

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE LOW MATRIC PASS RATE IN MOPANI
DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MOTUPA CIRCUIT**

BY

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DECLARATION

STUDENT NO. [REDACTED]

I, Malatji Mokgwathi Moses, declare that the title “Factors contributing to the low matric pass rate in Mopani District: A case study of secondary schools in Motupa Circuit”, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of references.

Signature :Date : 02 May 2019

ABSTRACT

The comparatively high failure rate in South African rural and township secondary schools is a matter of great concern. This study set out to establish what factors are contributing to the low matric pass rate in our secondary schools, in order to identify possible solutions. The study provides an overview, informed by a review of local and international research literature, of the educational and social factors that hinder school performance. The two secondary schools in Motupa Circuit selected for this study had underperformed for the previous five years, below the benchmark of a sixty percent pass rate. The study population consisted of school management teams, teachers, school governing bodies and grade 12 repeating learners. The study followed a qualitative approach, with a case study research design in which the inquiry process was based on interviews and observation. The theory of educational productivity was used to discuss the social and emotional influences of classroom management, parental support, and interaction between teachers and learners. Analysis of the data collected led to findings that served as the basis for the recommendation that all stakeholders, from departmental officials downwards to communities and parents, join hands and work together to address and correct all the ills. The findings revealed minimal support from departmental officials and school management teams. Poor management and instructional leadership are seen as some of the ills that affect academic results. The lack of involvement of parents in supporting the schools serves to demotivate teachers in their daily work. The study also revealed that non-completion of the syllabus and the poor monitoring of written work were a bane to our rural schools. Lastly, social life outside the classrooms contributed to derailing our learners' progress. The study recommends that the DBE develop and support SMT's by enhancing their skills of management and leadership, so as to empower teachers at all levels. Career guidance in grade 9 was a necessary step towards guiding learners on their choice of subjects.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to the following individuals for their continuous support, encouragement and love during my studies.

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(d) All principals, teachers learners and SGB's who participated in and contributed my projects.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABET –Adult Basic Education and Training

ALT – Academic Learning Time

ANA – Annual National Assessment

APIP – Academic Performance Improvement Plan

C2005 – Curriculum 2005

CA – Curriculum Advisors

CAPS – Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

CASS – Continuous Assessment

DBE – Department of Basic Education

DoE –Department of Education

FET – Further Education and Training

GET – General Education Training

HOD – Head of Department

IQMS – Integrated Quality Management System

LDE –Limpopo Department of Education

LTSM – Learner Teachers Support Material

NCS – National Curriculum Statement

NGO – Non Governmental Organisation

NSC – National Senior Certificate

OBE –Outcomes Based Education

PIRLS – Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study

QLTC – Quality Learning and Teaching

RNCS – Revised National Curriculum Statement

SACMEQ – Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

SADTU – South African Democratic Teachers Union

SASA – South Africa Schools Act

SDT – School Development Team

SGB – School Governing Body

SIP – School Improvement Plan

SMT – School Management Team

TIMSS – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The education system in South Africa is expected to produce school graduates of a high standard who will have the necessary capabilities, intellectual capital and skills to be ready to enter the labour market (Swart & Becker, 2014). However, matric results have been a matter of concern since the post-apartheid merging of Education Departments from different historical backgrounds. Years after the transition in South Africa, many schools are still struggling to reach the targets set by the provincials and National Department of Education as attested by the Ministry of Basic Education when announcing the Matric results on 04 January 2019 (<https://www.sanews.gov.za>).

Poor performance in many of the rural and township schools indicates that there are serious challenges in the South African education system (Limpopo Department of Education-LDE,2016). The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of this situation, and outline the aims and objectives of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION TO THE STUDY

When South Africa became a democratic society in 1994, the education system changed through the merging of the former education systems of Report 550 in the bantustans with the education systems of the whites, coloureds, Indians and blacks in the townships, into one education system known as the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2011). Grade 12 remained the yardstick and the exit point for learners to pursue their tertiary education at Colleges or Universities. Within the Department of Basic Education, three major developments have occurred: Curriculum 2005 (C2005), Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)(DBE,2012).

The disappointment that greets the annual announcement of the matric results indicates the presence of a crisis in the education system of South Africa (DBE, 2014).

According to the Department of Basic Education (2016), the fluctuation and variation in results between one province and another are produced by individual schools, circuits and districts failing to reach the benchmark and target set by the Department. South Africa has the worst education system of all the middle-income countries that participate in cross-national assessments of educational achievement (Spaull, 2013). This is demonstrated, inter alia, by the high percentage of failures who get stuck in grades 10 and 11. Spaull (2013) observes that there is a large number of pupils who start schooling in grade one but do not make it to exit in grade 12.

Motupa circuit is found in the Mopani district in Limpopo province. Motupa circuit forms part of the Bolobedu cluster of circuits in the Modjadji area. The circuit is in a deep rural area with about ninety percent of the schools declared Quintile 1, as per the norms and standards of state funding (DBE, 2014). The circuit has about 13 secondary schools. Although a lot of work has been done by scholars and educationists on the challenges facing education in SA, there has not been any thorough and systematic research on the factors contributing to the low matric pass rate in Motupa circuit. This research therefore investigates the factors contributing to this low matric pass rate.

The low matric pass rate has been a matter of critical national concern since 2003, despite some improvement in 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016. In the past three years the national pass rate has fluctuated from seventy-five percent in 2014, to seventy percent in 2015 and seventy-two percent in 2016 (DBE, 2017). These statistics show that every year there is a fluctuation of results from one province to another, including the districts and circuits. About 101 000 learners were “progressed” from grade 11 to grade 12 in 2015 without meeting the pass requirements. This number of progressed learners dragged the National pass rate down by three percent the following year (DBE, 2016).

Not only was there a decline nationally and provincially, but also in Mopani District, as the Department of Basic Education has declared. Poor performance by learners in Grade 12 in Motupa circuit affects the district, the province and national results. The low pass rate in the province in turn affects the national pass rate. Yearly, when results are announced Limpopo Province is ranked in last or second-last position. The average

percentage pass in the Mopani district dropped to below sixty in 2010. Mopani district has 264 secondary schools, of which 93 underperformed in 2016, and only 131 schools obtained above the benchmark of sixty percent (Limpopo Department of Education [LDE]. Mopani District Report on Matric Results, 2016). This is an indication that there is a crisis within the District and Province. Within the Bolobedu cluster, Motupa circuit has been the worst performing circuit over the past eight years. The overall average percentage pass in the circuit has been ranged from twenty-four percent to an improved fifty-eight percent in 2014, declining to 54 percent in 2015 (LDE, 2015). It is worth noting that the Department of Basic Education has declared schools scoring below sixty percent to be dysfunctional.

Since matric results are performance indicators for learners as well as the point of exit to tertiary institutions, the underperformance in the circuit becomes a matter of concern to the communities. The major stakeholders, such as the School Governing Body(SGB), teachers, parents and traditional leaders blame each other for the high failure rate when results are announced. Researchers such as Rammala (2009) and Shoko (2006) have established certain factors as contributing to matric results in other areas of Limpopo Province, but no investigation of the low matric pass rate in Motupa has yet been conducted. Even though there are some signs of improvement in the province as a whole, the pass rates in many schools from Motupa circuit remain poor. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors contributing to the low matric pass rate in the Mopani district, particularly in Motupa circuit.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Looking at the matric pass rate province by province, the Limpopo Education Department and Mopani District in particular are found to be underperforming, because in part of dysfunctional circuits like Motupa. Although the problem is systemic, the focus of this study is on grade 12, which after all defines the future career of the learner (Mativandlela, 2009).

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher will use Walberg's (1981) theory of educational productivity, which is one of the few empirically tested theories of school learning based on extensive review and the integration of many studies (Diperna, Volpe & Stephen, 2002). Walberg's theory talks about the most influential domains of variables, which involve social-emotional influences (classroom management, parental support, student-teacher interaction), social-behavioural attributes, motivational-effective attributes, the peer group, school culture and classroom climate (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). This theory provides some perspectives that the researcher used when looking at the issue of the low pass rate. The theory suggests, for instance, that in the context of poor performance we need to consider influential issues such as classroom management. When the classroom is not well managed, the situation is likely to affect the teaching and learning agenda of the school. The theory also raises the important issue of parental support. Education is a societal issue, and responsibility for educating a pupil is not only the responsibility of teachers, but of parents as well. In the case of Motupa Circuit there is a need for parents to support the school, teachers and the learners with the view of improving education of their children. The other issue that the theory has raised is student-teacher interaction.

Student-teacher interaction is absolutely central because it informs the teaching and learning that is taking place. During data collection for this study, the researcher observed how teachers were interacting with learners and kinds of resultant relationship. The social-behavioural issue is another prominent factor. In most of the high schools, discipline is a challenge as a result of learners' social behaviour. In Motupa Circuit, teachers seemed to spend more time disciplining learners than teaching them.

Walberg (1981)'s theory also presented motivational-effective attributes as one the lenses through which to look at issues of poor academic performance. During data collection, issues of learner motivation, peer group influence, school culture, common

beliefs and practices, and classroom climate were also observed.

Walberg (1981) also suggests certain more distant background influences (e.g. state, district, or school policies, organizational characteristics, curriculum, and instruction), which are considered less influential. The researcher nevertheless school policies, support from the Department of Basic Education, the school district, school curriculum, school management and their effect on the matric pass rate.

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors contributing to the low matric pass rate in Motupa circuit.

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

The main research question guiding this study is as follows:

- What are the factors that contribute to the low matric pass rate"

From this main research question, the following sub-questions derived:

- What are the factors that result in a low matric pass rate in Motupa circuit"
- What are the challenges that teachers experience in grade 12 classes"
- What are the challenges that learners experience in grade 12 classes"
- What recommendations can be made to improve matric results in Motupa circuit"

1.7. AIM OF THE STUDY

- The study aims to contribute to improvement of education in schools in Motupa circuit by identifying factors contributing to the low matric pass rate.

1.8. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study are to:

- Explore factors that result in low matric pass rates in Motupa circuit
- Explore challenges that teachers experience in grade 12 classes
- Examine challenges that learners experience in grade 12 classes
- Recommend possible solutions to improve matric results in Motupa circuit.

1.9 POPULATION AND SAMPLING OF THE STUDY

Motupa circuit within the Mopani District was selected for the study, having consistently achieved low matric pass rates for a number of years. The circuit has 13 high schools. Two secondary schools in the circuit were selected for study, School A and School B. These high schools were performing well before 2003. They achieved a pass rate of twenty percent in 2009, which is extremely low. The target and benchmark set by the District and Province is sixty percent.

TABLE A: ANALYSIS OF PASS-RATE STATISTICS 2014–2016 (two schools in Motupa Circuit, Mopani District)

	Name of School	2014	2015	2016
1	School A	57.7	52,2	46.2
2	School B	60.1	28	22,3

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define sampling as the group of subjects or participants from whom the data is collected, usually a portion or a smaller number of units of a population, deemed to be representative of the total population (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011). The researcher used purposive sampling to select two schools that performed poorly consecutively during 2014 to 2016. According to De Vos et al. (2011), purposive sampling is a judgemental technique where the sample is composed of elements that possess the characteristics most representative of the population that serve the purpose of the study. The participants interviewed were

teachers with 6 years" teaching experience in their schools who were willing to respond to questions and were knowledgeable about the situation in each of the selected schools, 1 principal, 1 deputy principal, 2 heads of departments, 2 educators, 2 repeat full-time learners and 2 representatives from the SGB representing the parents.

1.10 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) point out that in qualitative research, there are several main methods of gathering data, namely, interviews, observation, document review and audio–visual materials. To address the research question, the researcher opted for individual interviews, focus group discussion and observation. Observation refers to an essential data-gathering technique in terms of which the researcher sees and hears what is occurring naturally in the research site, to provide an intimate perspective on the group dynamics and behaviour in different settings (Maree, 2007). In terms of interviews, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with the School Management Team (SMT), while the educators, the grade 12 repeat full-time learners and SGB representatives were interviewed in focus groups. A tape recorder and note books for note taking were utilised for data recording.

1.11 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used inductive analysis, a method employing a process of selecting, synthesising, coding, categorising and interpreting data, to provide an explanation of a single phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). After data collection the researcher also took the following steps in analysing the data, as outlined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010).

1.11.1 Step 1: Organising data

The data collected in the form of notes, recordings, observation data, and interview data was organised by means of separating and sorting it in files and folders. The notes taken from interviews and observation were transcribed and typed up and reviewed manually (Maree et al., 2007).

1.11.2 Step 2: Data coding (finding themes in the data)

Data coding is the process of identifying small pieces of data that stand alone, line by line, and grouping them into meaningful units or segments (Maree, 2007). The researcher made use of colour to identify the participants, quotations, participants' perspectives, events, processes and other actions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher used three levels of analysis using the same data, sorting the data into the responses of individual participants, as a group and as a whole.

1.11.3 Step 3: Establishing themes or categories

The transcribed data which had been coded was moved into themes or categories. The researcher used a method of short description for each category. Issues that recurred in the data assisted the researcher to form subthemes. These subthemes in a sense emerged automatically from the data. The researcher then moved back and forth through the data combining the categories or themes into subcategories and independent categories.

1.11.4 Step 4: Ensuring credibility and transferability in data analysis

According to Mertens (2005), to maintain quality in qualitative research, the researcher has to focus on the criteria that establish rigour in qualitative methods, which are: credibility, persistent observation, peer debriefing, progressive subjectivity, member checks, triangulation, authenticity and transferability. In the case of triangulation the researcher used multiple methods like observations and interviews and respondents' opinions. To ensure trustworthiness the researcher used different sources, ensuring a combination of individual interviews with information from focus groups and an analysis of written material on the subject (Maree, 2007)

1.12. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will benefit the stakeholders in education, society and the communities concerned to address the challenge of underperformance. This study might also assist the Provincial Department of Education in Limpopo, the municipalities in Bolobedu, non-

governmental organisations and parents with how to address the challenges caused by the legacy of apartheid in education. The findings might be helpful in suggesting strategies to improve the results not only in Grade 12, but also in the GET and FET bands in the secondary schools.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher requested permission to interview the principals, deputy principals, the grade 12 educators and repeating grade 12 learners from the Provincial Department of Education. The communiqué granting permission from the Head Office, Department of Education in Limpopo is attached as an appendix. The researcher had to respect the department's ethics by protecting the rights of the participants. Respect for the social beliefs, norms and values of the communities researched was displayed. The researcher informed the participants about the purpose of and reason for the study before the interviews took place. The participants were given consent forms to sign and were urged to be open and honest in sharing their experience and observations, without being subject to any prompting or persuasion. The researcher's findings were reported correctly without addition or falsification.

1.14 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter has described the background of the study. A statement of the research problem and the research questions are provided, and the aims and objectives of the study are outlined. The researcher has also presented the research design, described the research population, and explained how data was collected and analysed. The next chapter combines a literature review and theoretical framework for the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter literature relevant to the factors, variables and challenges that contribute to the underperformance of matric learners will be reviewed under the following headings: the effect of curriculum change in South Africa, assessment in the classroom, the language of teaching and learning, instructional leadership, staff development and others. De Vos et al. (2011) define a literature review as a way of organizing the existing knowledge and presenting its content in an analytical way. The theoretical framework initially discussed in this chapter is Walberg's (1981) anatomy of educational productivity, which focuses on factors involved in the learner's interactions with the school environment that influence his learning situation.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher will use Walberg's (1981) theory of educational productivity, which is one of the few empirically tested theories of school learning based on extensive review and the integration of many studies (Diperna et al., 2002). Walberg's theory talks about the most influential domains of variables, which are social-emotional influences (classroom management, parental support and student-teacher interaction), social-behavioral aspects, and motivational-effective attributes, such as the role of the peer group, school culture and classroom climate (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). This perspective reminds us that when researching issues of poor performance, we need to consider influential issues such as classroom management. When the classroom is not well managed, this is likely to affect teaching and learning at the school. The issue of parental support is also crucial. Unlike in the past, education is now a societal issue. Responsibility for educating the pupil is shared by teachers and parents. In the case of Motupa circuit there is a need for parents to support the school, teachers and the learners, with a view to improving the education of their children. Another key issue raised by Walberg is student-teacher interaction, which is central to any teaching and learning that is taking place. During data collection for this study, the researcher

observed how teachers were interacting with learners, which also raises the issue of social behaviour. In most of the high schools discipline is a challenge arising from the learners' social conduct. These issues were all considered by the researcher when the data collection tools were designed. In Motupa circuit it was as if teachers spent more time disciplining learners than teaching them.

