaching and learning; developing concepts of teaching; and the development of collegiality (Cooper and Bell, 2009). There are some South African studies that touch on peer observation as part of the IQMS, but there is no dedicated study to this topic which is under-explored. This encouraged me to conduct this research in order to fill the apparent gap.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to explore the experiences of educators of peer observation, I decided to use the theory of collegiality which involves collaborative interaction among teachers in joint work related to their core tasks in school. It implies collective action, strong interdependence, shared responsibility and a great degree of readiness to participate in reflective inquiry into practice (Little, 1990).This theory is used as a lens for the discussion on educators' experiences and their perceptions of the peer observation component of the IQMS; it was the basis for the data analysis.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. Strauss and Corbin (1990) highlight that, because of its interpretive character, a qualitative research methodology allows for the discovery of meaning in research events. The educators of the selected schools gave meaning to their experiences and perceptions of the peer observation component of the IQMS in schools. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1994), qualitative research provides the researcher with the opportunity to obtain a more complete picture of what is happening in a particular situation. In this study, as the researcher, I obtained information from the participants on their experiences and how they perceive the peer observation component of the IQMS in schools.

According to Scheurich (1997), a qualitative approach endeavours to ascertain what is in a particular individual's mind in order to access the perspectives of the participant. From the perspectives of the participants the researcher was able to form a holistic understanding of their views and experiences of the peer observation component of the IQMS in their respective schools.

1.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

The study was conducted in Venḓa in the Vhembe district. Not all experienced educators and non-experienced educators were interviewed which proved to be a limitation. Furthermore, this study employed a qualitative research paradigm with a strong reliance on interviewing a selected number of participants as primary and secondary data collection vehicles. More

participants could have been included by means of questionnaires in a quantitative paradigm. Due to the nature of the study, some participants were not able to provide the researcher with certain information; they felt that they could not divulge information about their school because of their respect for the confidentiality of certain issues at their school. However, adequate data was collected and, hence, the ability of the researcher to produce this dissertation.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant for the following reasons**:**

- It has revealed recent perspectives of educators' experiences of peer observation as a component of the IQMS.

- The causes or factors leading to challenges facing peer observation as a component of the IQMS have been identified and possible solutions for these challenges may be devised from the findings of the study.

- The interpretation of the participants' perspectives and the recommendations madein the study add to a body of knowledge that will be of valuable to other researchers.

- The findings and recommendations will be made available to the Department of Education and they may be used to improve the implementation of the IQMS in the schools under its jurisdiction.

- The study should also pave the way for future research on topics which have emerged from the findings; such research may take place in other contexts with other participants.

1.9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 introduces the study by outlining the problem statement, the research questions and the rationale for the study as well as providing a synopsis of the research methodology, design and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 reports on a review of the relevant available literature where the researcher attempts to examine the historical background of performance management in South African Education and the evaluation of educators in post-apartheid South Africa. The Integrated Quality Management System, its role and the responsibilities of structures involved in the IQMS are outlined in detail. A full explanation of peer observation of teaching is given, including its benefits and its challenges.

Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework; the study was undertaken within the theoretical framework of collegiality. The Theory of Collegiality was used as a basis for the research as it allowed the researcher to elicit data from selected participants and to provoke discussion on educators' experiences and their perceptions of the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS).

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology and data collection methods employed to investigate the research question. It details how the study was undertaken; how participants were selected for interviews; the data collection procedures and instruments; and the method of data analysis.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 contain a data analysis; a discussion of the research findings; and conclusions drawn, recommendations made and an indication of an area for further research.

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter served as an introduction to the study which aimed at determining educators' experiences and perceptions of peer observation**.** The IQMS's objectives are to enhance and monitor the performance of educators in the education system and to identify the specific needs of educators, schools and district offices in terms of support and development. It is through developmental appraisal that individual educators are assessed in a manner which is transparent with a view to determining their strengths and weaknesses and that programmes for individual growth are designed.

The background of the study, rationale, problem statement, research questions, research design and methodology, conceptual framework, significance and limitations of the study were outlined. The next chapter focuses on a literature study relating to educators' experiences and their perceptions of peer observation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) argue that a literature review is an account of what has been published on a researcher's topic of interest;they also suggest that a literature review may be presented as a paper on its own or it can be an integral part of an article, research proposal, research report or dissertation. They perceive the role of the literature review as one that discusses contrasts and assesses leading theories, disputes, themes, methodologies, strategies and debates in the relevant available literary texts on a topic. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2003) believe that a literature review is conducted to produce and polish research ideas andto gather knowledge about the topic under investigation as well as to determine if there are any knowledge gaps that need to be investigated further. In addition, it also connects, compares and contrasts arguments, themes and methodologies with those of the proposed research project.

In terms of the above, this chapter focuses on the literature related to the experiences and perceptions of educators of the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System. The reviewed literature includes books, journals, dissertations and theses.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Performance management is a relatively new concept in education in South Africa. Prior to 1994, the national system of appraisal was to a great extent inspectoral, shrouded by bureaucracy and it had a checklist which focused on evaluating educators where the purpose of such evaluation was to make teachers adhere to policies of the department instead of improving their performance. (Ramnarain, 2010). In scrutinizing the prior democracythere was countrywide opposition byteachers' unionsto, and denial of, any form of evaluation - especially from the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU)

whichrecommended that inspection should be replaced by an appraisal system for professional development instead of a mechanism for imposing authority and compliance.

After passing the 1998 Development Appraisal System (DAS) (ELRC Resolution Number 4 of 1998) changes were made and various policies on performance management and whole-school evaluation were integrated into the IQMS (ELRC Resolution Number 8 of 2003) as a quality and performance management policy similar to that of New Zealand and the United Kingdom (UK) that used the term, Performance Management, linked to the appraisal of teachers. The 2003 IQMS is concerned with the following:

- Reviewing performance and identifying strengths and weaknesses;
- Professional development;
- Performance measurement, accountability and pay awards; and
- Sustaining quality service and school effectiveness (Adapted from the IQMS Manual, 2005).

2.3 EVALUATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION

Evaluation in South Africa is as old as its history of education. Prior to 1994 inspection was the evaluation system that was used to ensure quality education. Williams (2003) is of the opinion that the primary motive of any type of staff assessment should be the further professional growth of staff members. Race played an important role in the administration of education during the apartheid era. There were differences in terms of resourcing the various departments which resulted in a disastrous system and jeopardized relations between educators and inspectors (Thurlow&Ramnarain, 2001). White education had an advantage; highly qualified inspectors were hired to monitor, guide and steer White education in the Boer Republics. The inspectors were responsible for classroom practice evaluation and the supervision of educators in terms of pedagogy and efficient classroom management and designing and upgrading school curricula (Baloyi, 2006). Their evaluations contributed to a high standard of quality academic achievement (Biputh, 2008).

State-controlled evaluation in Black schools brought about certain improvements in the academic standards of Bantu Education (Behr, 1980 in Biputh, 2008). However, the inspection system as a mode of evaluation was rejected by educators in Black schools as it was seen to have a high level of bureaucracy with autocratic, judgmental and summative forms of evaluation that were geared at controlling rather than developing and supporting (Educators' Workload Report, 2005). The inspection system was directed at compensating excellent educators and penalising ineffective educators instead of developing them (ANC Education Department, 1994). The fact that inspection aimed at improving results rather than improving educational processes, generally, was seen by Chetty (1993) - cited in Biputh (2008) - as a 'narrow objective'.

2.4 INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICY FRAMEWORK

As a result of post-1994 changes, a plethora of educational policies emerged in South Africa. South Africa has developed many policies in education in terms of a vision of quality education for all (Lerumo, 2004). The idea of teacher appraisal for development was mooted in 1993 by SADTU with a view to enhancing teacher development and performance, but it took another five years for the unions and the education departments to agree in the bargaining council of the public education (ELRC) to the Development Appraisal System (DAS) which was intended to be a form of remedy for disadvantaged teachers (Lerumo, 2004).

Subsequently, the 2003 Collective Agreement No 8 (ELRC, 2003) established the IQMS which consists of a school component, a whole school evaluation policy and an educator component that combines developmental appraisal and performance management. The followingobjectives reflect the purpose of the IQMS - as outlined by the Gauteng Department of Education and Culture (GDE, 2002):

- To monitor teachers' performance from a standpoint of determining their strengths and weaknesses;
- To provide support for prolonged development;
- To promote answerability;

•To evaluate individuals for salary progression and rewards; and

•To assess the complete effectiveness of the school in terms ofquality of teaching and learning.

2.5 STRUCTURES INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IQMS

Structures required to implement the IQMS in schools include the Senior Management Team (SMT) comprising ofthe school manager, deputy manager and department heads. The SMT is required to remind educators of their Work Integrated Learningand other planned educational activities and make all necessary arrangements for educators to attend them. The team also has the responsibility to ensure that self-evaluation takes place in terms of the WSE policy and in collaboration with the Staff Development Team (SDT).

The SDT consists of the school manager, the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) co-ordinator and one SMT member who isvoted for by educators. The SDT's responsibilities are, among others, to organize all tasks relating to the development of staff and to prepare and monitor the IQMS management plan and ensure its effectiveness.

The Development Support Group (DSG), which is comprised of the educators' immediate seniors and peers of their choice, must engage in feedback and discussion after the evaluation of educators. The DSG has a responsibility to provide mentoring and support and to assist educators to devisetheir Personal Growth Plans (PGPs). It is the responsibility of the DSG to check that the information prepared for performance measurement is factual (ELRC, 2003; Weber 2008).

2.6 CRITICISM AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This section reviews the literature that exists with regard to problems, criticism, challenges and tension in terms of the implementation of the IQMS.

2.6.1 Problematic Aspects of the IQMS Content

There are a few aspects to the IQMS content which are bound to cause problems during the implementation stage which are identified by the Class Act (2007) and De Clercq (2008). The Class Act (2007) contends that the IQMS is a complex and unclear document and that its

language is ambiguous. The way it describes the steps and processes involved in the DAS and the PM components are long-winded and difficult to follow. However, it acknowledges that some documents have been simplified since 2003 and that the document used for IQMS training is slightly clearer but that it is still a long bureaucratic exercise.

Another problem with the IQMS content is that it simultaneously combines development appraisal and performance management appraisal using the same evaluation tool or instrument. Makgalane (1997) is of the opinion that confusion arises when appraisal for development and appraisal for performance management co-exist in the same process. It produces tension because it sends contradictory messages.Although appraisal is intended to develop schools and teachers and improve education quality, it also measures and judges school and teacher performance. The question then arises: Which is more important and which dominates in the view of the people implementing, or being subjected to, the IQMS process? Makgalane (1997) suggests that the IQMS places greater emphasis on accountability than on professional development; the department appears to be more interested in accountability than in development and most teachers view and treat the IQMS as overly concerned with procedure – a paper exercise instead of a genuine basis for reflective developmental work.This is confirmed by Poster and Poster (1995) when they suggestthat an appraisal system which tries to combine all the possible benefits will fail as there will be conflictin objectives and clashes in resource demands.

A further content problem is the IQMS evaluation schedule which is presented as rational and person-proof. Weber (2005) criticizes the Department of Education for seeking legitimacy by presenting the IQMS as an objective tool designed to improve the quality of education. However, evaluations are not rational technical exercises; they are socially constructed and developed for a particular purpose.

2.6.2 The IQMS's Problematic Assumptions and Reliability

When analyzing appraisal, Cele (2008) emphasizes the importance of the context in implementation and suggests that there are implicit problematic assumptions in appraisals which do not match or reflect what exists. The IQMS assumes that most South African teachers are, and behave as, professionals committed to identifying their areas of development to improve the quality of their work and practices. In his research De Clercq (2008) found that few teachers behave in a professional manner and that they are not committed to reflecting on their teaching methods and ways to improve them with

colleagues. This is due to the fact that teachers have had years of poor or no experience of meaningful PD interventions within the school or from the district. In addition, few schools have a collaborative school culture or smooth, micro-politics that encourage teachers to open their classrooms to their peers or seniors and discuss their areas of weakness with them. As a result, there is there is a high probability that teachers will not use the IQMS as an opportunity to develop themselves.

There is also the assumption that evaluation expertise and capacity exists at district and school levels. However, many people in authority at provincial, district and school levels lack the skills, knowledge and experience to conduct professional evaluations (Class Act, 2007). There has been little training related to how provincial and school staff members should conduct peer evaluations as well as classroom observation. Research connected to the Class Act (2007) reveals that there are a few schools that perform well with senior managers who are sufficiently knowledgeable or experienced in handling and managing evaluation productively. However, the majority of schools lack such evaluation knowledge or experience. Senior managers struggle with the IQMS; they see it as a waste of time and end up treating it as an extra bureaucratic burden with which they have to comply. They do not take it seriously and, therefore, the IQMS evaluations will not be legitimate or reliable.

2.6.3 Challenges of the IQMS with Regard to its Implementation

Evaluation or appraisal exercises require capacity and resources at district and school levels. A factor that could cripple the implementation of the IQMS is the lack of capacity throughout the education system, including regional staff members, district staff and staff in schools. Given that the IQMS combines development appraisal and performance appraisal, the key capacity is to provide meaningful PD opportunities. According to many schools, the districts do not play a significant role in the support component of the IQMS (SADTU, 2005, in De Clercq, 2010). District support is deemed so unhelpful that many role-players do not want to talk to district officials or attend their workshops. Teachers require district officials to respect their professional autonomy and believe that they should not interfere with their curriculum and assessment practices. Schools end up fending for themselves in terms of support interventions; many poor schools are unable to offer strong internalsupport, unless they secure access to NGOs or other service providers.

The available relevant literature indicates a concern amongst teachers related to the IQMS. According to Khumalo (2008), teachers' perceptions of the IQMS are negative as they see

the IQMS as intimidating and undermining teachers' professional autonomy. As mentioned above, during the IQMS implementation educators should select their peers to observe them together with their immediate seniors; this simply means that the IQMS has an element of peer observation. This study sought to investigate educators' experiences and perceptions of peer observation as a component of the IQMS.

2.7 WHAT IS PEER OBSERVATION?

Peer observation is an activity that involves academic colleagues providing and receiving feedback on the productiveness of teaching methods in the promotion of learning - a process whereby an educator monitors the teaching of another educator with the intention of providing feedback which can be considered constructive. Peer observaion is communal and developmental in teaching when teachers provide support by monitoring each others' teaching and after monitoring they engage each other on what was monitored. After such engagements teachers are enriched with new thoughts; they start to view their teaching differently and strive to improve their pedagogy and a reciprocal teaching approach develops (Karagiorgi, 2012; Bell and Mladenovic, 2007). It is predicted that staff will work reciprocally in pairs when participating in the peer observation. A reciprocal teaching approach means that teachers monitor each others to identify areas of teaching practice that need assistance (Fleming, 1990).

A reciprocal teaching approach is at times called 'classroom observation' 'teaching evaluation' 'POT' or 'POLT' depending on the tasks and areas where teachers are employed in a pedagogic situation. However, in this research study, *'peer observation"* has bee used.

Studies in the literature show that peer observation is commonly practised at institutions of higher learning, like universities and colleges. The literature review has revealed few studies on peer observation in primary and secondary schools and, hence, the identified literature gap: educators' experiences and perceptions of peer observation.

The meaning of the word 'peer', from the expression 'peer observation' has many meanings within the school. According to Gosling (2002), peers can be colleagues from the same school or department, either of similar status or there can be a differencein status or the colleagues can be from another department or from a central educational development unit.Dumakule (2008) suggests that peers may be highly qualified and experienced

teacherscompared the novice teacher who is able to learn something from the peer observation activity.

