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POLICY AND POLICY ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Public policy affects the life of citizens in various and numerous ways. For instance, as Cochran *et al.* (1993:1) state that in public colleges and universities learners benefit directly from decisions of policy-makers who dictate whether or not to build and maintain their institutions and to subsidise their tuition. Not only learners who attend public institutions benefit, but also learners attending private colleges, schools, universities and universities of technology do benefit because they are eligible for state tuition loans. Apart from direct benefit by learners, institutions – both public and private – are equally affected, for example, by health and safety laws. Therefore, public policy affect each citizen in not just one way, but in many ways.

Policy analysis, according to Cochran *et al.* (1993:3) is principally concerned with describing and investigating how and why specific policies are proposed, adopted and implemented. Its main focus is on explanation rather than prescription, on searching scientifically for the causes and consequences of policies, and on general explanatory propositions.

3.2 POLICY AND PUBLIC POLICY DEFINED

There is no single definition of policy which is universally accepted. Academic authorities in the field of Public Administration have come up with different definitions. For example, Ranney (1968:7) defines policy as “... a declaration and implementation of intent”. Hanekom (1987:7) describes a policy as follows: “... a policy statement is the making known, the formal articulation, the declaration of intent or the publication of a goal to be pursued. Policy is thus indicative of a goal, a specific purpose, a programme

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of action that has been decided upon. Public policy is therefore a formally articulated goal that the legislator intends pursuing with society or with a societal group". Peters (1993:4) defines public policy as the sum of government activities, whether they are undertaken officially or through agents to influence the lives of citizens. Bates and Eldredge (1980:12) define policy as "... a statement that provides a guide for decision-making by members of the organisation charged with the responsibility of operating the organisation as a system". According to Theodoulou and Cahn (1995:201) policy is what the government says and does about perceived public problems.

The aforementioned definition of Ranney implies that consensus has been reached as to what should be done for society. This agreed upon purpose is communicated to the public along with the intention of the measures required to be put into practice.

The statement of Hanekom would mean that government must put in writing its aim with a particular matter. Not only should the aim be stated, but the process or processes to be followed to achieve the stated objective should be clearly spelt out. The aim, which is usually revealed with a pronouncement by a governmental office-bearer, is to address an issue or issues that affect society as a whole or part thereof.

The definition of Peters requires that government should apply its mind to problems that plague society and formulate appropriate steps that will remedy the situation. The implementation of the remedial activities is either done by government itself or agents acting on behalf of government. Actions that are taken should aim at improving the living conditions of citizens.

The definition of Bates and Eldredge means that management of an institution is directed with written statements which will guide the running of the institution. In this context an institution that is run as a particular system may be a private company, a school, a town or a state. With guidelines an institution can be run orderly and

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systematically. The definition of Theodoulou and Cahn (1995:201) means that the whole *raison d' être* of government is seen as identification of public needs and providing appropriate action to alleviate, ameliorate and uplift the standard of living of its citizens. There could be more definitions of public policy. For example, Dunn (1981:46) sees it as a series of choices made by governmental bodies and officials. This implies that policy is more comprehensive than a decision. These definitions differ as the former emphasises public problems while the latter emphasises choices to be made to address problems.

Each of the definitions or approaches implies some aspect of policy. Each looks at policy from a different perspective and define it as such. Features that are described or implied by the definitions are –

- ❖ authorities are unanimous that something should be done for society;
- ❖ a policy should be communicated in writing;
- ❖ every policy is focused on a particular recurring societal problem or problems;
- ❖ a policy should spell out steps or processes to be followed for its implementation;
- ❖ a policy is implemented by either government or its agents;
- ❖ a policy serves as a guide to promote efficiency and effectiveness in governance;
and
- ❖ a policy is the identification by government of a public need and a resolution to do something about it.

From the aforementioned a policy could be defined as a purposeful, intentional and goal-directed statement by a government or one or more of its institutions to attain one or more specific objectives. It could also indicate processes to be followed by all spheres of government through different departments and other state organs to successfully implement it. Its main purpose should be to improve the living conditions of the citizens. Another noteworthy feature of public policies is that they are educative

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in nature. In this regard Landy (1993:19) states that policies constitute teaching, in that they instruct the public about the aims of government and the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

After explaining what public policy is, it is necessary to understand why it should be studied. Researchers and students study public policies because they are about issues and decisions that affect them as citizens. Over and above this, studying policy allows for an overview of the workings of the whole political system, including political institutions and the informal elements of the political and public opinion formation. Thus, the study of public policy allows one to view the entirety of the political system, including its output (Theodoulou & Cahn, 1995:2). Another important aspect of public policy is that it is a product of language usage – either written or oral. In both language forms of policy making, argument is central. Discussion goes on in any institution, public or private, and in any political system, even a dictatorship. Discussion and argument are the heartbeats of a democratic politicising and policy making. This is evident in public affairs where political parties, the electorate, the legislature, the executive, the courts, the news media, interest groups, and independent experts are all engaged in a continuous process of debate and reciprocal persuasion (Majone, 1989:1). With the aforementioned understanding of what policy and policy-making is, it is necessary to look at how policies come about.

3.3 POLICY FORMULATION

Policy-making is a system of activities performed to create a policy. As indicated in the definition of a policy, it is the statement of activities to be undertaken to address a public need or a dysfunctional situation. Thus policy-making is the identification of activities to be undertaken to solve a public problem. In this regard Peters (1993:53) states that government has to accept that identification of a public problem is essential for preparation of its agenda for policy-making. Thereafter it has to decide what is to

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be done with each identified public problem. He further argues that this stage of policy-making could be called *policy formulation*, which is a mechanism devised by government to solve a public problem. During the policy formulation phase pertinent and acceptable proposed courses of action are developed to deal with a problem. Thus, it is decided what will be done to address the problem (Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt & Jonker, 2001:95).

In the policy formulation phase various alternatives to address the specific problem should be assessed in terms of their benefits, cost implications, and feasibility (Van Niekerk, Van der Walt & Jonker, 2001:95). Furthermore, Bouser, McGregor and Oster (1996:48) state that there are several alternative ways in which one can go about analysing policy options and making rational decisions. They are similar, but each uses peculiar keywords to describe its particular framework and detail. Policy formulation refers to the process followed which culminates in stating a policy, which is distinct from policy analysis, which refers to an activity undertaken to arrive at policy options that are feasible.

Policy formulation is necessary as it indicates how outcomes-based education policy is formulated. It also provides the actual wording of the policy.

The undermentioned matters require specific attention.

3.3.1 Establishment of the context

What is the issue? What is the environmental paradigm that is relevant to the issue? What categories of population are affected by the issue? What are the political interests involved? How does the issue fit into the cultural framework of our society? Are there conflicting goals, and if so, what are they? Are there current issue networks involved in the policy discussion? Who has primary control of action on the issue?

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Does the problem have the possibility of an acceptable solution (Bouser, McGregor & Oster, 1996:48)? These questions are necessary as they provide the context of the outcomes-based education policy. In turn it deepens understanding of the purpose of the policy.

3.3.2 Formulation of the problem

Formulating a policy for a specific problem is critical. It deals with such questions as: What are the source and background of the underlying problem? What are the objectives to be accomplished? How can the problem be clarified and constrained? How can it be ensured that the problem has been differentiated from symptoms (Bouser, McGregor & Oster, 1996:48)? Formulation of policy to solve a specific problem indicates the nature of the problem. It also suggests ways and means of the possible solution of the problem.

3.3.3 Search for alternative solutions

The policy analyst needs to be careful to avoid starting with a preconceived idea of the preferred alternatives. It is necessary to consider a variety of factors when one begins the search for possible solutions to a public policy problem. Some of the questions that should be asked are: What further information is necessary to consider relevant alternatives? Is adequate data and other important information about the problem available (Bouser, McGregor & Oster, 1996:49)?

As the saying goes, there are many ways of killing a cat. The same applies to outcomes-based education policy. Hence, the need for a search for alternative solutions to the problem.

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3.3.4 Setting the policy

To be effective policy analysis must not only find a proper course of action to obtain determined goals. The findings must be accepted and incorporated into a decision. This stage can involve a number of different levels of approval such as the minister in charge of a government department, the top official of the department or empowered subordinates (Bouser, McGregor & Oster, 1996:51). It is also necessary to describe how public policy is formulated. According to Theodoulou and Cahn (1995:86-87) the commonly agreed on stages of public policy formulation are as follows –

- ❖ Problem recognition and issue identification: This stage draws the attention of policy makers to a circumstance that could be an **issue** requiring governmental action.
- ❖ Agenda setting: If the issue is recognised to be a serious matter it requires agenda setting for further action.
- ❖ Policy formulation: Proposals are formulated for dealing with each issue.
- ❖ Policy adoption: Proposals are considered to select one to be the approved policy.
- ❖ Policy implementation: At this stage it must be decided what action should be taken by every sphere of government and even members of the public involved to give effect to the approved policy.
- ❖ Policy analysis and evaluation: This involves examining the implementation consequences of every policy to establish whether it will deliver envisaged results (Theodoulou & Cahn, 1995:86-87).

The stages of policy formulation are crucial as they contribute to comprehension of the public problem to be addressed. They also offer an opportunity to refine the policy and to prepare for its implementation.

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3.3.5 Context of policy-making and implementation

The processes of policy-making and implementation cannot be divorced from the social and physical environments and the contexts within which they take place. It is crucial to understand how specific policies prevail over others. The overall context of contemporary public policy is governed by a number of contexts (Theodoulou & Cahn, 1995:91). The first context is history. The policy history for a specific issue could importantly limit new policy options because policy changes take place in a context provided by past policies. Environmental factors form the second context. From the environment come demands for policy action; namely, support for both the existing overall political system and its parts. However, there could also be proposals for amendments. Such proposals could limit action by the policy-makers. The environmental context is the composite of cultural, demographic, economic, social, and ideological factors. Common values and beliefs help to determine the demands made upon policy-makers. If such values and beliefs are commonly held, then greater public acceptance for policy retentions or amendments could be experienced by decision-makers. Public opinion lays the boundaries and direction of policy while the social system attunes policy-makers to the social forces that are salient in terms of both demands and support. Those who possess economic power through their control of economic resources also possess undeniable political power which raises their demands and support for policies to the level of priority. The institutional context, which involves both the formal governmental institutions and structural arrangements of the system, also affect the formulation and substance of public policies. Finally, the ideological conflict between liberals and conservatives over the nature of governmental action affects policy debates in all areas (Theodoulou & Cahn, 1995:91-92). A final context is the budgetary process, for no public policy can be implemented without spending public money (Theodoulou & Cahn, 1995:92).

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According to Peters (1993:53) a number of policy choices have to be considered by a policy analyst who will apply analytic techniques to justify one policy choice over others.

Cloete (1998:139) concurs with this viewpoint where he states that a number of functions have to be performed in policy-making. These functions include identification of dysfunctional situations on which policies have to be made, investigation of matters requiring new policies or policy adaptations. The policy-making process could involve a number of role-players as well as institutions; for example, government functionaries, research institutions, commissions of enquiry, committees of legislatures, advisory institutions attached to legislatures, and executive institutions. Hanekom (1987:20) concurs with Cloete when he states that the initiative for public policy-making is undertaken by legislative institutions, public officials and interest groups, the Cabinet, selected committees, caucus of the ruling party and commissions of enquiry, political office-bearers and the ministers in charge of state departments. Ministers are important participants and initiators in the policy-making process. Public officials – because of their executive roles and expert knowledge – are also important role players in policy-making. Other significant participants in policy-making are the top and middle level public officials who act as advisors on policy, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy monitoring by comparing results with intentions.

It is essential for the members of the public interested in or affected by a proposed policy to participate in policy-making because the people are the major beneficiaries or sufferers of the end product. In this regard Ingram and Smith (1993:8) state that policy can have an important independent effect on political mobilisation and participation. From another perspective Ingram and Smith (1993:95) explain that government can, by design or unwittingly, use policy to trigger consciousness of public problems, create constituencies, and affect the behaviour and influence of individuals and groups. This authority wielded through policy may be helpful or damaging to democratic participation. The ability to mobilise support outside the public sector to influence government policy is of critical importance to citizen independence in a

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democracy. This viewpoint is shared by Cloete (1998:139) when he writes that policy-making involves the interaction between the public and political executive office-bearers, legislatures and officials who have to perform the policy-making functions. Cloete and Wissink (2000:27) also reiterate the importance of participation and public choice in policy-making. In addition, they state that policy-making processes should incorporate opportunities to exercise choices and explore rational options. Public participation in policy-making is also in keeping with the democratic principles. Hence, policy-making should make it possible for public participation in all spheres of government

Public participation in policy-making may take place in different places and forms. In this regard Cloete (1998:139) states that the interaction may take place at meetings of the public and political office-bearers, meetings between representatives of interest groups and political office-bearers, public meetings and statements during elections, media campaigns, intimidation brought to bear by interest groups on political office-bearers, and institutionalised interaction for which advisory bodies have been created and attached to public institutions.

In essence public policy-making is a systematic and an orderly process. This nature of policy-making is clearly discernible in the functions involved in obtaining information. For instance, to present information with which the policy to be decided upon can be quantified or qualified. For example, information needed for policy-making to provide housing for the poor will include the exact needs of the poor and their abilities to make their own contributions (Cloete, 1998:139). Peters (1993:54) mentions other ways government may follow to solve public problems. For instance, the United States of America relied on regulation more than on ownership of business. In the case of social policy, the method used to address public problems has been social insurance and the use of cash transfer programmes rather than direct delivery of public services.

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Policy-making processes are not confined to only the public sector. They are also prevalent in the private sector. On account of the different natures of these sectors, their policy-making processes are bound to differ. Be that as it may, the aims of policy-making have the same objective. That is, to provide clear guidelines on how to address a public problem and clear guidelines on how to run a private company profitably. Furthermore, Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt and Jonker (2001:90) state another distinguishing feature of a public policy from a private policy. Public policy differs from the policy of private sector institutions in the sense that it is authoritative. This means that public policy can be enforced on specific members of society, specific sections or society as a whole through instruments of coercion.

According to Bates and Eldredge (1980:201) policy formulation can originate from anywhere in an institution. In addition, policies have a high probability of coming into existence without the benefit of rational analysis. For instance, anyone in an institution may propose a policy. One of the primary criteria to test the need for a policy is that it should cover a recurring or repetitive condition. It must address a real need and guide action that will attain objectives. In addition, policy formulation is a costly matter.

Bates and Eldredge (1980:202) identify the following steps for policy formulation –

- ❖ A draft of a new or revised policy may originate from anywhere in the institution.
- ❖ The draft policy is evaluated by supervisory institutions and functionaries in relation to strategy, objectives and existing policies.
- ❖ To determine its applicability the draft policy should be discussed with the originator and other relevant functionaries.
- ❖ Thereafter the draft policy is routed to the appropriate superior for approval.
- ❖ If approved, the policy is incorporated in the policy manual; if rejected it is returned to the originator with the reasons for its rejection.

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Every undertaking should have a policy to rationalise its existence. However, established decisions could persist long after the reasons for their adoption and circumstances disappeared. This is known as an established tradition of an institution (Bates & Eldredge, 1980:202).

Policies may also originate as a result of an arbitrary pronouncement of an individual. This is known as policy by fiat. The major disadvantage of such a pronounced policy is that it may lead to frustration because subordinates could need to go to the source of a policy to obtain definition and clarification of its existence and purpose. In addition, it could be regarded as an imposition as no consultation took place; hence, lack of cooperativeness on the part of the subordinates. Be that as it may, if pronounced policies exist for any length of time, they tend to become tradition of an institution (Bates & Eldredge, 1980:203).

Groups of people within an institution who interact in completing given assignments develop internal policies that represent the expected patterns of behaviour within the group. These policies represent conduct norms that have to be observed by everyone. Group norms are not subjected to the rational policy formulation process. Nevertheless, they serve effectively as guides for action and decision-making. Group policies are fluid as they may be modified as the membership of the group change (Bates & Eldredge, 1980:203).

Since policies are formulated for different purposes and in different ways, they may be classified by types. Hence the description of types of policies.

3.4 TYPES OF POLICIES

Policies may be differentiated on the basis of their scope; for example, philosophical or operative. An example of a philosophical policy might be that area suppliers have to be

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supported. An operative policy could specify that when two bids for the supply of services or goods to public institutions are not significantly different, the local bidder's offer should be accepted. Furthermore, policies may be classified as originated, developed or imposed. Originated policies are those that stem directly from strategy. They are formulated in anticipation of problems, and the results of planning. Developmental policies are results of encountering unexpected problems. Imposed policies are produced by pressure of groups external to the institution, such as governmental institutions (Bates & Eldredge, 1980:204).

According to Van Niekerk, Van der Walddt and Jonker (2001:91) public policies can be divided into three broad categories; namely, domestic or national, foreign and defence.

In terms of domestic or national policy, one can further differentiate between regulatory, distributive and redistributive policies. Lowi (1993:15-16) explain these categories of policies as follows: distributive policies are those that are commonly considered pork barrel projects such as agricultural subsidies; regulatory policies are focused on the control of individual conduct by direct coercive techniques; while redistributive policies require politicians to redistribute resources from one group to another.