Walberg (1981)'s theory also presents motivational-effective attributes as an area to investigate when assessing academic achievement. For instance, the influence of the peer group in a school can be positive or negative, as can the ambient school culture of widely practised beliefs and behaviours, and the question of whether the classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning.

Walberg (1981) suggests that certain background influences play a lesser role (e.g., state, district or school policies, organizational characteristics, and curriculum). Nevertheless, it is important to assess the influence of school policies, support of the Department of Basic Education, the school district, school curriculum and school management on the matric pass rate.

2. 3. CURRICULUM CHANGE: CURRICULUM 2005 AND CAPS

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) commonly known as Curriculum 2005 was introduced in 1997 in grade one, with this cohort sitting for grade 12 exams in 2008. In 2012 the curriculum was changed by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2012). These curricula arrived with their own principles of teaching and learning, and with the agenda of dealing with the political legacy of the apartheid era (Wright, 2012). They were introduced in a "staggering pile of complex policy and implementation documents against the entrenched legacy of fifty years of apartheid education" (Wright, 2012:2). According to Wright (2012) Curriculum 2005 in the rural areas met the dilapidated education system inherited from the Bantustans, which was too weak to respond effectively to the new education philosophy. The Provinces were to deliver the approach as though the new curriculum was being introduced into a healthy, well-functioning system. The implementation of Curriculum 2005 assumed that teachers were already both properly educated and well-motivated. Wright (2012) maintains that

this was a radical misjudgment by the Department of Education, while Maenetja (2005) records the range and extent of the challenges the new system encountered in its implementation. According to Mchunu and Imenda (2015), in order to assist the learners to cope with the new curriculum, educators needed to have an adequate understanding of all the attendant changes, as well as applied competences to successfully implement the curriculum. Mchunu and Imenda (2015) quote Jiba and Mokhele (2008:254) to the effect that “Many schools in South Africa and elsewhere struggle to offer high quality instruction”. Dysfunctionality in schools resulted in the poor performance of learners.

Marule (2007) defines change as a personal and developmental process, at once an individual and collective responsibility. Change will not happen overnight, and there is no blueprint for change. Therefore, teachers as agents of change must be ready to engage with what is involved in the process of change. The system must support change that it encourages. Marule (2007:21) quotes Fullam (1993), who maintains that “you cannot make people change, there must be commitment to change and this will happen when people buy in, then commitment to the change process will follow suit”. Malatji (2016) agrees that when curriculum change occurs, teaching staff simply have to change and keep up with the current approach. It’s a thorny issue for the poor teachers who are reluctant to change and become defensive about immediate change, without having received proper training about what they will be implementing in their daily work. The series of curriculum changes outlined above confused many educators in formerly disadvantaged schools, who were having to spend so much time trying to include all of the curricular features in their planning that they did not spend enough time on reading and writing (De Waal, 2004; Maponya, 2015).

2.4 COMPETENCY OF AND CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION SPECIALISTS IN SUPPORTING SCHOOLS

According to the Department of Basic Education (2003), learning areas or streams from primary school to the FET band in secondary schools should have education specialists known as HODs (Heads of Department). Heads of departments represent the district education specialists who are commonly known as Curriculum Advisors

(CAs). Malatji (2016) defines the role of Curriculum Advisors as one of advising schools and helping them with the curriculum and other related matters. A current challenge is the shortage of Curriculum Advisors in the circuits, in terms of which some areas are without a single CA (DoE. Mopani District report on matric results 2015). This has been acknowledged as a challenge by the District Director for Mopani and the MEC for Education in Limpopo (LDE. MEC road show on underperforming schools in Limpopo, 2016).

Malatji (2016) also notes the low numbers of Curriculum Advisors in the district, who are as a result frequently unable to reach all schools. Mphahlele (2007) and Mbalati (2010) suggest that most of the Curriculum Advisers have no knowledge of the learning areas they supervise. Mbalati (2010) further observes that the district support teams are incompetent to assist the schools to develop as self-reliant institutions that offer quality education by training the staff accordingly. It becomes difficult for the circuits to find specialized Curriculum Advisers who are fit to support the GET and FET bands in schools. Malatji (2016) concurs with Mphahlele (2007) that most of our Curriculum Advisors visit the schools without knowing their roles and end up judging and criticizing teachers' work instead of providing them with support. They have been labeled by the teacher unions as fault-finders rather than advisors and supporters.

Mphahlele (2007) and Mbalati (2010) note that the Curriculum Advisors experience problems in making regular visits to schools for support purposes, since one CA has to support more than 4 circuits. A few schools in the Province of Limpopo are visited only on the first day of re-opening to monitor the start of teaching and learning. Another visit is made during Continuous Assessment moderation (CASS) towards the end of the year before the final exams. Both Mbalati (2010) and Mphahlele (2007) observed that most educators do not receive the necessary support from Curriculum Advisors, and that what is needed is a continuous curriculum support programme in the schools. One doubts the prospects of a good performance being produced by the secondary schools that have recently introduced the FET band (grades 10 to 12) without support from the Circuit and District.

Some of the learning areas are without a Curriculum Advisor because the department does not or cannot ensure that every learning area has a CA. The shortage of CAs means that workshops in some learning areas do not take place, leading to a poor beginning for the academic year of teaching in both Primary and Secondary schools (Mphahlele, 2007).

2.5 TEACHER EMPOWERMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Empowerment has to do with identifying the vectors of power that contribute to the problem, as well as developing and implementing specific strategies (Le Roux, 1994). With empowerment people are given more responsibility and more control to do their job in ways which are satisfying and effective. Most educators were trained and educated in disadvantaged institutions and they need further development in their career of teaching (Spaull, 2013). Historically, education for black people in South Africa has always been a major area of discrimination in that it is both separate and inferior in terms of quality (Le Roux, 1994). The monitoring of educators and learner attendance, coupled with in-service training for educators, are essential for the empowerment of teachers and the provision of quality education (Spaull, 2012).

Teachers need to be empowered so that they can shape their identity as educators. The school has an obligation and responsibility to empower the disempowered. Mutangwa (2007) claims that high pay attracts a good quality of teacher, produces good results and boosts the morale of educators, motivating them to stay in the profession rather than to quit. But the morale of teachers does not depend on salary alone: recognizing their responsibility and praising them for a job well done will intrinsically motivate them and improve their performance in class (Mutangwa, 2007). Dikgale (2012) maintains that it is the duty and responsibility of the Department of Basic Education to capacitate and develop educators to perform well. He observes that in their planning, the Provincial Department of Limpopo has a budget for training educators and management teams to prepare them for the new curriculum framework. The target group is mostly grade 12 educators, while the feeder band from grades 6 to 9 is ignored.

After a newly appointed educator has signed a contract, the principal has to ensure that appropriate induction takes place. According to Malatji (2016), it is the principals' responsibility to ensure that the school development team (SDT), the school improvement plan (SIP) and academic performance improvement plan (APIP) are developed, implemented and monitored. Educators must be empowered in order to gain the confidence to respond adequately to day-to-day educational problems (Mutangwa, 2007), like simply delivering appropriate content in the classroom (Dikgale, 2012; Mutangwa, 2007).

According to Mbalati (2010), educators need to be helped to improve their professional knowledge, skills and attitude in order to educate learners effectively and efficiently. Mbalati (2010) quotes Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1993:64) as saying that "educators who are not constantly motivated, developed, transforming, growing, gaining insight and becoming better people will very soon stagnate, become uninteresting and be spiritless". „Staff development" has to do with the need for people at work to grow and develop on the job, while „in-service training" focuses more on the deficiency of the educator (Mutangwa, 2007). Staff development is thus growth-oriented and extremely valuable, but seems to be prioritized in secondary schools, particularly the FET band, at the cost of primary schools, which lay the essential foundation.

For the realization of the Mission and Vision of any school, staff development and support are essential. Shoko (2006) stresses that a lack of staff development and support, and failure to utilize resources effectively, can lead to educator demotivation and disillusionment. An additional factor contributing to poor results in the schools is the inadequate provision of staff. In most of schools a shortage of staff impacts negatively on the performance of learners, as a result of educators' workload and overcrowding (Shoko, 2006).

The present system of education engages educators for two- to five-day workshops, a period one doubts is sufficient for developing and equipping secondary educators with the necessary skills. This has a negative impact on new educators who are fresh in the system and need to be kept abreast of changes to the syllabus in the new CAPS.

Principals, SMTs and Curriculum Advisors are tasked to empower and develop educators in this way. The poor principals are expected to have the capacity, abilities and content knowledge to develop and support newly appointed educators (LDE, 2015).

Dikgale (2012) quotes the De Lange Report of 1980, which stated that teacher training for blacks should be reviewed because it was totally inadequate. The majority of these inadequately trained educators perform their duties in the townships and rural areas. Dikgale (2012) emphasizes that the quality of teaching in black schools needs serious support to be developed and capacitated. Dikgale (2012) and Mutangwa (2007) agree about the lack of adequate in-service training for educators like refresher workshops, but note that the facilitators themselves, like the Curriculum Advisors, also need thorough training on the content so that they have the confidence to facilitate and give support to educators. Schools rely upon Curriculum Advisors for support, particularly newly-appointed teachers who may not know whether they are doing well or not.

2. 6. EDUCATOR CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Mutangwa (2007) maintains that some educators enter the field of education because nothing else was available for them to do or because they were not accepted in their field of choice. This leads to poor motivation and discipline, and hence a lack of competence. Mutangwa (2007) nevertheless holds the view that teachers' competence, flexibility and ability to innovate, depend largely on their level of education and training. Some graduates have majors which are non-school subjects (Mutangwa, 2007), while many educators in secondary schools are teaching subjects for which they are not qualified. Mthangeni (1991) is quoted by Mutangwa (2007) as pointing out that there are educators trained for primary education who end up teaching in secondary schools. All these factors are likely to have an effect on the performance of the learners in particular subjects. Mji and Makgato (2006) note that a lack of basic knowledge in subjects such as Mathematics and Science have resulted in poor teaching standards. According to Dikgale (2012), poor, under-qualified Maths and Science educators are found mostly in the rural areas teaching in overcrowded and ill-equipped classrooms. A lack of basic content knowledge results in educators in the sciences teaching only the theoretical

level of the subject, without any experiments to enhance learners' understanding and application of the knowledge.

Mutangwa (2007) states that even well-designed curricula cannot be effectively implemented unless educators are competent and confident in understanding the design and have the ability to relate such curricula to teaching-learning situations. The non-involvement of educators in curriculum development may lead to their performing ineffectively, which will also affect learner performance (Mutangwa, 2007). Spaul (2013) observed a serious challenge in the GET band when Grade six pupils were tested on SACMEQ 111 in 2007. He says the analysis revealed that many South African mathematics educators have below-basic levels of content knowledge, with a high proportion of educators being unable to answer questions aimed at their pupils (Spaul, 2013). He concludes that our educators cannot teach what they do not know, and that the quality of the country's education system reflects the quality of its teachers (Spaul, 2013). Mji and Makgato (2006) add that an educator who was trained in an incompetent manner will inevitably reproduce the bad practices he learnt in teaching others. This is especially so if the educator is not supported and developed in-service.

Maponya (2012) agrees with Spaul (2012:81) that a factor powerfully impacting learner performance is the educator's knowledge of subject content. There seems to be a particular content challenge in the GET band, with learners entering the FET phase without certain knowledge and skills that should have been developed in the lower grades (Basson & Kriek, 2012). This compels the FET educators to spend more time teaching the basics. Maponya (2015) notes that the educators who are struggling with content also experience difficulty with effectively evaluating learner performance.

A survey conducted in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) by Bansilal (2012) on mathematics knowledge and skills revealed that poor content knowledge in Mathematics is one reason for underperformance in Mathematics in South Africa. It was found that the respondents, who were maths educators for grade six, themselves achieved less than 50% for the subject. Selvaratnam (2011) observes that there are similar challenges with physical science educators delivering the content in class. Most science educators are

comparably under-qualified and inadequately trained. Selvaratnam (2011) discovered that science educators in KZN and North West provinces performed very poorly in most of the questions they wrote. In fact these science educators were found to be incompetent in both the skills and strategies tested. Both Bansilal (2014) and Spaul (2013) document teachers' deficiencies in the "scarce skills" subjects like Mathematics and Physical Science. Meanwhile, teachers and their unions distance themselves from the situation, claiming the system is to be blamed when educators are failing tests which are designed for their learners. The issue of content knowledge handicaps the successful implementation and delivery of the curriculum in Mathematics and Science, contributing massively to the high failure rate in matric.

2. 7. DISCIPLINE OF EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS

Muthangwa (2007) emphasizes that ill-discipline in the schools on the part of learners disturbs teaching and learning and leads to poor performance. Aspects of ill-discipline include learners not attending lessons regularly, using drugs and refusing to write written tasks. Such learners bully and show little respect for educators. Ill-discipline not only affects results but also has a negative impact on the morale of educators (Muthangwa, 2007). Modiba (2015) points that when a learner fails or become unteachable, it is the educator who is deemed ineffectual and deserving of reproach.

While it is true that learners need to be inspired, encouraged, stimulated and motivated to be disciplined and teachable (Modiba, 2015), when they fail, educators are the first to be blamed. The Department of Basic Education and other stakeholders hold the view that when the learners fail, it is the educator who has not done his job. A learner or child is regarded as innocent, while the educator is expected to be like a parent, showing him the way to a brighter future, irrespective of challenges encountered along the way.

The behaviour of learners in a school is influenced by every aspect of the way the school is run and how it relates to the community. Modiba (2015) emphasizes that the more educator became isolated within the community, the more difficult the management of discipline becomes. The availability of educators in class, their determination, their willpower and their discipline on the school premises is itself a

matter of concern in the matter of the underperformance of learners. Khanare (2008:37) is quoted by Modiba (2015) as asserting that teaching is about reaching the souls of learners. If this mission is not accomplished, education becomes a futile exercise. Dikgale (2012) re-iterates that ill-discipline at school is indirectly caused by the management and the educators. It is the duty and responsibility of educators to correct learners and make them behave properly. The involvement of stakeholders in managing the discipline of the learner, starting from home, to the community and on to school, cannot be overlooked, since it is the responsibility of all.

Dikgale (2012) and Modiba (2015) agree that poverty can encourage adolescent learners to be involved in anti-social behavior. They note that a poor family background can incline learners to illegal activities such as selling drugs, alcohol abuse and prostitution, with the aim of supplementing resources at home. Secondary school learners are adolescents: they have a tendency to be rebellious and can become unteachable. Schools which have problems with management and leadership help to create the conditions for this. Once there is no sustained teaching and classroom discipline, learners become bullying, rebellious and troublesome at school. Learners get up to more mischief if they are not occupied in class. This has a negative impact on their academic performance.

The disruption of classes and poor discipline among learners in turn affects the management of classes. This is a result of the democratization of the schooling system in line with the new political dispensation and freedom, which abolished punitive measures such as corporal punishment (Tigere, 2016). Current learners have lost a sense of the purpose of schooling and are focusing more on becoming wealthy at a tender age. Most of these learners are boys who are influenced and inspired by politicians who are driving fancy cars, fancy motorcycles and staying in mansions. They research the level of education of their politicians and conclude that schooling is counter-productive and a waste of time. They are at school simply because there is nowhere else to go; their dreams are to be awarded tenders and live a luxurious life (Modiba, 2015). This is attested by the members of youth leagues affiliated to political organizations who are determined to further their political agendas and activities even

while lessons are in progress at school. This behaviour send a bad message to the learners and youth, encouraging them not to value their studies, which results in poor performance in their grades.

2.8. SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THEIR SCHOOLS

The principal is the manager of an institution. It is his duty to manage and lead for the achievement of good results. Schools that achieve good results have principals who execute their management responsibilities by coordinating and supervising all the stakeholders, from building maintenance to curriculum implementation. Such principals, as Mutangwa (2007) points out, function in an instructional capacity, working with the staff and learners on matters relating to teaching and learning. When a school underperforms, the first person to be held accountable is the principal, since he is the representative of the Department of Education. The principal as an instructional leader has the roles of setting clear goals, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating educators regularly, so as to promote student learning. Quality instruction is the top priority for the instructional principal (Malatji, 2016).