Peer observation is a new phenomenon in South Africa. It is a phenomenon that is emerging where teachers work collaboratively which gives them an opportunity for contextual learning. Peer observation enhances professional development in context and it is said to be deeply rooted in history, dating back to John Dewey. Dewey (2001, in Urger, 2011) supports the peer observation model as a natural first-hand experience in context. He further suggests that the experience gained by the teachers doing the actual teaching should not be ignored. It is believed that knowledge and skills that adults acquire are learned more effectively when learned within the context in which they are used; hence, the term 'situated learning' which equals contextual learning (Buls, 2009).

Some research studies focus on the idea of contextual learning through peer observation. Two such studies were conducted in Indonesia, both qualitatively and quantitatively, by Zwart, Wubbles, Bergen and Bolhuis (2007; 2008) which show growth in teacher learning through the process of peer observation. Many studies have explored the process and learning that emerges from implementing a peer observation model as a form of professional development. Urger (2011) recommends that schools should create an opportunity for teachers to continuously learn by observing and by being observed in the classroom - bearing in mind that learning from each other in a natural context encourages continual learning and collaboration.

2.8 PRINCIPLES THAT UNDERPIN PEER OBSERVATION PROCESS

Gosling (2009) outlined the following guiding principles that underpin peer observation, namely:

- **Professional autonomy** – Instances when an observed educator is given an opportunity to dictate terms and conditions of what he or she wants during the observation process.
- **Self-evaluative and reflection** – The observed educator is able to check his/her growth or advancement in terms of his professional growth and able to see areas that need further improvement.
- **Non-judgemental** – Peer observation is aimed at developing teachers rather that judging them. It is an interactive process where two or more educators are involved.

- **Peer observation involves two or more educators working together** –Teachers work jointly giving each other professional support.
- **Positive and encouraging** - Peer observation aims at improving teachers' pedagogic activities rather than discouraging them.
- **Peer observation is an interchange activity** –It encourages teachers to exchange positive ideas regarding their teaching practice.
- **Consistency with good professional practice** - Peer observation reflects how professionals learn.

2.9 PURPOSE OF PEER OBSERVATION

Peer observation has been described in different ways; one description is: "Peer observation is aimed at developing teachers rather than judging them. If colleagues score each other peer observation becomes judgmental" (Ewens & Orr, 2002:33).Essentially, peer observation is beneficial as a formative, self-assessment tool for those who desire to improve their teaching abilities. It is mainly an unofficial process, centred on the notion of colleagues assisting each other in order to accomplish their aspirations and to become better educators.

The main purposes of peer observation are, namely: to manage and evaluate teaching and learning;for peer observation reviews; and to develop educators' teaching experience. The above purposes of peer observation are inline with the purposes of peer observation as oulined byGosling (2002).

The management or evaluative model is used by senior staff to monitor other staff with the purpose of identifying under-performance, confirming probation, appraisal, promotion, assessment and quality assurance. The result of this evaluation is the production of a judgmental report - a pass-fail report. The institution rather than the person observed benefits from this observation.

In terms of where peer observation is aimed at developing educators, an experienced peer regulates the observation process by not taking positions or hierarchy into consideration; however, an observed educator should indicate areas that need further improvement. Such observation becomes formative and supportive in nature (Devlin& O'Shea, 2012).

In peer review model observation, an interested peer is invited by another to observe a related aspect of teaching in order to to give positive feedback on its effectiveness in order to enhance learning. This is conducted in a favourable condition. The observed educator at the end gives summary of what he/she has learnt, namely: a reflective summary.

Hammersley-Fletcher, Orsmond (2004) and Gosling (2002) agree that peer observation has three important elements, namely: an element of accountability of one's teaching practice; an element of promotion and enhancement of reflection on one's teaching experience;and an element of advancement of one's teaching experience through consultation.

In the Higher Education sectors, peer observation is used in number ways. Peer observation can be used to determine the expertise of academics during their probation period and to appraise staff members for quality assurance purposes regarding their teaching practice (Hardman, 2007). It is worthmentioning that the main important task of peer observation in higher education remains the advancement of teaching practice through reflection that, in turn, improves student learning (Brockbank & McGill, 2007).

Although most of the literature on POT explores its purpose in institutions of higher learning, studies by Karagiorgi (2012) show its importance in primary schools in Cyprus. In"*Peer observation of teaching: perceptions and experiences of teachers in a primary school in Cyprus*" Karagiorgi (2012) suggests that the aims of POT are to get educators to reflect on how they educate (reflection) and view their practice through the eyes of their colleagues (collegiality).

Daniels, Pirayoff and Bessant (2013) believe that teachers are not actively involved in the resolution of obstacles that hinder their professional development but that they just wait "passively" for a resolution instead of being "proactively engaged in participating in its remedy." It is for this reason that Daniels *et al.* (2013) recommend that teachers should be awarded an opportunity to examine their own practice and purposefully work to polish their specific areas of need which can only be achieved only through POT. According to Daniels *et al.* (2013), the purpose of POT is to enable teachers to assume greater control over teaching and learning in their schools, thereby improving their professional development practices. This supports the view of Ross and Bruce (2007) who maintains that the more individuals have, or are perceived to have,control over their actions and

environment,themore likely they are to engage in a task. It should also be mentioned that when teachers assume greater control over teaching and learning in their schools, self efficacy is enhanced. Bandura (1997:33) defines self efficacy as "one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task."Another purpose of POT mentioned by Lawson (2011) is that observers learn ways to carry out their own practice by witnessing it rather than just observing passively.

2.10 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PEER OBSERVATION AS A PROMISING EXPERIENCE

According to Mento and Meyer (2000), peer observation in some HE institutions is not supported. They outline some factors that cause peer observation to be met with resistance by some academics: aspects associated with the observed–observee feelings about peer observation, such asthat peer observation undermines teachers' professional independence (Mento & Meyer, 2000:27) and thoseabout what is needed to be observed as well as the expected outcomes of such an observation process. It has been emphasized that for peer observation to be a success and a promising experience guidelines regarding how the peer observation process should be conducted, issues regarding mutual trust and how relevant and suitable feedback will be given should be prepared in advance.

Peer observation is also also used in medical schools - as Siddiqui, Dwyer and Carr (2007) remark. They suggest reasons for conducting peer observation in medical schools that benefit both the observer and the observee peer as it happens in schools. For it to yield good results, Siddiqui, Dwyer and Carr (2007)maintain that peer observation should be mutually respective and supportive to both the observee and observed peer.

Peer observation is a new and slow process that needs a gradual integration by the teaching fraternity. Forcing the concept on teachers will only raise their fears and contempt. The climate of POT that is based upon trust and helpfulness is vital to its success; teaching will move from being a private affair to being a public one and it is only through trust that teachers will be able to share what has worked for them in the classroom. According to Chamberlain (2011), trust is the key for the whole system to work. For POT to be successful, more emphasis should be placed on helping educators develop practice rather than being judgmentally graded in the observation and on learnergrowth. Teachers need to feel that what

they are doing has a direct impact on theirlearners rather than on their own personal pride; the focus needs to shift to how things can be done differently in the classroom to ensure that learners succeed academically (Cosh, 1998).

When planning the successful implementation of POT, its overall objective to share good practice and improve teaching needs to be emphasized rather than allowing it to be a fearful and distrustful process. For peer observation to yield its intended desired outcomes or aims and objectives, a formal observation programme for the whole institution should be properly developed, especially at the beginning of the school year (Donnelly, 2007).

According to Atkinson and Bolt (2010), giving feedback to peers is an important element of the success of the peer observation process and it helps to develop collegiality. The key elements for the success ofpeer observation are: It should allow educators to participate by their own free will rather than being coerced and it should be communal in nature where constructive feedback should be givenrather than being a private or personal activity.

In conclusion, peer observation should meet certain requirements for it to be purposeful. Bell and Mladenovic (2007) recommend that peer observation feedback given by observers should be non-judgmental and developmental; educators should be well conversant with the peer observation process, they should be well equipped with skills acquired through training on how to conduct peer observation. The training of teachers on how to conduct peer observation enables educators to see the importance and value of peer observation.

2.11 STAGES OF PEER OBSERVATION

Siddiqui, Dwyer and Carr, (2007:299) maintain that peer observation consists of three stages: the the pre-observation stage; the observation of teaching; and a post-observation stage which is the last stage of the observation process.

2.11.1 The first stage of observation

The first stage of observation involves discussion and the briefing of an observer and an observed educator to gain an insight of the whole observation process before the actual observation session starts. Bovill (2010) regards this stage as a pre-observation conference or meeting stage. Such a meeting between the observer and the observed educator involves clarifying issues, such as:

- Date and time when the actual observation will take place;
- Grade or class where the actual observation will be conducted;
- The nature or format in which feedback will be given after the observation;
- Areas where feedback is required; and
- The aims and objectives of the whole observation process.

It is in this meeting where the observed, not the observer educator, determines terms and conditions for the whole observation process.The observer should be willing to listen and ask questions to seek clarification, where necessary (Fleming, 1990).

2.11.2 The Observation

This is the second stage of peer observation; it is the actual observation process. This is the stage where in the actual observation process takes place in the agreed class or grade. In this stage the observing educator is expected to observe his/her peer according to the terms and conditions determined before during the first stage. It is also required that the observed educator inform learners the reasons for the visit by the observing educator. In some cases, learners have an option to deny or accept for an observation to continue (Schultz & Latif, 2006:45).

2.11.3 Post-Observation Meeting

This is the finaland most sensitive stage of the observation process that requires skills and tactical approach by the observing educator. It is the stage which, where possible, should be conducted immediately after the observation lesson. According to Bovill (2010) and Siddiqui, Dwyer and Carr (2007), this stage should be conducted in a friendly, warm and welcoming environment or climate that is free of any disturbances. It is also suggested that even the language used should be proper and polite. The comments given by the observing educator in the feedback should be mainly evaluative and advisory, for example:*"that was good", "it was excellent", "how about if we approach like this"*and *"what if we can change it in this manner?"*

This stage is comprised of feedback and reflection.

2.11.3.1Feedback

Constructive and positive feedback by observers should be given. Peel (2005:492) says that*"it is important to give critical feedback even if it is difficult to do so; this should only be given if educators gain something from such critical feedback."*Feedback should be objective, while supporting comments with data collected.

2.11.3.2Reflection

This phase gives an observed educator the opportunity to look back on the observation process;to reflect on whether the aims and objectives set where achieved;on what went well and the reasons why it went well; andon what could be done differently to improve - if such a lesson were to be taught again (Slade, 2002).

2.12 PEER OBSERVATION BENEFITS AND ADVANTAGES TO TEACHING

The literature suggests numerous benefits and advantages of peer observation - even if it is acknowledged by many academics that peer observation is not an easy process.Bell and Mladenovic (2007:45) believe that*"if peer observation is conducted in well-planned and supportive conditions, it yields numerous advantages."*Among the advantages are the improvement of one's teaching experience;the enhancement of one's confidence; and a willingness to learn more teaching approaches. According to Bell andMladenovic (2007) and Karagiorgi (2012), peer observation enhances collegiality and it serves as a powerful tool for professional enhancement.

Peer observation of teaching gives teachers an opportunity to enter a forum to talk about good teaching and learning through exposure, contemplation and, often, through imitation. Similarly, Karagiorgi (2012) maintains that improvement in teaching is not an isolated event but is often a collective endeavour that strengthens reflection - not as a separate entity, but in relation to collegiality; it prevents teaching from being a private activity and facilitates the dissemination of good practice and professional dialogue where teachers share ideas and expertise and a chance to discuss their problems and concerns. Karagiorgi (2012) further

explains that peer observation is developmental rather than judgmental and evaluative. If it becomes judgmental, teachers become defensive and anxious and they feel oppressed and threatened.

According to the South African Council of Educators (SACE, 2000), excellent teachers engage in continual learning and professional development as a life-long activity. It is through peer observation that both educators, the observed and observing educator,continue to learn and acquire new skills from each other irrespective of their positions. Young and inexperienced educators observe more experienced educators teach and they attempt to emulate them. Hendry and Oliver (2012) agree that peer observation is a mutual exercise where educators provide each others with new thoughts through constructive dialogue. This means that peer observation of teaching involves mutual learning where both the observer and the observed benefit from the experience.

In explaining the benefits of peer observation, Bell and Mladenovic (2007) suggest that peer observation of teaching provides an opportunity for teachers to copy and emulate the teaching styles and approaches of others. Peer observation promotes and enhances a collegial relationship amongst educators; it also enables educators to receive positive and constructive feedback in a friendly welcoming environment.

By means of peer observation educators have the chance to learn and develop by experiencing how others may approach teaching differently and practitioners are assisted in developing a greater self-awareness which leads to greater professional growth. Peer observation is professional, non-threatening and non-prescriptive (Daniels *et al.*, 2013).

According to Bandura (1997) and Hendry and Oliver (2012), the peer observationexperience strengthens and enhances teachers' self-efficacy that enables them to address challenging topics without any obstacles.

2.13 CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH PEER OBSERVATION

Literature studies reveal relatively few challenges regarding peer observation. It is viewed by many educators as invasive and theyfeel that peer observation invades their professional autonomy. To resolve this challenge, peer observation should be well-planned and

uncriticalrather than evaluative and seeking in terms of external requirements (Bell & Mladenovic, 2007).

Another challenge raised by many educators and academics is that observers are unintentionally subjective when observing their peers;Robinson (2010) calls this *"observer bias"* - which leads to an unfair teaching evaluation. Engin and Priest (2014) see peer observation as intrusive, threatening and highly subjective which are the main sources of concern that lead to a reluctance to accept peer observation as a learning tool. When educators and academics experience change fatigue, they tend to resist it as they believe it to be management and time consuming. Bell (2002) supports the contentions of others that peer observation can be a time-consuming, threatening, high risk activity that causes anxiety or fear.

In his article, *Peer Observation: Learning from one another*, Robinson (2010)suggests that peer observation makes educators feel uncomfortableand anxious. Educators associate a peer observer in a class with a stranger standing in one's bedroom watching one's dressing. The cited concerns about peer observation of teaching suggest that teachers do not want to be observed while teaching for various different reasons. Poumellec *et al.*, (1992) maintain that peer observation at one end of the spectrum is prescriptive or directive supervision; that the basic premise of peer observation is that the supervisor-observer knows the 'right' way to teach and can judge how closely the teacher matches the given criteria.

Peer observation has negative connotations in that it is usually associated with passing examinations, appraisals and obtaining a job. According to Poumellec *et al*. (1992), negative connotations are responsible for the reluctance of experienced teachers to enter into peer observation projects. Another major challenge they believe is that peer observation can be ineffective and counterproductive if observers lack training and experience in observation and feedback.

In conclusion, other challenges associated with peer observation of teaching are related to time. The literature suggests that peer observation consumes teaching time and it creates an unnecessary burden for educators (Keig & Waggoner, 1995).

2.14 CONCLUSION

There are some South African studies that explore how teachers experience peer observation as part of the IQMS, such as that conducted by Letsoalo (2009). This study suggests that the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) does not contribute to improving the skills, proficiencies and ultimately the capabilities of educators. The study also indicates that monetary aspects attached to the IQMS are over-emphasized at the expense of developmental aspects. Therefore, the pivotal element of educator assessment in terms of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is sacrificed. The study findings also reveal that the IQMS is unjust in the sense that in the process of peer assessment educators award each other unwarrantedly greater than normal marks, even in areas where they need to be more advanced because the IQMS is economically related.