A second typology of policy is that of Murray Edelman (in Theodoulou & Cahn, 1995:7), who views policy as a provider of either tangible resources or assigning substantive power to the beneficiaries. It may also impose costs on those who may be adversely affected. Symbolic policies have little material impact on individuals and bring no real tangible advantages or disadvantages.

James Anderson (in Theodoulou & Cahn, 1995:7) argues that policies may be classified as either substantive or procedural. Substantive policies state what government intends to do (actual plans of action), and they state objectives according to advantages and disadvantages, costs and benefits. In contrast, procedural policies

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indicate how something will be done or who will do it. A further way of classifying policies is to ask whether a policy provides collective goods or private goods. Collective policy may be viewed as providing indivisible goods, in that if they are given to one individual or group, they must be provided to all individuals or groups. In contrast, private policy may be seen as including divisible goods. Such goods are broken into units and charged for on an individual beneficiary basis.

Because of the political nature of public policy-making, such policies may be classified as either liberal or conservative. Liberal policies seek government intervention to bring about social change, while conservative policies oppose such intervention.

A third way of defining policy is rooted in the assumption that political behaviour is goal-oriented or purposive. Policy hence means a statement of actions calculated to achieve stated goals or purposes (Salisbury, 1995:34).

Turton and Bernhardt (1998:3) distinguish two approaches to policy-making. One is called the rational approach and the other is called the incremental approach. The former approach prescribes procedures for decision-making that would lead to the selection of the most efficient means of achieving policy goals. This approach hinges on the premise that decision-makers will gather all relevant information on the public issue under consideration. Thereafter they will consider all possible solutions available and select the best alternative based on a calculation of potential benefits versus disadvantages. This approach has two major shortcomings. The first shortcoming is that there are limits to the ability of decision-makers to comprehend alternatives and calculate their cost/benefit ratios. The second weakness of this approach is that decisions are made against the background of uncertainty and incomplete information availability.

Ingram and Smith (1993:9) concur with Turton and Bernhardt (1998:3) stating that policy-makers start with the previous year's budget or package of programmes and

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then incrementally adjust it upward, with little effort to fundamentally re-evaluate policy priorities. In this sense, previous policies shape the politics of government programmes. In addition Schulman (1995:128) describes incrementalism as a decision model which asserts the propensity of institutions to move in small steps because of disagreement on primary values and policy objectives, and the difficulty of gathering and processing information on which to evaluate a wide range of policy options. Hence, policy-makers arrive at their decisions by assessing with limited comparisons those policies that differ in relatively small degree from policies presently in effect. That is, the strategy of incrementalism is one of continual policy readjustments in pursuit of marginally redefined policy goals.

Criticism levelled against the weakness of the rational approach led to the development of an alternative model which was premised on the assumption of incrementality. Thus it was called the incremental approach. This approach portrays policy-making as a political process which is characterised by bargaining and compromise amongst decision-makers. In the main the rational approach is driven by self-interest of decision-makers. The rational approach advocates that development of policies is a process of making successive limited comparisons with previous familiar decisions on a step-by-step and in small degrees manner. Hence, decisions arrived at following this approach are marginally different from the existing (Turton & Bernhardt, 1998:3).

The aforementioned types of policies serve various significant aspects of community life. In this regard Ingram and Schneider (1993:69) maintain that different types of policies attract different patterns of political participation. Seen from another perspective, Weiss (1993:99) consider policies as tools that move society in the direction of desired objectives. For instance, which tool will achieve the most progress toward the objective? Which tool will be least expensive? Which tool can be implemented most reliably? Which tools are compatible with the ideology of powerful political leaders, can attract the requisite support among elected officials to be adopted in the political

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process, or will master enthusiastic support from the personnel of the government agencies who will administer the resulting policies? Answers to these questions could enable policy-makers to envisage the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of policies to address public problems.

Types of policies give guidance on where to place outcomes-based education policy. It also contributes to the nature of their problem or issue to be addressed.

3.5 ROLEPLAYERS AND FACTORS IN POLICY FORMULATION

On account of the fact that policies affect the whole spectrum of the community, people from different walks of life should and could contribute to policy formulation. This state of affairs requires that policy formulation should take care of the needs and aspirations of different categories of people. For instance, farmers, sportsmen and sportswomen, religious groups and academics have different interests and aspirations regarding different kinds of policies. Therefore they could request that policies be viewed from different angles to cater for the needs of all.

Many individuals and groups take part in policy formulation. Some are more important participants in this respect than others. Policy formulation is by nature a political activity. Hence, politicians play both leading and prominent roles in policy formulation.

On the negative side, politicians are not as good at formulating solutions to public problems as they are at identifying problems and presenting lofty ambitions for society to solve the problems. Expertise is essential in policy formulation as the success or lack of success of a policy depends to some degree on its technical characteristics, as well as its political acceptability (Peters, 1993:54).

According to Cloete (1998:113-137) and Peters (1993:54-58) the following institutions and factors influence policy formulation –

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- ❖ Public bureaucracy
- ❖ Think tanks
- ❖ Interest groups
- ❖ Members of legislative bodies
- ❖ Circumstances or the environment
- ❖ Needs and expectations of the population
- ❖ Political parties.

3.5.1 The public bureaucracy

Peters (1993:54) states that the public bureaucracy (i.e. appointed officials) is responsible for translating lofty aspirations of political leaders into attainable concrete proposals. That is, governmental bureaucracies are central to policy formulation. Cloete (1998:136) states that political executive office-bearers are well placed to influence the policies of the institutions entrusted to them. These office-bearers have at their disposal expert officials to advise them. In addition, these office-bearers are leaders in the legislative institutions which have a final say in policy matters.

When the role of officials in policy-making is considered it should be borne in mind that bureaucracies are masters of routine and procedure, which are both strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, government bureaucracies know how to use procedures and how to develop programmes and procedures to achieve goals. On the negative side, knowledge of routine and procedure have a tendency to stifle creativity (Peters, 1993:55).

Government has developed formulas for responding to public issues. Over and above that, there are agencies that are responsible for policy formulation (Peters, 1993:55). Cloete (1998:136) also indicates the role played by research institutions on policy formulation. However, he cites one of these institutions' weakness as placing their own

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wills, wishes and aspirations above those of the legislatures or the elected representatives. That is, these institutions could acquire a position of power and ignore the actual needs of citizens. This unfortunate state of affairs occurs because the legislatures and the executive officer-bearers delegate their responsibilities due to the fact that they do not have sufficient time and requisite knowledge of policy matters. Be that as it may, the administrative executive institutions by and large take the initiative in drafting legislation, with the aim of adapting their activities to meet new circumstances.

Peters (1993:55) states that an increasing number of the federal government employees have professional qualifications. With their expertise government bureaucrats help agencies to formulate more effective solutions to public problems. Professional training tends to be more focused and narrows the scope of expertise. Hence, a concentration of professionals in an agency will tend to produce only incremental departures from existing policies. Moreover, public management itself is becoming more professionalised. Consequently, the major reference group for public managers will be other public managers. Unfortunately, this will narrow the range of bureaucratic responses to matters needing policy adaptations.

Cloete (1998:137) identifies the contribution made by government officials to policy formulation. He agrees with Peters (1993:55) that some officials are experts in their work. He further states that these officials are well positioned to notice weaknesses in either the public policy or in the implementation thereof. They will then bring their discoveries to the attention of their supervisors so that omissions or discrepancies can be rectified.

In the public policy formulation process there are institutional as well as non-institutional actors. This is confirmed by Ripley and Franklin as quoted by Theodoulou and Cahn (1995:201) stating that policy is what the government says and does about perceived problems. They argue that policy-making is how the government decides

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what will be done about perceived problems. That is, policy-making is a process of interaction among governmental and non-governmental actors. Therefore, policies are formulated by government officers as well as by people who are not employed by government. In this regard, Majone (1989:9) states that citizens, legislators, administrators, judges, experts, and the media – all contribute their particular perspectives to policy formulation. Their different viewpoints are not only significant in a pluralistic society, but are necessary for the vitality of a system of government by discussion.

'Think tanks' are the next factors that influence policy formulation as explained in the following section.

3.5.2 Think tanks and shadow cabinets

Significant sources of policy formulation are 'think tanks'. These institutions usually consist of professional policy analysts and policy formulators who usually work on contract for a client. The 'think tanks' tend to be more creative and innovative than public institutions. A 'think tank' could be requested by a public institution to solve a specific problem. Reports produced by a 'think tank' have an element of respectability attached to it as it is produced by one or more experts. Moreover, these reports are paid for by the public institutions who could be tempted to apply their findings/proposals. Hence, the reports could have substantial impact on policy formulation.

These 'think tanks' have an inherent weakness in that the experts who constitute them have an unfortunate tendency to tell their clients what they want to hear. This state of affairs poses a serious ethical problem: What are the boundaries of loyalty to truth and loyalty to the client? Notwithstanding this shortcoming, 'think tanks' could play a crucial role in policy formulation and their influence could undoubtedly be significant (Stone, 1996:9).

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Of the three important 'think tanks' in the United States of America on policy formulation, two dominant ones are the Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute. These institutions published extensively on policy matters in an attempt to influence elite public opinion. The third 'think tank' is the Heritage Foundation, which gained prominence during the term of office of President Reagan (Peters, 1993:56). In South Africa we have the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and the Steven Friedman's Institute as think tanks.

Universities also serve as 'think tanks' for government. This is as a result of the growing number of public policy schools and programmes across the country. Universities train existing and future officials the art of governance. As an added advantage, programmes provide a place where scholars and former practitioners can formulate new solutions to public problems. Reference can be made to developments in the United States of America. In addition to the policy programmes, specialised institutions such as the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin and the Joint Centre on Urban Studies at Harvard University, develop policy ideas concerning their specific policy areas. On account of the fact that bureaucrats take expert advice from these institutes seriously, their influence on policy issues is enormous (Stone, 1996:10).

Interest groups is the next factor which influences policy formulation and can be described as follows.

3.5.3 Interest groups

Interest groups could also influence policy formulation. Numerous associations have been created by members of the population with similar interests, for example, workers, traders and industrialists. These groups from time to time approach government on policy matters, either to propose a new policy or an amendment of an existing policy or the scrapping of an unfavourable policy. The aim of the interest groups is to

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secure tangible benefits for their members through policy adaptations. In particular instances interest groups are represented in policy formulating bodies where their vote could count. This representation enables them to be a force to be reckoned with because they are in a position to bring pressure to bear on legislators, e.g. Treatment Action Campaign (Cloete, 1998:136).

Interest groups participate in policy formulation by identifying public problems and applying pressure on government to attend to these problems. Apart from the aforementioned activities of the interest groups, they also provide solutions for identified public problems. It is up to authoritative decision makers to accept or reject policy proposals of interest groups. In general, policy choices advocated by interest groups tend to be conservative, incremental, rarely produce sweeping changes, and serve self-interest (Peters, 1993:57).

Some American interest groups have broken away from the traditional model of policy formulation. These are the public interest groups such as the Common Cause, the Centre for Public Interest, and a variety of consumer and taxpayer institutions. These groups broaden the range of interests represented in the policy-making process and are also inclined to pursue reform policy and policy-making. They are inclined to advocate sweeping reforms as opposed to incremental changes, provide a balance to the policy process, and provide a strong voice for reform and change (Peters, 1993:57).

3.5.4 Members of legislatures

Members of legislatures are significant functionaries in policy formulation. A number of them involve themselves in serious policy formulation activities. Just like the public interest groups, parliamentarians have interest in reform rather than in incremental changes. They use formulation and advocacy as means of furthering their careers by adopting roles as national policy makers instead of emphasising constituency service (Peters, 1993: 57-58).

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In the United States of America there has been a continuing growth in the size of congressional staff, both personal staff of congressmen and the staff of committees and sub-committees. These employees help Congress in undertaking research and drafting for policy formulation. Thus, they contribute to rectify a serious imbalance between the power of Congress and that of the executive branch (Cochran *et al.*, 1993:2).

Circumstances and the political, economic, social and international environments in which a policy is formulated has an influence on it. How this influence comes about is explained hereunder.

3.5.5 Circumstances or the environment

Circumstances refer to the environment as a whole in which the government operates. The environment includes the state of community life with respect to economic, technological and social matters. Apart from the aforementioned factors that have an influence on policy formulation, geographical and climatic conditions also have a role to play. For example, the Minister of Finance could introduce a compulsory savings levy to fight inflation; or request more money to assist farmers during a drought. The Minister of Education may introduce abolishment of school uniforms. Economic policies could be introduced to protect the balance of payments, bring about import control, and allocate quotas for import and export purposes. Dry climatic conditions and land that is not arable have necessitated the formulation of policy with respect to conservation of water and forestry. Other factors that influence policy on the state of community life and call for adjustment of education policy are technological developments; population increase and urbanisation; crises, natural disasters, war and depression; international relations; and economic and industrial development (Cloete, 1998:133-134).

Each technological development has its own influence on policy formulation. For example, the motor car. The ever-increasing number of motor vehicles on the roads

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have forced the Ministry of Transport to formulate policies that relate to licensing of vehicles and drivers, compulsory insurance, traffic control, tarred roads and tollgates. An increase in population and urbanisation also necessitates formulation of appropriate policies to deal with health services, housing, water, protection against pollution of food, as well as water and air, and slum clearance (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:1). Such policy adjustments for the stated matters could necessitate adaptation of education policies.

Government is duty-bound to take action to prevent or at least relieve suffering and hardship during crisis periods. For example, the government should take precautionary measures to avoid an economic decline. During floods and after powerful thunderstorms, the government has to provide assistance to the communities adversely affected. War also forces government to come up with policies on price control, the rationing of food and fuel (Cloete, 1998:134). International relations influence a number of policies. For example, South Africa takes part in the following international institutions: United Nations, the International Civil Aviation Organisation, the Universal Postal Union and the International Monetary Fund. The activities of these institutions influence national policies of each member state.

In a similar way technological developments require a properly educated and trained public personnel corps. Technology, for example, demands the ability to read, write, use the computer and be able to communicate with counterparts in the business sector. Therefore policies are required to capacitate members of society to participate in developing the public service sector to provide technologically driven services.

Economic and industrial development also influence policy formulation. A community that is economically and industrially developed could require more public services than a developing community. Hence, policies must be formulated in keeping with the demands of economic and industrial development (Cloete, 1998:134).

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Factors which self-evidently influence policy formulation are the needs and expectations of the population as described below.

3.5.6 Needs and expectations of the population

Public institutions are established to address specific needs and justified expectations of the population. Normally, the public will become aware of a need and then the public or an interest group will make representations to government for the need to be satisfied. For example, churches may request that alcoholics be treated, commerce may request the lifting of restrictions on imported goods and requests for the introduction of a state lottery. To address all these needs and expectations, policies must be formulated to give effect to appropriate activities (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:4-5).

For government to address public needs and expectations, money is needed. In other words, the more the public demands are acknowledged, the more money is needed to pay for consequential public services. Since the major source of income of the government is tax, taxpayers will have to pay more tax to pay for increasing public services. This is a paradox because the population prefers to pay less tax, but satisfying every demand will bring about expenditure. Responding to public needs and expectations could necessitate increases in tax (Cloete, 1998:135).

State departments have been established to address diverse needs and expectations of the population. For example, the Department of Health looks after the health of the population while the Department of Police Services fights crime. To respond to needs and expectations of the population, numerous public corporations and research institutions have been established to cater for the needs of the population which cannot be met by state departments. It is also worth noting that the activities of state departments, corporations and research institutions are governed by policies which could even have been substantiated by law. Therefore, it could be concluded that recognised

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human needs and expectations influence policy formulation (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:12). The education policies could have to be adjusted to provide for the needs of the adapted public sector.

3.5.7 Policies of political parties

Both in democratic countries and one-party states the leaders of political parties govern. The ways in which they govern their countries are based on their policies. It, therefore, follows that when a new political party wins an election and thus comes into power, it could introduce policy changes. The changes could affect the activities of various public and private institutions (Cloete, 1998:135).

Although policy changes could be introduced by a new political party when it comes into power, most public institutions could continue as before the election or even *coup d'etat*. This is the case particularly with routine work such as the registration of births, marriages and deaths. In addition, police, prison and defence services will always be needed in the same way. However, the policy concerning the provision of the services could change in keeping with the policies of the new ruler(s). Other matters which could change when a new political party or ruler takes over the government, are priorities. Although a new political party will still need police services, its priority might shift from urban to rural areas. It could nevertheless be accepted that the policies of political parties and their leaders will influence policy formulation (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:48).

Various new policies have to be formulated when a radical change occurs in government. For example, when a fully representative government came into power in 1994, it had to change nearly every facet of the South African society. Amongst others, it had to eradicate injustices of the past, such as differentiated education systems. It could thus be stated that the current educational system could be expected to deviate significantly from past educational policies. Outcomes-based policy is aimed at capacitating

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formerly disadvantaged communities, bridging educational gaps and providing a work-force capable of rendering equal services to all members of society effectively and efficiently.

After the description of policy formulation, it is necessary to have a closer look at policy analysis. Hereunder follows an explanation of policy analysis.

3.6 POLICY ANALYSIS

Every field of study has its own history, which explains how, why and by whom it was introduced. Policy analysis is no exception. Hereunder the origins of policy analysis follows.