Leepo (2015) quotes Swan"s (2014:2) definition of instructional leadership as "the dynamic delivery of the Curriculum in the classroom through strategies based on reflection assessment and evaluation to ensure optimum learning". Maponya (2015) characterizes instructional leadership by the principal as related to the core activities of the school, which are teaching and learning. Maponya (2015) and Leepo (2015) agree that instructional leadership occurs when the principal provides resources and support to both the educators and the learners, with the aim of improving learner achievement. Leepo (2015) views the principal as the primary source of educational expertise in a school, vested with the responsibility for ensuring that the school works effectively and efficiently.

Among the criteria for a candidate to be shortlisted for the post of principal is the possession of (qualifications or documents indicating) management and leadership skills. Mutangwa (2007) insists that the principal should lead, manage the school, shape its direction and develop the school. He can achieve this by ensuring that there is a clear system of accountability. Furthermore, the principal needs to establish and maintain a positive internal school environment in which teaching and learning can take place. Hofman & Gray (2015) claim that for effective education or teaching to take place, the principal and SMT must create a sound culture of teaching and learning. This is enabled by managing the curriculum, supervising teaching and monitoring learner progress (Hofman et al., 2015). This is enabled by the principals and SMT's setting up goals, working according to the set goals and ensuring that such goals are attained (Malatji, 2016). This is achievable if the staff, SGB and parents are involved from the onset.

Spaull (2012) confirms that variables such as school management and teacher quality significantly influence the performance of learners. Schools that perform well forge a good relationship among all stakeholders and ensure that educators go to class and teach the correct content as per pace setters. In his survey Leepo (2015) observes that underperforming schools have no credible intervention programmes. They may have plans available in the offices but there is no proof that they are implemented. It is the duty and responsibility of the principal to motivate the educators and learners, to acknowledge and appreciate the good work they are doing. Regular workshops for principals are essential to ensure that they are capacitated with the requisite personnel management, curriculum management and development skills.

2.9. COMMITMENT OF EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS

Rammala (2009) observes that the bunking of classes by learners has become a common practice, with school-going youths getting arrested in town in school uniform or even organizing parties during school hours. Rammala (2009) reports that some learners confessed that they would go to nearby shops and come back late or not come back at all, while others would not co-operate with educators. Mbalati (2010) supports

Mthanji (2007) in estimating that fifty percent of learners in schools are characterized by unbecoming behaviour. Mbalati (2010) endorses the Whole School Evaluation policy of the Department of Education, designed to ensure that schools which are conducting themselves according to the set policies attain good academic standards, acceptable standards of behaviour and high rates of punctuality and attendance.

Mahlomaholo (2010) observes that black learners enter into the secondary phase unaccustomed to the culture of learning. They find it hard to adapt to the high standards of learning and working independently. A learner who is intrinsically motivated will go to school for the enjoyment of learning new things, or because of dreams for the future. But unmotivated learners do not know why they are going to school. They experience feelings of incompetence and a lack of control, and consequently underperform at the end of the academic year (Ricard & Pelletier, 2015). It is the responsibility of the educator to evaluate the profile of a learner to establish their challenges and assist them accordingly.

Mahlomaholo (2010) notes that some African learners are also heading parentless families, and an overload domestic responsibilities retards their progress at school. They are expected to take care of their household, to purchase groceries for the family, clean the house, wash the dishes and generally do real work since there are no domestic workers. They have no time for homework and studying, and no energy to do schoolwork. Such learners can be seen sleeping during school periods.

Learner and educator absenteeism remains a challenge at some schools (Malatji, 2016). As per departmental policy the principal and SMT must ensure that period and class registers are non-negotiable tools for controlling attendance at school. A big challenge is the monitoring of these attendance registers by the SMT and staff. Lack of commitment on the side of educators and learners make it difficult for SMT members to be productive. The issue of educators and learners coming to school late and leaving early makes it difficult for the SMT to fulfill their responsibilities of leading and managing.

Adelabu, Oyelana & Adelabu (2016) view the school as a place where wrong is corrected and young people are moulded into useful citizens and members of the community. In their study, Adelabu et al. (2016) identify some of the factors and variables that can lead a child to truancy and underperformance: uninteresting material, wrong curriculum, inappropriate classes, failure to provide service to students with problems, poor pupil-teacher relationships and insufficient counselling and guidance. The educator replaces the parent at school and spends many hours with the child. Learners expect the educator to play a role of a father figure or mother figure. They expect counselling, encouragement and comfort on their road of academic progress and life more generally, but are often disappointed. Mthanji (2007), Rammala (2009) and Mbalati (2010) reach the same conclusion: a lack of discipline and commitment on the part of both educators and learners leads to poor relationships in the teaching-learning environment and contributes to underperformance.

2.10 CHALLENGES FACING EDUCATORS IN DELIVERING ‘SCARCE SKILL’ SUBJECTS

According to Mji and Makgato (2006), the national audit of 1997 and the Education for All assessment of 2005 revealed that only fifty percent of maths and science educators in Northern Gauteng had actually specialized in those subjects. Many graduates in these subjects do not go on to teach because they are recruited by the private sector with good offers. Some schools have decided not to offer Physical Science and Mathematics, while numbers of science and maths educators are qualified to teach in primary schools but have been obliged to offer these subjects at secondary school level.

Spaull (2013) supports the view of Mji and Makgato (2006) that very few learners take Mathematics and Physical Science at school because of a perception that learners in grade 12 do not perform well in these subjects. This challenge of a comparatively high failure rate recurs in one school after another. Parents encourage their children to enroll for Maths and Science from grade 10 sometimes misled by grade 9 results that have been adjusted as per the Department's directive. When learners reach grade 12 they decide to change from Mathematics to Mathematics Literacy together with Physical

Science, which is not an ideal combination for the job market. Guidance on the choice of subjects is a challenge in most schools where, as a result of peer pressure, learners end up following unsuitable streams (DBE, 2015).

Other factors of a more general nature contributing to underperformance in these subjects include time-consuming registration at the beginning of the year, time lost to writing and marking in class, time spent on union meetings, strikes and memorial services, and undue emphasis on athletics and music competitions (Wright, 2012). The level of educator training has a profound effect on the efficacy of teaching. An educator who is inadequate and not on top of the content in these subjects is constantly challenged by his learners. Such educators drag their feet when they are needed in class, and some cannot last the duration of the period, giving excuses for leaving early (Mutshaeni, Maree & Engelbrecht, 2011).

2.11. TEACHER MORALE AND EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Educators and learners must be intrinsically motivated before they can be motivated by an outsider. Both educators and learners enjoy the time spent at school if their morale is positive. Malatji (2016) outlines that low morale among teachers is mostly found where there is a passive school management team. Educator cabals, troublesome learners and bullies can lower the morale of educators and make them engage in what amounts to an ongoing go-slow strike. Congratulating educators who are doing well in terms of their learners' academic performance and maintaining discipline on the school premises encourages positive feelings and spurs them on to work harder (LDE, 2015).

Hofman et al. (2015) point out that successful schools fare well in terms of three indicators: classroom effectiveness, school effectiveness and governance structure. The progressive teacher gives himself academic learning time (ALT) which he develops in class. Within this sphere the teacher will do remedial teaching on reading, do co-operative learning and person-oriented counselling. According to Hofman et al. (2015), about fifty percent of educators spend over eighty percent of their lesson time on teaching. This model of educational effectiveness compels the educator to practice teaching, modelling, management of time, and refining their role in making the

classroom a learning environment. Malatji (2016) is of the view that the SMT must support and motivate educators to do achieve these things by approaching their work with passion. The SMT must listen to educators' contributions and praise them when good work is being done.

The second factor as outlined by Hofman et al. (2015) is school effectiveness. This factor requires the school to develop a policy to achieve and maintain consistency in the learning process and the monitoring of learners' achievement. The school has to ensure that there is a culture of community participation, with parents and the local community being accountable and „owning“ the school. The involvement of parents in school policy matters plays a positive role in the academic performance of learners.

The last factor identified by Hofman et al. (2015) is the impact of governance structure. Mahlomaholo (2010) agrees, arguing that the school is an extension of the family. The school is in loco parentis, bearing the responsibility of carrying out the parents' will. The school is jointly tasked with parents with transmitting the culture of the community from the older generation to the younger. Parents' presence in the schoolyard for a few hours, to acknowledge the educators' contribution and signal their support, would serve to motivate the teachers to go the extra mile in their work. Overall educational effectiveness is a non-negotiable requirement for preparing learners to be responsible and accountable citizens in society (DBE, 2014).

2.12.THE IMPACT OF REDEPLOYMENT AND PROMOTIONAL PROCESSES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Rammala (2009) has observed that the frustrations caused by the process of rationalization and the redeployment of educators has also put a strain on educators' morale. Immediately the redeployment and rationalization begins, the teaching and learning process is disturbed and morale plummets. Even replacements have an effect, since learners might take time to adapt to newly placed educators (Rammala, 2009). Louis et al. (2010) claim that redeployment and promotion in our education system has in another way made a negative impact on the performance of learners and success of the school. The mobility of educators and principals represents a high level of turnover,

causing problems with continuity, commitment to goals and school vision and the momentum of improvement. In some schools, once a principal has left, it becomes unclear as to whether the growth plan had been shared by the entire staff or was solely the idea of the principal. The same applies to a teacher who leaves with the syllabus content of his subject not fully covered. This has a profound effect on the school's improvement plan. For some schools, to receive a competent headmaster or educator is a benefit and a blessing, while for others the result is chaos and frustration for all the stakeholders (SADTU Mopani Regional Annual Report, 2015). Redeployment has become a big threat to the majority of educators. Although all have signed their agreement, teachers on the ground live in fear of being redeployed far from their place of residence.

2.13 THE EFFECT OF TEACHER FORMATIONS

Cekiso and Maqhubela (2015) outline the existence of teacher unions as social partners in the education system to ensure transformation and decision making. The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) (SASA), gives proposes that teachers, parents and learners work together in the management of schools. According to Robinson and McCarthy (2010:18), as cited by Cekiso and Maqhubela (2015), teacher unions in the USA were perceived as the problem and not part of the solution in the education system. The same appears to be the case in South Africa: teacher unions are perceived as having a negative as well as a positive impact on the school management team (Cekiso & Maqhubela, 2015).

Wright (2012) points out that teacher formations can have an effect on the performance of learners in classes. SADTU(South African Democratic Teachers Union) , the biggest teacher formation in SA, is widely perceived as sacrificing the welfare of learners to its own interests. For instance, SADTU is blamed by the Department of Education in Eastern Cape for being involved in disruptive action (Wright, 2012). Dikgale (2012) maintains that strikes organized by teacher unions have become a routine source of disruption to the culture of learning and teaching.

Wright (2012) describes how the South African Democratic Teachers Union resisted when the Western Cape education authorities proposed competency testing for markers of Grade 12 NSC. The Department believed that “there are English educators who can’t write simple correct English and Mathematics educators who can’t do the sums in Maths correctly.” This annoyed the educators since it seemed the department doubted their competency (Wright, 2012). Mahlomaholo (2010) report that SADTU-affiliated teachers are not welcome in ex-white model C schools since they are regarded as trouble makers and less competent. The guidelines from South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act, No 76 of 1998, the Labour Relations Act, No 66 of 1996, and National Education Act, No 27 of 1996, make provision for schools to provide high quality of teaching and learning based on democratic relations between the management and teachers (Cekiso & Maqhubela, 2015).

Although Dikgale (2012) and Mahlomaholo (2010) demonstrate that the teacher formations, particularly SADTU, have contributed to underperformance in the schools, Cekiso and Maqhubela (2015) believe that teacher formations’ presence as stakeholders in the field of education is unavoidable. The Department of Education presents plans and directives to educational stakeholders, and teachers are expected to implement these. For the educational process to succeed, all stakeholders – especially educators, represented by their unions – need to relate well to each other.

According to Cekiso and Maqhubela (2015), factors that erode the relationship between SMTs and educators in the workplace include a lack of transparency, poor channels of communication, discrimination on gender and unclear guidance. These lead to tension within the school environment and retard progress, since subject content cannot be properly delivered if the atmosphere is not conducive to teaching. One major challenge to the relationship between the SMTs and teacher unions is the lack of workshops or training to support changes and directives. The principles of operation and limitations of operation in the workplace lead to conflict, affecting teaching and learning (Spaull, 2013). Many schools do not run smoothly as a result of tensions between the SMT and union sites. The attendance of union meetings during school hours is seen as another

factor which contributes to the high failure rate of learners in both the GET and FET bands (Cekiso & Maqhubela, 2015).

Cekiso and Maqhubela (2015) are of the view that members of some unions are released to attend to labour matters during school hours, while others are told they are too few and must attend to such matters after hours. This shows off a management that creates further rifts among the staff. Malatji (2016) has observed that attendance at meetings during working hours has a negative impact on school performance. Union meetings and memorial services disturb the normal programme at schools and make it difficult for members of the SMT to operate.

The SMT and teacher formations are obliged to forge a positive relationship in the school environment because when there are tensions, it is the pupils on the ground who suffer most at the end of the year. Some teacher unions argue that tougher action is required to prioritize the capacity building of education personnel to assist them to adequately perform their duties (Cekiso & Maqhubela, 2015). It is the responsibility of the teacher formations in the school environment to protect the employment rights of educators. But problems arise when the teacher formations go beyond their sphere of operation by interfering with school office and departmental matters. It is believed that teacher formations should have limits on their directives and policies imposed by their leadership at national level in conjunction with departmental officials.

2.14 RESOURCES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Mutangwa (2007) is of the view that for schools to run their educational programmes smoothly and properly there should be sufficient facilities provided by the government. In some of the rural areas, the supply of facilities is minimal or non-existent. This demotivates otherwise committed educators and derails the educational process. Facilities such as buildings and equipment are necessary for educators to be effective and learners to achieve (De Waal, 2004; Mutangwa, 2007).

Some of the schools that perform poorly do not have enough facilities and teaching media. Mutangwa (2007) argues that educators need basic teaching media for effective

performance. Technology has advanced and learners in today's society need to engage with it through the use of computers and other media. Student access to information on the internet is a non-negotiable issue if they are to compete with other learners nationally and internationally.

Ramalepe (2013) concurs with Mutshaeni (2011) that there is no way in which one can be productive in the implementation of a learning area without proper resources. This is attested by the worst performance in TIMMS and SACMEQ tests recorded in rural provinces like Limpopo. Secondary schools in the rural areas face a big challenge in offering Physical Science and Life Science due to the lack of laboratories. This lack clearly has a negative impact on learners' performance in science subjects. In some schools, learners were unable to describe a glass tube and test tube (Mutshaeni, 2011). Mutshaeni (2011) emphasizes that inadequate funding can undermine science subjects, which are mostly introduced in the FET band without any background or support from laboratories on the school premises.

Teacher unions hold the view that poor environments that are not conducive to teaching and learning have a strong bearing on teachers' performance, for instance dilapidated and overcrowded classrooms. Although funds from norms and standards are allocated to schools to upgrade their environment, restrictions are made by the National Department to devote 60% of the money to curriculum implementation (SADTU-Mopani Regional Annual Report, 2016).

2.15. PROVISIONING OF LEARNER – TEACHERS' SUPPORT MATERIAL (LTSM)

According to Maenetja (2005), most schools in the rural areas are without enough resources to support teaching and learning. This impacts negatively on learner performance. A teacher's individual efforts and learners' classroom performance cannot be successful if they are not complemented by supportive teaching material (Shoko, 2006). LTSM that is delivered to schools is often irrelevant and does not match their book requisitions, and even this distribution is unequal. Schools in historically black villages are impoverished compared to schools in middle-class suburbs which are relatively wealthy (Shoko, 2006). While the Department of Education is striving to

distribute textbooks on time, the retrieval policies drawn up by schools to retrieve the books are not implemented. The delivery of stationery to schools is also problematic, with some of schools only receiving supplies a month after reopening. This obviously impacts the written work and note-taking of learners. And while some schools did not receive textbooks, textbooks were discovered dumped in rivers and dams in Limpopo. This exposes the weakness of the distribution system in the Provincial Department of Education (SADTU Mopani Regional Annual Report, 2014).

Mthanji (2007) reiterates that the distribution of educational resources among the four race groups by the apartheid government revealed serious disparities and inequalities across the several education systems which provided education in South Africa. The distribution of wealth has been inequitable and politically entrenched. The yardstick applied by the apartheid system placed black educational a disadvantage, delivering inferior education (Mthanji, 2007).