It should, however, be mentioned that there is no dedicated study of the topic which explores teachers' experiences and perception of the IQMS and its impact on collegiality. The next chapter discusses the conceptual framework used for this research.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to explore educators' experiences and perceptions of the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), the Theory of Collegiality was used as a basis for analysing the research finding of this study. This theory was used as a lens for the discussion on educators' experiences and their perceptions of the peer observation component of the IQMS and formed the basis for the data analysis.

It has been widely acknowledged that the virtues of teacher collegiality are widespread. Different stakeholders, including teachers, educational administrators and policy-makers may have a range of reasons to believe that teacher collegiality is beneficial to various aspects of school success and improvement. Indeed, a sizable body of empirical research links collegiality among teachers to their enhanced feelings of efficiency increased teaching quality and greater accountability for student achievement (Louis, 1999; Dunne, Nave & Lewis, 2000). Taking the form of collaborative lesson planning, classroom observation, peer coaching or mentoring, teacher collegiality has often been conceptualized as an important factor that contributes to teacher development whereby educators are provided with opportunities to learn from each other; rather than being dependent on external experts, teachers are expected to share and develop their expertise together so that they can revisit, and take advantage of, their own reflections on teaching (Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004; Grossman, Wineburg & Woolworth, 2001).

3.2 WHAT COLLEGIALITY ENTAILS

Drawing on common definitions in the literature, teacher collegiality is conceptualized as collaborative interaction among teachers which involves joint work concerning their core task in school, i.e., the practice of classroom teaching. Such joint work implies collective action, strong interdependence, shared responsibility and a great degree of readiness to participate in reflective inquiry into practice (Little, 1990). Bell and Mladenovic (2007) define peer observation of teaching as a collaborative, developmental activity in which

professionals offer mutual support by observing each other teaching; explaining and discussing what was observed; sharing ideas about teaching; gathering student feedback on effective teaching; reflecting on understanding, feelings, actions and feedback; and trying out new ideas. Peer observation uses collegiality to offer a structured process for mutual support in which colleagues can share their knowledge and experience and develop their skills and approaches within the immediacy of their own teaching environment.

While it is worthwhile noting that teachers frequently experience considerable conflict in professional beliefs about teaching and learning when involved in joint work, as Achinstein (2002) maintains, teacher collegiality is not viewed as a condition for consensus and solidarity. However, the contention resulting from different viewpoints can ultimately become the potential source of organizational learning if teachers manage to embrace, rather than suppress, differences and disagreements (Achinstein, 2002).

It is important to note that organizational learning becomes more viable in a collegial atmosphere where collaborative working relationships among teachers evolve from teachers' own perceived needs, rather than from administrative imposition (Bidwell, 2001; Hargreaves, 1991) which is also a prerequisite for peer observation of teaching to thrive.

According to Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002), teachers are those who interpret and implement any policy reforms in the educational system; the successful transfer of reform ideas into practice is likely to depend greatly on how well collegial working relationships have been created and sustained among teachers. Peer observation of teaching as a component of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) and as policy to enhance the development of teaching and learning in South Africa is no exception. For the IQMS to be successfully implemented there should be a collegial working relationship amongst teachers themselves as well as the School Management Team (SMT).

3.3 COLLEGIALITY AND EMERGING PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Newly emerging social psychological perspectives posit that cognition is not simply the property of an individual person; it is distributed across people (Hutchins, 1995). Such distributed cognition perspectives commonly suggest the possibility that teacher collegiality may help "diverse groups of teachers with different types of knowledge and expertise draw

upon and incorporate each other'sexpertise to create rich conversations and new insights into teaching and learning" (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Similarly, images of leadership have also changed in that teachers are encouraged to actively engage in leadership roles. Recent studies on school organizational challenge conventionally conceptualizes leadership as monopolized by administrators and emphasize new styles of leadership whereby leadership is shared with, and distributed among, teachers (Somech, 2005). These alternative forms of leadership are characterized by shared decision-making, collaborative problem-solving and supportive relationships which all relate to Collegiality Theory.

3.4 BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF COLLEGIALITY

Collegiality among teachers is widely seen as beneficial because it helps teachers engage in reflective inquiry about teaching and learning (Kazemi & Franke, 2004; Kennedy, 2009). Considering that it is important for every teacher to be empowered as an active and reflective educational theorist and practitioner rather than just a passive agent of a curriculum package (Shulman, 2004; Silcock, 1994), collegiality can provide teachers with various opportunities to collaboratively produce useful local knowledge about the practice of classroom teaching. One of the most valuable benefits of collaborative teacher interaction lies in the increased opportunity provided for teachers to interact with one another regarding instructional issues; it has been well documented that teachers who regularly participate in collaborative interaction have opportunities to listen to a wide range of ideas about the practice of teaching as they exchange helpful feedback with their colleagues regarding how to deal with various instructional dilemmas and constraints that they are confronted with in their teaching (Fernandez & Yoshida, 2004; Paine & Ma, 1993).

Through collegiality teachers can develop useful local knowledge and skills to effectively use in their classrooms. Teachers can promote their professional growth "when they generate local knowledge of practice by working within the contexts of inquiry communities" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). As a form of "relational" capacity teacher collegiality in schools may facilitate the building of their professional knowledge (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Further, the development of teacher competence is largely acquired through collective efforts embedded in the "ethic of care" in schools (Gilligan, 1993).

Weller (2009) maintains that in schools where collaboration is constantly fostered, on-going communication is likely to increase the awareness that virtually every professional in a school has a range of difficult tasks. When this awareness is combined with the sharing of knowledge and skills, teachers find themselves "connected with each other as a result of felt interdependencies, mutual obligations, and other ties" (Weller, 2009).

Other benefits of teacher collegiality have been reported. As noted by Madiha (2012), the most significant of these among teaching personnel is an improvement in teachers' professional growth, development and professionalism; school quality and organizational effectiveness; and student behaviour, attitude and achievement. Singh and Manser (2002) believe that collegiality among staff members leads to increased teacher satisfaction and adaptability; it breaks the isolation of the classroom; and it brings career rewards and daily satisfaction for teachers. Collegiality stimulates enthusiasm among teachers and reduces emotional stress and burnout. For collegiality to be realised in a school situation, teachers should have a sense of belonging. Mutual respect and self-evaluation should be encouraged as this may mitigate the belief that the principal is the expert in such matters. Members of the teaching staff should be treated as partners rather than as subordinates because this will encourage co-operative decision-making.

3.5 CRITICISMS OF COLLEGIALITY

Hagreaves (1994) is of the opinion that in theory joint work at classroom level sounds positive, but in reality it is difficult to put into practice because of the management of available time and that different meanings and forms of collegiality that are considered to be most compatible with the positives of teacher empowerment are usually forms that are used the least. It is argued that collaborative planning often centers more on specific task-related work rather than on collaborative and reflective reviews of purpose and process. It is further acknowledged that some teachers are actually unfamiliar with the collegial role; they may be comfortable outside the classroom with sharing ideas but are less so with the idea of sharing or adjusting practice inside the classroom (Karen, Brett & Sharon, 1994).

Collegiality refers to "encounters among teachers that rest on shared responsibility for the work of teaching (interdependence); collective conceptions of autonomy; support for teacher initiative and leadership with regard to professional practice; and group affiliations grounded

in professional work" (Hargreaves (1994). Educationally, collaborative collegiality becomes an important tool for teacher empowerment and professional enhancement when it brings colleagues and their expertise together to generate critical but practically grounded reflection on what they do as a basis for wiser, more skilled action. However, not all collaborative collegiality is educationally valuable; Hargreaves (1994) labeled educational invaluable collegiality as "contrived collegiality", referring to the workplace conditions where teacher collaborative working relationships are not spontaneous, voluntary, development-oriented, pervasive across time and space and unpredictable but can be characterised on the contrary as administratively regulated and controlled, compulsory, implementation-oriented (putting into practice what others have decided and designed), fixed in time and space and predictable (Hargreaves, 1994). When collegiality becomes contrived and mandatory in nature, wherein colleagueship and partnership are administratively imposed, such collegial relationships present difficulties for the creation and persistence of a collaborative culture and do not contribute to the further development of teachers' professionalism. The teachers' feelings of personal responsible for their students' outcomes that allow them to make internal causal attributions for pupils' results diminish (Wallace, 1998).

Contrived collegiality reduces teachers' autonomy and independence (teachers' control about the organisation and content of their work) and it contributes to dissatisfaction and possibly to burnout. Contrived collegiality makes teachers technicians rather than professionals exercising discretionary judgment (Hagreaves& Dave, 1990). In such circumstances, collegiality becomes an administrative colonisation tool for the surveillance of teacher collegial relations and non-classroom time; it is likely not only that contrived collegiality will fail to create an enduring collaborative culture, but also that it may additionally undermine those elements of trust, support and relaxed informality that already exist.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The rarity of US and African schools engaged in meaningful collaborative work in terms of teaching has been well documented (Leonard & Leonard, 2003; Lortie, 2002; Rosenholtz, 1989). Many studies decry limited opportunities for teacher supportive collegial relationships through which they can share their "personal knowledge" with other teachers (Clandinin, 1985). A more voluntary, development-oriented model of teacher collaboration would build more effectively on the discretionary judgements that teachers exercise in the varying

contexts of their work. Mandated, implementation-oriented forms of contrived collegiality are almost certainly too inflexible for that. It is for this reason that this study sought to explore whether peer observation of teaching creates teachers collegiality that is a more voluntary, development-oriented model of teacher collaboration. The next chapter, Chapter 4, describes the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter reviewed the theoretical framework employed in conducting this study; this chapter provides an outline of the research design and methodology. The research procedures and techniques adopted in the study attempted to answer the research questions raised in the first chapter. This chapter presented details relating to the type of research approach and research design executed in the study, the study area and sample size, the data collection instruments and procedures and the data analysis process. The chapter also gave the criteria used to select the research method and clearly explained the whole research process. Included in this Chapter are the ethical issues that were recognized in this study.

Essentially, the study adopted a descriptive and exploratory design within a qualitative research approach because the researcher wanted to examine educators' experience and perceptions of peer observation.

4.2 RESEARCH AIM

The aim of this study was to examine educators' experience and perceptions of the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research design is a framework within which the given parameters of a research exercise is to be undertaken and provides reasons for the selection of suitable research methods which are used in the study of a given phenomenon. Maree *et al.* (2003) maintain that a research design is a procedure that develops from an underlying philosophical assumption to detailing the choice of respondents, the data collection methods to be utilised and the data analysis to be executed, while it is the view of Macmillan and Schumacher (2001) that the purpose of a research design is to deliver, within an appropriate mode of enquiry, the most valid accurate answers possible to research questions.

There are several methods of research that may be used in a study. According to Patton (1990), modern developments in research "have led to an increase in the use of multiple methods." This suggests that a researcher should not only rely on the most suitable method for a study, but has to bear in mind which combinations of methods will produce better results. The use of a multiplicity of techniques in research is referred to as triangulation. In research, several methods may be utilized to obtain valid data on what is being investigated. Triangulation means the combination of two or more theories, data sources and methods used in the study of a given problem.

This study adopted a descriptive and exploratory design within a qualitative research approach which is line with what Creswell (1994) defines as an "inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture which is formed with words that report the detailed views of participants in a natural setting." The suitability of qualitative research for this study was based on the view that qualitative research aims to explain complex phenomena by means of verbal description rather than testing hypotheses with numerical values (Patton, 2002). The Integrated Quality Management System is a complex phenomenon that needs verbal descriptions to grasp its relevant meaning and the message being conveyed. In this case, the qualitative approach was deemed to be suitable because it helped the researcher identify the participants' beliefs and values (De Vos, 2005). Creswell (1994) adds that the data emerging from qualitative research is descriptive in nature.

Niewenhuis, in Maree, Creswell, Ebersohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Niewenhuis, Pietersen, Plano Clark and Van der Westhuizen (2003) believes that people often describe qualitative research as research that attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the purpose of establishing an understanding of what is being observed or studied. Furthermore, qualitative research, according to Maree *et al.* (2003), involves "understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underpin various behavioural patterns and it is mostly concerned with exploring the "why" questions of research". It typically studies "people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment (*in situ*) and focusing on their meanings and interpretations" (Maree *et al.*, 2003) quoting Holloway & Wheeler, 1996). Qualitative researchers enter the natural field of the participants and have direct contact with them during interviews.

This study was based on a qualitative rather than a quantitative paradigm because it was narrative in nature rather than statistical. The collected data was in the form of words rather than figures. Qualitative research is involved with describing and making sense of phenomena in their occurring context (natural context) with the purpose of establishing an understanding of the meaning(s) imparted by the respondents (Maree *et al.*, 2003). Thus, the phenomenon could be best described in terms of its meaning for the participants.

Qualitative methodology focuses on the real-life experiences of people. The methodology allowed me to know the participants beliefs and values personally. In this research data was collected from the participants in their natural setting, namely, their schools. A qualitative research methodology was selected because of the characteristics of the paradigm as identified by all the authors quoted above.

The next paragraphs discussed the epistemological and ontological assumption of qualitative research design.

4.3.1 Epistemological assumption of qualitative research design.

Denzin and Lincoln (2004), argue that the process of qualitative research entails an approach that is interpretive and naturalistic- 'This suggests that researchers who use the qualitative approach study things in their natural environments, in attempts to interpret phenomena and make sense of it in regardto the meanings that people bring to them'. The study utilized an interpretivist epistemology which posits that knowledge is established through the meaning attached to the phenomenon under study (Krauss, 2005). Researchers are involved directly with the participants of a study for the purpose of obtaining data and the inquiry changes both researchers and subjects (Rabionet, 2011). Interpretivists believe that knowledge is subjective because it is constructed in a social context and is dependent on the mind; truth is embedded in human experiences. This means that assertions on what can be regarded as true or false are bound by culture and are dependent on history and context - although some may be universal (Claire *et al.*, 2012).

In this study I conducted interviews with different participants, encouraged participants to talk about their experiences about IQMS in order to get deeper meaning and understanding of the phenomenon under study hence peer observation component of IQMS. I listened, observed what participants said and interpret their views in order to have deeper

understanding and knowledge of their experiences about peer observation component of IQMS.

4.3.2 Ontological assumption of qualitative research design.

According to Taber (2006), the ontological assumption of qualitative research design is constructivism. A constructionist ontological assumption suggests that there is no objective reality but that there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest. Similarly, Claire, Barbara and Mark (2012) maintain that on the topic of what can be regarded as reality, the interpretivists are of the assertion that reality is constructed in a social context and that there are people constructing them. In other words, people impose order on the world in an effort to construct meaning. Reality depends on the individual mind and is, therefore, a personal or social construct. Ontologically the researcher's qualitative research was constructionist because it views the social world in terms of process and collective events, actions and activities which unfold overtime and in context. In this study, I constructed the reality about the experiences of peer observation component of IQMS from what participants had been saying through interviews.