3.6.1 Origins of policy analysis

According to Mannheim and Rich (1981:321) the origins of policy analysis can be traced back to the attention which was given to causes, content and consequences of government action by political scientists. Research in the areas of government activities culminated in a new subfield of study known as *policy analysis*.

The historical and developmental phases of policy analysis are, according to Wissink (in Cloete and Wissink, 2002:58-59) as follows –

- ❖ growth of empirical research;
- ❖ growth and political stability;
- ❖ professionalisation of the social sciences;
- ❖ policy science movement;
- ❖ growth of the analycentric perspective; and
- ❖ institutionalisation of policy analysis.

These matters are described briefly below.

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Growth of empirical research was a result of basic change in procedures followed to understand society and its challenges. In addition, the change came in the form of growth and empirical research, quantitative and policy-related research (Quade, 1975: 7-8).

Growth of political stability was a spin-off of new systems of centralised government. This system of government had a profound influence on science. The new empirical approach to the production of policy-relevant knowledge was in response to the need of reliable information for policy formulation. Consequently the focus on specialised knowledge to solve public problems reared its head (Wissink, in Cloete & Wissink, 2002:58).

Professionalisation of the social sciences which occurred during the 20th century redirected the production of policy-relevant information. The 20th century approach to policy analysis was that knowledge was no longer provided by a heterogenous group made up of bankers, industrialists, journalists and scholars who guided various groups of people interested in statistics. The responsibility to provide relevant knowledge for policy analysis became the responsibility of university professors and professional bureaucrats teaching policy sciences. These groups of experts were called upon from time to time by government to provide professional backing and advice on policy-making (Quade, 1975:9).

The policy science movement which came after World War II can be regarded as a precursor of Policy Analysis. At that stage Policy Analysis was not confined to only the aims of science, but was addressed to practical issues such as decision-making capabilities in democratic societies (Wissink, in Cloete & Wissink, 2002:58-59).

Growth of the analycentric perspective indicates that Policy Analysis was developed not

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by the activities of academics, but by the activities of practitioners in government service, such as engineers, town planners, systems analysts, operations researchers and applied mathematicians. The trust to shape the activities of these practitioners was to develop analytical tools such as planning-programming-budgeting systems, operations research, and systems analysis (Wissink, in Cloete & Wissink, 2002:59).

Institutionalisation of policy analysis was ushered in by Yehezkel Dror. The National Association of School of Public Affairs and Administration declared Policy Analysis as one of the five major subjects. Dror (1986:197-203) made the following three statements which ushered in the institutionalisation of Policy Analysis as an academic discipline:

- ❖ Systems analysis which emphasises quantitative tools and an economic view of the world is of limited help in government.
- ❖ Policy Analysis should make use of proven methods of systems analysis with qualitative methods.
- ❖ Policy Analysis should be institutionalised with a specific function in government, namely, to contribute to policy-making.

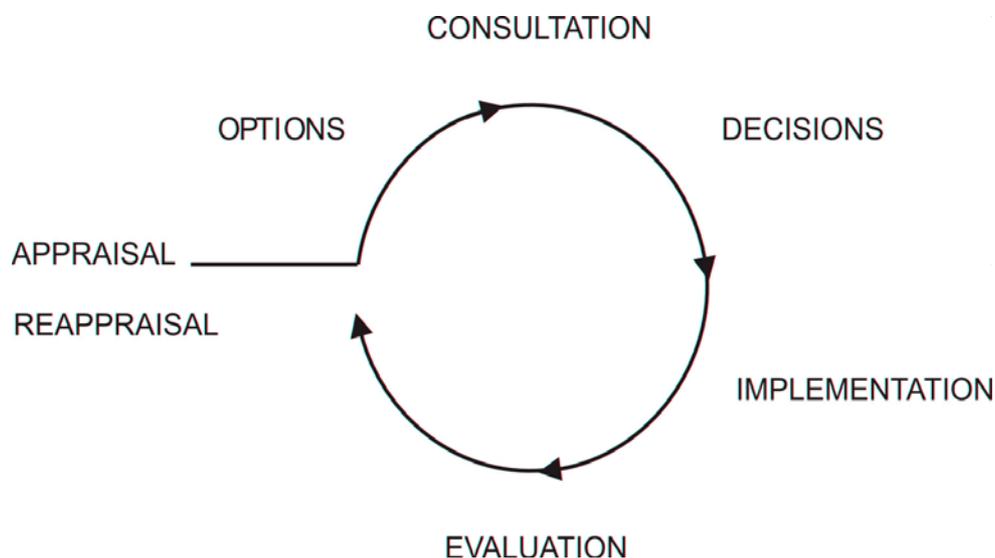
After tracking the origin and development of Policy Analysis as a discipline, it is equally important to explore the process of policy analysis.

3.6.2 Defining Policy Analysis

According to the Commonwealth Secretariat (January 1996) policy analysis includes the entire range of activities through which policy is developed and implemented. This process starts with an appraisal of the options, followed by a choice of the preferred alternative, and thereafter consultation with interested stakeholders. Implementation follows formulation. To complete the cycle of policy analysis evaluation and appraisal

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of policy outcomes is required. Diagrammatically, the policy-making cycle is depicted



by the figure below.

[Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996:9]

Figure 3.1: Policy-making cycle

Earlier definitions of policy analysis were mainly descriptions of its nature. Dror put forward some criteria of Policy Analysis in an attempt to define the boundaries of this field of study. The criteria in question, according to Carley (1980:24) are –

- ❖ attention paid to the political aspects of decision making;
- ❖ a broad description of what decision making is;
- ❖ emphasis on ability to formulate new policies;
- ❖ heavy dependence on qualitative methods;
- ❖ emphasis of thinking with the future in mind; and
- ❖ a logical step-by-step approach in recognition of the complexity of means-end interdependence, numerous factors that must be taken into account in decision making, as well as the sensitivity of every analysis.

The aforementioned approaches to policy analysis lay emphasis on the political aspects and the qualitative method. In 1969 Wildavsky expanded this view of policy analysis by

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arguing that it was equivalent to strategic planning. In other words, policy analysis was concerned with plans with major consequences (Carley, 1980:24).

In 1971 Dror revisited his earlier definition of Policy Analysis as a discipline. He defined it as an approach and methodology for design and identification of preferred policy alternatives. Building on this foundation laid by Dror, Ukeles in 1997 defined Policy Analysis as the systematic investigation of alternative policy options and the justification of the policy alternative chosen. This is a problem-solving approach to the definition of Policy Analysis. The approach encompasses the collection and interpretation of information, and to predict the consequences of alternative courses of action (Dror, 1986:207).

An alternative approach to define Policy Analysis (the Science) is to distinguish it from Policy Science and meta-policy making. Simply stated, Policy Science is discipline research, that is, a focus on academic excellence and the pursuit of knowledge. Meta-policy making is concerned with the characteristics of the policy making system. However, neither of the two approaches is Policy Analysis which usually involves working directly or indirectly for government or private institutions interested in influencing policy making (Carley, 1980:25).

Coleman in 1972 formulated the undermentioned distinguishing features of Policy analysis which also contributed to a more refined definition:

- ❖ The audience is a set of political actors, ranging from a single client to a whole populace, and the research is designed as a guide to action.
- ❖ Partial information available at the time an action must be taken is better than complete information after that time.
- ❖ The criteria of parsimony and elegance that apply in discipline research are not important; the correctness of the predictions or results is important.
- ❖ The ultimate product is not a contribution to existing literature knowledge, but a social policy modified by the research results.

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- ❖ It is necessary to treat differently policy variables which are subject to policy manipulation, and situational variables which are not.

A more comprehensive and workable definition of Policy Analysis (the science) comes from Walker and Fisher (1994:1), who state that it is a systematic approach to making policy choices in the public sector. It is a process that generates information on the consequences that would follow the adoption of one or other of various policies. Its purpose is to assist policymakers in choosing a preferred course of action from among complex alternatives under uncertain conditions.

Weimer and Vining (1999:27) concur with the first part of Walker and Fisher's definition of Policy Analysis when they state that it is client-oriented advice relevant for public decisions which take into account social values. This indicates that proposed action should take into account possible consequences. Values come into play in the sense that a decision should always take into account the welfare of the population. Hence Policy Analysis should take a comprehensive view of consequences which respect social values.

Another definition of Policy Analysis (the science) is given by Nagel (1995:181) who states that it is the study of nature, causes and effects of ways in which governments attempt to deal with social problems. Systematically evaluating the effects of alternative policies involves processing a set of goals to be achieved, alternative policies for achieving them, and relations between goals and their alternatives in order to arrive at or explain the best alternative, combination, allocation or predictive decision-rule.

The purpose of policy analysis spells out three major characteristics of this field of study. Firstly, it could be used as a tool to help policymakers to make a decision. It could serve as a gauge on which to base the decisions of policymakers. That is, it could help them to choose from many policies a preferred alternative, the affordability of the cost of implementing that policy and clarification of the public problem to be

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addressed. Secondly, policy analysis is a complex process as it contains numerous variables, feedback loops, and interactions with stakeholders. In this regard the Commonwealth Secretariat (January 1996) concurs with Walker and Fisher when it states that Policy Analysis is not a one-dimensional activity. Thirdly, it is uncertain about the choices to be made as these are based on incomplete knowledge about policy alternatives and unknown projected consequences in the future. A further uncertainty is brought about by the fact that alternatives must be compared with their expected consequence as well as by the risks of being wrong (Walker & Fisher, 1994:1).

Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt and Jonker (2001:101-102) summarise the four characteristics of policy analysis as follows:

- ❖ Policy analysis utilises the analytical techniques and research methodologies developed in modern democracies, particularly those developed in Economics, and apply them to current government problems.
- ❖ Policy analysis draws upon any discipline for relevant information and expertise. In particular, theories pertaining to Political Science, Public Management, Sociology and Economics can effectively be utilised.
- ❖ Policy analysis does not aim to develop theory, but to provide solutions to the current problems of government.
- ❖ The selection and definition of the problems for study is a product of continuous dialogue between government actors and the policy analyst.

Cloete (1998:145) and Walker and Fisher (1994:2) provide disparate descriptions of the policy analysis process. The processes differ in the sense that the first approach is to study the process by analysing the smallest units that make up policies. The second may be regarded as a holistic approach, as it looks at a complete policy.

According to Walker and Fisher (1994:2), the policy analysis process involves per-

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forming the same set of logical steps. These steps may not follow each other in the same sequence. The steps in question are:

Step 1 Identifying the problem. Here issues to be addressed are identified, the contexts within which they are to be analysed and to function. Stakeholders to be affected by the policy decision are also identified. Major operative factors in deciding on the fast approach are discovered at this step.

Step 2 Identifying the objectives of the new policy. In general terms, a policy provides a set of objectives meant to solve a problem. The policymaker has certain objectives that would solve a public problem. With this step policy objectives are determined.

Step 3 Decide on criteria to evaluate alternative policies. The emphasis here is on the measurement of performance and costs because determining the degree to which a policy meets an objective involves measurement. This step involves identifying consequences of a policy that can be measured and that are directly related to the objective(s). It also involves identifying the costs that would be incurred in implementing the policy, and how they are to be measured.

Step 4 Select the alternative policies to be evaluated. The step specifies the policies whose consequences are to be estimated. The current policy in operation should be used as a point of reference in order to determine the improvement to be made by policy alternatives.

Step 5 Analyse each alternative. Here the consequences that are likely to follow if an alternative is implemented are determined. The consequences are measured in terms of the criteria set in Step 3.

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Step 6 Compare the alternatives in terms of projected costs and benefits. At this step the alternatives are ranked in order of desirability and choosing the one preferred. If none of the alternatives is chosen, return to Step 4.

Step 7 Implement the chosen alternative. This step involves obtaining acceptance of the new policy from within and outside the government. Training of people who are to use the new procedures and performing other tasks that would help the implementation of the new policy.

Step 8 Monitor and evaluate the results. This step ensures that the policy is accomplishing its intended objectives. Failing which the policy may have to be modified or discarded or a new study performed.

According to Cloete (1998:145) and Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt and Jonker (2001:101) policy analysis and evaluation processes are the following:

- (1) Studying the “correct” policy in use or lack of policy.
- (2) Identifying a dysfunctional situation that arose because of lack of policy or despite the existing policy.
- (3) Studying the current policy in operation to determine what factors contributed to its inability to achieve its objectives.
- (4) Forecasting the future.
- (5) Preparing new or modified policies for further action by the administrators or the political office-bearers.

The two processes of evaluation described above are different but complementary. Both of them contribute to a deeper understanding of the sequence of events to be followed in analysis of a policy.

In a nutshell, Policy Analysis (the science) can be described as a field of study that

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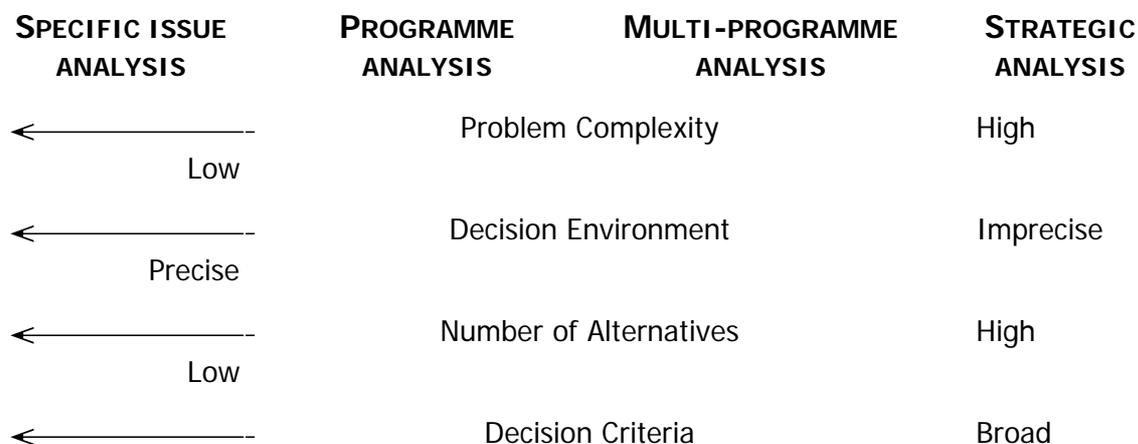
identifies public problems; how those problems could be solved; who is affected by the problems; procedures and methods to be used to solve the problems; resources, both human and material, needed to address the problems; when the public problem should be tackled head-on; and the benefits to be derived from implementing the proposed public policy.

The foregoing explanation of Policy Analysis as a discipline clarifies the main purpose of this study and its scope dealt with below.

3.6.3 The scope of policy analysis

The scope of policy analysis can be defined in terms of the classes of policy problems to which it is applied and by looking at the range of activities that it tackles. One classification is in terms of the types of analytic activity needed to solve a public problem. In this regard there are four categories, namely, specific issue analysis, programme analysis, multi-programme analysis and strategic analysis. These classes are distinguished by (a) increasingly complex policy questions; (b) increasingly imprecise policy making environment; (c) a wider range of possible alternatives; (d) increasingly broad criteria; and (e) increasingly time to do policy analysis (Carley, 1980:27-28).

The following figure of Policy Analysis by problem type is provided by Carley (1980:28).



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identified by the researcher as serving a valuable purpose.

- (2) Gathering information for policy making and adaptation which provides policy-makers with information and advice.
- (3) Policy monitoring and evaluation which comes after analysis of policies and programmes.
- (4) Analysis for policy determination which is the study of the inputs and transformational processes operating on the construction of public policy.
- (5) Analysis of policy content which is the study of the intentions and operation of specific policies.

From the explanation of policy analysis it has become clear that it is crucial to any policy implementation model. The definitions shed light on certain aspects of the policy process that policy analysis focus on. Distinguishing features, steps or stages and scope of policy analysis are described to provide an understanding of its activities. This information is helpful in the search for an implementation model of outcomes-based education policy. Thus, in the case of the thesis the focus will be on the techniques of policy analysis and their contribution to the implementation model.

3.7 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Policy implementation is a much more demanding task than policy formulation. There are more impediments blocking intended actions by government than there are to materialise results. This underlines the extreme difficulties of administering and implementing public programmes (Peters, 1993:91). This is furthermore explained by the fact that policy implementation is a process which could consist of several stages. According to Sabatier and Mazmanian (1995:167) the stages in question are the decisions and outputs of the implementing agencies; the compliance of target groups with those decisions; the actual impacts of those decisions; the political system's evaluation of a statute in terms of major revisions or attempted revisions in its content.

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The view of policy implementation as a process is also expressed by Majone and Wildavsky (1995:142) when they state that it is not a simple matter; the right implementation activities should be found. In practice, implementing a policy is usually a unitary matter. Bardach (1995:139) also views policy implementation as a process of assembling the elements required to produce a particular outcome. Contrariwise, policy implementation denotes action or a series of activities. In this regard Bouser, McGregor and Oster (1996:43) state that it is action that bring into being the purposes of a policy. The one or more actions culminate in concrete terms in the form of constitutions, laws, court decisions, administrative actions, regulations, budgets, treaties, informal agreements, executive orders, and legislative precedent. Furthermore Bouser, McGregor and Oster (1996:51) regard a policy decision as an intention which needs an implementation plan to achieve its intended purpose. Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt and Jonker (2001:96) also hold the view that the implementation phase entails translation of decisions into actions. This stage could be political in character and involve important decisions about the broad policy guidelines agreed to by Parliament.