It is problematic for educators especially in the rural areas to implement the curriculum and be successful in the absence of teaching support materials. Marule (2007) points out that our schools need audio-visual equipment in order to run effectively. Most rural black schools are rated as “0” or no fee-paying (Quintile 1) by the Department and are remote from the NGOs and businesses who might otherwise be able to help. Shoko (2006) points out that the quality of education provided in our schools is by no means entirely dependent upon the level of resources, but there is no doubt that resources are an essential component of that quality.

2.16. PERCEPTIONS OF SCIENCE SUBJECTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The majority of parents desire to see their children studying Maths and Physical Science since they are regarded as subjects pointing the way to a good job. Learners, on the other hand, are fearful of these subjects because of high failure rates (Mji & Makgato, 2006). Wright (2012) has noted that in 2010 the overall Matric pass rate increased by 7.2% although only 29.7% of science learners obtained 40% and more. In a Grade 8 Science international TIMMS assessment, South African learners came last, well below international norms (Wright, 2012). This indicates that the GET band is not

preparing Maths and Science learners for the FET band. A good performance in the FET band, particularly in the exit grade 12, is expected to start in the foundation phase. The Department Basic of Education seems to ignore the GET band while supporting grade 12 classes. The TIMMS and ANA tests have been phased out since their outcome expose that something was not well in the foundation phase (SADTU Mopani Regional Annual Report, 2016). The lower pass rates in Maths and Science are a matter of concern to all the stakeholders in education (DBE, 2014).

2.17. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

According to Mutangwa (2007), parental aspirations play a dominant role in school achievement and studies. Good parents encourage their children to read books, to try hard at school and to do their homework conscientiously. Mahlomaholo (2010) observes that the involvement of parents and families is an important factor in the education of the children. Learners who do well in class enjoy support from their parents. Parents who are fully involved in their children's education know when to assist them with social networking or material and resources like a computer at home with internet access (Mahlomaholo, 2010).

Mutshaeni et al. (2011) reiterate that children from well-to-do families consistently outperform children from poor home environments. Variables such as space for study, time to study and a quiet and peaceful environment all have an impact on a learner's performance. Mahlomaholo (2010) observes that the parents are not always there to support their children. Schools send parents letters of invitation, but only a few turn up for parents' meetings. The parents living in poverty are often ignorant, negative and uninvolved in the school situation. They tend to shift all responsibility to educators at school. Lack of support by parents at home and at school frustrates learners and may lead them to becoming street kids. Dikgale (2012) agrees with Mahlomaholo (2010) that variables such as the financial background of the parents, their level of literacy and the distance they have to travel to reach the school may impact on their readiness to become involved with the school.

Dikgale (2012) maintains that it is the responsibility of the headmaster to forge a relationship with parents. This should be a non-negotiable intervention if the school wants to move forward. Involvement of the parents in the education of their children becomes a reality when the school and the parents share responsibility for assisting the learner. Otherwise a cultural discontinuity can exist between home and the school, which leads to barriers to learners' achievement (Dikgale, 2012).

Learners whose parents stay in with the school perform better than those whose parents never set foot on the school premises. Parents should ensure that their children attend school regularly (Mutangwa, 2007). Parents should also discuss learners' progress and participate in school activities, rather than only be seen in the school yard at exam result time. Mutangwa (2007) indicates that if schools treat parents as unimportant, if they treat them as negative educational influences on their children, or if they discourage parents from becoming involved, then they promote the development of attitudes that will inhibit their children's achievement. Shared responsibility and governance should promote harmony and trust among educators, administrators, parents and the community (Mutangwa, 2007). Malatji (2016) and Ramalepe (2013) agree that activities such as homework and projects require parental involvement to make sure that they get done. Ramalepe (2013) complains that parents' supervision of learners' home work is so poor that sometimes their homework books are not signed for a week or two at a time. Due to this minimal parental involvement, educators are unable to achieve their set goals. Teachers and parents have a shared responsibility to educate the child. The absence of parents from the education of their child means that they are abdicating their responsibility to raise him or her for a better future.

According to Shoko (2006), parents should be acknowledged as first educators, since they have a central role to play in their children's informal education, starting at home. Le Roux (1994) as cited by Shoko (2006) regards education as a community task that must be undertaken for the benefit of the child by different members of the community. Parents and others can play an important role in supporting and improving the relationship between learners and educators (Shoko, 2006). Meeting learners' basic psychological needs, encouraging their autonomy, competence and academic

motivation all have an impact on their academic performance. Learners who have quality relationships with their parents, teachers and classmates do not struggle to perform academically since they enjoy general support for their studies and can maintain a positive disposition (Ricard & Pelletier, 2016).

Modiba (2015) shares the view that parents ought not to sit back or only talk in the corridors when things are not right in a school. It is their right to enquire after the progress of their children and the state of affairs in the school from the SMT and staff. In their survey Adelabu et al. (2016) point out that ineffective parenting and a low level of attachment between the parents and the child have a negative impact on the lifestyle of the child. If not well monitored and supported in his or her life and school work, the child ends up with problems such as truancy, drug abuse, bullies, and being troublesome both at school and outside. Educationists and scholars agree that the involvement of parents in the education of their children has a positive impact on their progress and eventual success.

2.18. OVERCROWDING

One of the contextual factors standing in the way of implementing the Integrated Quality Management System is overcrowding in classrooms (DoE, 2008). The Department of Education's model of post establishment in schools considers the weight of the subject together with the total number of learners in that particular subject (DBE. Post Establishment, 2013). Shoko (2006) observes that teachers having to work with large groups of learners is a major problem in education that has a negative impact on the quality of results. In large classes, genuine teacher-learner and peer interaction is difficult to achieve, while smaller numbers of learners enable the educator to attend to learners individually. Overcrowding in the secondary school, especially in grade 12, is the result of the number of „progressed“ learners pushed through to grade 12. They need special assistance from the subject educator, who finds it difficult to give individual attention to anyone. Add the number of promoted and progressed learners to the number of those who are termed repeat full-time candidates, and the situation becomes volatile.

According to Shoko (2006) the uniqueness and diversity of learners' backgrounds and interests are a primary consideration for each educator imparting knowledge in class. De Waal (2004) concurs with Shoko (2006) that teaching a large class places physical and emotional constraints upon both the educator and the learner. It also compels educators to revert to presenting formal teaching without involving learners in discussion. Large classes are perceived as troublesome, difficult and problematic (Shoko, 2006), while learners in small classes learn rapidly and can be individually assisted. They have opportunity to engage and co-operate in the lesson, which makes it easier for them to present the knowledge they've learnt. Large classes make the monitoring of written work difficult and time consuming, creating backlogs in other areas. They also mean that the educator takes a long time to detect his learners' weakness, strengths, interests and expectations. Only the traditional method of narration becomes suitable for imparting knowledge and less quality is realized in such an environment (Shoko, 2006).

2.19 NON-COMPLETION OF THE SYLLABUS AND THE CONTENT GAP

According to Section 58B of South African Schools Act, underperforming schools, circuits, districts and Provinces are required to account for why they are not performing, via a protocol from the school to the Minister of Education (SASA, 58B, 1996). By the beginning of the first term of the year, dysfunctional secondary schools that are scoring below the benchmark of 60% are invited by the District Director and the Provincial Department to establish the causes of their underperformance. This is a program to assist schools with the drawing up of a Curriculum Management Plan, a School Improvement Plan(SIP) and an Academic Performance Improvement Plan (APIP). APIP has to establish the weak points in the school and introduce intervention strategies to address these. Among the major challenges identified are non-completion of the syllabus by the subject teachers and the content gap among learners from grades 10 to 12 (DBE, 2016). It has been discovered that learners are lacking basic knowledge in subjects like Mathematics, Accounting, Geography and others. This has meant that the grade 12 teacher has had to spend time teaching the basics rather than covering the syllabus (DBE, 2016). This is the reason for the Curriculum Management Plan.

According to the DoE (2016), the SMT will typically honestly confess that ignorance and leniency led to a failure to monitor the content coverage in matric subjects downwards to the lower grades. Some educators spend too much time on low order questions, ignoring high order sections which are the ones to boost learners to pass at the end of the year. The SMT needs to be reminded that their work includes checking the content coverage monthly, from grade 8 to grade 12, and making sure that it is in line with the written work of learners (DoE, 2017).

2.20 LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING (LoLT)

In secondary schools, the medium of instruction in teaching and learning is English in all subjects except African languages. Rammala (2009) emphasizes that the language used as a medium of instruction in different educational settings has a major impact on the academic performance of learners. Language affects learning and may cause inadequate understanding of the subject matter. Mutshaeni et al. (2011) concur with Mahlomaholo et al. (2010) and Rammala (2009) that the biggest challenge facing learners in SA is the language of teaching and learning.

Teachers in the GET and FET band are teaching content subjects such as Geography, History, Physical Science, Life Sciences and Economics in their home language, while the learners are going to confront examination question papers in English by the end of the year (DBE, 2016). From GET band to entry in FET band which is grade 10, learners find it challenging to adapt and grasp the necessary language skills. This is attested by exam answer sheets, where some responses are in the vernacular. When it comes to writing essays, source-based exercises and cartoons, the learners have difficulty in interpreting the questions and responding. The diagnostic report on performance in matric subjects revealed that some learners respond to questions using the vernacular, even in the grade 12 exams. This problem emanates from the transition between primary and secondary phases, and exposes the fact that monitoring and supervision of classes or work by school management has not been done (DBE, 2016). Mji and Makgato (2006) concur with Mutshaeni et al. (2011) and Mahlomaholo (2010) on the challenges associated with English as the medium of instruction. They reiterate that

Maths and Science learners find it difficult to understand concepts in Science like speed, velocity and acceleration.

Educators also find it challenging to interpret the differences between the above terms in vernacular because the meanings get lost. Explaining abstract concepts in the vernacular leads to confusion and the misinterpretation of ideas. According to Ramalepe (2013), educators can be blamed for not using English as a means of communication in the classroom and elsewhere in the school by both the teacher and the learner. The Department of Education in the various provinces stresses that learners must be taught in the language of examination, which is English. Eighty percent of the black children who attend township and rural schools share a poor socio-economic background that lacks infrastructure, resource materials and educators who are proficient in English (Maponya, 2015). According to Maponya (2015), the report on the effect of the language of learning on teaching, as surveyed by the Department of Education, indicates that learners in the rural areas score very poorly in language proficiency.

2.21 TEAM WORK: TEAM TEACHING

The teaching of „scarce skill“ subjects like Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting is a great challenge to most of the schools since the annual pass rate is below 70%, while at some schools it is between 10% and 50% (DBE, 2016). This disaster recurs from one year to the next, with newly appointed educators from University joining the system. Mentoring, support and development for these newly appointed educators is essential. Hofman et al. (2015) note the need for co-operative learning, with teachers planning and working together to improve cohesion in the school and pupil performance.

Hofman et al. (2015) further stress that teacher training should dedicate time to showing educators effective ways to co-operate, plan, and work together with other educators in their schools. Once subject collaboration is established among the subject teachers, it can be extended to the department and later to the whole school. The whole school has to stand firm on the rules, norms and policy that learners should comply with. In a

subject, team work will curb the spirit of subject ownership; certain sections avoided because deemed too difficult by an educator can be covered by others. A lack of regular subject committee meetings, where feedback from workshops and cluster meetings can be given, can prevent newly appointed educators from developing and cause poor performance in their subjects.

2.22 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS (WRITTEN WORK)

Spaull's (2012) view that summative assessment in the form of tests and assignments is significant, although classwork and homework daily enable the learners to practice what they have learnt. Written work in the form of formal and informal assessment is a non-negotiable issue in the schools as per Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (DoE, 2014). Every learning area has its own number of tasks to be set every week as per work schedule or pace setter (Doe, 2014). Rammala (2009) and Dikgale (2012) agree that the more the learner practices what s/he has been taught in class, the less likely that content is to be forgotten. One of the contributory factors to underperformance is a shortage of written work. This is the case with Maths, Science and Accounting, subjects for which written work is necessary every day so that learners can practice (Mopani District Report on Matric Results, 2016). Spaull (2012) observes that learners from schools in quintiles 1,2 and 3 are given less work to do than those in quintiles 4 and 5, who are given written work daily and produce good results at the end of the year. While this cannot be generalized, it is fair to say that most educators are not giving enough written work. This is evidenced by the audit of written work which is done quarterly by the districts (DoE,2017).

Klette (2007) shares Spaull's view (2012) that written work like homework assists learners to revise the work done in class. Magoro (2007) notes that a lack of homework denies parents the opportunity to check their children's progress at school. She believes that parents should enjoy visiting the school to check on the work of their children and look at it as one of their responsibilities to execute. Reports on written work, either informal or formal, pose a challenge to the school's SMT if they are not done correctly. If

written work is reported correctly, it will correlate with the content coverage as to whether the teacher proceed according to the pace setter or is dwelling at one place, hence requiring intervention (DBE, 2015).

2.23 SOCIO–ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE COMMUNITIES

Mji and Makgato (2006) and Maponya (2015) identify the socio-economic status of and work related-demands on the parents as a critical variable contributing to underperformance in schools. Maponya (2015) points out that nineteen percent of children live with neither parent, while eighteen percent live in households headed by their grandparents. Most parents leave very early for work and come back home very late and very tired. Time for checking their children’s work and assisting with homework is limited. The school activities of their children become the last thing on their minds. Poverty has a detrimental effect on the attendance of learners as a result of lack of basic necessities such as nutrition, clothing and decent housing (Spaull, 2012).

Deprivation and poverty have an impact on learners’ performance in emotional, intellectual, psychological and educational ways. Such learners are regularly absent from class, or exhibit unacceptable behaviour in class, poor concentration and underachievement. Family factors such as financial problems and illiteracy, alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, poor community support systems, and lack of parental control and supervision have an impact on the success and progress of a school learner (Spaull, 2012).

Modiba (2015) believes that family income affects parents and their school-going children. Sometimes learners cannot afford to pay for support materials like study guides. This may serve to demotivate them and cause a certain passivity. Some learners claim that socio-economic conditions at home distract them from studying, saying that it’s hard to study on an empty stomach. Mahlomaholo (2010) concurs with Milner and Khoza (2008) that to address the anomalies present in schooling in SA, the socio-economic status of African learners and their families need to be improved. Maponya (2015) quotes Spaull’s (2012:3) observation that “the legacy of apartheid and

the consequent correlation between education and wealth meant that poorer learners perform badly academically”.

2.24 SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

The non-delivery of infrastructural services is a serious challenge to communities. Lack of basic needs such as water and roads affects the progress of learners in the schools. When the communities are at loggerheads with the municipalities and the government, the people who suffer the most are the learners. They are the target group, taken out of classes to blockade the roads so that the demands of the communities can be heard. Children are being used as pawns to fight battles which are not theirs.

Family background and social environment have a great influence on students in secondary school (Rammala, 2009; Mutshaeni, 2011; Adelabu et al., 2016). According to Rammala (2009), an environment which is not conducive to good morals and education retards a learner’s progress. Communities committed to moulding the moral behaviour of their children will advance in terms of education irrespective of what challenges arise. Children naturally imitate the lifestyle of older people in the society as their role models. Even uneducated parents can motivate their children to see that education is the key to success in life (Tabane, 2005).

2.25 THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN SCHOOLS

The role of the SGB in public schools is to ensure that proper and effective education is provided. The SGB as representatives of parents are partners in the education process and are supposed to assume responsibility for governance of the education of their children. According to Mutangwa (2007), the absence of effective school governance has a negative impact on the results of the school, especially at the grade 12 level.

Mutangwa (2007) maintains that in most rural areas parents distance themselves from the running of the school, regarding it as the sole responsibility of the principal and the teachers. Most NGOs and traditional institutions like the headkraal are not involved in the process of schooling. They just wait for the results and then come and complain

about the poor results and lazy teachers and learners. The school community is a reflection of society. The school and community are inseparable. The community must be present in the raising of the child either at home or at school. The role of the community is important, especially in our times where some learners are orphans and others head families, with parents far from home due to employment. According to Adelabu et al. (2016), among the factors leading to the underperformance of learners in our schools are a lack of support and encouragement from the community members, unresponsive community service agencies and community upheaval, turmoil and change. Children who drop out of school face both poverty and the lure of crime.

2.26 OUTCOME OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES

The political system in the past played a role in the education of black South Africans. Mahlomaholo (2010) is of the view that the apartheid regime was marked by institutionalized disrespect and exploitation, marginalizing Africans as individuals and as a social and cultural group. They believe that the social injustices of the apartheid era “continue to rear their heads and manifest in high levels of failure rates and early school leaving”. They further agree that underperforming schools do not have a sustainable learning environment for social justice.