4.4 PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING

Sampling can be defined as the "process used to select a portion of the population for the study" (Maree *et al.*, 2003). This is a procedure where a sample or a few people from a larger portion of the population are chosen to become the basis for estimating or predicting a true situation or result regarding the larger group in which the investigator is interested. By monitoring the attributes of the sample, one may infer specific deductions regarding the features of the population from which it was concluded. It is also possible for one to infer changes observed in the sample as changes that would likely occur in the population. Samples are not chosen in a haphazardly manner but are selected in a systematically random manner so that chance or the operation of probability is utilized. However, where random selection is not possible, other systematic means are used. The major objective of any sampling design is to cut the limited cost with regard to the gap between the values obtained from the sample and those existing in the population. Sampling is a paramount aspect of research due to the fact that it enables representation of the population from the few

participants in the study. Sampling is important in the sense that studying the whole population would be expensive and time consuming.

Qualitative researchers often opt for purposive sampling procedures in the place of probability sampling which is more inclined towards research approaches that are quantitative (Maree *et al.*, 2003). Babie (2010) defines purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling where the elements to be monitored are chosen on the basis of the researcher's judgement regarding which can be considered the most productive or the most representative. This statement is supported by Krathwohl (2004) who is of the opinion that purposive sampling is the most attractive technique in qualitative research because it entails the selection of participants who are extensively informed and can make provision to unique access to the topic being explored. This study made use of purposive sampling methods; the participants were chosen owing to them possessing defining characteristics that make them custodians of the data required for this investigation (Maree *et al.*, 2003).

The sampling technique employed in this study was a very progressive method of identifying adult participants who were regarded to be conversant with the phenomenon under investigation. In this scenario, I was interested in informants who were conversant with peer observation as part of the IQMS. Therefore, it was deemed appropriate to also use the snowballing technique. Patton (1990) describes snowballing as an approach in which initial contact with one informant leads to further contacts; initial contact with an informant generates further contacts. He states that snowballing increases as one accumulates more information-rich cases. Those people or events recommended as valuable by a number of different informants take on special importance.

4.5 SAMPLE SIZE

This investigation targeted a specific group of people, namely, educators who have participated in peer observation. However, there is controversy pertaining to the determination of an adequate sample size; in fact, researchers agree that if resources are available, the larger the representation sample used, the better. However, most researchers experience financial constraints and inadequate time and manpower to allow them to collect large samples. It has been proved by many researchers that qualitative research has no specific rules to determine a sample size. Robnson (1993) points out that the size of the sample in qualitative research is diminutive**.** The idea behind settling on the case or cases is

to generate a more in-depth understanding of the phenomena being investigated. It was in this regard that the sample for this study was 15 participants who were drawn from two primary schools in the Dzindi Circuit of the Vhembe District in Limpopo Province**.** I selected 10 experienced educators and 5 inexperienced educators to participate in the study. Experienced educators were educators who have ten year teaching experience and above and inexperienced educators referred to those educators who had less than ten year teaching experience. The participants were chosen on the grounds that they were regarded as relevant sources of information about the IQMS, especially its peer observation component. Although an estimated number of 15 participants were envisaged, sampling continued through snowballing until data saturation was reached, i.e., when additional data resulted in redundancy and no new information was revealed (Patton, 1990).

4.6 CODING THE PARTICIPANTS

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:421), "participants should not be identifiable in print." For the purpose of not disclosing the identities of the participants taking part in this study, codes were used. The following codes were used in order to ensure the anonymity: educators were alluded to as Participants A, B and C - up to O. (Refer to Table 4.7.3.4 below).

4.7 DATA COLLECTION

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) believe that the majority of researchers who are interactive in nature make use of multiple methods of collecting data in a study, but mostly choose a single one as the leading method. They add that this strategy of using multiple methods permits triangulation of the data across inquiry techniques and that the varying methods may produce understandings about the subject of interest that differ and improve the reliability of the findings (McMillan &Schumacher, 2001).

In this study I used interviews and document study to collect data. In-between the interviews and documents study field notes were constantly made. Because data that appears in print only is not always reliable, this encouraged me to use the combination of interviews and documents study.

4.7.1 Interviews

This study used interviews of a semi-structured form as the technique for collecting data. Kvale as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) sees interviews as an "interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest". Leedy and Ormord (2001) say that interviews can yield a great deal of useful information. This is because interviews attain higher rates of response than other methods, owing maybe to the assumption that respondents are more reluctant to turn you down and, moreover, it decreases the answers like 'I don't know' and the practice of leaving questions unanswered, (Babbie,1990).

I chose semi-structured interviews to collect data from the participants in this study because they provide me with an opportunity to ask questions and record answers from one participant at a time (Creswell, 2002). The use of semi structured interviews enabled the follow up questions I was able to use when I got brief responses or when I did not understand the responses. They allowed me to rephrase or clarify a question when I noticed that a participant did not understand it as Babbie (1990) says that interviews can also provide a guard against confusion because if the respondent clearly misunderstood the question or reveals that he does not make sense of it, the interviewer has the opportunity to explicate matters, and therefore obtain more relevant responses.

Furthermore, what is important about semi-structured interviews is that whilst they allow for asking probing questions they also ensure some consistency in the main questions asked to each participant. This resulting dialogue between me and the respondents enabled me to uncover their true feelings. A collection of prearranged open-ended questions on an interview schedule was developed to guide me during the interviews and those questions enabled the participants to share information on how they experienced peer observation as part of the IQMS.

4.7.2 The interview process

This involved the negotiation of entry into the field and the interview process. The schools were visited in advance in order to negotiate for consent to carry out the research study. There was an accompanying letter from the supervisor of the studies. The principals of the selected schools easily granted the permission and promised to select the participants and arrange the follow up meeting for me. In the follow up meeting the participants were already identified by the principals.

In that follow up meeting the issues of ethical considerations were explained and discussed at large. These issues involved freedom from external influence and regard for the dignity of the participants; non-maleficence; beneficence; objectivity; informed consent; anonymity and confidentiality; and reflexivity. These issues were observed throughout the study.

We had a lengthy discussion with the participants where they enquired why they and their schools were selected; which criteria were used and when the interviews would take place and how long would they be. The fact that I informed them about a tape recorder that I would carry and use during the interview process made the situation difficult but after I showed the purpose for its use that is only to capture the responses so that I would be able to listen to them when I transcribed their voices into text they agreed. Then in that meeting we also arranged the times for the interview process and they made it clear that they would be available only during break time; they would not be available after school because they had some personal matters that they needed to attend to at that time. This later prolonged the process because I had to see one educator a day. Moreover, there were difficulties in making appointments to conduct interviews with individual educators as they kept on postponing. This also delayed the process.

After several attempts to secure appointments with the participants, some educators said that they were not yet ready and others said that they had forgotten about the date even though they were reminded several times. As a result, I had to return to the schools several times. I was eventually successful and the interviews were held during break time in the staff room as we had arranged. The interviews lasted about thirty minutes to one hour depending on each participant. The environment was not so quiet and peaceful because learners were playing outside and the playing grounds were not very far from the staff room.

Participants were again frightened about the use of the tape-recorder, and then I had to calm them by explaining again the purpose of using it. They were so tense at the beginning of the interview in such a way that when we were about to start some asked to first go and relieve themselves and others asked to go and fetch some water. I thus learnt to organise water before we started.

They understood all the questions however some educators gave brief responses and then again I had to probe. Others were not free at all from the beginning to the end of the interviews but, fortunately, it was only one educator and it was funny that she was responding to the questions but when you looked at her face you could see that she was not happy; maybe it was because she was frightened. Although ultimately interviews took place, it was not a smooth process due to the issues involving participants discussed above.

Here under are some of the probing questions used under some main question of the interview guide.

1. Have you participated in any kind of peer observation in your teaching experience?

- *When was it? This year or last year?*
- *How often do you participate in peer observation of teaching?*
- *What did you gain from that evaluation?*

2. Have you ever been included in a DSG as a peer observer during the implementation of the IQMS?

- *If so what did you experience?*
- *What were the portfolios of members that included you as a peer observer?*
- *Did you know what it was expected from you as a peer observer?*

3. How did you choose your peer during peer observation process?

- *Did you choose your own peers or were they imposed upon you?*
- *Can you explain further, why did you choose them? Did you check their experiences or knowledge of the subject?*

4. Did you find the peer observation process beneficial?

- *How was it beneficial to you? Can you explain further?*

- *Why was it not beneficial to you, do you have any regrets? Can you elaborate more?*

5. Has your peer helped you reflect on your practice?

- *When did he/she help you to reflect on your teaching? What is it immediately after observation or after a week? Can you elaborate on that?*

6. Did you share ideas with your peers?

- *Can you explain further, you share ideas with your peers? Do you share ideas with peers during the organized meetings or only members who teach the same subject?*

I have realized that participants at times responded more than they intended to respond and later regret having done so. Example, in answering probing question 1, one participant said, *"We do not do IQMS in classes, we just complete IQMS summative evaluation forms only.*

At the end of each interview meeting I summarised the meeting, providing interviewees a chance to comment on anything related to the interview. I thanked the interviewees for their participation and I promised to make available to them a digital version of the study's final results.

4.7.3 *Demographic characteristics of participants*

Table 4.7.3.1. Distribution of participants by gender

Gender	**Total number**
Male	**0**
Female	**15**
Total	**15**

All the participants were females as both schools are primary schools and it is very rare to get a male teacher in a primary school.

Table 4.7.3.2. Distribution by highest professional qualifications and their positions

Educator	Highest Professional Qualifications	Position
A	Bed	Educator
B	JPTD + ACE	Educator
C	Bed	Educator
D	Bed	Educator
E	Bed	Educator
F	Bed	Educator
G	Bed	Educator
H	Bed	Educator
I	Bed	Educator
J	HED	Educator
K	Bed	Educator
L	Bed	Educator
M	Bed	Educator
N	Bed	Educator
O	Bed	Educator

The table shows that one educator has a Junior Primary Teacher's Diploma and an Advanced Certificate in Education; one has a Higher Education Diploma and thirteen have Bachelor of Education. All educators are in the first level of educators' positions.

Table 4.7.3.3. Distribution of participants by teaching experience

Educator	**Teaching experience**
A	10 years and above
B	10 years and above
C	Less than 10 years
D	10 years and above
E	10 years and above
F	10 years and above
G	10 years and above
H	Less than 10 years
I	Less than 10 years
J	Ten years and above
K	Less than 10 years
L	Ten years and above
M	Ten years and above
N	Ten years and above
O	Less than 10 years

The table shows that ten out of fifteen participants have been teaching for ten years and above; and five for less than ten years.

Table 4.7.3.4. Explanation of codes

Educator	**Position**
A	**Educator in school A**
B	**Educator in school A**
C	**Educator in school A**
D	**Educator in school A**
E	**Educator in school A**
F	**Educator in school A**
G	**Educator in school A**
H	**Educator in school B**
I	**Educator in school B**
J	**Educator in school B**
K	**Educator in school B**
L	**Educator in school B**
M	**Educator in school B**
N	**Educator in school B**
O	**Educator in school B**

School A refers to one primary school in Dzindi Circuit of the Vhembe district and school B refers to another primary school in Dzindi Circuit of the Vhembe district.

4.7.4 Documents Retrieval

Documents are public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain from the sites or participants in a study. These records may include minutes, personal journals, and letters (Creswell, 2002). The documents requested from the sites in this study were the IQMS year

programmes, shared SMT and SDT minutes, School Improvement Plans (SIPs), and summaries of summative scores. The motive behind perusing these documents was to discover the educator's experience and perception of peer observation component of IQMS. From the two selected primary school, it was difficult for me to verify as to whether peer observation component of IQMS was indeed conducted with the purpose of developing teachers. Of the two schools selected only one was able to produce minutes of School Development Team (SDT) meetings, even though they were not in line with the relevant policy document, there was no IQMS time table or any IQMS management plan for the year. The other school decline to divulge documents regarding the implementation of peer observation component of IQMS citing the confidentiality nature of the documents.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

I analysed the data using thematic content analysis. In the case of thematic content analysis, the researcher identified common themes which emerged out of the data. Firstly, as the interviews were tape-recorded, the researcher gave attention to the recorded voices and and put them into written form. Then the data was coded and put into categories. The common themes and patterns that emerged out of the data were arranged into texts and summaries. The respondents' responses were compared with each other and the results were presented in the form of themes. In this study, I analysed data under the following themes, namely:-

- Educators' experiences of the peer observation component of the IQMS.
- How peer observation is conducted in the visited schools.
- Educators' preparation for the peer observation component of the IQMS.
- Impact of the peer observation component of the IQMS on collegiality.
- The peer observation component of the IQMS as professional development tool.

These topics were to a greater extent divided into sub-themes which were discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The documents were analysed by the *content analysis method*. The term 'content analysis' is defined as "the process of summarising and reporting written data – the main contents of data and their messages" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Krippendorp (2004) define content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use." I read the contents of the IQMS year plans, minutes of the SMT and SDT, School Improvement Plans, and summaries of summative scores. The purpose of perusing these documents was to draw inferences on the educator's experience and perception of peer observation component of IQMS.

I find analyzing and interpreting this qualitative interview much more time consuming. Qualitative interviews and transcripts has produced an extensive bulk of material which was to be condensed, categorized, interpreted and made meaningful, it eventually came to be one of the most expensive and laborious aspects of the study.

4.9 CREDIBILITY AND BIAS

Credibility refers to the "demonstration that it is possible to sustain data an explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides" (Schwandt, 2001). The data is credible if it is trustworthy and the results can be verified. Member-checking which is used to verify data accounts refers to "a process where the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account" (Creswell, 2002). The transcripts of the interviews were taken back to the participants for their comments to determine their accuracy. The participants added credibility to this study by reacting to the data and the final report.

Triangulation was used in this study, taking into account that it "is a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research" (Campbell & Fiske, 1959, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Cohen *et al.*, (2007) describe different types of triangulation; the type applicable to this study is methodological triangulation, which is defined as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour" (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In this study triangulation was achieved by conducting interviews and by analysing school records and document study dealing with the IQMS. Ten experienced educators (ten year and above teaching experience) and

inexperienced educators (less than ten years teaching experience) from two primary schools were interviewed to ensure that the data collected from the interviews was valid and reliable. I further took transcripts and examined findings back to some of the interviewees, and ask them if this is the intended meaning. I did that in order to establish validity of this study.

4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All ethical measures were considered throughout this study; these were the philosophical principles guiding the study from the beginning. (Wassenaar as cited in Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter, 2006).

4.10.1. Permission to study

A research proposal was submitted to the relevant university Research and Ethics Committee before embarking on this study in order to obtain approval with the help of the researcher's supervisor.

4.10.2. Ethical clearance

I sought permission to carry out the study from the following bodies:

- The Limpopo Department of Education.
- Principals from two selected schools.

All the above-mentioned bodies were assured that the position of the researcher as an educator would not influence the study.

4.10.3. Informed consent and voluntary participation -

The following standard components of consent as stated by Wassenaar and as cited in Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) were adhered to:

- Provisions of appropriate information,
- Participants' competence and understanding,

- Voluntariness in participating and freedom to decline or withdraw after the study has started, and
- Formalisation of the consent, usually in writing.

The above components were maintained using the following procedure: There was a short briefing with the participants which explained the purpose of the study, thereby providing the prospective participants with understandable, comprehensive and accurate information regarding the study as well as its design, together with pledge of the non-compulsory nature of involvement, and the right to decline or bow out without any punishment. After these deliberations, consent was sought from them to proceed with the processes of the study; the consent form was issued for them to sign after it was discussed with them. They all agreed to sign the consent forms.

4.10.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), say, "The obligation to protect the anonymity of research participants and to keep research data confidential is all-inclusive. It should be fulfilled at all costs." Therefore, during this study all reasonable steps to maintain anonymity and confidentiality were set about. Participants were given assurance that the information that they provided would in no way reveal their identity and the participants' privacy would be guaranteed through-out the study.