According to Brynard and Erasmus (1995:166) research has indicated that policy implementation occurs in phases. Three generations of research in this area are identified.

The first generation was of the opinion that after a policy has been formulated, implementation would happen automatically. The second generation challenged the view of the first generation. Its views were based on studies conducted on challenges in specific cases. It further stated that policy implementation could be a political process which could be much more complex than policy formulation. Peters (1993:91) concurs with this finding when he states that policy implementation is a much more demanding task compared to policy formulation. This is so because there are many more impediments blocking intended actions by government than there are of making results materialise. In fact, this state of affairs underlines the extreme difficulties of

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administering and implementing public programmes. The third generation, unlike the second one, did not study the specific implementation limitations. Its focus was on the understanding of how implementation works in general and how to improve it (Brynard & Erasmus, 1995:167).

Another view on policy implementation is based on the top-down approach and the bottom-up approach. The top-down approach starts from the authoritative policy decision at the central level of government and asks the following questions:

- ❖ To what extent were the actions of policy implementers in keeping with the objectives and procedures of a policy?
- ❖ To what extent were the objectives of the policy realised within a specified period?
- ❖ Which major factors affected policy outputs and impacts?
- ❖ How was the policy reformulated in order to make it more effective? (Brynard & Erasmus, 1995:169).

The bottom-up approach was a reaction to the top-down approach. It studied weaknesses and proposed alternatives to eradicate the shortcomings. For instance, the fact that the policy-makers had to exercise direct and determinant control over policy implementation was vehemently approved. Furthermore, it was preferable that analysis should be the responsibility of policy implementors and not of policy-makers. Policy implementors, because of their location, are in a better position to propose modification of policies to suit the local needs (Brynard & Erasmus, 1995:169).

A closer look at these two approaches to policy implementation reveals that they are not mutually exclusive. In fact, both provide useful insight into policy implementation. It must also be stated that both approaches have strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the identification and utilisation of the strengths of the top-down and the bottom-up approaches could lead to an improved policy implementation process.

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Policy implementation has its own shortcomings or problems. According to Milward and Provan (1993), one such difficulty is experienced in a federal government system when the relation between levels of government is based on bargaining rather than hierarchy.

They state another problem of policy implementation which could be encountered when non-public entities implement public policy. The major difficulty experienced is how to control the behaviour of people who are not public servants and whose loyalty, in addition to serving their clients, is either to the prosperity of their own undertakings or to their non-profit calling.

Understanding policy implementation is crucial for this thesis as it is about implementation of outcomes-based education policy. For successful implementation of any public policy, the theory and practice of policy implementation is essential. Hence, the description of policy implementation is relevant to the thesis.

3.7.1 Factors to be considered in policy implementation

There are specific factors which contribute to the limited success of public policies. According to Peters (1993:91-92) the factors in question are –

- ❖ legislation;
- ❖ policy issues;
- ❖ political setting;
- ❖ interest group;
- ❖ institutional setting;
- ❖ institutional disunity;
- ❖ standard operating procedures;
- ❖ institutional communication;
- ❖ time problems;
- ❖ incomplete and inaccurate public planning; and

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- ❖ interinstitutional politics within public institutions

These matters are dealt with seriatim below.

(a) Legislation

The first factor that could affect the suitability of a public policy for effective implementation is the nature of the legislation. Laws differ according to their specificity, clarity and the area to be addressed. Another dissimilarity of laws is the extent to which they bind individuals and institutions that have to implement them (Peters, 1993:92). These views are also shared by Weimer and Vining (1999:396-397) when they state that the logic of a policy is a chain of hypotheses. These hypotheses are determined by the characteristics of the policy and the circumstances of its adoption. In general terms, the greater the legal authority the adopted policy gives implementors, the greater their capacity to compel hypothesised behaviour. Furthermore, the stronger the political support an adopted policy enjoys, the greater the capacity of the implementors to achieve intended objectives.

Outcomes-based education policy is a product of the legislation. It is the South African government, through its Department of Education, that decided that outcomes-based education be adopted as policy in terms of appropriate legislation.

(b) Policy issues

At times legislators choose to legislate for policy areas where there is a lack of information about causal processes to enable them to make effective policy choices. Regardless of their intentions, such efforts are bound to fail. It is only when legislators have possible combinations of knowledge of causation and information that there is a strong likelihood of effective implementation of legislation (Cochran *et al.*, 1993:1-2).

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An example of large-scale policy formulation and implementation based on inadequate knowledge of patterns of causation was the war on poverty in the United States of America. Many theories were postulated about the causes of poverty. However, these theories were not based on the economic and social dynamics producing the problem of poverty. Hence, an erroneous decision was taken which declared war as the enemy. This wrong policy decision was described by Daniel P. Moynihan (Peters, 1993:92-93) as follows:

This is the essential fact: The government did not know what it was doing. It had a theory. Or rather a set of theories. Nothing more. The US government at this time was no more in possession of a confident knowledge as to how to prevent delinquency, cure anomic, or overcome that mind morning sense of powerlessness than it was the possessor of a dependable formula for motivating Vietnamese villagers to fight Communism.

Another factor which may serve as an impediment to policy implementation is the political setting. This is dealt with in the following paragraphs.

(c) Political setting

For legislation to be adopted, the majority of the members in the legislative must support it. This implies that participating political parties must come to a common or shared understanding. This is a difficult process because of competing interests of political parties which will entail trade-offs and coalitions that have to be entered into for the legislation to be passed. Unfortunately this political process may plant in legislation the seeds of its own destruction (Peters, 1993:93-94).

In order to accommodate the concerns of political parties, legislation is bound to be written in general language. By phrasing legislation in general and inoffensive

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language, legislators run the risk of making their intention unclear to those who must implement the law. This misinterpretation of the intention of the policy may result in implementors altering the entire meaning of the programme to address a public problem substantially (MacRae & Pitt, 1980:17-18).

Politics plays a pivotal role in the formulation of legislation. However, the political process followed to come to a political decision makes the implementation of the legislation ineffective. The compromises made by political parties in the formulation of the legislation contribute to the vagueness and lack of clarity of purpose. Consequently, implementation may be inhibited.

Interest groups also influence policy formulation as well as the resultant policy implementation as explained below.

(d) *Interest group*

Government could experience problems with its efforts to regulate human behaviour through legislation. This severely complicates the implementation of a law. In addition, it is equally difficult to hold government accountable when it administers ambiguous legislation. The interest group liberalism inherent in the United States of America's politics also contributes to the vagueness and lack of clarity of intention of the laws. On account of public interest being defined in terms of many private interests, implementation of legislation could differ from the intentions of the legislators. Furthermore, implementation could be undertaken to serve the interest of the grouping (political party or executive institution) to which it owes allegiance at the expense of the intentions of the legislators. Hence interest group liberation could contribute to adverse policy implementation (MacRae & Pitt, 180:38-39).

In particular instances the law itself makes room for interest groups to be consulted

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and afforded an opportunity to make an input during a policy-making process. For example, section 5 of the *National Education Policy Act, 1996* (Act 27 of 1996), states that the Minister of Education must determine the national education policy after consultation with appropriate bodies. This creates an opportunity for the interest groups to either support or reject the proposed policy. In other words, interest groups may become a stumbling block for policy implementation if it does not serve their interest (Cloete, 1998:148).

Government could request a specific public and/or private institution to implement policy on its behalf. The social, political or geographic setting of such an institution could influence the policy implementation.

(e) *The institutional setting*

An institution to which a policy has been referred for implementation, may pose as an implementation threat. In the context of this thesis the institution is the Department of Education. This is not because of the venality of the institution or its bureaucrats, but its particular setting. Its internal dynamics often limit the ability of an institution to respond to policy changes and implement specific views or altered programmes (Peters, 1993:96).

Chris Hood (in Peters, 1993:96) proposes five characteristics of perfect administration of public programmes, which requires –

- ❖ unitary performance where it would be like an army marching to the same drummer;
- ❖ uniform norms and rules throughout the institution;
- ❖ no resistance to commands;
- ❖ perfect information and communication. and
- ❖ adequate time to implement the programme (Peters, 1993:96).

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The abovementioned requirements for successful implementation of a policy by a public or private institution are often absent or not fully present. Since a government usually relies on large institutions to implement its policies, difficulties arise in administration and implementation. In the case of education the provincial departments of education are responsible for implementation. These difficulties need not be insurmountable, but they must be understood and provided for, if successful implementation must take place.

It is prudent at this stage to look at the characteristics and difficulties in institutional structure that lead to difficulties in implementation.

(f) *Institutional disunity*

Public institutions rarely have unitary administrations. Indeed a number of causes of disunity are inherent in institutional structures. There could be disjunction between a central office and its regional institutions. Decisions taken by a central office must be implemented by field staff at the local level. Regional offices of the provincial Department of Education are in charge. If members of the field staff do not share the values and goals of the administrators in the central office, implementation problems are bound to occur. This disjunction of values could take several forms. For example, a change in the values and programmes could be required as a result of a change in the head of state or ministers, but the field staff could remain loyal to the older policies (Stone, 1996:74).

A more common disparity may occur between the goals of the central office and those of field staff because the latter could be more loyal to the clients. Field staff are usually close to their clients and may adopt the perspective of their clients with respect to policy and its implementation. The bond between the field staff and its clients could be stronger than their relationships with the central office because of frequent contact,

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sympathy, empathy and devotion to a common mission. Hence, the identification of the field staff with the clients could complicate the implementation of centrally formulated policy. Educators who are responsible for policy implementation should always be informed (Stone, 1996:78).

Community participation in decision-making lessens the control of central offices over the implementation of programmes. Developing community institutions that would facilitate participation is a major cause for pressure to divert the programme from centrally determined priorities to locally determined priorities. Undoubtedly, community participation have made policy implementation less successful. Another implementation problem originates from field staff who are compelled by local conditions not to follow centrally determined directives in order to perform a given task. Field staff, in order for them to get substantive compliance, may be compelled not to comply with procedural directives. Indeed rigidities resulting from strict central controls could actually produce less compliance in policy implementation. For instance, from time to time regional and provincial offices of the Department of Education issue circulars and guidelines to schools (Peters, 1993:97).

(g) *Standard operating procedures*

Institutions have developed standard operating procedures to respond to policy problems. When a client asks for assistance at a social service agency, the agency follows a standard pattern of response. For instance, specific forms must be filled out, particular personnel must interview the client, and prescribed criteria must be applied to determine the prospective client's eligibility for benefits (MacRae & Pitt, 1980:20).

Standard operating procedures are essential for the smooth running of an institution. They reduce the time spent processing new information and developing response. In fact, standard operating procedures are the learned response of the institution to certain problems. From the clients' point of view standard operating procedures are

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adopted to ensure equality and fairness for clients (MacRae & Pitt, 1980:20).

Although standard operating procedures are certainly important and generally beneficial, they could become impediments to realistic policy implementation. This is evident when a new policy or a new approach to a current policy is being considered. In such a case institutions are likely to continue in defining policies and problems in their standard manners, regardless as to whether the old definition or procedure no longer helps to implement the policy successfully. In addition, standard operating procedures also tend to produce inappropriate or delayed responses to crises. Consequently the Department of Education authorities issue guidelines and circulars to schools (Peters, 1993:99).

It is necessary to note that standard operating procedures are helpful in the implementation of established programmes. However, they are likely to be barriers to change and to the implementation of new programmes. Likewise, they may be stereotyped to allow response to non-standard situations or non-standard clients, thereby being useless to novel situations.

(h) *Institutional communication*

Communication plays a central role in any institution. Similarly, communication is vital in policy implementation. Hence the role played by communication for policy implementation needs close scrutiny.

Effective policy implementation requires the proper flow of information to, from and within every public institution. Accurate information is required without interruption for successful running of every public institution (Waugh & Manns, in Bergerson, 1991:61).

Public institutions tend to develop into bureaucracies in which information tends to be concentrated at the bottom. The field staff and the technical experts of an institution are in close contact with the environment but are at the bottom of the institutional structure. Thus, to provide for every change in its environment and to make appro-

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priate policy and implementation decisions, there must be continuous reliable up and down transmission. The more levels through which information is to be transmitted, the greater the probability that the information will be distorted. This distortion may come from random error or from deliberate distortion. Selective distortion comes about when at each level of the institution officials decide to transmit only information they believe their superiors wish to hear or the information which will boost the image of the subordinates. Furthermore, the superiors may assume distortion by their subordinates and on their own decide to correct the distortion. The result of the transmission of information through a hierarchical institution more often than not is rampant distortion and misinformation that limits the ability of an institution to implement policies successfully. In the case of schools information is sent from provincial offices to districts, to circuits and then to schools (Waugh & Mann, in Bergerson, 1991:133).

Another impediment to effective communication within an institution is secrecy or classified information. It is understandable that there must be a need for secrecy within some government institutions. Be that as it may, secrecy may inhibit both communication and implementation (Peters, 1993:101).

Free flow of information gathered from the environment of an institution is crucial to its performance. Therefore, the management of communication within an institution is an important component matter requiring reliable gathering of raw information and processing the results for implementation purposes. Internal hierarchical structures, differential commitment to goals, differences in the command of professional languages, all conspire to complicate institutional communication. This could hamper effective implementation of policies.

(i) *Time problems*

There are two time problems that inhibit the ability of institutions to respond to needs

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in their policy environment. One of them is a linear time problem in which the responses of implementing institutions tend to lag behind needs. This happens where institutions base their responses on lessons learned in the past rather than on current conditions. Institutions tend to lag behind by implementing programmes to deal with a crisis that has just passed, rather than the crisis they currently face or are about to face (La Plante, in Bergerson, 1991:73).

Other time problems are cyclical and delayed implementation. A typical example of this problem occurs in making and implementing a macroeconomic policy in which, even if the information available to a decision maker is timely and accurate, a delayed response may exaggerate economic fluctuations. Therefore, it is not sufficient merely to be right; an effective policy must be both correct and on time if it is to have the desired effect. In the case of outcomes-based education the timing is correct as the main purpose is to teach learners democratic principles and values (La Plante, in Bergerson, 1991:73).

(j) *Incomplete and inaccurate public planning*

A major challenge relating to the implementation of policy could arise when institutions plan their activities incompletely and inaccurately. Problems of this nature could be encountered because institutions could plan for implementation without access to relevant information and lack of cues to necessary choices. For example, clients might be required to fill out forms, but the institutions may forget to print the forms. More often than not textbooks are not available when a school term commences (Quade, 1975:250).

For the sake of effective management and implementation, planners must beforehand identify crucial potential blockages in the relevant institution and come up with possible solutions. It is not unusual for unexpected problems to arise especially with the

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introduction of a new policy. Hence, some planners prefer using smaller pilot projects instead of embarking upon large projects at once. This has the advantage of reducing costs should the project fail, and preparation of the institution to implement full-scale projects (Qudae, 1975:251).

Some projects will not require a pilot project before full-scale implementation. Their nature dictates that for them to be effective from the onset, they must be tackled full-scale and comprehensively. For example, a programme like a space programme which is designed to reach a major goal within a limited time and with an implementation instead of a pure research focus must be tackled full-scale and comprehensively to be effective. Outcomes-based education should be applied on the same principle – countrywide (Newcomer, in Bergerson, 1991:74-75).

In a democracy policies could be based on conditions affecting many parties and could have to be implemented by many interrelated public institutions. This could affect the implementation of policies adversely. Hence, a discussion on interinstitutional politics with respect to policy implementation ensues.

(k) Interinstitutional politics within public institutions

Normally public policies are designed for and implemented by a number of public and/or private sector institutions. Problems could then be encountered during implementation of the policies as the process could require the implementation structures of the institution or the pattern of interactions among institutions as they attempt to implement the public policy. Problems become more compounded when there is institutional and communication disunity as well as when the implementors of the public policy are not bound by loyalty to a single institution. The competing loyalties of relevant institutions and lack of interest in the effective implementation of a particular programme also serve as impediments to successful implementation. The

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situation might be worse if private contractors play a leading role in implementation because their goals of profit and contract fulfilment may conflict with goals of service delivery and accountability in the public sector (Ventriss, in Bergerson, 1991:148).

Within an institution or between implementing institutions there are specific clearance points, which are individual decision points that must be agreed to before any policy intention can be translated into action. Besides the problem of clearance points there may be impediments to the agreement, such as legal problems, budget problems or problems of building coalitions with other institutions. Statistically it has been proven that if each decision point is independent of others and if the probability of any decision maker's agreeing to the programme is 90 per cent (.9), then the probability of any two agreeing is 80 per cent (.9 × .9); and for three points, the probability would be 73 per cent (.9 × .9 × .9); and so forth. Apart from the problems associated with the clearance points, there are also limited political resources. All these factors, individually or jointly, pose a problem for the implementor succumbing to the pressures encountered in the implementation system (Peters, 1993:104-105).

Notwithstanding the problems stated above, chances of successful implementation are high if there can be persistence at each clearance point. As each clearance point is not independent of others, success at one may pave the way for success at others. Although policy implementation is a difficult task, it can be manipulated to enhance the chances of success (Ventriss, in Bergerson, 1991:150).