Spaull (2013) has noted that the South African dataset on educational achievement shows the outcome of two different public school systems in our country. The better performing system which accommodates the wealthiest class of 20-25% and the larger system, which serves the poorest at 75-80% of pupils. The results of assessment on TIMMS and PIRLS shows that pupils from quintiles 1-3 (which are mainly rural areas) are far behind those in quintiles 4 and 5 when it comes to literacy and numeracy. Mahlomaholo (2010) claims that African learners are actually owed huge amounts of educational, social and economic capital because of their experience and their aspirations which have for so long been thwarted. The two categories of schools pose the DBE a major challenge since the mode of assessment is the same for all.

Milner and Khoza (2008) point out that sidelining people in rural areas in terms of facilities and resources impacts on school performance. Spaull (2012) in his study of

inequality in South African education stresses that black schools which were entirely dysfunctional under apartheid remain largely dysfunctional today. This is attested by underperformance in grade 12 and also low percentage passes in the GET band. The legacy of apartheid continues to impact negatively on the performance of learners.

2.27 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter featured a review of literature, both local and international, on factors contributing to the poor performance of learners in schools. The researcher has learnt that scholars and researchers are largely in agreement as to the variables and factors that affect learners in their schooling. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology of the study, describing the research paradigm and approach, the research design, the data collection instruments, the research population and the sampling procedures.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the research methodology used in this study. The main objective of the research was to investigate, through interview and observation, factors contributing to the low matric pass rate at two secondary schools in Motupa circuit.

3.2. AREA OF STUDY

This study was conducted in Motupa circuit, Modjadji South, in the Mopani district. The Mopani district is a district of the Department of Education in Limpopo, South Africa. The two secondary schools sampled form part of Motupa circuit, which has 13 secondary schools in all.

3.2.1 TYPE OF RESEARCH

This project is descriptive, since participants were asked to describe their experience of challenges they encountered. The study thus establishes the challenges faced in the schools and provides the stakeholders in education and NGO's with appropriate and accurate information about educational matters in the area.

3.2.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that qualitative research involves gathering data in the form of words rather than numbers. Qualitative data thus take the form of text, where written words represent the people, their actions and behaviour in daily life (Neuman, 2000).

The researcher had to determine the research design to be used in gathering data. I chose a qualitative approach so as to obtain in-depth insight from the participants into the factors and challenges contributing to the low matric pass rate in Motupa circuit. The participants shared their views, observations and experiences regarding these factors. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) maintain that qualitative research has nine key

characteristics: natural settings, context sensitivity, direct data collection, rich narrative description, process orientation, inductive data analysis, participant perspectives, emergent design and complexity of understanding and explanation.

The researcher opted for a natural setting in that in the field he observed learners out of the classroom, noting their behaviour far away from the teaching-learning situation (when they were partying). All the children's behaviour observed was recorded so that it could contribute to the study. This served as information gathered directly from the source (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

I chose a qualitative approach, not formulating hypotheses to prove or disprove, but rather synthesizing the data gathered inductively to generate generalisations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher used a case study in his research to answer the research questions as to why and how the two schools in Motupa Circuit performed below the national and provincial benchmarking their matric results (Maree, 2007).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.3.1 CASE STUDY

Maree (2007) and Yin (1984) define a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. It is a systematic inquiry into an event with the aim of describing and explaining the phenomenon of interest (Maree, 2007). Robson (2002) distinguishes three types of case study: descriptive, explanatory and exploratory. This research comprised a descriptive case study, one that is focused and detailed and in which propositions and questions about a phenomenon are carefully scrutinized and articulated at the outset (Yin, 1984). The researcher sought to understand the participants from their point of view in their own voices. Thus much of what is reported in the study consists of the participants' perspective.

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.4.1 POPULATION

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) define a population as a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and to which results can be generalised. A

population is an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications (Mbokane, 2009). These specifications define all the individuals who meet the selection criteria for a group to be studied via a sample. The targeted population in this study comprises SMTs, teachers, SGBs as representatives of the parents, and grade 12 repeating learners in the two schools, treated as focus group. The areas for study and observation include the two schools, parents' meetings, and places of entertainment outside the schoolyards. The participants are thus stakeholders in the day-to-day situation of teaching and learning and school governance.

3.4.2. SAMPLING

A sample refers to individuals selected from a larger group of people called the population participating in the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A focus group is part of the sample of subjects from whom data is collected. In qualitative research, sampling is viewed as a process which is dynamic, ad hoc and phasic, guided by statistics pertaining to the population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) maintain that the sample size is determined by factors such as the type of the research, the research hypotheses, the financial constraints, methods of data collection and the degree of accuracy needed. It is important to sample a sufficient number of participants so that adequate variability in the responses is obtained.

Samples in qualitative research typically range from 1 to 40 participants, and in this case the researcher sampled 20 participants for data collection and analysis. The participants participated voluntarily and had the right to quit at any time if they wanted to. Those sampled were chosen on the basis of accessibility and suitability for answering the research question. The participants signed a consent form after clarification of the purpose of the study.

There are about 12 types of sampling, which include random sampling, simple random sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling, convenience sampling, purposive sampling, etc. (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). I used purposive sampling in this project. De Vos et al. (2011) stress that purposive sampling is a judgemental technique since the sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics

representative of the population that serve the purpose of the study. With purposive sampling, the researcher selected particular elements from the population that seemed most representative of or informative about the topic of interest. The advantage of purposive sampling is that it is less costly and assures a high participation rate, while the disadvantage is that it is time consuming (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Not all the secondary schools in Motupa circuit could be involved in the study due to the geography and the total number of secondary schools in the area. Two secondary schools were sampled through purposive sampling. The researcher targeted schools that had performed poorly for the past five years. The pass rate for the sampled schools had fluctuated between 18% and 44%. The schools have been declared dysfunctional by the district and the Department of Education in Limpopo.

The sampled educators come from the Natural Science and Commerce departments in the schools. The social science and language departments were exempted since they have performed satisfactorily, with pass rates of 80 to 100% annually.

3.5. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that in qualitative research there are various methods for gathering data, namely: observation, interviews, document review, questionnaires and audio-visual materials. To respond to the research questions, I chose interviews, observation and focus group discussion. Individual Interviews and focus group discussion dominated in this project, although observation was also part of data collection. The qualitative approach centres on face-to-face interaction with people in their natural setting (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher was interested in the lived behaviour and educators, learners, SGBs and principals, and sought to obtain first-hand information from their own mouths. According to De Vos et al. (2011), the participant should do ninety percent of the talking, telling his or her own story. Unstructured interviews were utilised to accomplish the objectives of the study. An unstructured interview is an interview in which there is no specific set of predetermined

questions, although the interviewer usually has certain topics in mind that he wishes to cover. The interview flows like an everyday conversation, tending to be informal and open-ended. An open-ended question allows the participants to respond on their own terms.

3.5.1 INTERVIEWS

Maree (2007) defines an interview as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant. The aim of the qualitative interview is to see the world through the eyes of the participant. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define an in-depth interview as involving open-response questions to ascertain how the participant perceives the world and how they make sense of the important events in their lives.

In his interview sessions, the researcher used a tape-recorder and note-taking to obtain information from the participants. The tape recorder assisted my recall when the data was analysed. The recorded information was played back to capture the exact words of the participant. The researcher made appointments with the participants by telephone or personal contact. Most of the appointments for interviews took place after hours to avoid disturbing the teaching-learning programmes of the participants.

Rubin and Rabbie (1995:145), as quoted by De Vos et al. (2011), suggest that an interview is built up of three kinds of questions: main questions, probing, and follow-up questions. I prepared a handful of main questions to guide the conversation. The main questions (interview schedule) are attached in an appendix. Secondly, the researcher used probing questions to gain depth and clarity in the participant's response. Then came the follow-up questions, pursuing the implications of answers to the main questions.

According to De Vos et al. (2011), the aim of an unstructured one-on-one interview is not to get answers to questions or to test hypotheses, but to gain an understanding of

the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of those experiences. It allows the researcher and the participants to explore a particular issue. It is used to determine individuals' perceptions, opinions, facts and forecasts. Members of the SMTs, particularly the principals, were also attended to individually to establish the challenges they encountered as school managers in daily school situations.

The information gathered had to be reliable and valid so that the project could be authentic. In the interview sessions, I gave participants the latitude to say anything relevant to the research topic. I had to interact face-to-face with the participants to gather the in-depth data I needed. This technique of collecting data face-to-face is known as Interactive qualitative inquiry (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). I had to study the participants in their real-world situation, which is the reality of underperformance by secondary schools in Motupa circuit.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) outline the following strengths and weakness of interviews. The strengths are that interviews are flexible and adaptable and can be used with non-readers. They allow one to probe for clarity or for more answers. The process of repeating questions enables the participant a second chance if he has misunderstood the question. The interviewer can make sure that all the questions are answered. Weaknesses associated with interviews are that they can be costly and time consuming if researcher has to meet (a large sample of) the research population personally. Lastly, interviewing can be biased and lead the respondent to a certain answer. De Vos et al. (2011) mention that it is important to minimise the amount of irrelevant information in the interview.

3.5.2 OBSERVATION

Observation was another method of data collection in this project. Maree (2007) defines observation as the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them. Observation is thus a process in which the researcher is collecting data through watching (or participating in) the activities of the research participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). By observing the behaviour of the participants for hours or days,

the researcher hopes to obtain a rich understanding of the phenomenon being studied (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Maree (2007) distinguishes several types of observation that can be used in qualitative research: complete observer, observer as participant, participant as observer and complete participant. The researcher chose to be an observer as participant, in terms of which he engages with the situation, but focuses mainly on his role as observer. For instance, the social life of the learners outside the classroom warranted the observer's close involvement in order to understand its consequences for their learning or studies. Observation has two dimensions, the description of what you observed and your reflection about that (Maree, 2007). The researcher targeted two events which exposed the social immorality of the learners, weekend bashes and Sunday River sand sessions. The observation templates are presented in Chapter 4.

While Maree (2007) propose an observation template, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggest a participant observation grid. The researcher had to use both to describe the social-cultural behaviour of the learners outside the classroom (see Chapter 4). McMillan and Schumacher (2007) outline the strengths and weaknesses of observation. The weaknesses are that observation is costly, time consuming and that the observer may be biased. The strengths of observation are that it captures the natural behaviour of the participants and is reliable.

3.5.3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Focus group interviews were utilised to get fuller information from participants. De Vos et al. (2011) describe the focus group as a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic nominated by the researcher. De Vos et al. (2011) maintain that focus group discussion enables a better understanding of how people feel or think about an issue, product or service. The participants in a focus group are selected because of a common characteristic of relevance to the subject of the research. In this study the focus group consists of grade 12 repeating learners, the members of the SGB as representatives of parents in the school, and some of the grade 12 educators. The

participants are interviewed as a collective to share perceptions, points of view, experiences, wishes and concerns.

I chose a focus group for this study to secure multiple viewpoints and responses on a specific topic. Another advantage of a focus group is that it saves the time it would take to interview participants one-on-one. A disadvantage of a focus group might be of one of the participants dominating the conversation. Since the two secondary schools are six kilometres apart from each other, the researcher organised a centre at one school to serve as a place for interviews.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define data analysis as an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories. Data analysis can also be defined as a process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>). Inductive analysis is the process through which qualitative researchers synthesize and make meaning from the data. The researcher used unstructured and follow-up questions to make the data as rich as possible. The participants were given ample latitude to suggest solutions to the research problem.

Inductive analysis occurred when a vast amount of data was reduced, sifted and organised into categories. The interpretation of the data was guided by Walberg's (1981) theory of educational productivity, having focused on classroom management, parental support, the interaction between teachers and learners, and the social behaviour of the learners.

The researcher synthesized the data collected and developed interpretations and generalisations so as to establish themes. A systematic process of coding, categorising and interpreting data ensued, in order to produce a meaningful project which addresses the problem statement.

3.7. METHOD OF INQUIRY

The researcher applied the notion of educational productivity, focusing on the social and emotional influences in classroom management, parental support, and interaction between teachers and learners, in relation to underperformance in the schools. The factors that contributed externally and internally this underperformance had to be established so that a solution could be formulated and made available to all stakeholders. Although the researcher is part of the system of education and is directly and indirectly affected by underperformance, he had to guard against any influence in data gathering. This project was expected to be valid, reliable and authentic in answering the research questions.

3.8. DATA PREPARATION

After it had been collected, the researcher organised the data and transcribed it in segments or units. Then it had to be coded. The data had to be categorised into headings and subheadings guided by relationships among the headings. Lastly the data was developed into patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Data collected from observations and interviews was transcribed into summaries and typed to form a database. The researcher used triangulation of the data, where findings from interviews and observation and other sources were examined to check for recurring relationships within the information and patterns in the data

3.9. DATA CODING

Maree (2007) defines coding as the process of reading carefully through the transcribed data, line by line, and dividing it into meaningful analytical units. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) describe it more simply as a process of identifying small pieces of data that stand alone. The researcher took into cognisance the importance of participants' views as quoted directly from the interview sessions. The researcher had to use selective coding to identify the data and systematically arrange and organise it into categories.

3.10. MULTIPLE DATA SOURCES

Maree (2007) states that the value of using multiple data sources is to establish the validity of the findings. The researcher combined the data from individual interviews, the focus group interview, and observations of the learners, educators and parents. Observation of the learners in the school situation and outside the classroom after hours was also done in order to establish the nature of their social-cultural behaviour. The case study also took note of the role of the social media and their impact on the learners in class.

3.11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Ethical considerations as defined by Maree (2007) refers to the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study and protection of the participants' identities. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define confidentiality as an undertaking by the researcher to protect the anonymity of the participants from other persons and from the general reading public. The researcher had to create good inter-personal relationships with the interviewees so as to build trust, while respecting the norms of the situation and natural setting. The researcher had to give the participants a consent form to read and sign. Each participant was given an explanation of his right to confidentiality and anonymity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The participants were assured about their privacy, that they were participating voluntarily and had the right to withdraw from the research process at any time. Permission to conduct the research in the schools and circuits was sought from the Limpopo Department of Education. The letter of permission from the Limpopo Department of Education is attached in an Appendix.

3.12. DATA TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness is about establishing the criteria for rigour in qualitative research. While validity, reliability and objectivity are essential for qualitative research, De Vos et al.

(2011) distinguish four aspects that reflect the assumptions underlying the qualitative paradigm, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

3.12.1 CREDIBILITY

Credibility is the how confident the qualitative researcher is in the truth of the research study's findings. According to De Vos et al. (2011), the researcher ensures that there is an exact match between the research participants' views and the researcher's reconstruction and representation of them. To ensure the credibility of the findings, the researcher made wide use of triangulation.

3.12.2 TRANSFERABILITY

Transferability is a measure of the extent to which the research study's findings are transferable and applicable to other contexts. De Vos et al. (2011) quote Lincoln and Guba (1999), who propose transferability as an alternative term to external validity or generalizability. Transferability among similar situations, similar populations and similar phenomena was tested in school A and school B when, for instance, the researcher visited the schools to establish the observance of time management during the commencement of first period and after break.

3.12.3 DEPENDABILITY

Dependability is the extent that the study could be repeated by other researchers with findings consistent with and similar to each other. In this case the transparency of the methodology should ensure that another researcher could repeat the enquiry into the low matric pass rate in any two schools in Motupa Circuit and come up with the same findings.

3.12.4 CONFIRMABILITY

Confirmability in qualitative research is founded on the acknowledgement that research is never objective, while De Vos et al. (2011) stress that confirmability is the need to ask whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another. The findings

should represent the situation being researched. The researcher made sure that the questions on the low matric pass rate in the two schools were addressed without preconceptions or generalisation, but through focusing on the participants' actual viewpoints.

3.13. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter was described the research methodology employed in the study, outlining the research design and techniques used in collecting data on the factors contributing to the low matric pass rate in the secondary schools of Motupa Circuit. The sample population for data collection comprised SMT members, grade 12 teachers, SGB members and grade 12 repeating learners. I used three instruments to accomplish the study's objectives: unstructured individual interviews, a focus group discussion, and observation. The next chapter features the presentation of data, data analysis and data interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I provide an analysis of the data and the resulting findings. I also address data presentation, analysis and an interpretation of the low matric pass rate in Motupa circuit. Data was obtained from the interviews and observations from the school management teams (SMT), educators, grade 12 repeating learners and the school governing bodies (SGB). The two schools selected are from Motupa circuit in Mopani District. I conducted interviews and observed the educators and learners both on school premises and outside the school in order to consolidate the information collected. The presentation of data is mainly descriptive and based on unstructured interviews where I used follow up questions to gain an in-depth view of the problem from the respondents.