The second way of protecting their right to privacy was through the promise of confidentiality, i.e. I assured them that I would not connect the information provided to any particular participant (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). In order to guarantee the participants that their responses would be anonymous and confidential, first, the principal was told that the school's name would not be published to any party. Secondly, the participants were told about their confidentiality and anonymity. They were convinced that they would be free from any harm during the course of the research and they would be free to withdraw at any time if they felt that they were not secure. I pledged that I would not reveal any names and the responses to anybody (Leedy and Ormord, 2005). I maintained those principles up to the end of the study.

4.10.5 Autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons

This deals with the safekeeping of individual and institutional confidentiality which is also a crucial operational articulation of this proposition. In attaining this, the principal of the school and the participants were assured in a meeting that the proceedings of the data collection would be strictly confidential. The name of the school and the participants would not be disclosed to anybody except the supervisor of the interviewer. The arrangements for holding interviews were kept between the interviewee and interviewer and no third person was involved.

4.10.6 Non-maleficence

This proposition adds to the proposition of autonomy and makes it necessary that the researcher ensures that research participants are not harmed as a consequence of the study. Participants were assured in the meeting and just before the start of interviewees that their responses were only to further the study; they did not have any other purpose that could lead to any harm.

4.10.7 Beneficence

It requires the researcher to strive to maximise the advantages that the study will provide to the participants in the research study but it should be noted that the payment of research participants is not considered a benefit. In this study there was no kind of payment made to and from both parties. Participants agreed to help without receiving any incentives.

4.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with the methodology that was followed when doing this study. It indicated the design and the reasons for its selection. The data collection techniques were discussed. It also showed how the study would maintain and observe the ethical issues. The next chapter, Chapter 5, focuses on the analysis of the data and the presentation of findings.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 presented the research design and methodology used for this study. Chapter 5 describes the analysis of the data collected from the interviews. Data was analysed under five themes that emerged during data collection process.

5.2 THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE COLLECTED DATA

The following themes were identified once the collected data had been carefully analysed:

- Educators' experiences of the peer observation component of the IQMS.
- How peer observation is conducted in the visited schools.
- The impact of the peer observation component of the IQMS on collegiality.
- The peer observation component of the IQMS as a professional development tool.

5.2.1 Theme 1: Educators' Experiences of the Peer Observation Component of the IQMS

The theme of educators' experiences of peer observation consists of three sub-themes, namely: the benefits of peer observation for the observer; the benefits of peer observation for the educator who is being observed; and the challenges faced by educators during the peer observation component of the IQMS.

5.2.1.1 Benefits of the peer observation component of IQMS for the observed educator

Participants were asked about the benefits of the peer observation component of the IQMS for the observed educators. According to the data collected from participants, the peer observation component of the IQMS does have benefits for the observed educator. Four of the fifteen participants felt that the peer observation component of the IQMS was beneficial,

especially when it came to feedback that observed educators received both on their teaching as well as on the manner in which learners responded to the way in which they teach. The following quotes from the feedback given by participants illustrate how peer observation is beneficial for the observed educators:

> *For me peer review of my teaching is an invaluable and constructive way of ascertaining the extent to which I am achieving my stated aims. The feedback from observers enables me to identify areas that require further thought and also highlights existing good practices that ultimately benefit the students* (Participant N).

Other participants added:

> *Being observed encourages me to reflect on my teaching approach and classroom management at all stages of the lesson – prior, during and after the observation. As teachers, we owe it to our students to ensure that we not only possess relevant subject specific qualifications or knowledge, but that, in practice, our teaching approach is suitable to the context.*(Participant J).

> *I can now plan my lesson well, my lesson presentation has changed for the better* (Participant K).

It is worthwhile noting that not only inexperienced educators see the issue of giving and receiving feedback as an important benefit of the peer observation component of the IQMS; experienced teachers commented on the importance of obtaining feedback from a peerwhich is reflected in the following quotes from responses given by Participants C,L and E:

> *I think it was…important in terms of the content, somebody to observe how you present the content to the students. I'm an accountant and I have more than 10 year experience in accounting behind me. So sometimes I was worried whether I'm using terminology that the students would understand, given that I was teaching them something like ABC in accounting to me. And having someone observing me, observing my lesson, was good in terms of telling me whether the*

terminology that I was using was really understandable by the students (Participant C).

I did not realise that I was asking and answering all my questions until the observer showed me his narrative account of what he had seen in my class. I wanted to get on with my lesson and get them writing. Now I think my students just waited each time I asked questions because they realised that I would eventually answer these same questions for them. I was in fact spoon feeding them too much. Now, thinking about this I realise that I frequently do this in my Language classes. I think this is not helping my students. After this class and discussion with the observer I realised the power of having another pair of eyes in the room to help me "see" better. I should also say that the observer was a trusted friend and helped me a lot too. (Participant L).

I have always found peer observation of teaching invaluable. I have learned a lot from watching other colleagues teaching. Consequently, I am able to be a better teacher with improved style of teaching and classroom practice. Likewise, others who had observed my teaching had commented how this experience had helped them. I have been teaching for 28 years and I find each peer observation adding to my teaching skills (Participant E).

Data collected from the participants also revealed that peer observation is exciting and rewarding as it enables educators to reflect on the effectiveness of their own teaching and identify developmental needs which further improve the quality of learning and teaching. This is shown in the quotes from the responses of Participants N, F and M, given below:

There is always excitement tinged with nervousness about being observed, just as there is with any performance, but I have always found it reinvigorating especially when observers seem to want to learn more about what I was teaching (as well as tell me about how). I try to ask more questions than I make statements (Participant N).

> *The reward for me is the discovery of new approaches and constructive feedback on what I think I am doing. We think we are self-aware but you can't replace the reality of other people's observation. What a learning experience*(Participant F).

> *It gives me an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of my own teaching and identify areas that need to be developed thereby improving the quality of learning and teaching (*Participant M).

5.2.1.2 Benefits of the peer observation component of IQMS for the observer

Participants were asked about the advantages of peer the observation component of the IQMS for the observer educators. Data collected suggests that it is not just those who are observed and receive feedback that gain from the experience and develop or change their teaching practice,but also those who observe. Participants cited the considerable benefits of theopportunity to sit in on the classes of others as an observer and observe what happens. They said that as observers they witnessed colleagues doing things that they could imitate. Even very experienced participants agreed that they continued to learn new things that they could take and apply to their own teaching. Participant H confirmed this in the following statement:

> *I would say that I learned some of my best 'moves' in the classroom from peer observation. I learned that the physical presence has a role to play in directing, guiding, and enthusing students. By watching a much more experienced teacher, I realised that by not standing or sitting at the front, but by moving around, sitting among the students, or even speaking from the back of the room, the students seem more attentive and more inclined to ask questions*(Participant H).

Participants further agreed that an observer has an opportunity to see other ways of teaching**.** They believe that the more you observe, the better; in a limited circle of colleagues teachers might only witness a restricted range of methods to assisting learners with their learning, but if that circle was broadened, the chances of experiencing different approaches increase - some of which may be well worth putting to the test. According to Participant N:

> *The great thing about observing other people's teaching is how much you learn and how much good practice one can pick up. Some of my best teaching techniques have been 'plagiarised' through watching other people!* (Participant N).

Participant D admitted:

> *I did not know how to use some of the teaching aids available, now I can use the data projector with easy, and it makes learning very easy.*(Participant D).

The data collected suggests that by providing reviews to colleagues on their teaching helps observers become more responsive to feedback on their own teaching. If something goes exceptionally well, observer educators ensure that the observed teachers know it was satisfactory so that they can build on their successes and repeat them. If something has not been successful, observers will want to help the observed teachers find ways of making it work better the next time. In either case, observers will find ways of how best to support their colleagues whose teaching they observed. This approach and attitude pays dividends when it is the observers who need be receptive to their feedback on their own lessons. Participant N commented:

> *As an observer, my feedback drew attention to important but easily missed aspects of the learning process such as giving enough time to exercises, the 'energy' of the group and to processing feedback*(Participant N).

The data collected also suggests that observers could learn a great deal about fields different from their own. It is believe that observing individuals teach subjects tangential or totally unalike one's own broadens your comprehension of a variety of issues. As Participants F and K put it:

> *I find observing an enjoyable experience. I learn new knowledge especially when the subject is not in a familiar area. The added bonus is that I can pick up useful tips to use in my own lessons!* (Participant F).

I can now teach genetic topic after observing my peer presenting it in that manner. It was a very difficult topic for me to teach. (Participant K).

5.2.1.3 Challenges faced by educators during the peer observation component of the IQMS

Although peer observation is an essential component of the IQMS, the collected data highlighted various challenges in the peer observation component of the IQMS. Some participants showed a lack of enthusiasm for peer observation component of IQMS and others reported being anxious or worried about upsetting their observed colleagues when giving feedback. This is reflected in the following response from Participant A:

I was a bit nervous,...so I tried to make sure that, well you know the way it's hard if there were any negative feedback, but eh, it's not meant to be negative, it's meant to be constructive, but you still don't know...(Participant A).

There were mixed opinions on who participants considered to bea peer. Some felt that it should be someone who is on your post level; for example, a Post Level 1 should observe a Post Level 1 educator as this would eliminate the issue of a power imbalance. As Participant A commented:

I think there is a lot to be said for senior educators, HODs being assessed by senior educators, Deputy Principals... there's no power thing there...you're all assessed by your equal(Participant A).

Participant B added:

There may be a problem if there is a strong hierarchical standing"(Participant B).

For some participants difference in seniority was an issue. However, most participants agreed that they needed to be comfortable with the person observing, suggesting that the relationship between observer and observee must be one of mutual respect. Two participants said:

The person I was observing was very much more senior to me...but the interactions we had were not very good…(Participant B).

I got on very well with the other person and I think that was good"(Participant C).

Perhaps one of the most widely reported concerns from the participants who engaged in the peer observation of teaching component of the IQMS was the issue of ownership and confidentiality. Participant G said:

> *Having a colleague present in my classroom and making observations regarding my teaching can in some cases makes me feel very vulnerable, anxious or stressed. Who will see the information? What will the information be used for? Who owns the information?*(Participant G).

An element of trust and credibility was another concern raised by participants. They maintained that the observer-observee relationship should be based on mutual trust and respect, illustrated by the following quote:

I would rather be observed by my friend whom I trust, who respects me.I do not need an observer who is imposed upon me.It is better to choose my own "critical friend" who is an expert in my subject (Participant C).

Professional autonomy is highly valued amongst teachers. The participants felt that the peer observation component of the IQMS undermined educators' competency. Some criticism of process was that it could undermine educators and that educators may find peer observation intrusive and a challenge to their professional freedom. They were adamant that they had been trained as professionals, but peer observation did not permit teachers to realise their professionalism. Participant A commented:

> *This evaluation undermines my capacity as an educator. I feel demoralized, discouraged and humiliated as the system tends to cast a slur on all educators* (Participant A).

Most of the participants agreed that the peer observation component of the IQMS was a positive experience but at the same time they complained that it was time consuming. Examples of responses from two participants are:

> *The peer observations were a very worthwhile exercise, especially when you receive positive feedback. Again a lot of time required to prepare these sessions and do up paperwork. They also happen at a very busy time of year* (Participant G).

> *They required lots of preparation and were time-consuming* (Participant K).

Participants also complained about inadequate time received for training and giving support in areas of practice that were identified for development as an outcome of the peer observation process. They felt that they were not properly trained to provide support and to give feedback to the observed educator. According to Participant J:

> *There needs to be some training and support provided for the areas that you identify. I found myself my own best critic. The feedback from my peers was all positive and so I found it hard to learn anything from them* (Participant J).

Ten of the fifteen participants were concerned about the lack of resources at their respective schools, starting with the lack of classrooms and science laboratories to teach science as well as furniture. Participant D said:

> *Even though our resources are not at all bad, but we still need extra classrooms that can be supplied with science equipment as learners and educators cannot perform experiments at the moment* (Participant D).

5.2.2 Theme 2: How Peer Observation is Conducted in the Visited Schools

All participants acknowledged that before peer observation was conducted they first had to complete self-evaluations forms and review their strengths and areas that may require more development. Ten participants said that they completed the self-evaluation forms only in order to comply with regulations. Five participants said that they did not see the necessity to complete self-evaluation forms. Examples of responses include the following:

> *Completion of self-evaluation forms is not necessary; those forms are not even considered because educators just give themselves high scores that will be changed back by the DSG after evaluation.* (Participant M).

> *I did not complete the self-evaluation forms because I did not know how to complete them. I was not workshopped or trained to complete them. What I did was just to photocopy self-evaluation forms from the previous year without understanding* (Participant L).

Six of the fifteen participants maintained that their DSGs were unable to guide or assist them on how to complete the self-evaluation forms. One participant said:

> *They lack information, skills and knowledge on how to implement IQMS* (Participant E).

Participants F and G added:

> *They were not trained; time given for the training was not enough. They (the facilitators) were rushing it saying time is not on their side* [but] *this thing* [IQMS] *needed to be implemented. That is why DSGs are ill informed about IQMS* (Participant F).

> *The head of the department did not attend the workshop, only educators from our department participated in the training programmes with the result that the heads of*

department do not have the competencies to support or control what they do not know. I do not trust and more confidence in what they do (Participant G).

Five participants admitted that they were given an opportunity to select and identify their own DSG. Eight participants confirmed that the school management team and the appraisees agreed on who they thought would be relevant to do the appraisals. Two participants maintained that they were not given an opportunity to choose their peer who would assist in giving guidance and support. Examples of responses are:

I chose my peer checking his subject expertise and experience (Participant A).

To me my choice was obvious, my friend and my only available senior were there to form my DSG (Participant B).

All DSG members were imposed upon me due to unavailability of enough educators to choose from.(Participant G).

According to some participants, many educators do not deserve the ratings they receive during the implementation of the peer observation part of the QMS. They argue that the criteria for selecting the DSGs in schools result in subjective ratings. They mentioned that teachers select their friends in the DSGs to help one another secure a salary progression. Participants believed that educators do not select observers who are capable of assisting them with their professional development. Participant B argued that:

They choose their "friends" and they take the HOD, the one that they are involved with as friends or the weaker one. Then, when they sit down, they see to it that they get good marks … (Participant B).

Ten participants were of the opinion that some immediate seniors lacked subject knowledge or experience of the subject because they were the only available subject head at school. They felt that the same applied to peers; some did not have anyknowledge of the subject and they became peers just for the sake of forming a DSG.This led to a situation where the DSG was composed of members without knowledge of the learning area and accounted for why

most DSGs were incompetent in implementing the IQMS. Participants C and F commented as follows:

> *I realised that the Development Support Groups (DSGs) were not competent to provide the required support and mentoring due to lack of knowledge of the subject.* (Participant C).
>
> *Educators favour each other. No educator is rated as a weak educator* (Participant F).

All participants agreed that observation takes place in three stages, namely: pre-observation, observation and post–observation. At the pre-observation stage the observed must already have compiled a portfolio which must, together with a personal details form, be handed to the appraisal panel (DSG). Eight participants commented that before the actual observation takes place the observer and the observed have an opportunity to sit together in a pre-observation meeting. This is supported by the following statement by Participant M:

> *The key thing is making sure that you have a pre-meeting with the colleague you are going to observe. We make sure it is not too long before the session takes place. This helps to relieve our pre observation nerves, clarifies a shared view of our perceived expectations of the sessions and allows the observed person to ask you to 'watch out' for any particular areas they would like some extra specific feedback on*(Participant M).