Identification of factors to be considered in policy implementation are necessary because they could influence a public policy from its formulation up to its implementation. Unless a thorough study is made of the impact of relevant factors on policy implementation, chances of successful implementation are slim. Taking into account the limited resources of public institutions necessary to satisfy numerous public needs, it is imperative to do everything possible to implement every public policy successfully.

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There to, it is crucial to know how each of these factors could affect outcomes-based education policy.

From the above description it is clear that there are critical variables for studying policy implementation. A description of them follow hereunder.

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3.8 CRITICAL VARIABLES FOR STUDYING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Policy implementation is a complex and broad process with political implications. The process of public policy implementation travels through a maze of unique situations. As the implementation process unfolds, there are critical variables that shape the directions that implementation might take. Scholars, from divergent perspectives (top down or bottom up) working on different issues like environment of education, in different political systems (federal or unitary state) and in countries at various levels of economic development have identified five critical variables for studying policy implementation. These five variables are also known as the 5-C protocol. The variables in question, according to Brynard (in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:178-179), are –

- ❖ content;
- ❖ context;
- ❖ commitment;
- ❖ capacity; and
- ❖ clients and coalitions.

3.8.1 Content

Policy content may be distributive, regulatory or redistributive. Distributive policies create public goods for the general welfare and are non-zero-sum in character; regulatory policies specify rules of conduct with punitive measures for non-compliance; and redistributive policies aim at changing allocations of wealth or power for some groups at the expense of others (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:1-5).

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3.8.2 Context

Policy implementation does not take place in a vacuum. Policies are implemented under specific political, social, economic and legal settings. The context under which a policy is being implemented may impact on the process positively or negatively. Hence, the contextuality of policy implementation is an important factor to be studied for policy implementation (Banting, in Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:148-149).

3.8.3 Commitment

Firstly, successful policy implementation depends, to a large extent, on the commitment of the implementors. Even if a policy satisfies all the requirements of cost-benefit analysis and is satisfactory in terms of policy content, and all the resources required are available, it will not be implemented if its implementers are not committed. It is further stated that commitment is essential at all levels through which the policy passes. Secondly, commitment influences will be influenced by the four remaining variables; namely, content, capacity, context, as well as clients and coalitions (Brynard, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:181).

3.8.4 Capacity

A government's aim to deliver public service and goods should be declared in relation to capacity which relates to its structural, functional and cultural ability to achieve set goals. Furthermore, capacity includes access to tangible resources such as human, financial, material, technological, logistical and others. Apart from tangible resources, capacity also refers to intangible elements such as leadership, motivation, commitment, willingness, courage, endurance and others. Besides the tangible and intangible factors of capacity, the political administrative, economic, technological, cultural and social environments within which a policy is implemented must be conducive to successful

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implementation. Education is about people and is meant to enlighten them; therefore, both tangible and intangible factors will be helpful (Brynard, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:181-182).

Authorities in this field of study are unanimous about the need of effective implementation capacity. Therefore it is crucial to know how capacity is created and utilised to reach stated policy objectives (Quade, 1975:255).

It is common knowledge that every state has limited resources at its disposal to produce and provide public goods and services. Consequently, it is advisable for government to structure its policy implementation in keeping with its capacity. In addition, the government is not compelled to produce all functions and services on its own, especially when it lacks capacity. It may resort to the so-called alternative service delivery mechanisms to customise and maximise the success of delivery in a given context. It follows that the role of the state in goods and service delivery can be that of a promoter, facilitator, regulator, observer or participant. In other words, there are alternative goods and service delivery mechanisms which the state may adopt in a policy implementation programme. The mechanisms in question, according to Brynard (in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:182-183), are –

- ❖ decentralisation;
- ❖ corporatisation;
- ❖ outsourcing;
- ❖ joint ventures;
- ❖ partnerships and alliances;
- ❖ regulations; and
- ❖ assistance and privatisation.

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It is necessary to measure the effectiveness of capacity. In the absence of objective criteria to match the role of capacity, the following questions have proved to be helpful.

Firstly, according to Brynard (in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:183), it should be asked whether the traditional public service agency concerned can provide the service –

- ❖ at the required level in terms of quantity, quality and cost-effectiveness?
- ❖ in the required way, that is, by participatory or people-centred manner?
- ❖ with the required legitimacy and controls?

Secondly, a government can improve its policy implementation strategy by reducing big public bureaucracies to smaller ones. This may take place by deciding that selected policy implementation functions should be taken over by institutions which are outside the public sector (Quade, 1975:255).

Thirdly, a government can improve the effectiveness of its policy implementation by moving away from separate and isolated policy and financial planning and implementation to integrated and co-ordinated strategic management practices at all levels of an institution (Brynard, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:184).

Fourthly, government may change from an input, resource-focused administration to an input, result-based management system to improve capacity implementation (Brynard, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:184 and Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:14).

Fifthly, government may change from a closed bureaucracy-dominated work environment to a transparent, accountable and participatory public policy process (Brynard, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:184 and Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:16).

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Sixthly, and lastly, in order to improve its policy implementation capacity, government may change from simple cash budgeting and accounting methods and annual financial planning cycles to more complex accrual budgeting and accounting practices and multi-year financial planning cycles (Brynard, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:184).

According to Bulmer *et al.* (1986:28-30), experiences of the South-East Asian countries; namely, Malaysia, Thailand, Phillipines and Indonesia, indicate that there are pre-requisites for successful policy implementation, which have the following characteristics –

- ❖ committed, strong, competent and honest political and administrative leadership and direction;
- ❖ the existence of and consensus on a clear, national vision and attainable action plans in strategic policy sectors;
- ❖ the availability of resources and the creative, pragmatic and co-ordinated utilisation thereof in the public, private and voluntary sectors of society;
- ❖ appropriate design, implementation of monitoring evaluation and review of policies;
- ❖ a developmental social and institutional culture with a strong work ethic;
- ❖ responsive or amendable democratic and economic environments; and
- ❖ a substantial measure of good luck.

3.8.5 Clients and coalitions

In the interest of efficiency, cost-effectiveness and transparency, government has to join forces with coalitions of interest groups, opinion leaders and other parties who support a particular policy and its implementation. A change of power from one group to another could produce a corresponding shift in the implementation plan. It follows that the support of clients and outsider coalitions could be important factors in policy implementation. In implementing outcomes-based education it is essential that there

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must be closer co-operation and collaboration between provincial departments of education, regional offices, circuits, school governing bodies and schools (Brynard, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:185).

On account of the fact that clients and coalitionists could influence policy implementation favourably or unfavourably, the influence of each need to be determined. This exercise will help to ascertain which clients and coalitions need to be taken seriously in the policy implementation process. Similarly, it will also indicate insignificant clients and coalitions that may be relegated or totally ignored for implementation of a particular policy (Quade, 1975:263-267).

After a closer assessment of public policy implementation, it should be possible to evaluate its measure of success.

Critical variables for studying policy implementation such as content, context, commitment, capacity, and clients and coalition provide valuable information that will contribute to successful policy implementation. For example, it is necessary to know the content of the public policy; the context within which the policy must be applied is essential, commitment of policy-implementors for successful implementation is crucial; capacity of both policy implementors and clients will contribute to successful implementation; and the needs and influence of clients and coalitions may determine the success or failure of the public policy being implemented. Hence, it is crucial to take into account critical variables for studying policy implementation for the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

3.9 MONITORING POLICY OUTCOMES

Monitoring is the policy-analytical procedure which is utilised to extract information about causes and effects of public policies. As a result, monitoring is a primary source

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of knowledge about policy implementation because it describes relationships between policy programme operations and their outcomes. Therefore, monitoring is useful in the sense that it describes and explain public policies; that is, monitoring is primarily concerned with establishing factual premises about public policies. Furthermore, monitoring produces results during and after policies have been adopted and implemented. On the contrary, forecasting seeks to establish factual premises before implementation (Dunn, 1994:335). In this regard Starling (1979:697) concurs when he states that monitoring is an activity that evaluates continuously the feedback of an operation against established criteria or standards.

Dunn (1994:335-336) maintains that monitoring performs at least four major functions in policy analysis. These functions are compliance, accounting, auditing and explanation.

- ❖ Monitoring helps to determine whether the actions of the participants in public policy implementation are in compliance with relevant standards, procedures and legislation.
- ❖ Monitoring is instrumental in determining as to whether resources and services provide intended results for specified target groups and beneficiaries – that is, it performs an auditing function.
- ❖ Monitoring provides information that is helpful in accounting for social and economic changes that occur due to public policy implementation over time.
- ❖ Monitoring also generates information that helps to explain why the outcomes of implementation of programmes could differ from those envisaged by public policies.

For successful monitoring of public policies in any given area, information that is relevant, reliable, and valid is required. For instance, in implementing outcomes-based education policy, relevant information that would enhance successful implementation is required. Information acquired through monitoring must be relevant and reliable. This

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implies that observations of evaluation of public policy and its implementation should be reasonably precise and dependable. The implementation of a public policy is the performance of a particular task to satisfy a felt need. Thus, it is essential to determine whether information about policy outcomes actually test what it is supposed to measure – that is, whether it is valid information (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 1999: 279).

In monitoring policy outcomes, it is imperative to differentiate between two kinds of consequences; namely, outputs and impacts. Policy outputs could be goods, services, or resources provided for target groups and beneficiaries. On the one hand, the beneficiary could be a group for whom the effects of policies are beneficial or valuable. On the other hand, a target group could be persons, communities, or organisations on whom a public policy or programme is expected to have an effect. Policy impacts, contrariwise, are actual changes in behaviour or attitudes that come about as a result of policy implementation. In the case of the implementation of outcomes-based education policy outputs is effective teaching while policy impacts are creative and independent thinking learners (Dunn, 1994:338, 396-397).

Starling (1979:99) provides another explanation of monitoring which is not contrary to the aforementioned viewpoints, but supplementary as well as complementary to them. He states that monitoring should accept uncertainty about the meaning and rate of change of unfolding developments. He continues that monitoring includes search, consideration of alternative possibilities and their effects, selection of critical parameters for observation, and a conclusion based on synthesis of progress and implications.

One important and widely applied form of evaluation is describing how a programme is being operated and assessing how well it is performing with its relevant intended functions. This form of evaluation does not involve a single distinct evaluation procedure; on the contrary, it involves a number of approaches, concepts, and methods that are used in different contexts and for different purposes. In this form of

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evaluation the focus is on the enacted programme itself – its operations, activities, functions, performance, component parts and resources. Although there are differing viewpoints on the name of this family of evaluation approaches, it is generally referred to as programme monitoring (Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey, 1999:192).

Programme monitoring is defined as the systematic document of key aspects of programme performance that are indicative of whether the programme is functioning as intended or according to some appropriate standard. It generally involves programme performance in the areas of service utilisation, programme organisation and outcomes.

Monitoring service utilisation involves examining the extent to which the intended target population requires comparison of the plan for what the programme should be doing with regard to service provision, and what is actually done. Monitoring programme impact entails a survey of the status of programme participants after they have received service to determine if it is in line with what the programme intended to accomplish (Quade, 1989:350).

Other than the aforementioned primary domains of service utilisation, programme monitoring may include information about resource expenditures that indicate whether the benefits of a programme justify its cost. Furthermore, monitoring may include an assessment of whether programme activities comply with legal and regulatory requirements; for example, whether affirmative action requirements have been met in the recruitment of staff (Strong & Robinson, 1990:78-79).

According to Rossi, Freeman & Lipsey (1999:192-193), programme monitoring specifically aim at answering such evaluative questions as:

- ❖ How many persons are receiving services?
- ❖ Are those receiving services the intended targets?
- ❖ Are they receiving the proper amount, type and quality of services?

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- ❖ Are there target groups that are not receiving services?
- ❖ Are members of the target population aware of the programmes?
- ❖ Are necessary programme functions being performed adequately?
- ❖ Is programme staff sufficient in numbers and competencies for the functions that must be performed?
- ❖ Is the implementation programme well organised? Do staff members work well as a team?
- ❖ Does the programme co-ordinate effectively with relevant existing programmes and organisations with which it must interact?
- ❖ Are programme resources, facilities and funding adequate to support basic programme functions?
- ❖ Are programme resources used effectively and efficiently?
- ❖ Are beneficiaries satisfied with the services they receive?
- ❖ Do beneficiaries engage in appropriate follow-up behaviour after receiving services offered by the programme?
- ❖ Are beneficiaries satisfied with the conditions, status and functionary results?
- ❖ Do participants retain satisfactory conditions, status or functioning for an appropriate period after completion of services?

From the aforementioned questions it is possible to deduce evaluative themes in programme monitoring. Virtually all themes involve adjectives such as appropriate, adequate, sufficient, satisfactory, reasonable, intended, and other phrases that indicate that an evaluative judgement is required. In answering these questions an evaluator or other responsible participants must not only describe the programme performance, but assess whether it is satisfactory. This, in turn, demands that there should be a basis for making a judgement. Hence the need for some defensible criteria or standards to apply (Strong & Robinson, 1990:123-124).

It is crucial that the implementation of outcomes-based education policy be monitored

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during and after implementation. This should take place at regular intervals on a continuous basis. As monitoring is goal-directed, it should also address questions raised by Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (1999:192-193). Answers to the questions will indicate clearly whether outcomes-based education policy has achieved intended objectives, whether there are sufficient resources to implement it, whether there is co-operation amongst staff members who implement it, are all role players participating in their respective roles? Are the recipients of the service and goods provided satisfied or not?

Monitoring is also helpful in generating information about the implementation of outcomes-based education policy that is relevant, reliable and valid. That is, monitoring will indicate how beneficial the implementation of this public policy is or not. In addition, monitoring could encompass specific functions as accounting, auditing, compliance and explanation. These functions as explained by Dunn (1994:335-336) will determine the utilitarian value of the implementation of outcomes-based education. Therefore, monitoring is essential in providing information that indicates to what extent the implementation of outcomes-based education is successful.

3.10 POLICY EVALUATION

Policy evaluation is needed to determine whether to continue with implementation of a policy or programme, or to curtail, terminate or expand it (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:210). Furthermore it is essential to know what policy evaluation is, how it is done and what constraints it.

3.10.1 Defining policy evaluation

Policy evaluation is a process of actions to determine the value or effectiveness of a policy with the aim of changing or rejecting it. It implies that the impact of the policy on its target should be established. This process consists of systematic description and

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judgements of programmes and determining whether the intended results are being achieved or not. Stated differently, policy evaluation is the use of a policy-analytic research method to measure the effectiveness of a policy project or programme with the intention of continuing, adjusting or terminating it (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:211).

Bouser, McGregor and Oster (1996:43) advance the view that policy evaluation should be concerned with assessing what actually happened as a result of the policy and its implementation. The question is whether the purposes of the policy are being met and how implementation might be improved. The evaluation might result in the policy being changed or even abandoned. Valelly (1993:262) concurs with the aforementioned views about policy evaluation stating that policies are usually evaluated as to whether they get the job well done and at what price.

Evaluation could be a management tool. In this regard Nachmias (1995:178) writes that evaluation may be a means to reduce or eliminate conflict in management. He continues that evaluation may be an indication that the policy is subject to negotiation and modification once the research findings become available. Moreover, evaluation may also serve the function of complacency reduction and thereby enhancing the chances of successful policy implementation.

Policy evaluation is used for assessing both the effectiveness and the impact of a policy. Van Niekerk, Van der Waldt and Jonker (2001:98) concur with this view arguing that policy evaluation is the continuous assessment of the outcomes. It focuses primarily on the output of policy. They further state that questions to be asked include: Did the policy work? Was it effective – if not, why not? Was it practical? What difference did it make?

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Policy evaluation may be regarded as both the end and the beginning of the policy process. According to Bouser, McGregor and Oster (1996:51) this stage is regarded as the end in that it follows all of the previous steps that led to the adoption and implementation of the new policy. They also argue that the purpose is to evaluate the success of the new policy to determine whether it accomplished the goals for which it was accepted. Furthermore, they state that evaluation procedures should be prepared well in advance of the implementation of the policy in order to include the collection of the necessary data and information in the implementation plan.

Evaluation can be seen as a beginning. In this regard Bouser, McGregor and Oster (1996:51-52) state that if evaluation is properly accomplished, the information gained from the evaluation sets the stage for commencing the succeeding policy process anew. They elaborate by stating that it can result in fine-tuning the existing policy or in the conclusion that an entirely new policy approach is needed. Consequently, some states have passed sunset legislation to ensure that public programmes for policy implementation do indeed receive periodic evaluation.

It is crucial to define and to understand both the meaning and implication of evaluation. This is necessary because the thesis is about the successful implementation of outcomes-based education policy. To determine its success it is imperative to evaluate the total purpose and implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

3.10.2 Reasons for policy evaluation

Research, according to Cloete (in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:212), indicates that policy evaluation is undertaken

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- ❖ to measure progress made towards the achievement of envisaged objectives;
- ❖ to learn how to programme policy review, redesign or implementation strategies;
- ❖ to test the feasibility of an assumption, principle, model, theory, proposal or strategy;
- ❖ to ensure political or financial accountability; and
- ❖ for public relations purposes.