During interview with the participants who consist of principals, deputy principals, HOD"s, repeating learners and the SGB, the relevant information was collated via an interview schedule. Depending of which position they held, the participants were given the same set of questions to answer. The views of the participants are provided in italics which serves as evidence. The findings are presented followed by a discussion. In the discussion the literature review from Chapter 2 and the theoretical framework are integrated. The background information of the participants who were purposefully sampled is outlined in the table below to give the reader a picture of the historical record of the respondents.

TABLE 2 illustrates the background information of participants

<i>RESPONDENTS</i>	<i>GENDER</i>	<i>EXPERIENCE IN YEARS</i>	<i>PORTFOLIO</i>	<i>NAME OF SCHOOL IN BRACKETS</i>
SMT				
IISMT 1	M	32	PRINCIPAL	A
IISMT 2	F	21	PRINCIPAL	B
IISMT 3	F	18	DEP-PRINCIPAL	A
IISMT 4	M	15	DEP-PRINCIPAL	B
IISMT 5	F	13	HOD	A
IISMT 6	M	16	HOD	B
IISMT 7	F	14	HOD	A
IISMT 8	M	13	HOD	B
EDUCATORS				
FGIE1	2 MALE & 2 FEMALE	VARIES FROM 11 – 04	SUBJECT EDUCATORS	A C B
REPEATING LEARNERS				
FGIRL	2 MALE	2 YEARS IN	REPEATING	A & B

	& 2 FEMALE	CLASS	LEARNERS	
SGB				
FGISGB	2 MALE & 2 FEMALE	2 (5 YEARS AS SGB MEMBER) 1 (6YEARS AS SGB MEMBER AND 1 (4 YEAR ON SGB)	2 CHAIRPERSON , 1 TREASURER AND 1 DEPUTY SECRETARY	A & B

IISMT (1) – Individual interview school management team, one

IISMT (2) – Individual interview school management team, two

FGIHOD, 1- Focus group interview head of department, one

FGIHOD, 2 – Focus group interview head of department, two

FGIHOD, 3 – Focus group interview head of department, three

FGIHOD, 4–Focus group interview head of department, four

FGIE, 1 – Focus group interview educator, one

FGIE, 2 – Focus group interview educator, two

FGIE, 3 – Focus group interview educator, three

FGIE, 4 – Focus group interview educator, four

FGIRL, 1 – Focus group interview repeating learner, one

- FGIRL, 2 – Focus group interview repeating learner, two
- FGIRL, 3 – Focus group interview repeating learner, three
- FGIRL, 4 – Focus group interview repeating learner, four
- FGISGB, 1– Focus group interview school governing body, one
- FGISGB, 2 – Focus group interview school governing body, two
- FGISGB, 3 –Focus group interview school governing body, three
- FGISGB, 4 – Focus group interview school governing body, four

4.2.1. THEME 1: ASSESSMENT GIVEN TO LEARNERS - WRITTEN WORK

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
*Quality and quantity of written work *Control of written work	*Not enough written work *Quantity of tasks not serving the purpose *Lack of monitoring and accountability

For an institution to run effectively and efficiently, policies must be implemented. Each and every learning area in the school has its own policy on written work as per the Assessment Guideline on written work. The policy on written work is aimed at enabling the learners of all grades to continue practicing what they were taught. The two principals from school A and B were interviewed to establish how written work is administered. The principal from school A was asked about his experience on the audit of written work in his institution. In his response, IISMT, 1. (A) mentioned that:

“written work forms a basis in the teaching and learning as per policy document of the department of education. On the last Friday of the month, all books, tests and assignments are to be submitted to the HOD to compile an audit of written tasks for a particular month. For the second quarter, the Life Science educator had only 3 classworks, 4 homeworks instead of 12 classworks and 12 homeworks. When the educator was summoned to the office, he defended himself that he wanted to cover the syllabus and prepare learners for June Exam. With the Life Orientation educator, there was only one task which is assignment for second term. The educator explained that May was characterized by outdoor activities which is Physical Education and Training(PET)”.

The SMT representative from school B IISMT, 2. (B) mentioned that:

“some educators would give learners 10 classworks and 10 homeworks a day immediately they are reminded of submission. Such educators object to the system where HOD’s collect books from learners. They prefer to collect books themselves so that few learners would spend the day writing. Learners would do the marking and corrections while the subject teacher would control the work by signing the books. Educators in our school argue that HOD’s do collect books from learners who bunk classes while some are always absent from the classes”.

From the interview account, it is clear that the SMT of both schools do not execute their duties of instructional leadership such as efficient monitoring. The two principals admit that an urgent intervention is needed to turn the situation around.

A focus group interview for educators in both schools about written work was conducted. The response from educators in school A, FGIE, 1. (A) was that;

“As history educator, I must ensure that within sixty minutes, i complete the objective of my lesson by presenting the subject matter. I prefer to give learners informal tasks from previous question papers to write on Fridays so that they have ample time to do the tasks freely”.

The Maths educator from school B - FGIE, 2. (B) mentioned that;

"I am a Maths educator and I prefer that after solving two to three problems in Maths, learners must go to the chalkboard and solve the other problems. This sometimes consume my time to give learners more written work. My strategy works for me since my learners pass although a weak point is that they cannot have enough written work to reflect and do revision".

The grade 12 repeating learners from school A were interviewed on the issue of written work. They also attested that there was not enough written work in their previous academic year and this might be a cause of their poor performance. The FGIRL, 1 and 2 (A) outlined that;

"Written work was not enough since we could spend the whole week without any written task and that put us at loggerheads with the parents who conclude that we bunk classes. My history book had so many classwork and homework which are controlled by the subject educator. The educator would just collect four to five books from the favorites. Some days we are given ten to fifteen classwork and homework at a go to write. To be given more than ten classwork from each subject is stressful and disturbing and deny us time to study".

The issue of written work was also extended to the grade 12 repeating learners in school B. The responses from FGIRL.1 and 2 (B) was that;

"some educators give us a lot of tasks which are from the previous question papers for some trial or final exams. The educator would divide the question papers into five to ten classworks. The dates would be inserted from question one to three as classwork for a specific date, whilst question four to six will be homework for another date. Unfortunately the class representative would be given a memorandum to come and write on the chalkboard. There is no control at all. How can you know that you are in the right direction"“

"Sometimes a subject educator would come to class and say today we are going to write classworks and homeworks. Then the textbooks will be used for the source based exercises. Learners would write in groups, submit to the educator. After controlling the

books, they are returned to a group so that each one of us can copy the written work. Then we will use red pens and the educator would just append the signatures ”.

The responses from the participants in school A and B reflect that written work in their schools does not serve its intended purpose for learners to practice what they were taught and studied. There is no reflection of validity and authenticity from the work. The findings from the SMT, educators and learners share the same sentiment with the observation by Spaul (2012) and Magoro (2007) that less written work is given especially in the rural and townships schools. Written work is still a challenge to many educators in the GET and FET band. Lack of enough written work as per pace setter, denies the learners the opportunity to practice and familiarize themselves with the topics taught. Written work assists the Curriculum Advisors and head of departments at school to check the content coverage as per the pace setter. Less written work given to learners plus poor monitoring is a reflection that classroom management is not well managed in our schools. The big task lies in the hands of the school management team and parents to monitor the learners and the educators on the quality of written task.

4.2.2. THEME 2: EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
*Minimal support	*Lack of support and competency from the SMT, Curriculum advisors and senior teachers to develop educators *A need for immediate intervention by seniors and department officials
*IQMS and district program to support educators	

The IQMS- Integrated Quality Management System was established in the education system as an aid to develop educators throughout the year. The educator has to evaluate himself/herself on self-evaluation, do his personal growth plan and identify areas where development is needed. The DSG – developmental support group is composed of a peer and a senior who are to do a class visit, check the progress and provide support in the problem areas. When asked about the significance of IQMS and support to educators, the educators from school A – FGIE,2 (A) respondent” s words are;

“The paperwork of IQMS is done for the sake of filling the forms and submission for remuneration. There is no validity, reliability and authenticity of the scores and performance. The coordinators of IQMS and DSG do not make a follow up on the areas which needs development. As long as the paperwork was done, they assume that development will be made by the Curriculum Advisors”.

“IQMS disturb the time for the completion of the syllabus and revision with learners since educators spend five to ten days doing the paperwork”.

The Department of Education does have a development program entrenched in their planning by the end of the academic year. The Curriculum Advisors are supposed to develop and support both the newly appointed educators and also the older educators. A big challenge in development and support from seniors ranges from an area of specialization, capacity and ability to support the educators. A focus group interview with the heads of departments was conducted on how they develop and support the educators in their respective departments. From school A, a focus group interview was conducted with the two HOD’s for Commerce and the Natural Sciences, FGIHOD, 1 & 2 (A). Their responses about educator development and support were that;

“The system of the Department of Education is driven by the quest to produce results in grade 12, ignoring the GET band which has to lay the foundation. It is our responsibility as HOD’s and Curriculum Advisors to develop and support educators. A bigger challenge in our work is specialization. I am an HOD managing the Sciences and the Languages. My specialization at the College was Life Sciences and English. It becomes

challenging when one has to give support to a Maths and Physical Science educator. Sometimes I am bound to send them to the nearby school for assistance”. -HOD of the Natural Sciences from school A.

The HOD for the commercial subjects had the following to say on development and support from her department;

“I have specialized in Economics and Business Studies. I am compelled to support an Accounting educator. How do I support him since I was not trained in that subject” Our Curriculum Advisor had lectured Economics at College of Education but he was given accounting to assist since there is a shortage of Curriculum Advisors. When he comes for visitation at school, he would just bring the mark sheet and pace setters for that academic year and leave for good until we meet him in the time for Cass moderation of FET band in May, August and October. He would advise us that when we experience the challenges, we should form a cluster as subject educators and address the problem areas”.

In his words, the HOD for the languages from school B responded that;

“I was redeployed as an HOD of the languages to my current school. I have majored in English and Life Sciences. I find it difficult to support my educators in Sepedi. Since the principal has majored in Sepedi, I engage him to assist me to support, develop and moderate the work of Sepedi educators in our school. When I am to approve the lesson preparations and do a class visit for educators I do that with no confidence. I do that for the sake of compiling reports”.

An individual interview was conducted with the deputy principal as Curriculum Head from school B, IISMT, 3 (B). In his words about educator development and support;

“I am a Curriculum Head in our school but since there are four streams it becomes difficult for me to give support to streams like commerce and science since I specialized with the social sciences. I expect the HOD’s to execute the task of teacher development”.

The principal from school B, IISMT,1 (B) was asked how he gives support to his HOD's and educators. In his words he said that;

"In our circuit, we have a challenge of Curriculum Advisors. We are relying on them particularly on the scarce skilled subjects like Maths, Physical Science and Accounting. One Curriculum Advisor has to support more than eight circuits in the district. I did invitations for Maths, Physical Science and Accounting in the beginning of the year in 2014 and 2015 to request their assistance in our school. I have sent many invitations via the Circuit Manager but you will never see them throughout the year. This impact negatively on us about the visitation to develop and support newly appointed educators and underperforming educators. On the issue of visitation, the Curriculum Advisors argue that they won't visit schools regularly since they are waiting for subsidy cars from the Department of Education. They are currently using their cars as a matter of sacrifice. To be visited by a Curriculum Advisor is a blessing. We meet the Curriculum Advisors when submitting the educators and learners files for Cass Moderation".

When asked whether HOD's get support and development in his school, the principal from school A, IISMT,1 (A) responded that;

"The district annual program of support to the schools are distributed to circuits although visitation becomes a challenge. Some of the Curriculum Advisors complain about using their own cars to support the schools. Bolobedu South is a mountainous area with some schools on top of the mountains and hills with gravel roads. In one of the consultative meeting with the District Director to account why learners have not performed in grade 12, I responded with a question. I questioned the Curriculum Advisors if they know my school. From many Curriculum Advisors present in the meeting, it was only four Curriculum Advisors who knew my school. The others have never set a foot in my school. This is an indication that there is a need to beef up the Curriculum Advisors to support our educators particularly those who are newly appointed".

The Curriculum Advisors are employed to monitor, develop and support educators in their daily work. A prerequisite for a Curriculum Advisor is to be a specialist in his

working field as they are called Senior Education Specialists. Their task is to work with the HOD's to assist educators where there are challenges with the teaching of subjects. A focus group interview was conducted with the educators from school A and B. In response to the support and development they expect from their seniors, the educators FGIE, (A) and (B) in their own words revealed the following;

"My HOD has majored in Economics and Business Studies and finds it difficult to support me in certain sections which are challenging. Always when the Curriculum Advisor comes, he requests the books for learners to check the written work and the educator's files. If you give the challenges in some of the topics, the response you will get is that you must consult other subject educators from other schools and that we should do cluster committees to assist each other".(A commerce educator from school A).

"I am a Physical Science educator and annually I complete the syllabus on time and give more written work but my learners still do not perform. After analysis of results of the mid-year exam, the Circuit Manager would request the underperforming educators to send learners to an identified center to assist our learners. This is a good initiative but the timing of assisting these learners is scheduled for the last days of the third quarter whereby every educator is supposed to do revision with the learners. This impacts negatively on our performance since we do not do revisions and corrections of trial exam".(A Science educator from school A).

"We have a serious challenge with Agricultural Science. We meet the Curriculum Advisor when attending the consultative meetings in February. After completion of the Cass, the SMT submit the files which are also moderated by the other teacher. The district does not have enough Curriculum Advisors for Agricultural Science. Only two Curriculum Advisors are to give support to twenty four circuits comprised of 265 Secondary schools".(A grade 12 teacher in school B).

"I have being at this school for four years and I have never seen the Curriculum Advisor for History. My HOD is an expert in Geography but he is obliged to support History and Geography. I did not perform for the past ten years and in 2016, I obtained 33.4 percent

in History. We meet our two Curriculum Advisors during the Cass moderation. As a History educator, I am amongst those helping the Curriculum Advisors with moderation of Cass".(An educator in school B).

"I am teaching Business Studies and my HOD has specialized in Accounting and Economics. I am expecting development and support from my HOD. For the past three years, Business Studies performed below sixty percent. My HOD is unable to assist me on development. He rather checks only written work and content coverage. It's difficult for him to ensure that I am teaching the relevant and prescribed content in class. Where there are challenges I make appointments with other subject teachers in neighbouring schools for assistance".(A commerce educator in school B).

The responses above compelled the researcher to investigate why the Curriculum Advisors who are appointed to give support in the Bolobedu cluster and the District at large are largely absent. Bolobedu cluster of circuits is comprised of Motupa, Modjadji, Mawa and Rakwadu. By the end of the academic year of 2017, the statistics were as follows; Maths – 01, Mlit – 0, Agricultural Science – 0 , Physical Science – 0 , Accounting – 01 , History – 01, Geography – 01, English – 01 , Life Sciences – 01 , Economics – 01 , Business Studies – 01 , Sepedi – 01, Tourism – 0 and Life Orientation – 01. Bolobedu cluster circuits consist of 54 secondary schools to be supported and serviced by 11 Curriculum Advisors. The foundation and intermediate phases which are vital in laying a good base have a serious crisis in terms of monitoring and support.

The responses reveal that there is a crisis in the issue of supporting and developing educators. Educators are forced to form their own clusters as schools and assist each other. There is no guarantee whether educators in the cluster meetings are moving in the right direction when assisting each other. Subjects which do not have Curriculum Advisors in the FET band are assisted by other District Curriculum Advisors stationed in the district in Giyani. On the other hand the SMT starting from the top level with the principal to deputy principals and HOD's, shift their responsibilities to the Curriculum Advisors when it's their duty to support their subordinates. The findings from the

respondents through interview concurs with the findings by Mphahlele (2007), Malatji (2016) and the MEC for Education in Limpopo (MEC –road show on underperforming schools, 2016) that there are serious challenges with the understaffing of Curriculum Advisors who are supposed to give support and encourage the development of educators. This becomes a barrier to performance since there is an exodus of educators leaving the system who are replaced by newly appointed educators who still need a lot of support and development.