However, this is not always the case. Participants see it is a stage where the observer and the observed meet before actual observation in order to get a fuller understanding of the session to be observed. Seven participants said that these pre-observation meetings seldom took place at their schools. This observation is reflected in the following comment by Participant K:

> *We do not even get an opportunity to explain the aims of the teaching session and give any contextual information that will help the observer to appreciate what he/she sees. An observer is not given any opportunity to become aware of any areas where feedback would be particularly helpful.* (Participant K).

Participant F made the following suggestion about becoming an observer:

> *At the pre-meeting discussion get to know your colleague, find out more about the session to be observed: the context, the time, place, and nature of the session, find out from your colleague what the students concerned are intended to be getting out of this particular session and most important find out from your colleague what he or she particularly wants you to do during the session, and what feedback would be most appreciated* (Participant F).

Ten participants confirmed that they get much more out of observing others teaching than from being observed themselves. They believed that as an observer they have to prepare and that when preparing to be an observer, it was useful to set up the observation so that it was possible to obtain information about the class being taught as well as the context of the particular session. According to Participant B:

> *The most important thing to remember as an observer is that your primary aim should be to give your colleague feedback on what he or she wishes, rather than provide a "lecture" on how you yourself would have approached teaching the same lesson with the students who were present. It's only too easy to fall into "I would have done it like this…" when what's most important is how it actually worked: what went well, what went less well* (Participant B).

Twelve participants agreed that post-observation was a very important stage of peer observation. They maintained that these meetings took place at their schools in order to allow the observed educator to obtain feedback from the observer; to receive the observer notes which are stored for the educator's own information and use; and to allow the observed educator to explain any things that need elaboration to the observer. Participant K commented on the post-observation stage by saying:

> *Make sure you have a debrief as soon as possible after the session and get the observed colleague to do most of the talking. If they wait for you to give them a 'ruling' on how 'good' the session was, take the initiative and say 'How did you think that went? What were the best bits about it?* (Participant K).

Participant O further explained:

> *Reflection before this meeting and the discussion about what happened in the classroom is when real learning for both the teacher and the observer occurs. Teachers should treat each other with respect and offer opinions in a kind and constructive way. Both teachers should walk away feeling like they have learned something new and will be better teachers because of it* (Participant O).

There was a view that the IQMS was unproductive and was considered a futile activity as being observed in a single day cannot enable an educator to develop in an effective manner. Some participants experienced the implementation of the peer observation part of the IQMS as an event in schools that served the purpose of baseline and summative evaluation. They were of the opinion that educators were evaluated when scores were required by the provincial department for salary progression; all educators who have been evaluated qualify for 1% pay salary progression.

Participant A said:

> *The evaluation of educators once per year cannot be termed 'quality teaching'; instead it promotes 'window dressing'. Educators, including underperforming educators prepare themselves thoroughly on the day of evaluation and rise to the expectation of the day to impress their DSGs* (Participant A).

5.2.3 Theme 3: Impact of the Peer Observation Component of the IQMS on Collegiality

Participants indicated that peer observation changes the way teachers speak; they become purposeful; they start engaging in the common preparation of instructional plans and materials; and the teachers, rather than outside experts, start teaching others. They further indicated that this happens when peer observation is non-evaluative. Participant K commented:

> *Peer observation means having opportunities to share instructional knowledge and experience with each other* (Participant K).

Many teachers indicated that on the limited number of occasions when they could be with other teachers in their schools, they sometimes merely became involved in "gripe sessions." According to the participants, peer observation prevents this kind of negativism that does*not* characterize good collegiality; in fact, they said that they avoided spending time with colleagues who complained a lot, believing that chronic complaining among teachers was destructive. Participant N commented:

> *I get frustrated by teachers becoming negative. If there's just nagging and whining [when teachers get together], I'll find something else to do* (Participant N).

Although many participants suggested that it was not uncommon for talk among teachers to be "gripe sessions", the peer observation part of the IQMS promotes interaction among teachers that is characterized by friendliness, support and positive dialogue which encourages academic engagement that contributes to higher teacher professional commitment. Participant K shared the following:

> *Colleagues! I now want to form a group with positive minded people want to make positive changes, positive contributions to our school.* (Participant K).

It was the participants' view that an important characteristic of good peer observation was the sharing between teachers of professional knowledge and ideas. Of the fifteen participants, seven used the word "sharing" in their responses. Indeed, Participant F said: *To me, peer observation is sharing ideas.* Thus, these teachers believe they have something to offer their colleagues and that their colleagues have something to offer them; they are eager to share with, and learn from, others which influence the intrinsic motivation and career dedication of educators and the degree to which they are inclined to amend their classroom practice. Participant A maintained:

> *We work together, plan lessons together and we select instructional methods together. It makes me enjoy my work* (Participant A).

Some suggested that the peer observation process builds collegiality in terms of discussing and sharing teaching practice as it provides a platform for engaging in dialogue related to pedagogy:

> *It would lead to conversations around teaching* (Participant C).

> *We had a broad ranging conversation which I thought was a good thing...talk about big picture stuff...it was a constructive conversation between two professionals*(Participant D).

Some participants were of the opinion that peer observation contradicts the structure of schools that work against collegiality. They said that where teachers work in classrooms isolated from colleagues, the daily schedule allowed little time for flexibility and that there was not much organizational support in most schools to encourage collaboration. They said that it was through peer observation that teachers obtained an opportunity to be together and to interact because they saw each other as primary and important sources of ideas and teaching. Participant B commented:

> *Staff development activities involving teachers teaching teachers, like peer observation, significantly enhances teachers' attitudes and beliefs about teaching. We need a forum to brainstorm about how to present content and information; we need to hear other teachers' ideas about instructional plans or techniques that worked, as well as those that did not work* (Participant B).

Other participants said that peer observation gave them an opportunity to collaborate within their departments or across the grade levels that they taught; they supported interaction with colleagues in other departments as it would spark creativity and expose them to new ideas. Participant L commented:

> *The interdisciplinary approach in schools would be "a device for breaking down isolation" as well as "facilitating the sharing of knowledge among teachers"*(Participant L).

Participant N suggested that good peer observation sessions would involve constructive problem solving and another teacher, Participant E, maintained that *instead of [focusing on] what's wrong, I want to know how to fix it.*

In the teachers' views voluntary rather than mandatory peer observation created collegiality. Participant C observed: *I'll bet if someone said we have to meet, it wouldn't be well-received* but Participant A commented that she believed all teachers in a school should participate in meetings set up to share ideas and added that such meetings should only include people who want to be there.

Peer observation requires administrative support. Teachers expressed a desire for their administrators to support the realization of greater collegial contact and wanted to feel that they had the trust of administrators. For example, Participant G commented: *We have to get the administration to trust us to talk business.* The participants said that administrative support could take many forms, including making time available for teachers to work together. Participant E commented:

> *Opportunities for collegial exchange must be structured into the organization through district and school policy and organizational norms.*

5.2.4 Theme 4: The Peer Observation Component of the IQMS as Professional Development

Historically, South African educational staff members' development activities have been dominated by input from inspectors from the district offices and subject advisory services. The activities took a judgmental approach; inspectors came to schools with the assumption that educators' performance needed to be judged. In terms of the judgmental approach, there was a tendency to concentrate on discovering teachers' flaws; to be critical in written reports; and reluctance to appreciate the productive activities of educators. The judgmental approach did not take those being judged into account and teachers saw this approach as equivalent to "policing educators' performance."

Many of the interviewed participants had had some experience of judgmental developmental appraisals as a form of professional development as well as with the peer observation component of the IQMS. Most of the participants challenged the usefulness of the judgmental developmental appraisal - the school district's mandated evaluation process - in which they all participated. All of them expressed their concern about the uselessness of this form of appraisal. As Participant F explained:

> *It is kind of silly…You obviously put your best lesson forward…it kind of turns into a show that may not be how you operate everyday…you are putting your best shoes on to impress the bosses observing you because your job depends on it*(Participant F).

Participant G added:

> *They do not even see you as a teacher. They treated me as an object.*

All participants argued that school district mandated evaluations did not improve their teaching. Participant J said:

> *They just completed their own evaluation tool, left the class even before the lesson ended. No feedback was given, No copy of evaluation report was given to you.*

It was suggested that the peer observation component of the IQMS was more beneficial when compared to judgmental developmental appraisal as it takes into consideration the views of the teacher who is observed in the pre-observation discussion, the observation stage and the post-evaluation discussion. The participants' comments included the following:

> *Discussing ideas and techniques of teaching before observation with peers was so important.* (Participant M).

> *It was great to get some affirmative feedback and to at least know that I am on the right track.* (Participant O).

> *You can learn a lot from everyone…I feel more comfortable talking to teachers other than my boss.* (Participant O).

Participants in this research insisted that the peer observation part of the IQMS enabled teachers to freely volunteer to be observed at any time when they felt the need of assistance in teaching something where they need help. For example, one participant said:

> *I was unable to teach comprehension paragraph, I asked my peer to observe me while teaching so that he can assist me on how to teach it effectively.* (Participant O).

Peer observation enables teachers to participate in a dialogue concerning the curriculum**.** Through relationships that are developed, teachers begin to talk about the curriculum – as illustrated by the following quote:

> *I am bringing up more curriculum items at my department meetings because I have more to share since I have been visiting classrooms* (Participant E).

Peer observation gives teachers the opportunity to encounter new teaching ideas. Participants said that they learned from observing their peers. For example, Participant M said that in peer observation *you can get new ideas; get confirmation that you are on track with grade level material or pacing* and continued by adding the following:

> *I found so many new learning techniques that I could apply to my classroom…I would not have even thought about any of these things before if I didn't't observe. I also saw new strategies that I am going to try to implement in my teaching. It gave me great insight/ideas for new strategies and techniques to try, particularly around the rate and flow of my lessons and motivating underperforming students...* (Participant M).

It seems that unlike other professional development activities, peer observation enables teachers to increase their content knowledge and gain new classroom management techniques. This is reflected in the following quotations:

I saw new ways to teach particular topics in Mathematics (Participant G).

It was great! I found two new ways to present map skills (Participant K).

[Speaking about classroom arrangement] *…made a significant change on how the students are engaged in my classroom* (Participant O).

[Observations helped to]…target my teaching in regards to classroom management and relationships with my students (Participant E).

Although peer observation is, apparently, considered to be more beneficial than other forms of professional development activities, it has its own challenges. Participants were of the opinion that peer observation still felt like evaluation. One participant spoke about being intimated when observations were conducted in her classroom. She said:

I know that the teacher is there to learn for herself, but I just can't help think about what is being about my teaching. It is always on my mind(Participant L).

5.3 ANALYSISOFDOCUMENTSSTUDIEDDURINGDATACOLLECTION

The researcher analysed the minutes of staff and school management meetings. She requested minute books and records of matters related to the peer observation component of the IQMS and professional development and the following points emerged:

- Of the two schools selected only one was able to produce the minutes of the School Development Team (SDT) meetings and those were not in line with the relevant policy.
- Records of reports and meetings of staff and school management teams from the two schools were not available.
- The educators who attended workshops relating to the IQMS did not submit written reports to their principals, heads of departments or their colleagues.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The data analysis for this study showed that the peer observation component of the IQMS is beneficial to educators, both the observed and the observing educators. In terms of the views expressed by the participants, the peer observation component of the IQMS enables the observed educators to receive feedback in all aspects of their teaching practice, including classroom management, lesson preparation and the various teaching strategies or methods they use to present content - irrespective of how experienced they might be. By means of feedback the peer observation component of the IQMS provides the observed educators with an opportunity to receive support and to share mutual and collective experiences with others. Apart from the constructive feedback that educators receive, peer observation is exciting and rewarding as it enables educators to reflect on the productiveness of their individual teaching and to recognize their developmental requirements which further enhance the standard of teaching and learning.

The observer educators are able to emulate others' teaching styles; it is possible for them to learn something new that they can take and apply to their own teaching. Observers witness different approaches that they might not otherwise have known about which increases their confidence in teaching.

The data analysis revealed the following challenges associated with the peer observation component of the IQMS: lack of proper training and skills in giving feedback by observers; choice of peers to assist during the evaluation process; and participant discomfort at being observed by their seniors -they preferred to be observed by peers of their own choice to eliminate the issue of power imbalances. The ownership and confidentiality of information gathered during peer observation is also seen as a challenge. Participants insisted that the information gathered should be kept confidential between the observer and the observee where there should be mutual trust and respect and an observer should not be forced on the observed educator. To avoid undermining educator's professional autonomy and freedom, the data suggested that peer observation should be well managed otherwise it tends to be intrusive on educators' professional autonomy and freedom. The lack of sufficient time to train educators in giving feedback was also raised as a challenge by participants.

The collected data suggested that proper IQMS implementing structures are in place, i.e., SDT and DSGs; however, it seems that some members are included in the DSG only in order to comply with policy, like members who do not have the necessary subject knowledge and experience. According to the data, in some schools DSGs lack knowledge and skills to assist and guide educators as they are not properly trained to implement the IQMS.

It was revealed that educators are given an opportunity to select their peers but that this process leads to the subjective rating of scores as a result of favouritism because educators choose their friends without considering their expertise in the subject and their background. In smaller schools peers and DSGs are imposed on educators or negotiated from other schools.

It seems that all necessary procedures to implement the peer observation component of the IQMS are followed; for example, the completion of self-evaluation forms and pre-moderation and post-moderation discussions which educators believe are helpful. Participants are of the opinion that the peer observation component of the IQMS is a powerful tool to develop educators and it should be implemented throughout the year; it should not be a one day event - as currently practised.

The collected data revealed that the peer observation component of the IQMS has an impact on collegiality. It suggested that peer observation builds collegiality in terms of discussion and sharing teaching practice; the peer observation process provides a platform for engaging in dialogue around pedagogy. It was revealed that through peer observation teachers have an opportunity to be together and interact; they see each other as primary and important sources of ideas for teaching. It also enables teachers to indulge in dialogue concerning the curriculum; thereby, developing them professionally.

The next chapter, Chapter 6, discusses of findings of the research.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 discussed the findings of the research based on the data gathered from participants to determine how educators experience the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). To guide this study and its data collection five sub-questions were developed:

- How do educators choose their peers?
- What perceptions do educators have regarding the influence of peer observation on their development?
- What benefits does peer observation yield?
- What difficulties are faced by educators during peer observation?
- To what extent does peer observation enhance or impede collegiality?

6.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter attempts to provide answers to the research sub-questions based on the results of the data analysis, outlined in Chapter 5.

6.2.1 How Do Educators Choose Their Peers?

This research sub-question was asked to obtain the views of the participants of who was responsible for choosing peers to assist during peer observation; to learn whether or not the educators choose their peers; and what the characteristics are of who they consider to be their peers.