Closely related to the reasons for undertaking policy evaluation are the benefits to be derived therefrom (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:212):

- ❖ It will provide precise evaluation of the nature and extent of the impacts that can be expected. Thus, it will help planners to identify projects or programmes that are likely to give value for money.
- ❖ It will indicate whether the unsatisfactory situations are due to internal or external factors. This will help to avoid projects or programmes that are likely to produce undesired results.
- ❖ It will single out factors contributing to project or programme impact. This will help planners to improve project or programme design.
- ❖ It will identify groups that stand to benefit least from certain kinds of projects or programmes. This will ensure that special measures be taken to encourage these groups to participate.
- ❖ It can estimate the time period during which the impacts are likely to occur. By so doing it will increase the precision of project analysis procedures.

Policy evaluation is by nature goal-directed; it focuses on a specific societal institution or technologies, processes or behaviour changes. Thus, it is necessary to understand the reasons for policy evaluation. This will contribute to the implementors of outcomes-based education policy taking their task seriously.

3.10.3 Policy evaluation foci

Policy evaluation may focus on one of the following aspects (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:213):

- ❖ A goal free or value free evaluation which is a description of intended and unintended changes in or impacts on structures, processes or behaviour patterns.
- ❖ The degree of success in achieving objectives; that is, the goal-effectiveness or adequacy of the project or programme.
- ❖ Cost-benefit ratios, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of performance and resource utilisation, as well as the level of productivity achieved.
- ❖ Participation, representativity, empowerment and satisfaction of the stakeholders or target audience.
- ❖ Equality and equity.
- ❖ The sustainability of the project or programme in one or more sectors such as financial, social, political, administrative, technological and so on.

Evaluation should not take place suddenly or abruptly or haphazardly, but should be a continuous function. Evaluation can be useful for problem definition, understanding of prior initiatives, community and institution receptivity to particular programmatic and policy approaches, and the impacts, both intended and unintended, that might occur as a result of different intervention strategies. These matters could be relevant for policy evaluation (Rist, 1995:xx).

Vedung (1997:101) identifies accountability, intervention and basic knowledge advancement as areas that evaluation may focus on or may be seen as purposes of evaluation. The key purpose for accountability evaluation is to find out whether educators have exercised their delegated powers and discharged their duties properly and that school principals evaluate their work. Accountability embraces the responsibilities of both the

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principal and the educator. The responsibilities of the principal are to issue orders and directives that the educators have to follow, while the responsibilities of the educators are to implement the instructions of the principal. That is, the agent does the accounting and the principal passes judgement. The aim is to improve performance. This is confirmed by Palumbo and Hallett (1995:38) when they state that the evaluator's role is to lead to agreement on intended performance and to come up with actions needed to improve and maintain performance.

According to Vedung (1997:102) evaluation may be seen as fundamental research that seeks to increase the general understanding of reality. Albaek (1995:15) also regards evaluation as research. This research tests the ways agencies function, the coping strategies of front-line service deliverers, or the effects of particular interventions. Such research may be devoid of practical implications in the immediate future or even in the long term. It seeks knowledge for knowledge's sake.

Evaluation is by nature goal-directed or focused on a particular matter. The aim is to assess the impact of the policy being implemented. The same applies to outcomes-based education policy. Teaching and learning are the outcomes-based education policy foci.

3.10.4 Evaluation decision

Evaluations could contribute to decisions with diverse objectives. Firstly, evaluations are undertaken to confirm what the administrators already know, and to provide authoritative arguments for doing what was envisaged originally. Secondly, this approach is essential to legitimate decisions. Thirdly, dialogue between ministry and executive public institution commonly occurs where a department argues against a proposed cut or for an increase in funds. Fourthly, evaluation could serve as corporate memory (Nyden, 1992:168).

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On account of its complex nature, evaluation needs thorough planning and implementation. Otherwise it will consume or waste resources. Hence, according to Cloete (in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:213-214), the following questions should be asked before a decision is taken to conduct an evaluation:

- ❖ Is there clarity about what is to be evaluated?
- ❖ Is the reason for evaluation clear and justified?
- ❖ Will the results influence future policy-making?
- ❖ Is there sufficient time for the evaluation?
- ❖ Is the evaluation feasible? Stated differently, can the information needed be obtained, causality determined and results reported in time?
- ❖ Are sufficient evaluation resources available?
- ❖ Is the evaluation worthwhile? Stated differently, is the project or programme significant enough and will the anticipated evaluation results be sufficiently important to justify the costs – direct, indirect, hidden and opportunity costs?

The evaluation should be embarked upon on condition that all these questions are answered in the affirmative or positively. Moreover, evaluation should not only be an orderly function, but should also be systematic and consequential.

Evaluation generates information that is crucial to the policy-maker to make informed decisions about the retention or amendment of existing policy and implementation processes. It provides justification for allocation of resources by the government to perform specific tasks by implementing public policies. In the case of outcomes-based education policy, evaluation should provide essential information as to whether the government is getting value for money.

3.10.5 Evaluation design

Evaluation design should apply for every evaluation decision. The following questions help to guide the evaluation design (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:214-215):

- ❖ What type of evaluation should apply and at what stage of the policy life cycle?
- ❖ What should be done to achieve the evaluation objectives?
- ❖ How should the evaluation results be measured and assessed? (What criteria, standards, values and indicators should be used?)
- ❖ Who should do it – insiders or outsiders?
- ❖ How will the conclusions be disseminated and utilised for maximum effect on the policy process?

The evaluation design indicates that there are different types of evaluation. These evaluation designs may be used in planning for evaluation of outcomes-based education. This is helpful as the evaluation design will contribute to making the evaluation process to be focused and relevant.

3.10.6 Types of evaluation

Policy evaluations arise under a number of circumstances. Researchers may choose to study the implementation of government policies. However, a programme manager may wish to better understand the relation between his/her activities and the ensuing impacts on society. From another perspective, governing bodies and the government might wish to have evidence in a particular case on whether or not the intended effects of government expenditure are meeting intended aims. In specific instances, there may be the need for research to produce a rationale for a particular programme or to demonstrate that the programme embarked upon is rationally managed. In each of all these cases, a particular form of evaluation is called for by an interested party. All or parts of the majority of evaluations have their origins under these circumstances

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(Mayne, 1992:3). This view of multiple purposes of evaluation is held by Lippincott and Stoker (1995:328) writing that to implement change it is necessary to coordinate the actions of numerous, autonomous actors with divergent interests. Contrariwise, Majone (1989:170) shares the aforementioned viewpoint by arguing that multiple evaluation starts with two basic questions, which are: "Evaluation by whom?" and "Evaluation of what?" The first question emphasises the importance of accounting for the presence of different evaluative roles, while the second question directs attention to the three basic modes of evaluation; namely, inputs evaluation, outcomes evaluation and process evaluation.

There are different types of evaluation which may be undertaken. The types of evaluation are policy stages and foci, time-frame and scope (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:215) as explained below.

(a) Policy stages and foci

This type of policy evaluation is divided into three distinguishable phases, which are planning or design stage, implementation stage and completion stage.

At the planning stage the feasibility study of the different policy options that may be chosen is undertaken. Herein factors like potential costs, benefits, constraints and the impact the policy may have on the existing ones are identified. In addition, feasibility studies may focus on policy of different sectors; for example, political, social, economic, technological. Techniques made use of in each phase could be statistical and projection, modelling, scenario-building, cost-benefit analysis and others (Cochran *et al.*, 1993:4).

At the implementation stage a policy has to be monitored in order to keep track of the time-frame, the spending in the programme, the progress towards objectives and both the quantity and quality of the outputs. Here project management techniques, which

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focus on the effectiveness, efficiency and levels of public participation are employed (Cochran *et al.*, 1993:4).

After the completion of the policy project or programme evaluation is undertaken to assess either the progress made towards achieving policy objectives or the results of the policy. The results should relate to positive or negative changes to the state of affairs before the policy was implemented. Thereafter causes to the changes are determined. Techniques used at this stage include a wide variety of approaches to data gathering and analysis. Summative oral evaluation should concentrate on the end product and the impact of the changes (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:216).

It is crucial to evaluate the impact of outcomes-based education. This will indicate whether the objectives of the policy have been met or not. Hence, the relevance of policy stages and foci to the thesis.

(b) *Time frame*

Any evaluation may be undertaken over either a short-term, medium-term or long-term period. Quantitative policy outputs may be easily assessed; for example, number of schools built. Intangible outputs or impact are difficult to measure, especially over a short-term period; for example, improved quality of life of a community once schools have become operational. Intangible outputs evaluation needs to take place over medium or long periods, e.g. increase in people formally employed after completing a particular number of years of education or having attained a particular educational standard (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:216).

Time is of the essence especially in policy evaluation. Considering the magnitude of the implementation on outcomes-based education, it is crucial to evaluate it in phases – short-term, medium-term and long-term.

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(c) Scope

Evaluation can be narrowly designed for one policy sector only or comprehensively to focus on the integrated assessment of several policy sectors simultaneously. Evaluations can be undertaken for a single policy project or a combination of different policy projects. However, it should be noted that any increase in the scope of an evaluation will also increase the complexity, the cost, and the project life of the evaluation (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:216-217). Policy evaluation is a complex, and at times, a time-consuming exercise. Therefore, it must be properly managed to yield desired results. Hence, a discussion on policy evaluation management ensues.

There are mainly two approaches to tackling or embarking on an assignment. It may be done in piece meal or in full, that is atomistically or holistically. Evaluation of outcomes-based education may be done atomistically or holistically.

3.10.7 Evaluation management

Amongst other considerations, the administrative culture appears to be essential for explaining why a number of countries took the lead in integrating evaluation of the administrative process and in professionalising it (Bemelmans-Videc, 1992:17). In addition, evaluation must have the support and commitment of supervisory functionaries and it requires information on programme performance to ensure that supervisors are accountable and can report to the office-bearers, Parliament and the public. It is support and commitment and the credibility of the findings and recommendations that ensures acceptance of evaluation by line managers. Evaluation results have been significant inputs in the development of new policies and programmes and in efforts to make existing programmes cost-effective. The acceptance within the institution that improved performance is a constant goal to be strived for, has resulted in the acceptance of critical findings as part of the search for how programmes and policies should

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be improved (Midgley, 1992:87). Hence the need for management processes of evaluation.

Factors that play significant roles are the building-blocks of evaluation management: examples are baseline and culmination data; plan and budget for evaluation; and evaluation approaches, methods and aids (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:217-218).

Since evaluation entails determining, measuring and assessing changes that occur in specific target groups, regions and sectors; one needs both a starting and an ending point. That is, evaluation depends on the availability of evaluation data for both the *status quo* at the beginning and at the cut-off point that signals the end of the evaluation period. The better the quality of the baseline and the culmination data, the more accurate the evaluation will be. Another significant aspect of evaluation management is the plan and budget for evaluation. At the inception of the policy project or programme different types of evaluation must be identified. This will make it possible to generate data systematically and effectively as well as monitoring resources, systems and procedures. This will ensure that an accurate estimate is made of the financial resources needed to undertake the evaluation. This will form part of the approved budget for the policy project or programme evaluation (Newcomer, in Bergerson, 1991:58).

No rule is available to determine the size of the evaluation budgets. This will depend on the information and other needs, as well as the scope, depth and methodology to be used. Scholars have suggested, as a rule of thumb, 1% of the project or programme budget to be a realistic starting point (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:218).

The third aspect of evaluation management is the selection of evaluation approaches, methods and aids. The following table contains a summary of the main approaches and methods that may be considered for performance of the policy analysis process (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:219-220).

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TABLE 3.2: BASIC METHODS BY STEPS IN THE POLICY ANALYSIS PROCESS

Steps in the process	Method
All steps	Identify and gather data Library search methods Interview for policy data Basic data analysis Communicate the analysis
Verifying, defining and detailing the problem	Back-of-the-envelope calculations Quick decision analysis Creation of valid operational definitions Political analysis The issue paper/first-cut analysis
Establishing evaluation criteria	Technical feasibility Economic and financial possibility Political viability Administrative operability
Identifying alternatives	Research analysis No-action analysis Quick surveys Literature review Comparison of real-world experiences Passive collection and classification Development of typologies Analogy, metaphor and synectics Brainstorming Comparison with an ideal Feasible manipulations Modifying existing solutions
Evaluating alternative policies	Extrapolation Theoretical forecasting Discounting Sensitivity analysis Allocation formulas Quick decision analysis
Displaying alternatives and selecting from them	Paired comparisons Satisficing Lexicographic ordering Non-dominated-alternatives method Equivalent-alternatives method Standard-alternatives method Matrix display systems Political analysis Implementation analysis Scenario writing
Monitoring and evaluating policy outcomes	Before-and-after comparisons With-and-without comparisons Actual versus planned performance Experimental models Quasi-experimental models Cost-oriented approaches

[Source: Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:219-220]

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In addition to the aforementioned list of research methods, there are a few qualitative data collection methods for formative evaluation that are effective. They are listed hereunder (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:220-221).

TABLE 3.3: DATA COLLECTION METHODS FOR FORMATIVE EVALUATION

Method	Description	Examples
Focus groups	Small group discussion is held with programme delivery staff or recipients, focusing on their reactions to a proposed intervention or their experiences during pilot delivery.	Convene focus groups of teachers who tried out a new curriculum module. Use focus groups of local public housing officials to predict the workability and likely impact of a proposed new programme regulation.
Observation	Evaluator observes actual pilot delivery or video recording of initial delivery.	Observe teacher delivery and student classroom reactions during pilot delivery of a new curriculum module. Observe videos of physicians trying out a counselling intervention to stop patient smoking.
Open-ended interviews	Evaluator asks probing questions of prototypical recipients or deliverers, using an interview protocol without preset response categories.	Briefly interview shoppers after their taste tests of new food for a low-cholesterol diet. Interview Head Start directors by telephone to assess their reactions to a new programmatic use for Head Start funds
Ethnographic analysis	Evaluator uses methods from anthropology (including observation and interviews) to obtain in-depth understanding of recipients' cultures.	Observe the study habits and strategies used by students of various ethnicities learning calculus, by having evaluators like in college dormitories. Attend meetings of local hospital officials to learn how they make decisions to purchase new medical technologies.
Message or forms analysis	Evaluator probes pilot recipients for their understanding of and reactions to specified aspects of a written or media communication.	Interview taxpayers after their first exposure to proposed new IRS forms and instructions. Talk to sample recipients about the meaning, acceptability and likely response to an Aids prevention pamphlet.
Expert judgement	Panel of individuals with extensive prior experience in the content area is convened to offer opinions on proposed programme components.	Convene panels of scientists for opinions on the appropriateness of a new strategic plan for the research grant programme of the National Institute of Health.
Equipment trial	Equipment to be used in intervention is tried out to check its feasibility in an intended situation.	Try out the pilot version of hardware and software for a computerised job search programme for unemployed teenagers in a video arcade or shopping mall.

[Source: Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:221]

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Evaluation needs to be properly managed. For this to occur basic methods are required to ensure success. Collection of data is crucial in evaluation – hence the need to make use of data collection methods for formative evaluation. These evaluation methods will be helpful in evaluating outcomes-based education policy.

After explaining evaluation management it is prudent to look at the requirements for effective policy evaluation.

3.10.8 Requirements for effective policy evaluation

The following criteria have been suggested as requirements for effective policy evaluation:

- ❖ **Relevance:** The evaluation should be relevant for the purposes of resolving an existing policy issue.
- ❖ **Significance:** It must make a difference to an existing situation.
- ❖ **Originality:** It must generate new information that was not available before the evaluation was undertaken.
- ❖ **Legitimacy:** It must enjoy the support of the major stakeholders involved in the policy issue area.
- ❖ **Reliability:** The data used must be accurate.
- ❖ **Validity:** The findings and conclusions must have effective causal linkages with the descriptive, factual component of the evaluation.
- ❖ **Objectivity:** The evaluation should be undertaken in an impartial and unbiased way.
- ❖ **Timelines:** The evaluation should be in time to influence future policy decisions about the specific project or programme.
- ❖ **Usability:** It should be written in a user-friendly way, with a practical, problem-resolving focus (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:222-223).

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Evaluation of a public policy is an essential undertaking. Results obtained from evaluation indicate whether the purpose of the policy has been achieved or not. To ensure successful evaluation, there are certain requirements that must be met. The evaluation of outcomes-based education policy must satisfy these requirements.

After explaining the requirements for effective policy evaluation, it is necessary to look at the impact policies make on the target areas. Hence follows an explanation of assessing policy outcomes or impacts.

3.10.9 Assessing policy outcomes or impacts

Political or real impact assessment is one of the objectives of evaluation. The aim of policy impact assessment is to determine and measure changes in policy target areas, groups or sectors which occurred due to policy implementation. This is, to determine the effect policy will have or has had on the *status quo* where policy intentions can be identified. Where policy intentions cannot be identified, assessment will be of an explanatory nature and will attempt to determine the extent of change, what caused it and why (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:223-224).

There are many outcomes for evaluation which occur throughout the implementation process, from the onset of planning, through the intermediate steps of implementation, and until the last steps of analysis and reporting of outcomes. Laymen in policy analysis will automatically mistake the evaluation report as the main outcome for an evaluation. Although the evaluation report may be a significant outcome, it is certainly not the only evaluation outcome neither is it the most important outcome. There are many outcomes for an evaluation which should be borne in mind throughout the evaluation process, for example, changes in methods of teaching, curriculum development and assessment (Bemelmans-Vidéc & Conner, 1992:243).