4.2.3. THEME 3: PERIOD REGISTERS AND COMMITMENT OF EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS.

SUBTHEMES	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
*Class attendance *Commitment of teachers and learners	*Bunking of classes *Lack of monitoring and control of period registers *Lack of commitment by learners *Unteachable learners

To alleviate truancy by both the educators and learners, the Department of Education introduced a measure to control attendance of periods for both teachers and learners by means of period registers. An educator must count the number of learners present and record the names of those absent plus the time the lesson starts and ends. Even the class representative has to record the time of the educator’s arrival in class and departure so that both the period register of the educator and class representative correspond.

The policy of a class register is a directive from the Department of Basic Education and is non- negotiable for all schools. When the period register was implemented, it was strongly condemned by the teaching fraternity although the leadership of teacher unions

were engaged in the process and signed it at the highest level. Some schools monitor this system and it is working fruitfully while it also sends a message to learners and educators that their place is in the classroom.

An individual interview with the school management team particularly the principals, IISMT, 1& 2 was conducted about the educators and learners commitments in class. Their response about their daily experience in classes was outlined in the following manner;

The principal from school A, IISMT, 1. (A) in his words remarked that;

“Good results are achieved by committed educators and learners with the support of the parents and Curriculum Advisors. Going to class on time and doing the business of the day reward the school with good results. A committed educator and learner are not reminded of going to class. They know when to go to class and what to do. Amongst the committed educator, there are some educators who still need to be reminded that you are supposed to be in class. Such educators will go to class after ten minutes and leave class before the period lapse. Once you see an educator do that, you start doubting whether he has prepared. I do have such educators in grade twelve who still need to be reminded and they contribute to our school underperformance although managing and controlling them is still an issue since it needs time”.

The principal from school B, IISMT,2. (B) stressed the importance of the usage of the period register in the schools. In his words he said that;

“Not all learners know why they are at school. Some learners enjoy being pushed to class. When an educator leaves his class, they are after him going to toilet or to drink water at the tap. We have a tool to control periods which is a period register. In our school every day in the last period, class representatives are submitting the register in the office to check the learners and educators who were not in class for certain periods. They will be called in the office to account why they bunked periods. Learners are to account in writing while the educators are to account in the summary period register.”

The educators who are curriculum drivers were asked about their commitment to teaching and how they perceive the implementation of a period register. A focus group interview was conducted with the educators from school A and B, FGIE, 1 & 2 (A& B). Their responses about this matter were that;

"In our school a period register is a good monitoring tool which enables educators and learners to be in class. The only challenge is its effectiveness in the first and second quarter while the instrument is thrown away in the third and fourth quarter. The third quarter is a period where I must do revision and assist the underperforming learners but if monitoring and accountability is not done, we'll do work for the sake of doing and the results will never be admirable".

"The principal ensures that class representatives collect the period register forms in the morning after Assembly and submit them towards school out. The principal would file them and wait for the day of monitoring by district as a proof that the tool is being used. No further steps are taken for accountability of being absent from class and no punishment is given to learners who bunk classes".

"Being up to date with the period register is not a reflection that someone is attending class and teaching. An educator may be in class on time, mark the register and leave without teaching. Going to class and teach goes hand in hand with your conscious as to what is the aim of being at school. In my view educators need only motivation so that they do their work with their happy hearts and minds."

"A period register assists us to control learners and check the dodgers of the periods. It also assists the SMT to identify if we do not attend our classes. This tool is significant if done simultaneously with the class visits by the SMT members."

The grade 12 repeating learners are the ones who will show the end product which is their results at the end of the year. To test conformability of the researcher and credibility of the information about class attendance, a focus group interview on grade 12 repeating learners from the two schools, FGIRL, 1&2 (A &B) was conducted to

establish the views of the learners. Their responses and views about the period register is that;

“A period register is a good instrument since it pushes teachers who are bunking classes, staying in the staffroom chatting and drinking tea. There are some of the teachers who would come to class late and leave early before time. A period register assists to control learners to check those who are absent in class. Some of our learners used to be at Assembly in the morning, then dodge classes but during break they are on the queue for food.”

“Learners who used to stay in toilets bunking periods are compelled to be in class because they are afraid of going to account to the principal for being absent from class while present within the school yards.”

“A challenge with a period register is that some of the teachers refuse to sign the time of their arrival and when they leave the class while some refuse to write the topic they prepared for a particular period”.

“Some of the teachers who refuse to write something in time register it’s because they come to class just to give a classwork or homework while one would just come to class and spent thirty minutes marking the class register and then leave the class after signing”.

The interview from the two schools reflects that monitoring and control of the period register is still a challenge in some of the schools. When the whole school evaluation is done by the district monitors, the instrument is available but is of no help to monitor the teacher and learner attendance in class. The period register needs to serve its intended purpose and the principal’s method of management by walking around the classes should not be replaced by the instrument. The availability of the principal and SMT always at work boosts the morale and determination of the educators to do their work effectively and efficiently.

The pace setters distributed to the grade 12 teachers need a strategy for a teacher to finish the program on time by the end of May. The mid-year exam of some of the

learning areas constitutes about 75 percent of the work from the pace setters. This requires a sacrifice from the educators to go the extra mile by working on extra lessons. Morning, afternoon and Saturday studies are converted to offering extra lessons to cover the syllabus and address the challenge of the content gap in the learners' knowledge. Commitment on the part of educators and learners is essential. An individual interview with school management team IISMT, 1 and 2 from the two schools was conducted to establish how committed the educators and learners are with regard to extra lessons. The responses from the two principals were that;

"We monitor morning, afternoon, Saturday lessons including the Easter, winter and spring classes. In our first meeting with the parents of grade 12 learners, the parents and learners sign a commitment form to attend all extra lessons without fail and are to contact the school in case of emergencies which can disturb the learners from attending. During the spring lessons of 2017, when the Circuit Manager was monitoring he found 33 learners out of a total of 118. About 70 percent of the learners did not attend the spring classes. This was done during the crucial time of revising the work of the year in preparation of the final exam. When learners are absent without any reason, I do a follow up by phoning parents and guardians including the learners. Learners who are absent also switch their cellphones off so that one cannot contact them whilst some also access the cell phones of their parents to put them on silent mode. Learners who absent themselves from classes are particularly those who are progressed and those who are repeating grade 12".

"We have a program to assist learners which are extra lessons. For learners who are absent from the classes, I ensure that I go to their respective homes to fetch them. Sometimes when they see my car, they'll lock the house or run for their lives. It is my extra job to ensure learners attend extra classes without fail, especially when we have outsourced educators to assist with the killer subjects like Maths, Physical Science and Accounting".

This reflection reveals that the educators are facing a situation of trying to teach learners who are unteachable. Initiatives and sacrifices by the SMT and teachers to

assist learners and outsource competent teachers on difficult subjects are done but due to the low morale, uncommitted and unteachable learners who dodge classes these are largely unsuccessful. The majority of these learners were progressed from grade 8 to 12 due to being in a phase for more than three years and those whose ages no longer permit them to be in the system. Their performance affects those learners who work hard. The findings from the respondents complement each other with the observation by Mothiba (2010) and Mathunjwa (2007) in Chapter 2 about their studies where they revealed ill-disciplined and unteachable learners who are found in the secondary schools. Not only are learners to blame but also educators who bunk their classes. The learners' observation on the punctuality of teachers in class is attested by Mbalati (2010) who reiterates that it is not a secret that some educators go to class unprepared. This reflects minimal or poor monitoring on the side of the SMT.

4.2.4. THEME 4: PARENTAL SUPPORT

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
*Involvement of parents in school matters * Presentation of a budget for approval	*Parents and guardians ignoring invitations by schools *Brothers and sisters acting as guardians *SGB elections & parents meetings postponed in order to quorate.

Academic researchers in education have observed that learners whose parents arrive at school when needed perform well in class. Parents who take the time to check on the books of their children give educators confidence and trust in the delivering of the curriculum. The two schools sampled in Motupa Circuit are from rural areas with many of the parents illiterate. A focus group interview was conducted with the school governing body members of the two schools sampled with regard to their view on the

parents' support when contacted by the school. In response to this matter, the FGISGB, 1 & 2 highlighted the following challenges;

"Parents of school learners are invited by letters through learners 7 days before a date of the meeting. Few of the parents would attend the meetings while some parents would give excuses of work. We shifted the meetings during the week to Sunday to accommodate working parents but the attendance still become poor since some of the parents argue about attending family matters, village matters in the head kraal while the others claim to be held up by religious matters like church services".

"We the parents are very much ignorant about the education of our children. We go to school when the children are collecting school reports. You'll find the number of parents less than 30 out of a total enrolment of 615 learners. We give the educators our children, fold our arms and remain spectators. Teachers are stressed by the behavior and ill- discipline of our children".

"For a budget of a school to be approved about 2 meetings will be postponed due to a poor attendance with parents not forming a quorum. I think the principal and the educators must have a strategy whereby children who come to school without their parents and guardians should be returned home to fetch them".

Not only is the SGB as a governance organisation worried about poor support from parents, the SMT is also affected since the support from parents is essential. An individual interview with school principals, was conducted concerning the poor attendance of parents at school activities.

When asked about the support he gets from the parents in the school, the principal of school A, IISMT, 1 (A) responded that;

"The parents come to register children in the beginning of the year. They will go for good till the day the reports are taken. Sometimes when there are cases of unbecoming behaviors about their children, they excuse themselves that they are at work or far away from home. But when their children fail, they will be coming to school running to seek answers why their children failed. The support we get is so poor that sometimes parents

meeting continue without a quorum. We seriously need the involvement of parents particularly on issues such as progress of the learners and discipline”.

From school B, IISMT, 2 (B) the principal showed grave concern about the minimal support from the parents of the learners. In his words he said that;

“Parents who always come to school, are those who are concerned and conscious about their work. The parents are advised to check their children’s book but just few signatures could be seen as a reflection that parents did check the books. It’s hard and challenging to work with unteachable learners who misbehave, bully and are disrespectful especially when you invite their parents and the response is we are not available to come. Such parents would send the brothers and sisters of the learners to schools to act as guardians. As a school we conclude that parents just dumped their children to us and expect a miracle of progress and good disciplined administered by the educators”.

TABLE 3:A TEMPLATE OF OBSERVATION IN A PARENTS MEETING –SCHOOL A

Date & Time	Event & Situation	Participants	Actions observed	Reflection
28/09/2017 9h00am	Parents meetings to approve a school budget and check the grade 10 & 11 Portfolios	36 Parents attended the meeting out of 796 school learners as per record of the attendance register	*The SGB presented and explained the budget for 2018. *Teachers displayed the Gr. 10 & 11 portfolios. Each learner was to sit next to his/her	*Parents were happy about the interaction with their children’s educators. * Out of 120 grade 10 learners and 196 grade 11 learners, only 24 parents were there to talk to educators accompanied by their

			parent or guardian *Teachers interacted with the parents about the learners" performance.	children. *More than 70 parents & guardians did not bother attending the meeting
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TABLE 4: A TEMPLATE OF A MOTIVATIONAL DAY FOR GRADE 12 LEARNERS IN SCHOOL A

DATE & TIME	EVENT AND SITUATION	PARTICIPANTS	ACTIONS OBSERVED	REFLECTIONS
04/02/2017	Motivational day for Gr.12 Learners and to inform parents on strategic planning for extra classes on morning, afternoon and Saturday lessons.	28 Parents attended the meeting representing 138 school learners. As per records 54 learner"s parents attended. 84 learners did not have parents or guardians	Two motivational speakers presented their items, i.e. the local Pastor and former circuit manager	Parents and guardians appreciated the strategic planning and promised to support it.

TABLE 5: A TEMPLATE OF A MEETING FOR THE ELECTION OF AN SGB IN SCHOOL B

DATE & TIME	EVENT AND SITUATION	PARTICIPANTS	ACTIONS OBSERVED	REFLECTIONS
04/02/2017	Parents meeting for election of SGB	Only 18 parents and guardians attended representing 47 learners out of school enrolment of 735	The election committee postponed the meeting to the following Sunday of the 11 February 2018	The School has 735 Learners
11/02/2018	2 nd Meeting for election of SGB – As per manual – the election committee was to finalize the SGB elections whether there was a quorum or not as per voters roll.	44 parents and guardians attended the meeting of the elections.	The election Committee read the clause of the manual which gives a go ahead with elections and finalize them.	From the new SGB elected – 8 parents were former SGB members while 1 parent was a new member. The SGB promised to motivate parents and guardians to attend school matters.

Parental involvement in the schools is a challenging issue. The respondents' experience and the observation of the researcher during the parents' meeting reflects that the parents need to be made aware of the importance of sharing ideas with educators about their children and their progress and behavior at school. Many educational researchers who investigate this problem in the schools observe that parental involvement in the school situation is not satisfactorily. The findings from the SGB and SMT concurs with the observations made by Mahlomaholo et al. (2010), Dikgale (2012), Malatji (2016), Mutshaeni et al. (2011) and Maponya (2015) that the involvement of parents at schools is still unsatisfactory. This is an ongoing challenge going back decades with no improvement in the schools of quintile 1, 2 and 3 from the rural and township schools.

4.2.5. THEME 5: NON COMPLETION OF SYLLABUS

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
*Selection of easy, simple and certain sections in pace setters *Content gap exposure in the grades	*Poor monitoring of teachers' work by SMT *Failure to check content coverage

The first consultative support meetings organized by the district for subjects focus primarily on pace setter distribution, clarification and analysis of grade 12. Subject educators are work-shopped by Curriculum Advisors to adhere to pace setters or work schedules. The formal tasks of the year are set focusing on the pace setters. The subject educators are advised to go the extra mile by teaching learners during morning lessons, afternoon lessons, and Saturday lessons and to run enrichment classes over Easter, winter and spring. Some of the subjects are scheduled to be completed by the end of May since the mid-year question papers are set for the whole pace setter.

The underperforming schools in grade 12 end up accounting to the district director for their lack of performance. Accountability is supposed to start at school level with the

subject educators accounting to the SMT to ensure that valid information is presented to the district team. A focus group interview, FGIE, (A & B) was conducted with the two schools to establish the views of the educators about the completion of the syllabus. When asked whether the syllabus is completed in their respective subjects, the grade 12 educators from school A, FGIE, 1 & 2 (A) had the following to say;

"I teach Life Science and I did not finish the syllabus last year. Certain sections like Genetics and Evolution were not covered in my teaching since I do have a challenge on the teaching of these sections. I banked on an outsourced educator who assisted me on Saturdays, only to realize lately that we both have the same challenges on Genetics. He taught and revised what I taught during the week. I did not attend his lessons on Saturdays due to family commitments".

"I am a Physical Science educator. I have a challenge with paper two, Chemistry, but I ensured that my learners score higher marks in paper one – Physical Science part. I complete the section on time and annually I request my HOD to outsource the Physical Science educator to assist me with the chemistry section".

"In History we are certain that all sections are to be set in the final question paper. I do not teach all the sections but 3 sections both for paper one and two is enough. For the past years my candidates obtained not less than 80 percent as History pass rate".

"I did not complete the syllabus of Maths last year since I attended three workshops for underperforming schools at District and provincial level. On Saturdays and during the holidays when I thought I would cover the work, learners were summoned to the centers organized by the District and Province. I banked on those educators to do the job since I had spent eight weeks attending the workshops and the SMT did nothing to have somebody continuing with the pace setter".

It is a directive from Mopani District Curriculum section that all grade 12 learners should be provided with pace setters for all subjects in their files. This is done to assist learners to check the pace of the subject educator in his teaching. To test credibility and conformability on the information provided, the grade 12 repeating learners were asked

whether the syllabi were completed before they sat for their final examination. A focus group interview with grade 12 repeating learners was conducted to establish the problem of syllabi completion.

The grade 12 repeating learners from school A, FGIRL, (A) were asked whether their educators completed the syllabus on time to enable them ample time for revision. In their words the learners responded that;

"There were so many new items that were asked in the question papers of Physical Science. I just skipped them because I did not know the answers".

"Our educator in Maths said we have finished the syllabus by the end of May, but we all failed in mid-year and trial exam. The final exam question paper was so strange to us with some questions that were difficult even to interpret".

From school B, FGIRL, (B) the response about the completion of the syllabus was that;

"Our educator did not teach the section of Evolution and Genetics in Life Science and they constituted a lot of marks. I used the study guide to study the two sections".