The study findings revealed that educators are given an opportunity to choose their own peers and their immediate seniors for support and guidance in the Development Support Group (DSG); some participants argued that this leads to favouritism and nepotism which results in the incompetency of DSGs to properly implement peer observation as well as the subjective allocation of scores for them to receive a 1% pay progression. In some schools

observers are 'negotiated'whereby the school management team and the observee agree on who they think will be appropriate to observe the observee educator. It is possible that management and the observee negotiate the choice of an outside observer from a nearby school. In schools where there are only a few educators, it seems that DSGs are imposed on educators because there are only a limited number of educators to choose from. In this case, peer observation is a futile exercise as some seniors may not have the necessary skills and knowledge of subjects taught by the observee; peers and immediate senior educators who lack a knowledge of the subject cannot give support, guidance and feedback to the observed educators. Wragg, Wikeley, Wragg (1996) assert that appraisers should have a good level of expertise and comprehension of the context, especially of the subject and age group within which the appraise educator works. The Wragg *et al.*, (1996) assertion is in line with the Integrated Quality Management System, DoE policy (2003) which stipulates that the Development Support Group (DSG) that serves as an appraisal panel for each educator should be selected in terms of the relevant phase, learning field and subject knowledge which is very important for the enhancement of the appraisal process.

Shortland (2004) suggests that the relationship between the observer and observee must be one of mutual respect. POT is largely carried out by peers, often from the same discipline but with little training in educational pedagogy. Therefore, although observers may be content experts, their observations and feedback on a peer's teaching may not be highly regarded by their peers if the elements of trust and credibility are absent (Blackmore, 2005; Shortland, 2004). Bell and Cooper (2013) regard the observer as being a critical friend where feedback is given 'as dialogue and not judgment', thus removing the notion of the observer as an expert. Generally, the participants felt that they should not be observed or appraised by their seniors; they prefer to be observed or appraised by educators who are on the same post level as themselves. It seems that their reason is to eliminate the issue of power imbalances. The issue of comfort with the observer was emphasized which confirms the findings of Wragg *et al.* (1996) that the appraiser-appraisee relationship is pivotal to the success of the appraisal process - as indicated by the educators who were sampled in the study. According to the findings of this study, some educators prefer to choose their own appraisers to avoid being appraised by someone with whom they have a personality clash, or for whom they do not have any respect. Most participants regard professional respect as a key criterion when choosing an appraiser; they consider excellence in classroom practice as being imperative. For example, Participant C commented:

You got to admire the person who's going to observe you, because if you reckon he is a rotten educator it means you would not listen to a word he said, seniors must conduct themselves professionally(Participant C).

6.2.2 Educators' Perceptions of the Influence of Peer Observation on Their **Development**

This research sub-question was asked in order to determine participants' perceptions of the influence of peer observation on their professional development.

The study findings revealed that educators view peer observation as an instrument and a tool that helps them improve and develop their teaching practice; it is seen as a tool that helps them identify areas that need to be developed. Through peer observation they learn how to plan their lessons; they are assisted in the use of a variety of teaching strategies that may help learners to learn more easily; and they are taught to use various leaner/teacher support materials and other available resources that they could not previously use. These study findings support the assertion by Martin and Double (1998) that a number of personal and professional competencies can be developed through engagement in the peer observation of teaching (POT). Many of these competencies encompass an increasing capacity to plan learning tasks which take into account the requirements of an increasingly diverse learner body - within the requirements of a specific discipline; developing confidence to effectively employ a collection of teaching methods appropriate to the learning requirements of the learners; an ability to deliver teaching programmes which are at a level of challenge and pace suitable to individual students, considering their growing understanding and bringing about work of high quality; and a growing capacity to enhance the performance of learners and the effective utilization of the resources of the institution. According to the findings, there is a developing recognition of the significance of personal reflection and peer review as well as a considerable ability to collaborate actively in a mutual approach to curriculum delivery and renewal.

It appears that the participants view the peer observation process of observing each other as a very powerful learning tool; this is based on the assumption that peers learn from each other. In a study by Bell and Mladenovic (2008) participants considered the observing process as

more beneficial than the actual feedback from peers. Evidence suggests that it is not just those who are observed and receive feedback, but also those who observe that gain from the experience; an outcome is that they develop or change their teaching practice (Bell & Cooper, 2013, Gosling, 2009; Hendry & Oliver, 2012). Increased confidence in teaching, in turn, facilitates an openness to try new teaching strategies which was also reported in the studies by Bell and Cooper (2013) and Hendry and Oliver (2012).

6.2.3 Benefits of Peer Observation

This research sub-question was asked to determine whether or not the peer observation component of the IQMS is beneficial to educators. The study findings revealed the following benefits in engaging educators in the peer observation component of the IQMS:

- It improves teaching practice that, in turn, benefits the learners; this is supported in the following quote:

  > *The feedback from observers enables me to identify areas that require further thought and also highlights existing good practice that ultimately benefit the students.*(Participant N).

  This benefit supports the use of peer observation as outlined by Webb (1996) when he maintains that peer observations are especially helpful for self-assessment and the enhancement of teaching skills. It is important for educators to be aware that what is achieved through peer observation will - in the long run - be beneficial to learners. Gosling (2005) suggests that peer observation facilitates deliberation on the productiveness of the participants' own teaching and identifies their development requirements; it also improves the standard of learning as well as teaching.

- It enables educators to improve their teaching practice which is supported by the quote from the response of Participant K: *I can now plan my lesson well; my lesson presentation has changed for the better.* The relevant literature suggests that even though it is utilized for varying purposes, peer observation of teaching has to do with facilitating educator change for the better (Shortland, 2007; McMahon, Barrett & O'Neill, 2007).

- This study's findings revealed that the peer observation component of the IQMS enables observer educators to emulate others' teaching styles and they learn new approaches with which they may not be familiar; that they can take and apply to their own teaching; and this leads to increased confidence in teaching. Bell and Cooper (2013) suggest that it is not only the observed educators who receive feedback, but also the observers who gain from the experience and develop or change their teaching practice. They are of the opinion that peer observation leads to an increased confidence in teaching which, in turn, facilitates an openness to try new teaching strategies (Bell & Cooper (2013).

- The peer observation component of the IQMS enables observed educators to receive feedback on all aspects of their teaching practice, including classroom management, lesson preparation and various teaching strategies or methods of presentation of content - irrespective of how experienced they might be. According to Participant D:

  > *I did not know how to use some of the teaching aids available, now I can use the data projector with easy, and it makes learning very easy* (Participant D).

  By means of feedback observed educators are provided with an opportunity to receive support and to share common experiences with others. This finding is in line with what Webb (1996) believes: that the more teachers can share common life experiences with others in institutions, the greater the possibility is that they will be able to extend their horizons to encompass a fuller understanding in all aspects of teaching.

- Peer observation enhances educators' 'self-efficacy'which is confidence in their own potential to be successful in specific circumstances or in executing a task (Hergenhahn, 1982:406). This is illustrated by the following:

  > *I can now teach genetic topic after observing my peer presenting it in that manner. It was a very difficult topic for me to teach* (Participant K).

In peer observation educators observe others succeed in their given tasks; when witnessing the success of others their self-efficacy is increased. Pintrich and Schunk (2002) in their explanation of Bandura's (1997) theory on self-efficacy explain that the self-efficacy of individuals can be strengthened when they see their peers complete tasks in a successful manner.

- The feedback educators receive from the observers serves as a social persuasion that strengthens educators' convictions that they possess what is needed to succeed and it may persuade them to increase and continue their efforts over a period of time rather than doubt themselves and linger over personal shortfalls when they are challenged by unmanageable situations. As a result of peer observation, educators tend to display increased degrees of passion; they are more receptive to new ideas; they display a readiness to attempt a diversity of practices to meet the requirements of their learners in an improved manner; and they are more committed to teaching (Clark & Redmond, 2009).

6.2.4 The Challenges Faced by Educators during Peer Observation

This research sub-question was asked in order to find out if there are challenges that educators face in the implementation of the peer observation component of the IQMS. In the above discussion the study findings suggest convincing benefits in the implementation of the peer observation component of the IQMS. However, this study has also revealed the difficulties that are associated with the implementation of peer observation in schools and if these potential difficulties are not acknowledged and attended to, the implementation of peer observation in institutions may have adverse effects.

The study findings revealed that peer observation is time-consuming and time-wasting as it creates a great deal of paper work. In other words, educators really do not benefit from it; instead they see it as an added burden and if they do not see any benefit from the activity, then it will difficult for learners to benefit from it. This issue is supported in the findings of the study by Millman and Darling-Hammond in England (1990) where educators indicated

that evaluation activities consumed a lot of time and that little time was left for their professional development.

It seems that the SDTs and DSGs are not properly trained to implement the peer observation component of the IQMS, especially in giving feedback as they are anxious and worried about upsetting the observee. To exacerbate matters, DSGs members are not knowledgeable about the new curriculum and, therefore, they cannot to give support and guidance to the educators and the District Area Project Office should help in this regard. According to Participant D:

> *The whole DSG was unable to assist me with subject related matters; the Head of Department was ill-informed about the new curriculum. They were all not conversant with NCS. They need proper training about the IQMS and the curriculum* (Participant D).

This tally with the findings of the study conducted by Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2002) in Australia where educators felt that appraisal was not effective for improvement as nothing had been done to develop those with identified weaknesses. Another important issue which was raised by educators in Kleinhenz and Ingvarson's study was that there is, generally, disrespect for educator evaluation conducted by seniors; they were regarded as inaccurate raters due to the fact that they did not possess the required knowledge and expertise for the subject.

According to Protheroe and Paik (2002), the training of stakeholders before appraisal is important. They state that in order to establish and maintain positive attitudes towards appraisal, it is necessary to ensure that all educators are fully informed about both policy and procedures. Appraisers must be credible and have the trust and confidence of the staff they appraise; therefore, they should also ensure that they are trained in the skills and techniques of appraisal before the system is implemented. Time must be made available to achieve this and the suggestion is that school principals should re-evaluate their strategies in preparing for appraisals so that they may go beyond the instant-fix, one day approach.

The study findings suggest that peer observation undermines educators' competency; they apparently see it as intrusive and a challenge to their professional freedom and autonomy.

Lomas and Nicholls (2005) maintain that the negative aspects of peer observation may be overcome if it is designed to be non-judgmental and developmental instead of evaluative and externally stipulated.

The findings revealed that the lack of resources at schools hinders the proper implementation of the peer observation component of the IQMS. This situation may frustrate learners and educators as, according to Vakalisa and Mashile (1999), "when educators and learners find themselves operating in an environment devoid of adequate resources, they lose faith and confidence in the education system."This finding is also supported by research conducted by Duke (1995) in Washington and in the United Kingdom (UK) that suggests that a lack of resources impacts negatively on the implementation of educator evaluation. In the UK educator evaluation slows when politicians judge that the cost of evaluation training and professional development of educators to be too great. Duke (1995) asserts that politicians are more willing to invest in educator evaluation when the focus is on accountability as they support the idea of rewarding excellent educators and training administrators to root out poor educators. Fiddler and Cooper (1991) assert that the introduction of any change in an organisation has resource implications and these really need to be fully taken into account. In appraisal it is necessary to calculate, not only the possible financial costs of initial training and follow-up support, but also the time involved in the process of change. Apparently, the Department of Education in the RSA has not done enough to support appraisal with the necessary human and financial resources. To exacerbate the matter, educators are not allowed to attend developmental workshops during school hours and this is really disturbing.

6.2.5 To What Extent Does Peer Observation Enhance or Impede Collegiality

The research sub-question was asked to find out from participants if the peer observation component of the IQMS enhances or impedes collegiality amongst teachers. Teacher collegiality is considered as collaborative interaction among teachers which involves joint work concerning their core task in schools, i.e., the practice of classroom teaching. Such joint work implies collective action, strong interdependence, shared responsibility and a great degree of readiness to participate in reflective inquiry into practice (Little, 1990).
The study findings revealed that peer observation enhances collegiality among teachers. Participant K shared the following idea:

> *Colleagues! I now want to form a group with positive minded people want to make positive changes, positive contributions to our school* (Participant K).

The quote from the response by Participant K above suggests that peer observation enhances collegial relationship amongst teachers which is characterised by friendliness, support, positive dialogue and academic engagement. This contributes to a high teacher professional commitment, supported in a recent study by Carrol and O'Loughlin (2013) where participants reported that peer observation encourages academic engagement, collegiality among teachers and positive dialogue about teaching practice.

Peer observation brings educators together who may usually not get anopportunity to communicate; it produces an occasion for sharing views and expertise, together with an opportunity to talk through obstacles and concerns as educators see each other as primary and important sources of ideas on teaching rather than being their seniors or HoDs which are their only source of ideas and information. Through peer observation and the ability to create a collegial relationship, teachers become a source of professional development for one another and, consequently, their dedication levels improve as confirmed in the study by Martin and Double (2000). Teachers' commitment to teaching and theirenjoyment of their work is strongly associated with collegiality and to their sense of school community.

Similarly, Bell (2001), Byrne, Brownand, (2010) believe that forging a collaborative collegial culture is a crucial advantage of the peer observation of teaching. They add that those who participate in the peer observation of teaching are provided with opportunities to discuss their teaching practice with their peers, share ideas and experiences, explore different methods and approaches to teaching and provide support for each other. The following are positive quotes from this study:

> *To me peer observation is sharing ideas* (Participant F).

> *We had a broad ranging conversation which I thought was a good thing...talk about big picture stuff...it was a constructive conversation between two professionals (*Participant D).

> *We work together, plan lessons together and we select instructional methods together. It makes me enjoy my work (*Participant A).

The above finding tallies with thatof D'Andrea (2002a) that the peer observation of teaching provides a forum where teaching methods are shared instead of continuing to exist as an exclusive activity and this encourages reflection on teaching and fosters discussion about and circulation of best practice.

The quote from a response by Participant M: *I am still enjoying my work at this age, and I am still going strong"* illustrates that educators who work in a collegial manner are more likely to last in the profession because they feel encouraged and appreciated. This finding is confirmed in a study of teacher professionalism by Talbert and McLaughlin (1999) who found that collegiality among educators kindled their professionalism and dedication to teaching. Another study that researched the role of professional learning communities in 16 high schools in California and Michigan discovered that collegial encouragement and interaction swayed how educators felt about their duties and their students (McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001). The authors discovered that collegiality also affected the determination and career commitment of educators and the degree to which they were prepared to adjust their classroom practice.

6.3 CONCLUSION

Chapter 6 discussed the research findings as related to the five research sub-questions. The study findings revealed that educators are given an opportunity to choose their own peers to give them guidance and support during the peer observation component of the IQMS but this only happens in schools where there are sufficient educators. In schools where there is a shortage of educators, peers are imposed on educators to guide and support them even if they have no knowledge and experience of the subject. It seems that educators view the peer observation component of the IQMS as a tool and instrument to improve and develop them professionally if it is implemented properly. Participants cited more benefits of the peer observation component of the IQMS than challenges that hinder its implementation. The peer observation component of the IQMS enhances collegiality among educators which benefit them in all aspects of their professional life because it is characterised by support, friendliness and positive dialogue concerning matters related to their teaching practice.

The next chapter, Chapter 7, draws conclusions and makes recommendations, including ones for further study of the topic.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study with reference to the literature review, research questions and the findings. The purpose of conducting the study was to determine how educators experience the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). The conclusions and recommendations, including the one for further research, are presented in this chapter.

7.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study was undertaken to determine how educators experience the peer observation component of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). It was guided by the following five sub-questions:

- How do educators choose their peers?
- What are educators' views of the influence of peer observation on their development?
- What are the advantages of peer observation?
- What are the difficulties faced by educators during peer observation?
- To what extent does peer observation enhance or impede collegiality?

Having explored the questions above, the following findings emerged.

7.2.1 Findings Applicable to the First Research Question

The study found that educators choose their own peers during the implementation of the peer observation component of the IQMS. Although educators choose their own peers in schools where there are sufficient educators, in schools where there is a shortage of educators they choose available peers without checking their knowledge of the subject or learning area phase. In some instances peers are imposed upon educators and this raises the concern that an observation will be a waste of time because the imposed peers may not have knowledge of the subject and, therefore, they will not be able to guide and support the observed educator.