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It is necessary to measure the policy outcomes or impacts. These are set procedures to assess the impacts.

(a) *Impact assessment procedures*

The procedures used for impact assessment are the ones that are used in project management processes. These procedures are designed to achieve clearly specified evaluation results within a specified time period and budget, using specified resources (Cochran *et al.*, 1993:5).

There are two types of impact assessment procedures; namely, social impact assessment procedures and environmental impact assessment procedures.

Social impact is a significant improvement or deterioration in peoples' well-being or a significant change in any aspect of community life. Social impacts are intangible phenomena that cannot be measured directly. To measure them, indicators are used; both subjective and objective indicators. Subjective indicators may be described as results or perceptions interpreted or perceived by those affected. Objective indicators are those that can be measured objectively and directly, regardless of the fact that the affected people agree with them or not. Environmental impact assessment procedures are similar to those used for social impact assessment. Here assessment starts with a scoping exercise. During this phase of assessment issues are identified along with alternatives and procedures to be followed. Hereafter follows the investigation phase during which scoping guidelines are implemented (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:224-225).

The social assessment process is described in Tables 3.4 and 3.45, *infra* (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:226-227).

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TABLE 3.4: SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: GENERAL METHODOLOGY

Assessment steps	Analytic operations
Scoping How big a problem is it? How much is enough?	Set level(s) of assessment (policy/programme/project). Determine impact area boundaries. Establish time horizons. Develop study design.
Problem identification What is the problem? What is causing it?	Formulate policy goals and planning objectives. Identify publics and concerns. Perform needs assessment. Determine evaluative criteria.
Formulation of alternatives What are the alternatives?	Define a set of 'reasonable' alternatives (corresponding to identified concerns). Determine change agents, instruments. Characterise and describe technical systems; analyse for social (institutional/behavioural) components and correlates. Analyse economic and environmental impacts for secondary social impacts.
Profiling What are the alternatives?	Dimensionalise impact categories. Select impact categories. Assign impact indicators. Perform indicator measurements. Compile a social profile.
Projection What is it causing?	Explicate 'state of society' assumptions. Perform trend impact analysis. Construct dynamic system models. Estimate impact indicator values for alternative plans ('with or without' implementation).
Assessment What difference does it make?	Perform sensitivity analysis for alternative outcomes of alternative plans. Perform a cross-impact analysis. Describe and display 'significant' impacts.
Evaluation How do you like it?	Reidentify publics and concerns. Reformulate evaluative criteria. Rank and weight preferences for alternatives. Perform a trade-off analysis. Identify preferred alternatives.
Mitigation What can you do about it if you do not like it?	Review unavoidable adverse impacts. Identify possible mitigation measures. Perform sensitivity analysis of possible measures.
Management Who is in charge here?	Devise management plan. Adjust planning objectives, operating procedures, design specifications.
(Bottom line) Who benefits and who loses?	(All of the above.)
Now, associate and integrate methodologies, specific techniques and relevant data.	

[Source: Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:226]

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TABLE 3.5: THE REVISED SOCIAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Scoping	Identification of issues, variables to be described/measured, likely areas of impact, study boundaries.
Profiling	Overview and analysis of current social context and historical trends.
Formulation of alternatives	Examination and comparison of options for change.
Projection and estimation of effects	Detailed examination of impacts of one or more options against decision criteria.
Monitoring, mitigation and management	Collection of information about actual effects, and the application of this information by the different participants in the process to mitigate negative effects and manage change in general.
Evaluation	Systematic, retrospective review of the social effects of the change being assessed, including the social assessment process that was employed.

[Source: Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:227]

Being familiar with the impact assessment procedures, it is necessary to explain the instruments used to measure observable impacts.

(b) Indicator

An indicator is used to measure observable impacts. It is described as a measuring instrument used to give a concrete, measurable but indirect value to an otherwise unmeasurable, intangible concept (Michael, in Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:150).

Indicators can be devised for particular policy sectors like social, environmental, cultural and financial. It gives an approximate value or indicator for an intangible concept. An indicator is not independent, but it is inextricably intertwined with the abstract or intangible concept that it has been designed to clarify (Michael, in Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:151-152).

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There are five main types of indicators that can be used to analyse policy impacts in different sectors. According to Cloete (in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:228-229), these types of indicators are:

- ❖ *Demographic impact indicators*, which are subjectively perceived or objective changes in a population, size, distribution, and composition. Demographic impacts are analysed by means of estimates, polls, census data, projections and forecasts.
- ❖ *Geographic and environmental impact indicators*, which are subjectively perceived or objective changes in nature, climate and the quality of the natural and the living environment, including air, soil, noise, water, sea, flora, fauna and topography.
- ❖ *Social impact indicators*, which are subjectively perceived or objective changes in individual or community profiles. They measure aspects like status, value, institution and behaviour patterns, personal development levels, conflict, cohesion, networks, mobilisation, participation, mobility, stability, family life, youth development, crime, and so on.
- ❖ *Institutional and technological indicators*, which are subjectively perceived or objective changes in administrative agency size, budget, composition, scope and functions, services and facilities, distribution, accessibility, quality, quantity, effectiveness, efficiency, technology and so on.
- ❖ *Financial and economic impact indicators*, which are subjectively perceived or objective changes in income and expenditure patterns, taxation, economic growth and decline, inflation, exchange rates, types of economic activity and inactivity, employment, production and consumption patterns, living cost, productivity, and so on.

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It is essential to determine the impact policy makes on its beneficiaries. Therefore impact assessment is one of the objectives of public policy evaluation. There are different procedures and methods prescribed to determine the impact of a public policy.

These procedures and methods could be applied to the evaluation of outcomes-based education policy to assess its impact.

After explaining instruments to measure observable impacts, it is necessary to look at who is competent to do policy evaluation.

3.10.10 Responsibility for evaluation

In order to do evaluation, specific skills and experience are needed. Evaluation can be done in depth or superficially depending on the availability of funds and time. In depth evaluation is both time consuming and expensive, whereas superficial evaluation does not take too much time and is relatively inexpensive. Evaluation may be undertaken by internal implementation staff, special internal research, planning or evaluation units, independent evaluators and special multi-disciplinary evaluation teams (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:229-230).

Evaluation by the internal implementation staff is cheaper, faster and more cost-effective because they know the project or programme concerned well. The disadvantage of using internal implementation staff is that they are not experts, they may have vested interest in positive results and they have other assignments to attend to especially when one considers enormous responsibilities of officials of the Department of Education (Bowden, 1988:65). Therefore, special internal research, planning or evaluation units should have specialised research and evaluation skills, which make them suitable to undertake evaluation. However, as they may have designed the policy, they may favour it (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984:235).

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Independent evaluators have one major advantage, which is that they may be less biased towards the policy. On the contrary, they could, as outsiders, have less knowledge and experience of the specific project or programme. In addition, they lack knowledge of the details that may be relevant for the purposes of the evaluation. Finally, they may be more expensive than the internal officials of the Department of Education (Posavac & Carey, 1980:21).

Special multi-disciplinary evaluation teams are preferred as they are usually made up of internal operation staff, or planning staff and external experts from different disciplinary backgrounds (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:230).

Once it is known who should undertake evaluation, it is necessary to identify impediments on evaluation.

3.10.11 Evaluation constraints

Evaluation requires dealing with challenges. There are constraints or impediments that could impede the validity of an evaluation process. To promote the validity of policy evaluation, structural and procedural methods should be considered to stimulate the institutionalisation of evaluation to regulate political interests in evaluations and secure external scientific evaluation research. In addition to the evaluation of evaluation, which is known as meta-evaluation, the evaluation of the evaluation research policy, evaluation processes and evaluation structures also deserve attention. Vedung (1997) states that meta-evaluation might refer to three different operations; namely, evaluation of another evaluation either ongoing or completed; a procedure for summarising and synthesising the findings of several evaluations of the same programme or of any array of similar programmes; and evaluation of the general evaluation function of an institution or unit. Therefore, it would be prudent to allocate part of the research funds to evaluations of evaluation. This could rightfully be

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regarded as a worthwhile investment from the point of view of the quality of public administration (Hoogerwerf, 1992:225-226).

To better understand the aforementioned identified problems and possible solutions, it is vital to specify the problems and constraints of evaluation. Factors that complicate, prevent or obstruct effective policy evaluation are the following:

- ❖ Insufficient planning for and monitoring of the compilation of baseline or culmination data (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984:226).
- ❖ Absence of policy goals and objectives, as well as unclear or purposefully hidden objectives which could be changed during the implementation of a project or programme (Vedung, 1997:43).
- ❖ Criteria or indicators for measuring change are sometimes insufficient (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984:224).
- ❖ Unintended consequences, spillover and side effects may complicate the evaluation process (Vedung, 1997:45).
- ❖ The cumulative impacts of different but inseparable projects or programmes made as sensible conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships are very difficult or impossible (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984:226).
- ❖ On account of the fact that evaluation results may be politically or otherwise sensitive, evaluations are either not done, done partially or superficially, or done in a biased manner (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984:227).
- ❖ One sometimes encounter difficulties in trying to achieve different policy objectives which result in creating an impression of different degrees of policy success. This culminates in evaluation not being embarked upon (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:230).
- ❖ Insufficient resources for evaluation sometimes prevent evaluation from being done well or not at all (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:230).

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- ❖ Unrealistic or tight time-frames usually prevent thorough evaluations or account for evaluations not being done at all (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:230).
- ❖ The manner in which evaluation results are written may make them unacceptable; for instance, if they are too academic and impractical, too technical and thus incomprehensible to decision-makers, ambiguous, too late for specific purposes, and too critical of decision-makers or managers and therefore unwanted (Cloete, in Cloete & Wissink, 2000:231).

On account of the massive nature of the implementation of outcomes-based education policy which is countrywide, the probability is high that its evaluation might have constraints. In this regard, meta-evaluation, which is evaluation of evaluation, may prove to be helpful in evaluating the impact of outcomes-based education policy. Meta-evaluation will also help to identify possible constraints and corrective measure put in place to overcome the impediments.

3.10.12 Utilisation of evaluation results

Evaluations are useful in a number of ways beyond the narrow focus on implementing recommendations or making concrete, specific decisions about immediate courses of action. A beneficial spinoff of participative evaluation is that it could positively affect ways of thinking about a programme. Stated differently, utilisation of evaluation results may help to clarify goals, increase or decrease particular commitments and reduce uncertainties. Over and above, the process can stimulate insight, which could reveal consequences which may not have become evident until some time in the distant future (Qvortrup, 1992:272). Kordes (1992:128) concurs with respect to the usefulness of the evaluation results where he states that utilisation of the findings is necessary.

Rist (1992:155) states that he prefers what he terms utilisation focused evaluation. That is, evaluation that begins with the intent of fostering use and doing all that one can to ensure that eventuality.

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Evaluation is both demanding and expensive. Therefore, it is imperative that its results be put to good use. For this to happen Arvidson (1992:260) states that clear answers, acceptable for all the parties and documented, will help to decrease the probability of ending with unused or misused evaluation results. Indeed chances are better if the evaluation process will be a source of successive and mutual learning; exactly the outcome anticipated by the public sector and all evaluators.

Evaluation results must be written and summarised in a simple, clear and intelligible manner so that they can persuade policy-makers of their validity and usefulness. Clear evaluation reports will contribute to co-operation between evaluators and future policy-makers (Hendricks & Handley, 1990:109).

There are various guidelines for the preparation of an effective evaluation report. For instance, the reporting method for the diffusion-centred strategy could be as follows:

- ❖ Reports should be striking and thought-provoking.
- ❖ Reports should not beat around the bush.
- ❖ A report should deal trenchantly with an issue; if complex, it should be presented in several reports.
- ❖ Reports should contain a comprehensive but brief executive summary.
- ❖ Potential evaluation clients should be identified in advance.
- ❖ Written reports should be couched in simple and comprehensible language.
- ❖ Reports should have diagrams.
- ❖ Important points should be highlighted by means of clear headings, sub-headings, and an inclusive overall analysis.
- ❖ Methodological considerations should be appended.
- ❖ Findings, insights and recommendations should be continually disseminated to many audiences before the final edition is completed.

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- ❖ Every report should have a section on recommendations for action.
- ❖ Reports should be prompt and timely.
- ❖ Relevant or affected managers and stakeholders should receive written copies of the preliminary papers and the final issue.
- ❖ Results should be communicated in person.
- ❖ Evaluators should be involved in selling their findings.
- ❖ Evaluators must be available to assist managers, if need be.
- ❖ Evaluators should be brief and to the point when talking.
- ❖ Evaluators should tell performance anecdotes to illustrate points.
- ❖ Evaluators should engage in public debates (Vedung, 1997:281).

Finally, evaluation results should have a direct and discernible effect on discrete political and administrative decisions (Albaek, 1995:6).

Evaluation results of outcomes-based education policy may have several positive spin-offs; for example, it will bring about better understanding of the intended and unintended benefits. These results should be well reported and documented, and schools be provided with copies. By so doing, educators, who are the main roleplayers in implementing outcomes-based education policy, will be able to refine their teaching methods so that the policy may have optimum impact.

3.11 POLICY ANALYSIS INSTITUTIONS

Issues around and about public policy have become complex and demanding to such an extent that government functionaries cannot cope with them independently. This led to the establishment of policy analysis institutions and policy analysis units within government units. Rieper (1992:249) concurs with these developments where he states that evaluation research should be highly institutionalised. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss functions and tasks of these institutions, possible contributions of

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research to policy, contributions of policy analysis institutions to public policy, and the use of research by policy analysis institutions.

According to Weiss (1992:1), in the 20th century a new institutional form emerged; namely the specialised analytic agency. These agencies were staffed by experts where primary responsibility was to provide policy information and advice to government. These analytic units were expected to mobilise intellectual resources for social problem solving, and to help government to think.

A count on the United States of America policy analysis institutions outside of government, including those based on universities, came up with a figure of 1 000. In South Africa the Human Science Research Council is responsible for this task. There was a clear indication that the number of these institutions were on the increase. It is worth while to account for the pervasiveness of these policy analysis institutions or analytic units (Nagel, 1980:87).

According to Hoogerwerf (1992:217), it is impossible to realise a reasonably democratic, balanced and efficient use of the capacity of government without afterward evaluation of existing tasks and evaluation beforehand of new ones. Consequently, the strengthening of evaluation of policy effects deserves the highest political and administrative priority. One way of ensuring that governments implement policies to obtain optimum results is through the use of audits. In this regard Leew (1992:138) states that government-wide audits in the Netherlands are becoming an important instrument to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of government institutions and policies. Firstly, they provide comparative state-of-the-art findings. Secondly, the findings mirror the different departmental units that are part of the audit. Therefore it can be assumed that the results encourage institutional learning by these units. Finally, by performing audits of a comparative nature, given their large scale nature, it is possible to perform secondary analysis on the collected material.

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In South Africa it would be convenient and beneficial if universities could be given the responsibility of serving as policy analysis institutions. The added advantage would be that universities have both faculties of education, and economics and management sciences and would be best able to give advice on the evaluation of outcomes-based education policy.

3.11.1 Functions of policy analysis institutions

Policy analysis institutions help policy-makers to understand and cope with complex problems. On account of an increase of government's tasks and complexity, more information is needed to evaluate past performance, to consider future alternatives, and to foresee secondary effects and interactions with policies and objectives. Hence, it is necessary that someone has to take on the challenging work of amassing relevant information and to translate it into a policy framework (Weiss, 1992:4). In this regard Baehr and Wittrock (1981:30) concur with Weiss (1992:4) arguing that the responsibility of the Council for Government Policy is to develop an integrated long-term framework that the government can use to decide on priorities and to make a coherent policy. In South Africa the Human Sciences Research Council and public universities may perform the task.

On account of declining public confidence in government institutions, political leaders seek to demonstrate the reason and rationality for their actions. Policy analysis provides an answer to the question whether politicians and bureaucrats have followed proper procedures to reach correct outcomes (Weiss, 1992:4). Baehr and Wittrock (1981:30) refer to the aforementioned as the usefulness of policy analysis.

Analytic units give officials at the top of public institutions sufficient understanding to exert greater control over subunits. In addition, they also give central bureaucrats more knowledge of what is going on in the field. This knowledge is especially

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important since the federal government is responsible for funds given to state and local governments, as well as other corporate entities to administer. Therefore, policy analysis help central government officials and legislators to develop detailed procedures, structures, and systems of incentives to constrain the manner in which policy is implemented (Weiss, 1992:4-5).

Government sought independent research and analysis for a variety of reasons, for instance, if it did not have the requisite skills in-house; if large-scale work would require more staff than government would allow; if its need for certain kind of work was sporadic; if it wanted the imprimatur (approval for something to be printed) of outside authority; if it wanted to impress sceptical citizens about the validity of its analytic work; and if it wanted to be allied to prestigious policy analysis institutions (Weiss, 1992:5).

Think-tanks proliferated as a result of huge demand. Furthermore certain interest groups felt that their needs were overlooked; hence, they established their own policy analysis units (Weiss, 1992:5). Appropriate examples of the aforementioned is the Social and Cultural Planning Office in the Netherlands and the Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa. One of its main functions was to prepare scientific surveys in order to obtain a coherent description of the condition of social and cultural well-being in the Netherlands (Baehr & Wittrock, 1981:29).