According to Wragg *et a.*, (1996) and the Integrated Quality Management System (DoE, 2003), appraisers should have a good level of knowledge and understanding of context, especially of the subject and age group within which the appraisee works. The issue of choosing the only available peer contributes to the subjective rating of scores because such DSGs do not observe for the purpose of identifying areas for development, instead they focus on helping educators achieve minimum scores so that they do not miss out on the opportunity to get a salary progression; there is a misconception among educators that the IQMS serves the purpose of financial reward. This promotes subjective ratings as no educator wants to forfeit the benefit of a salary progression.

This finding is supported in literature (Bisschoff & Mathye, 2009; Kanyane, 2008) that shows that teachers cheat and threaten the DSGs to inflate their ratings in order to ensure pay increases. The developmental part of IQMS is ignored owing to the fact that educators tend to prioritise pay progression. Poster and Poster (1995) contend that an appraisal system that tries to combine all possible benefits is doomed to failure as there will be conflicting objectives and clashes in the demand for resources.

It has been found that relationship between the observer and observee is a very important component of the IQMS which needs to be implemented successfully - as suggested by Shortland (2004) and Wragg *et al.,* (1996). Educators do not want to be observed by their seniors, they prefer to be observed by peers who are equal in terms of post level. Educators value professional respect, excellence in classroom practice and mutual trust as key criteria when choosing an appraiser. The notion of an observer as an expert is commonly met with resistance by educators; it is for this reason that the use of "critical friend" where feedback is given 'as dialogue and not judgment' is acknowledged by Bell and Cooper (2013).

7.2.2 Findings Applicable to the Second Research Question

The study found that the peer observation component of the IQMS influences educators' development. Both the observer and the observed educators view the peer observation part of the IQMS as an instrument and a tool to improve and develop their teaching practice. It helps them identify their developmental needs, i.e., their strengths and their weaknesses, and develop self-assurance to effectively make use of a diversity of teaching methods suitable to the learning requirements of the learners. Educators regard peer observation as a powerful

learning experience where peers learn from each other. This finding is supported by Martin and Double (1998), Bell and Mladenovic (2008), Bell and Cooper (2013), Gosling (2009), Hendry and Oliver (2012).

7.2.3 Findings Applicable to the Third Research Question

This study found that there are various benefits for engaging educators in the peer observation component of the IQMS; they include the identification of areas that require further thought and highlighting existing good practice that ultimately benefit the learners. It has been shown that the peer observation component of the IQMS enables observer educators to emulate others' teaching styles; they learn new things that they can apply to their own teaching and they experience different teaching approaches with which they may not be familiar - this leads to increased confidence in teaching and enhances educators' 'self-efficacy'. The above identified benefits of the peer observation component of the IQMS are confirmed in various studies, such as those by Gosling (2005), Shortland (2007), McMahon, Barrett and O'Neill (2007), Bell and Cooper (2013), Webb (1996) and Hergenhahn, (1982).

7.2.4 Findings Applicable to the Fourth Research Question

The study found that peer the observation component of the IQMS faces some challenges that may hinder its proper implementation. It has been seen that if not properly planned, peer observation is time-consuming and time-wasting as it creates a great deal of paper work. It also causes anxiety among educators. This finding is supported by studies by Fiddler and Cooper (1991), Duke (1995), Lomas and Nicholls (2005), Millman and Darling-Hammond (1990).

7.2.5 Findings Applicable to the Fifth Research Question

The study found that the peer observation component of the IQMS has an impact on collegiality; it enhances collegiality relationships amongst educators which are characterised by friendliness, support, positive dialogue and academic engagement which, then, contribute to higher teacher professional commitment among teachers. The collegial relationships formed by means of the peer observation part of the IQMS produces opportunities for teachers to share ideas and skills, together with chances to deliberate on difficulties and concerns because they see each other as primary and important sources of ideas and teaching

rather than their seniors or HoDs who may be their only sources of ideas and information. The collegial relationship formed in the peer observation part of the IQMS encourages educators to remain in the profession for a long time because they feel encouraged and appreciated. Various studies that confirm that the peer observation of teaching has an impact on collegiality include, Little (1990), Carrol and O'Loughlin (2013), Bell (2001), Byrne, Brown and Challen (2010) and D'Andrea (2002a).

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the analysis and interpretation of the collected data, the following recommendations are made which relate to the literature review and the empirical investigation.

7.3.1 Recommendations Related to the Literature Review

The following recommendations are made in terms of the literature review:

- The two purposes of the peer observation component of the IQMS, namely: for development and for accountability, should be separated; if they are combined there is always conflict. By combining them the developmental purpose suffers at the expense of accountability purpose. This is confirmed by Makgalane (1997) and Poster and Poster (1995) when they contend that an appraisal system which tries to combine all the possible benefits will fail as there will be conflicting objectives and clashes in the demand for resources.

- The training of stakeholders before the IQMS and appraisal is important. Protheroe and Paik (2002) believe that in order to form and maintain desirable attitudes towards appraisal, it is necessary to ensure that all educators are fully informed about policy and procedures. Appraisers must be credible; they must have the trust and confidence of the staff members they appraise; and, to this end, they must ensure that if there is a need, there should be training in the skills and techniques of appraisal before the system is implemented. Time must be made available to achieve this.

- The relationships existing between the monitor and the monitored educators form an integral part of the successful implementation of the peer observation component of the IQMS. The organisational context should always be made conducive for the peer observation component of the IQMS; there should be mutual trust and openness in

schools (Duke, 1995; Seldin, 1988). This can be achieved if the principal is well informed about the policy and procedures for the IQMS. The peer observation component of the IQMS will be successful if the principal is democratic as it is supposed to be a democratic process whereby educators appoint their own DSGs. Bell and Cooper (2013) suggest the use of "critical friend" where feedback is given 'as dialogue and not judgment to remove the notion of the expert observer.

- The peer observation component of the IQMS may be considered to undermine educator competency and may be seen as intrusive and a challenge to educators' professional freedom and autonomy; these perception should be changed. Lomas and Nicholls (2005) suggest that these negative perceptions may prevail in situations where peer observation is purposed not to be judgmental and developmental rather than evaluative and externally stipulated.

- The lack of resources at schools hinders the proper implementation of the peer observation component of the IQMS. Therefore, resources should be made available for its successful implementation avoid instances where educators and learners find themselves operating in an environment devoid of adequate resources which leads them to lose faith and confidence in the education system - as pointed out by Vakalisa and Mashile (1999).

7.3.2 Recommendations Based on Empirical Investigations

The participants made the following recommendations:

- There should be adequate training for observer and observee educators of the IQMS so that they have the necessary knowledge and understanding for its effective implementation. In order to make the peer observation component of the IQMS successful, all stakeholders should be involved so that they are fully informed about policy and procedures.

- It emerged that the DSGs lack knowledge of the curriculum (NCS), a factor that leads to their inability to give guidance and support to their educators. It is recommended

that the Department of Education should conduct various workshops for educators about the new curriculum.

7.4 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDY

It is recommended that further research should be conducted on the potential use of peer observation as a professional development tool, not combing it with salary pay progression.

7.5 CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, the important findings of the study have been summarised and conclusions have been reached, based on the five research questions. Recommendations related to the literature review and the empirical investigation was made. An area for further research was also suggested.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies

Enquiries: MsA.W. Mudau P.O.Box 1461

14255783 Thohoyandou

0829226737 0950

PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER

Dear Participant

You are kindly requested to participate in academic research study interviews on the following topic: ***Educators Experiences and Perceptions of Peer Observation***at the University of Pretoria (Faculty of Education).I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail should you agree to take part. Your participation in this study will be voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately thirty to forty-five minutes which will take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your permission the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcription for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report.However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me on **0829226737** or by e-mail at **vhad668gp@gmail.com.**

All data collected with public funding may be made available in an open repository for public and scientific use.

I look forward to speaking with you very much and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign a consent form.

Yours sincerely

…… ……

Mudau A.W. Date

Masters Student

…… ……

Professor C Herman Date

Chaya.herman@up.ac.za

APPENDIX B:

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study entitled: ***Educators'Experiences and Perceptions of Peer Observation***and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study; to receive satisfactory answers to my questions; and add any additional details. I am aware that I have the option to allow my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications emanating from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that all data collected with public funding may be made available in an open repository for public and scientific use. I was also informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher of my decision to do so. With a full knowledge of all the above I agree to willingly participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print): _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date_____

Researcher Name: Ms A. W.MUDAU

Researcher Signature: _____ Date:_____

_____ _____

Supervisor: Professor C Herman Date

Chaya.herman@up.ac.za

APPENDIX C:

LETTER OF APPLICATION TO THE LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies

Enquiries: Ms A. W.Mudau P.O. Box 1461
Thohoyandou
Tel. No.: 0829226737 0950

THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

I, Ms A.W. Mudau, a Master's student (14255783) at the University of Pretoria hereby request permission to conduct research in the Vhembe District of the Dzindi circuit. I will be conducting research on the topic: **Educators' Experiences and Perceptions of Peer Observation.**

The purpose of this research is to explore how educators experience and perceive peer observation as a component of the Integrated Quality Management System. Interviews of approximately 30-45 minutes with educators will be scheduled and documents, such as the IQMS year plans and joint SMT/SDT minutes, will be perused.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will be maintained throughout the study and the schools' names will not be disclosed. The information required from the participants and schools is to help the researcher in this study.

All data collected with public funding may be made available in an open repository for public and scientific use.

For more information, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor, Prof Chaya Herman, the Department of Education Management and Policy Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. Tel: 012 420 5513, Fax: 012 420 3581, Email address: Chaya.herman@up.ac.za.

Yours truly,

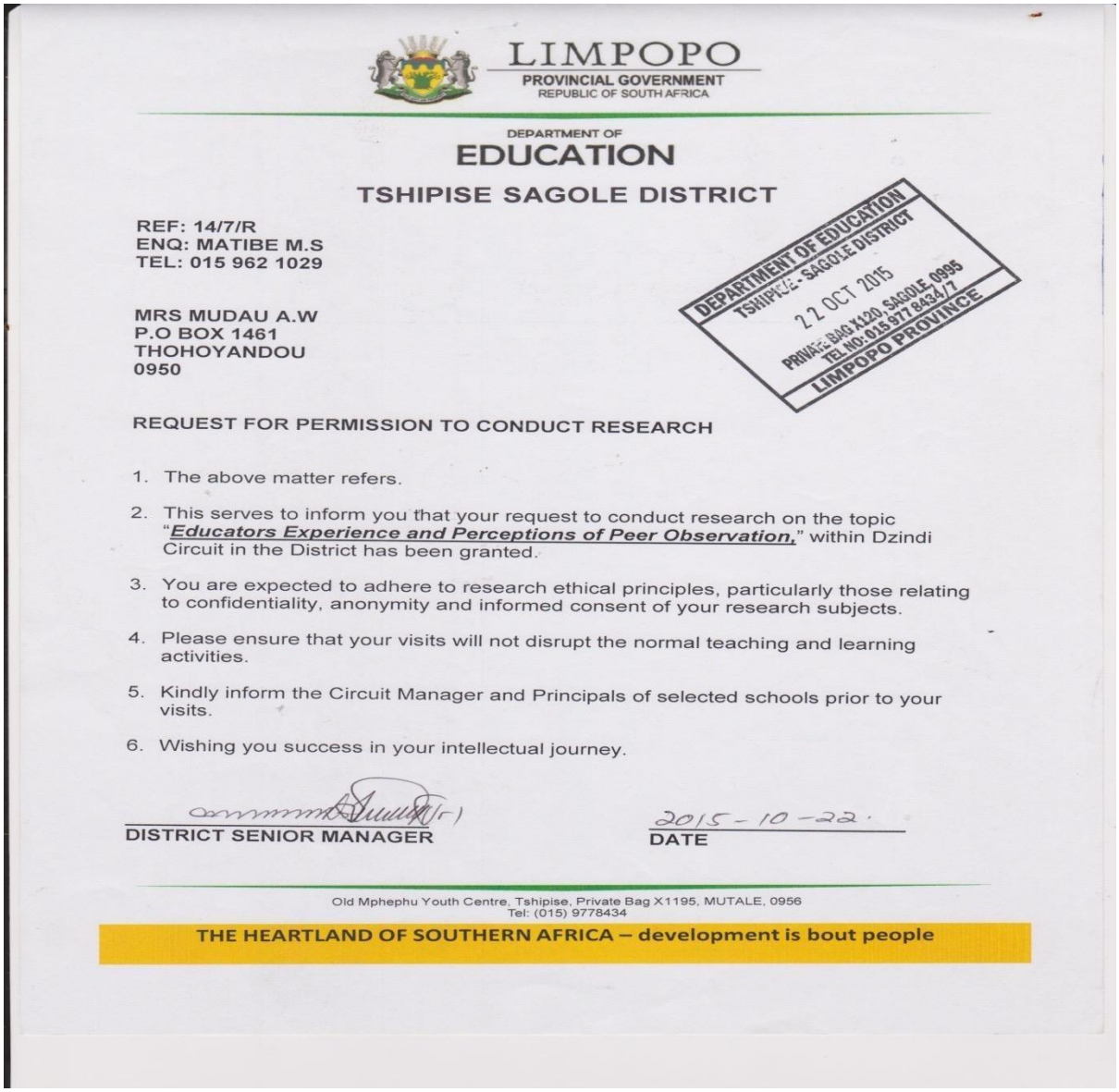
_____ _____

Ms A.W. Mudau Professor C Herman

APPENDIX D:

PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
TSHIPISE SAGOLE DISTRICT

REF: 14/7/R
ENQ: MATIBE M.S
TEL: 015 962 1029

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TSHIPISE - SAGOLE DISTRICT
22 OCT 2015
PRIVATE BAG X120, SAGOLE, 0995
TEL NO: 015 977 8434/7
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

MRS MUDAU A.W
P.O BOX 1461
THOHOYANDOU
0950

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above matter refers.
2. This serves to inform you that your request to conduct research on the topic "***Educators Experience and Perceptions of Peer Observation,***" within Dzindi Circuit in the District has been granted.
3. You are expected to adhere to research ethical principles, particularly those relating to confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent of your research subjects.
4. Please ensure that your visits will not disrupt the normal teaching and learning activities.
5. Kindly inform the Circuit Manager and Principals of selected schools prior to your visits.
6. Wishing you success in your intellectual journey.

DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER

2015-10-22.
DATE

Old Mphephu Youth Centre, Tshipise, Private Bag X1195, MUTALE, 0956
Tel: (015) 9778434

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ANNEXURE E:

INTERVIEW GUIDE

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies

1. Have you participated in any kind of peer observation in your teaching experience? What did you gain from that evaluation?
2. Have you ever been included in a DSG as a peer observer during the implementation of the IQMS? If so, what did you experience?
3. How did you choose your peer?
4. Why did you choose your peer?
5. Did you find the peer observation process beneficial? Why/Why not?
6. Did your peer help you reflect on your practice?
7. Did you share ideas with your peers?
8. What did you experience as an observed educator?
9. What did you experience as an observing educator?
10. How does the peer observation process compare with other staff development activities in which you have participated?
11. How does the peer observation part of the IQMS enhance collegiality amongst staff?
12. Did you make a new connection with your colleagues as a result of the observation?