It is worth noting that some of the expectations for policy analysis units were unreasonable. According to Weiss (1992:5) they were out-of-left-field or pie-in-the-sky. Be that as it may, it is essential to take note of specific steps when embarking upon an evaluation assignment. According to Arvidson (1992:259-260) those steps or recommendations are:

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- ❖ Choose and communicate a perspective and a focus for the evaluation; clarify the purpose; control, validation or innovation.
- ❖ Establish whether the evaluation will be worthwhile. Will any of the potential outcomes of the evaluation make a difference concerning the future operations? If not, why evaluate?
- ❖ Ascertain whether it is possible to do a meaningful evaluation, that is, conduct an evaluability assessment before the assignment is made.
- ❖ Clarify the roles in the evaluation process of the politicians, the managers, the field staff, the evaluator, and the beneficiaries.
- ❖ Specify the proper timing and form of presentation, especially if decision makers are not actively engaged in the evaluation process.
- ❖ Set out in a contract: letter of agreement or memorandum of understanding, the decision on each of the above issues and any others that are critical to the evaluation, such as costs, access to files, and administrative support.

Policy analysis institutions are beneficial to governments because they give guidance on public policy implementation and evaluation. On account of the fact that the South African government since the dawn of democracy is prolific in producing new policies, it is imperative that it should have a number of policy analysis institutions. In this regard public universities could fulfil the role of policy advisory institutions admirably and outcomes-based education policy should be referred to one of them.

The thrust of the work of policy analysis institutions or units is to undertake research on policy-related matters. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the possible contributions of research to policy.

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3.11.2 Possible contributions of research to policy

There are five possible contributions of research to public policy making and the results thereof. Firstly, it assists in the analysis of social problems. A problem is described as a discrepancy between a goal or some criterion and the perception of an existing or expected situation. Research can provide knowledge and insight regarding existing situations, expected situations both with their causes and effects, and the criteria for the evaluation of existing and expected situations (Baehr & Wittrock, 1981:30-31).

Secondly, research assists in the analysis of existing policy. Policies, by nature, are concerned with the achievement of certain goals with certain means and in a certain time sequence. Initially, researchers can analyse the means-end-structure of a policy. Thereafter, the underlying causal factors can be analysed and compared with scientific theories or with research results. Finally, researchers can compare and select a policy content with one or more of that of other policies. Analysis of policy content can be undertaken looking at the following aspects: finality, level of abstraction, priorities and time sequences (La Plante, in Bergerson, 1991:58).

Thirdly, research can concentrate on the analysis of policy processes. This involves the analysis of the preparation, determination, implementation, evaluation and adaptation of policies. The major emphasis in this contribution falls on evaluation of policy, policy processes and policy effects. In the case of evaluation, the main question to be answered is: To what extent does policy implementation contribute to the achievement of specific goals? Stated differently, evaluation research is dominated by the demand for policy effects and particularly by the demand for effectiveness (La Plante, in Bergerson, 1991:58).

Fourthly, research can contribute to the design of policies, that is, policy development. There are four distinguishable policy design types. Firstly, a policy design can be for-

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mulated in terms of final goal(s), intermediate goals, and instruments. A final goal is defined as a goal that the policy-maker intends to achieve via one or more goals. An intermediate goal is a goal that a policy-maker intends to realise in order to achieve a further-reaching goal (Baehr & Wittrock, 1981:31).

Furthermore, a policy can also be designed in terms of ordering goals according to the level of abstraction, that is, main goals, sub-goals and singular goals. A main goal is the ultimate situation or development that is strived for in a certain policy area. In the process of goal analysis, sub-goals intervene as transitions from abstract main goals to concrete singular goals. Main goals may be specified in terms of functions, for instance, preventive versus curative. Singular goals are deduced from sub-goals. In addition, policy design may be in terms of priorities. In this context, priority means that the achievement of one goal is more important for the policy-maker than the achievement of another. The policy-maker prefers priority goals because they yield larger returns than other goals (Baehr & Wittrock, 1981:32 and La Plante, in Bergerson, 1991:59-60).

Fifthly, a policy design can be formulated in terms of a time sequence. In this regard differentiation can be made between primary, secondary and later goals. A primary goal is a goal that a policy-maker wants to achieve first. Secondary goals are goals that the policy-maker wants to achieve after primary goals (Baehr & Wittrock, 1981:32).

Research may contribute significantly to the implementation of outcomes-based education policy; because it analyse the social problems or issues, existing policies, and the policy process. It contributes to the design of the policy and the differentiation of policy goals. Information gained from the analysis of the policy process will assist, in particular, the implementation evaluation of outcomes-based education policy, which is what the thesis is all about.

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Apart from contributions made by research to policy analysis, policy analysis institutions or units also do contribute to public policy. The following example of a research unit will shed more light on this matter.

3.11.3 Centre for Policy Research in Education: An overview

The Centre for Policy Research in Education was established in 1985 in the United States of America in the Department of Education. Its overarching goal was and still is to provide research that is useful to state and local policies to improve schooling. Its overarching goal is to provide research results that are useful to the state and local policy-makers. That is, research that meets the needs for information and is readily accessible. The centre's research is intended to provide advice about policy options to enhance learning. It is not supported by clients it serves, but by the Federal Government (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:63).

The Centre for Policy Research in Education has the following distinguishing features: a research agenda built around client concerns; a national consortium structure that unites education policy researchers at various institutions and facilitates contact with state and local policy-makers; and an emphasis on creating dialogue between the producers and users of research results (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:69).

Contrariwise, the development of policy evaluation in the United States of America has been categorised on the basis of focus, that is the subject; locus, that is the institution performing the evaluation; and modus, that is the methodology (Hoogerwerf, 1992: 215).

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(a) *Building research around client concerns*

Although the mission of the Centre for Policy Research in Education is determined by the Federal Government, the centre's researchers desire that the work of the centre be responsive to the needs of its primary constituents, namely, state and local policy-makers. This is confirmed by Sabatier and Mazmanian (1995:178) when they state that evaluative research may indicate which issues policy-makers consider to be worthy of serious attention. Consequently, from its inception its role has been to provide research capacity around issues of interest to state and local policy-makers. Later on, a need was felt to redefine the mission of the Centre, which was confined to meet the needs of professional education. Therefore, the new mission focused on both the needs of the educators and public officials to implement policy decisions (Weiss, 1992:82-83).

In the interest of being focused and relevant, the Centre invited suggestions about new problems and emerging solutions to study from its clients. The Centre has a governance structure which is made up of an Executive Board, Research and Dissemination Advisory Committees, affiliated institutions, and a Management Committee. The Executive Board is the primary mechanism for sensing the information needs of the policy community. The board is made up of elected and appointed policy-makers and other participants in the policy-making and implementation process, including teachers, parents, and business leaders. Other members of the board are scholars with significant research experience in education policy. At an annual meeting and through information communication throughout the year, board members advise the centre about framing research so that it is most useful to policy-makers (Weiss, 1992:83).

Members of the Research Advisory Committee are outside scholars from state and local research agencies and universities. Its function is to serve as a mechanism for ensuring the integrity, quality and coherence of Centre research. By including research members

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who are not associated with the Centre for Policy Research in Education, the Centre gains the perspective of users of its research and benefits from the expertise of colleagues who perform similar work. On the other hand, the Dissemination Advisory Committee is composed of six members who are outside scholars who specialise in knowledge utilisation, journalists, and experts in public relations. The function of this Committee is to provide advice on the basis of its assessment of dissemination performance and prospects. Furthermore, it serves as a mechanism for ensuring integration of dissemination strategies (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:79).

There are 19 national associations that are affiliated to the Centre. These associations represent key policy-makers, practitioners, and interested participants from the education policy community. The associations provide the Centre with important advice about information needs. At regular meetings and through frequent consultation, their staff advise on the Centre's research agenda, dissemination plans, and progress. Over and above that, the associations also help in the dissemination of the Centre's products (Weiss, 1992:84).

It is essential to build research around clients' needs. Research by nature is goal-directed to generate knowledge, to test the validity of existing knowledge, and to address social issues and problems. Therefore, knowledge gained from research may assist educators to implement outcomes-based education policy successfully.

(b) The national consortium structure of the Centre for Policy Research in Education

A second distinguishing feature of the Centre for Policy Research in Education is its structure as a consortium. Research centres, which are members of the consortium, conduct systematic, programmatic research. They address major educational issues like the relationship between educational policy and student learning. These centres

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attract senior researchers and provide leadership in both substantive and methodological areas. Moreover, research centres have mechanisms for disseminating findings and creating long-term interaction with practitioners and researchers (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:3-4).

As it is impossible for one institution to fulfil the broad mission of the Centre focused on educational policy, an institution consisting of core institutions was created. The Centre for Policy Research in Education is housed at six institutions, namely, Rutgers University, Michigan State University, Stanford University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Harvard University and the University of Southern California. Each institution is a full partner in all research and dissemination activities. As a member of the consortium, each institution is represented on all governance and management structures (Weiss, 1992:86).

The operation of the Centre for Policy Research in Education is greatly enhanced by its consortium structure. Firstly, the location of the six institutions in different geographical regions facilitates dissemination and collaboration with regional, state, and local participants; it also lowers the cost of conducting national research. Secondly, the Centre can draw on many of the most talented education policy researchers in the country. Thirdly, the consortium structure means that several institutions are strongly committed to the Centre and provide it with resources and experience that a single institution cannot match. Fourthly, and finally, a consortium structure takes advantage of technological advances that overcome many of the drawbacks of geographic dispersion (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:13-16).

Constructing and operating a successful consortium is not only a matter of linking interested researchers electronically, but also consortium institutions must be compatible on a number of dimensions to sustain a collaborative research endeavour. These dimensions include beliefs about governance, the priority of centre-wide con-

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cerns, appropriate division of labour, and shared institutional support. Compatibility on these dimensions may be maximised in alliances among institutions of the same type, for example, among universities, among contract research centres, and among government research agencies (Weiss, 1992:88).

With regard to the first dimension of centre governance, the partners need to develop decision-making mechanisms for the Centre that reflect shared beliefs about how the Centre should be run. Partner institutions must agree on fundamental issues: for example, which and how much of the Centre's activities are subject to democratic governance; how institutional partners are represented; whether institutional partners should be equally represented; and how centre governance may be modified. As a second dimension, consortium members need to be compatible on the relative priority placed on centre-wide, as opposed to institutional concerns. For example, decisions about the nature of the research dissemination programme take centre needs into account first. A third dimension in which institutional partners must reach agreement is the issue of division of labour. Finally, a fourth dimension of a successful consortium is shared institutional support. For example, the support of the universities to the Centre is that they value policy research and that they accord priority to applied research and public service (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:14-16).

A consortium is a sensible and cost-effective arrangement for running a national policy research centre focused on state and local issues.

Unlike the United States of America which has many policy analysis institutions, South Africa has the Human Sciences Research Council. Public universities could be requested to play the role of policy analysis institutions. As the Department of Education has more responsibilities than other departments, especially when the number of schools, learners, educators, school governing bodies, other office-bearers, and auxiliary services are taken into account. This implies that the needs of the Department are

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many and varied. Therefore, the structure of the unit within a university responsible for policy analysis should be such that each facet of the Department is represented.

(c) Creating a dialogue between producers and users of research

Researchers need to be accountable for the various ways in which research is used in order for it to be useful. It is a known fact that social science research has few direct effects on policy, especially policy-makers as they make their decisions. Research influences policy at the Centre during policy deliberations, shapes debates and spurs public discussion. The Centre contributes to policy deliberations by identifying the conceptual issues underlying policy problems and clarifying the assumptions of alternative policy solutions (Weiss, 1992:91). In fact, research is considered to be a distinguishing feature of a process approach to analysis. At this phase of policy analysis a variety of alternative options, relative to the social problems are then put forward for consideration (Carley, 1980:41). Majone (1989:21) concurs when he states that the policy analyst's job is only to determine the best means to achieve given goals.

For research to influence policy as intended, it must be presupposed that an appropriate dissemination strategy will be formulated. The strategy in question should be built on the following principles: dissemination is continuous, dissemination is an integrated endeavour, dissemination relies on existing channels to the extent possible, and dissemination is multifaceted (Weiss, 1992:93-94).

Dissemination is continuous in the sense that information about research is made known, not only at the end of research, but as it progresses. That is, researchers select, translate, and deliver knowledge that already has been produced. On the other hand, dissemination is an integrated endeavour as it is not separate from other activities. This means that users of research results are involved in the planning and production of information. An advantage of this approach is that it encourages users to use research results. Another advantage of the approach is that it engenders a sense

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of ownership through the process of dissemination. Besides, dissemination is also used to solicit ideas for research from policy-makers, as well as supplementing the meetings of the advisory structures of the centre. Individuals who conduct research are the ones who deliver it to the users. This procedure is important because it ensures that researchers are exposed to ideas and suggestions from the people on the ground, and it helps prevent distortion of information in the passage from researcher through intermediaries to policy-makers (Weiss, in Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:39).

Dissemination relies on existing channels to the extent possible. The primary channels for disseminating policy research are the national institutions to which policy-makers and participants, that is researchers, belong. These institutions have a responsibility for providing information, technical assistance, and other services to their members. In fact, evidence suggests that, in a large part, education policy-makers look at their own professional associations for information (Weiss, 1992:93-94).

Dissemination is also multifaceted as it often relies on only a few ways, but mainly in written form. However, in keeping with the viewpoint that different audiences are receptive to different communication forms, the Centre for Research Policy in Education uses multiple information activities, both written and person-to-person. Written materials range from reports to policy briefs and press releases. On account of the fact that literature on research utilisation has found translation or interpretation to be a major problem, hence the Centre places great emphasis on succinctness and clarity. It has also been found that policy-makers create files by topic; for example, dropouts, retention in grade, restructuring schools, and so on. Hence, the Centre's policy briefs concern a single issue, making it easier for users to store research results in specific files for future reference (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:15).

Closely related to dissemination of research results are public information campaigns. Weiss (1993:100-101) stressed their importance when she stated that they have

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attracted some attention from social scientists outside of policy studies.

Public information campaigns serve as effective and efficient communication tools. For instance, they offer an interesting case for the analysis of political consequences because they attempt to change what people think and what they talk about. Unlike policies which are directed at government or business, public campaigns are directed at individual members of the public (Bulmer *et al.*, 1986:46).

Public information campaigns, like many other matters that deal with community life, have their own shortcomings for purposes of obtaining democratic participation. First, campaigns may weaken and distort the competition of ideas in a free and open marketplace. Second, public information campaigns may threaten the democratic process by circularity of democratic control and self-aggrandizement by government agencies. Third, public inequalities to access information between well-educated and poorly educated citizens. Fourth, public information campaigns may constrict the roles of citizens by closing off opportunities for choice or autonomy, promoting passivity in political discussions, or denying the legitimacy of the citizens' own understanding of social circumstances (Weis, 1993:103-104).

Researchers embark on research to produce or create knowledge that is useful. Research results may be geared to solve certain public problems, or shed light on certain issues, or be solely for the creation of knowledge. For these results to be optimally utilised, there must be a free flow of communication between researchers and those who make use of research results. Sharing of information should not be confined to the end of a research project, but as the research is in progress. This applies to research on outcomes-based education policy. It is crucial that information gained from the implementation of outcomes-based education policy be made available to schools and officials of the Department of Education.

3.12 CONCLUSION

From the explanation of public policy and policy analysis it is evident that information gained is useful in policy implementation. It is essential to know what a public policy is, the process of policy formulation, types of policies and who policy-makers are and the factors that influence their decisions. The study of these factors indicate that the formulation of a public policy is a complex and intricate process which calls for insight, skills and innovation. Outcomes-based education policy is no exception.

Policy analysis is mainly concerned with identification of social problems and issues and how to address them. Furthermore, it provides tools that would help politicians whether a public policy is cost-effective, affordable, beneficial or unrealistic and hence worthless. In the case of outcomes-based education policy, policy analysis would play a pivotal role in determining, in monetary terms, its impact as well as its worth. Stated differently, policy analysis would help to determine whether the implementation of outcomes-based education policy is beneficial or not.

From the study of policy analysis it has emerged that it is essential in helping governments implementing public policies successfully. It is for this reason that it is imperative for the South African government to establish policy analysis institutions. Public universities, which are mainly state-funded, are in a better position to fulfil this role because they are sites of academic excellence. In the case of the implementation of outcomes-based education policy, public universities are in an ideal position to help because they have expertise in the Faculties of Education and Economics and Management Sciences. The establishment of policy analysis institutions at universities will contribute positively to the implementation of outcomes-based education policy.

The public policy under consideration is outcomes-based education policy. In keeping with the relevant policy directives, there are certain activities that are unique to the

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implementation of outcomes-based education policy. These activities can be regarded as distinguishing features of practising outcomes-based education policy. Stated differently, outcomes-based education policy instructs educators and learners as the main role players in education to behave in certain peculiar ways, and to perform the tasks of teaching and learning in accordance therewith. The peculiarity of the implementation activities and roles of educators and learners is described in the following chapter.