"My educator in Economics did not teach graphs in detail. The graphs were difficult to me till I understood them during spring enrichment classes. That educator wanted to cover the scope for two papers since it was revision time. He did not give more time on this section. If I was taught the whole pace setter, I may have obtained level six or even seven".

"In History our educator said he had to spot the sections since all sections will be asked in both papers. We did three sections for both papers from a total of six sections for each paper. If we did all the sections I may have obtained a distinction".

The researcher proceeded to test conformability on the completion of the syllabus on time. An individual interview was conducted with the principals from the two schools sampled. When asked about the monitoring of content gap and completion of the syllabus, the principal from school A, IISMT, 1(A) responded like this;

“I trusted that my HOD’s as Curriculum vehicle drivers will do their job to mentor and manage Curriculum. It was a mess this year after subject analysis to discover that in other subjects, learners sat for exam without completing the syllabus.”

The principal from school B, IISMT, 2 (B) admitted that he did not fulfill his monitoring obligations with regard to the content coverage. He said that;

“I admit that I did not check content coverage for Physical Science and Life Science and I was surprised after exam writing when candidates were complaining that many questions were new to them and were not taught. Indeed non – completion of the syllabus has a negative impact on the pass rate of our learners in grade 12”.

The findings on the non-completion of the syllabus is a reflection of the major obstacles the learners face which disadvantage them in their ability to perform well in their grades. The findings from the interviews are complementary with the observation and surveys by Basson and Kriek (2012) and the District Report on matric results (Mopani District report on matric results, 2017) that educators do not complete the syllabus and this results in many schools underperforming. Non-completion of the syllabus in the schools reflects a lack of monitoring by the SMT. It is suicide to learners as the recipient of knowledge when they do not know the content of the pace setters. This means that the school did not perform well starting with the preparations during the year and the audit of written work. The HOD’s and top SMT might have detected the problem after checking the learners’ books. The blame can be laid at the door of the principals down to HOD’s for not checking on the teachers about content coverage at the end of every quarter.

4.2.6. THEME 6: LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
*English as a medium of instruction	*Usage of vernacular in the teaching of content subjects *Translation of essays in mother tongue

South Africa has 11 official languages with English as the dominant language used for teaching the majority of the content subjects. While English is the medium of instruction, Mahlomaholo (2010) and Mutshaeni et al. (2011) argue that this presents challenges in the language of teaching and learning. If the educators who are delivering the curriculum struggle to express themselves well in English, what do we expect from the learners" A focus group interview with the educators from school A and B was conducted.

When asked about the language they use every day in the delivery of content, the educators from school A, FGIE, (A) gave different responses. Their responses were that;

"I sometimes mix English with Sepedi so that my learners can understand me. If you use English from the introduction of the lesson to the presentation of the content, you are likely to pose a question and they look at you. As an educator you strive to have the lesson understood, I am bound to interpret the lesson and questions in Sepedi. I understand this is wrong but I have no choice since my objective of the lesson is that, learners must understand me".

"It is not good to use the mother tongue to explain some of the concepts but we are bound to explain so that the message can be clearly understood".

Like educators in school A, one educator from school B condemns the use of the mother tongue while the other educator condones the use of mother tongue. Their articulation was that;

"I teach history, and sometimes essays need to be interpreted in mother tongue so that learners can be able to grasp what they were taught. Once I'm convinced they understood, I encourage them to reverse back to English. I understood it's not accepted but since I used this method, I never performed less than ninety percent in my subject for the past ten years. I also have a District Award for being the best History educator for three years consecutively scoring hundred percent. I was using this method".

“For our learners to be familiar and be good to express themselves in English, they need to always speak English. I do not use mother tongue in teaching the content subject.”

The researcher had to test the characteristics of conformability in qualitative research by conducting focus group interview with the grade 12 repeating learners. When asked about the language of teaching and learning in class, the FGIRL, 1&2 (A &B) responses were that;

“Our Maths educator used to teach Maths in Sepedi but he expects us to answer his questions in English. Since we were in grade 10, he will explain in Sepedi mixing with English were necessary”.

“Our principal addresses us always in English and he condemns the use of Sepedi during a content subject lesson. He always says that educators must use English which is the language of exam”.

“My Economics educator stresses that we must interpret the essays in Economics in Sepedi and then after grasping them we can translate back to English”.

“My History educator teaches us to interpret the History essays in Sepedi and that once we have grasped the content, one can translate it in English in the writing of tests and exam”.

“It’s not only with the content subject where teachers could be heard using Sepedi, even in the teaching of English literature books, the educator used to interpret the questions, expressions and scenarios in Sepedi so that we understand his lesson. Unfortunately in exam there is no word in mother tongue”.

The above deliberations reflect the challenge of the use of English as a medium of instruction. The findings discussed in Chapter two on the literature review concurs with the opinions of the respondents. The findings complement the observations by Ramalepe (2013) and Maponya (2015) about the challenge of using English as a medium of instructions in our schools. The principals as managers by being present in

the classes (MBWA) ought to be aware that some of the educators who teach the content subjects use mother tongue. Although the educators can be blamed for this outcome the effect of the legacy of apartheid on the inadequate training of educators and poorly resourced schools must be addressed (Ramalepe, 2013). The unfortunate outcome is that tests and exam papers are set in English and learners must answer in English. This is also one of the variables which impede learners in interpreting the questions posed in exam questions. Urgent strategies and intervention programs are needed to rectify this.

4.2.7. THEME 7: EDUCATOR CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
*Educator qualifications	*Most of SMT have post graduate degrees *Eighty percent of educators have teaching diplomas and junior degrees

Educators are expected to be confident when they stand in front of a class to impart knowledge. Learners come to school thirsty for the knowledge and are positive that they are going to benefit from the educator. An individual interview with principals from school A and B was conducted to establish the level of qualifications of the educators in their schools. When asked about the qualifications of his team, the principal from school A, IISMT, 1 (A) claimed that;

In our school we have educators who are highly qualified with junior degrees and Honour's degrees. There are four educators in commerce stream. Three educators have Bachelor of Commerce with majors in Business studies, Economics and Accounting while 1 educator has Secondary Teachers Diploma with majors in Accounting and Economics. The educator also graduated with Advanced Certificate in Education majored in Economics. The Head of Department (HOD) has Bachelor of Education Honours. From the Natural Science department, two have Bachelor of

Sciences Honours in Physical Science whereas four have Secondary Teachers Diplomas and further diplomas with Maths and Physical Science as their specialization. In the languages and social sciences nearly all have post graduate degrees”.

The response of the principal from school B, IISMT, 2 about his staff qualifications was no different from the principal in school A. This is what he said;

“In the Commerce department three teachers have BCom in Business studies, Economics and Accounting. The two teachers have Secondary Teachers Diploma’s and also graduated with Advanced Certificate in Education with majors in Economics and Accounting. Two of the above educators have Honours degree in Management. From the Maths and Science department only one educator has graduated with a degree with majors in Maths and Technology. Four educators graduated in Secondary Teachers Diploma while they also graduated in Advanced Certificate in Education Diploma in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). Like in school A, school B has highly qualified educators in the Social Science and Languages with Honours and Masters Degrees”.

From the above information it is clear that the educators in school A and school B are highly qualified so the challenge is their performance. The studies by Bansilal (2014), Spaul (2013) and Maponya (2015) exposed the problem of the teachers’ lack of content knowledge in the Secondary schools. It sounds like an insult to remark that some teachers have a content gap when the statements from the principals in school A and B maintain that their staff are highly qualified. It would seem that the educators do have content knowledge and yet the schools do not perform in both the GET and FET band. A big task lies with the Department of Basic Education to ensure that continuous workshops for educators are organized to equip the newly appointed educators with the necessary skills of imparting their knowledge during teaching.

4.2.8. THEME 8: ACCOUNTABILITY OF STAFF TO SENIORS AND CURRICULUM ADVISORS.

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
<p>*Submission of work to HOD"s and principals</p> <p>*Monitoring of educators work</p>	<p>*Poor accountability of educators to the seniors</p> <p>*Ignorance of SMT members to hold educators accountable about their performance</p> <p>*Non submission of the educators work to seniors</p>

According to the line of operation, the educators must account to their HOD's while the HOD's account to the deputy principal or directly to the principal if there is no deputy principal. As per the policy of accountability, preparations or lesson plans, audit of written work and an update of content coverage are to be submitted to the HOD's on a weekly or monthly basis. Each department in the school has its own policies which are distributed to educators to ensure the smooth running of the department.

An individual interview with SMT members in the two schools was conducted to establish how the educators account to their senior officials from the Department and the SMT members.

The HOD's from school A, FGIHOD, 1 & 2 (A) were asked how the staff is held accountable to them with regard to their daily activities. The following outcomes were discovered from the two HOD's. The HOD for Maths and Science said that;

"I supervise the Science subjects which are Maths, Maths Literacy, Physical Science and Life Science. I have majored in Maths and Life Science. I find it difficult to support and develop my Physical Science teacher. Sometimes I would send him to the

neighboring secondary schools so that the HOD of Science can assist him to avoid approving everything”.

The deputy principal who joined school A, IISMT, 3 (A) on rationalization and redeployment pointed out his challenges in this way;

“I was redeployed to this school to fill up the post of deputy principal. My major subjects are History and Sepedi. I do not have a knowledge of Geography. I have requested a senior educator with Geography to assist me. As a Curriculum Head, I draw a program of submission for lesson preparations and audit of written work, class visits etc. I expected the HOD’s and senior educators to submit to me like educators. From the five SMT members only one HOD does submission on time. With the others, you’ll remind them every day about the agreed dates”.

From school B the HOD, FGIHOD, 2 (B) who is supervising the two streams was asked how he keeps the educators accountable for their work. His response was that;

“I am the HOD looking at two streams, the science and social stream. I teach Maths and Mathematical Literacy in grade 11 and 12, I have 36 periods per week. It’s hard to manage and supervise more than 8 subjects in two streams. We have many streams in our school and they contribute to our underperformance. I fail to check and monitor the educators in the departments as per agreed policy and program. The other subjects like History, Geography and Social Sciences give me a headache when I am to do class visits, moderate and approve their work. Sometimes I would just put a stamp and a signature to attest that I had gone through them while the gist of the matter would be not well conversant with the content of the subjects”.

The responses from the above SMT members is a reflection that policies are drawn up by the department, put in school files and not implemented. Good results are the efforts of working hard, monitoring of the classes by the SMT and monitoring of the teachers’ work and learners’ work by the SMT. Monitoring and support is still a serious challenge in these schools. Teachers are accountable to the HOD’s, HOD’s accountable to the deputy principal and principal while the principal is accountable to the Circuit Manager

who must also be accountable to the District Director. The District Director must account to the Head of Department and MEC for Education.

4.2.9. THEME 9: THE CHOICE OF SUBJECT IN FET BAND

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
*Pass requirement in grade 8 and 9 * Poor attendance of parents on the day of career choice *Capacity of HOD"s and educators on subject choice	*Lack of guidance on the choice of subject *Peer pressure *Change of subjects in grade 11 and 12

The GET band is a foundation for the good choice of subjects in grade 10. It is the responsibility of educators and parents to assist learners in their choice of subjects. Good choice of subjects in grade 10 assists learners to make sound career choices. The period of guidance on the choice of subject is essential to engage parents to look at the strength, the weaknesses and performances of the learners. Unavailability of the parents in this process is frustrating for the learner and leads to confusion where peer pressure dominates. In this case the selection of subjects may be done according to what friends choose and not according to the capacity and ability to do well in the subjects and stream.

The pass requirements in GET band has a positive outcome on the learners in grade 8 and 9. Learners in grade 9 have a maximum year mark of 75% and they sit for 25% in their exam mark. This automatically enables the learners to pass the grade before sitting for examination. A learner may obtain 70% in Maths, Natural Science and Technology and be convinced that he is coping with the science stream. A focus group interview with grade 12 repeating learners in school A and B was conducted to establish how they arrived at their choice of subject in grade 10. The grade 12 repeating learners

in school A, FGIRL, 1 & 2 (A) were asked how they were assisted on the choice of subjects in grade 10. The response from the learners were that;

"My parents wanted me to be a medical doctor and they encouraged me to do Maths and Science. My parents did not avail themselves during a session of grade 9 choice of subjects. A decision had being taken at home days before the parents meeting. I am not good with the Science and Maths but Geography and Life Science are my favorites. I passed Maths and Physical Science with level three in last year's grade 12 results. I am presently repeating the grade to improve my Mathematics and Physical Sciences'.

"I passed Maths, Technology and Natural Science in grade 9 with distinctions but I was surprised to fail the Science subject in grade 10. My Life Orientation educator advised me to change Physical Science and replace it with Life Science in grade 11. My parents refused because they wanted me to pursue Engineering as a career. I passed my Science subject with level three in grade 12. These results led me repeating grade 12'.

The grade 12 repeating learners from school B, FGIRL, 3&4 (B) were asked how the school assisted them in their choice of subjects. This is how they responded;

"I did Maths and Physical Science because we emerged from grade 9 as a group which studied together. I never performed well in grade 10 and 11. I am repeating Maths and replaced Physical Science with Geography during the change of subjects. I am aware that we did not get a good guidance on the choice of subjects".

"We did not get a good guidance in grade 10 from our educators. We realized that we made wrong choices in grade 11 and 12 and it is too late to change the whole stream since its recommended that in grade 11 and 12 a candidate can change two in grade 11 and only one subject in grade 12".

To test confirmability and credibility of the information gathered, the researcher conducted an individual interview with the principals of the two schools, IISMT, 1& 2. When asked how he addressed the grade 10 learners' on choice of subject, the principal from school A responded that;

"In our curriculum plan, by the beginning of the year, we put a date to meet parents of grade 9 learners to advise them on the choice of subjects. We utilize the local human resources like HOD"s from the three streams of science, commerce and social sciences to present the careers in their fields of specializations. They are assisted by the Life Orientation educators in guiding learners and parents. A big challenge is the attendance since we experience poor turn up of the parents and guardians".

From school B, the principal was asked how he addressed the issue of choice of subjects in his school, his words were that;

"On the first day of re-opening, we delegate the deputy principal and the HOD's from one class to another in grade 10 to assist learners on the choice of subjects since some learners are pressurized by their peers and decide on the wrong streams. I think non-involvement of parents by the end of grade 9 year also contribute on the choice of subjects. Previously we used to organize parents to come to school but poor attendance led us to engage only the learners. Many of the learners follow the wrong streams until they realize in grade 11 and 12 that they are pulling hard".

The future of our learners lies in the hands of educators. Learners who are held back in grade 11 and 12 are indicative of a poor intervention in the education of a child. Many of the rural parents are illiterate and they rely on educators to teach and guide their children towards a better future. Many children become frustrated in grade 11 and 12 due to their choice of subjects and as a result they end up failing matric.

One can establish from the views expressed above that one of the contributory factors that leads to a higher failure rate in the FET band and that adds to the number of dropouts is a lack of intervention by the school on the learners" choice of subjects. One questions the capacity and abilities of Life Orientation educators whose role is to advise and assist learners on the choice of subject in grade 10.

4.2.10. THEME 10.THE PRINCIPALS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
*Leadership styles	*Uncooperative educators *Teamwork *Laissez faire attitude

The principals in the schools are representative of the Department of Basic Education. They are assigned duties to run the schools effectively and efficiently. The Department expects a good performance from them resulting in schools that perform well. Their instructional leadership as a dynamic delivery of the Curriculum is to ensure there is effective teaching and learning. An interview with the principals from the two schools sampled was conducted. When asked about his leadership style, the principal of school, IISMT, 1(A) said;

“Today we live in democracy, in most cases I am dictated by the situation and conditions although I prefer democratic leadership and charismatic leadership style. But when things get out of hand I resort to autocratic leadership style in order to have the work done. Sometimes I do not smile when I need submissions or when an educator has bunked a class. The educator is summoned to my office to give reasons why he/she failed to attend a class or why he came to school late”.

The principal from school A was asked how he engages and implements his policies. His response was;

“There are directives from the Department of Education which do not need discussions but implementation while local policies which are drawn by the educators and SGB are discussed , ratified and put in the files and in offices and staff-rooms”.

The principal from school B was questioned about his leadership. In his words the principal of school B, IISMT, 2 (B) said that;

“Sometimes I do not compromise when I need work but I have to be soft in other instances to win the educators to do the job. I like democratic and autocratic leadership style although the situation do come out of hand with educators doing as they like. I hate laissez faire leadership style but sometimes the educator formations do protect the educators even where they are wrong. When the educator is wrong, the following day the whole team of branch is in your school seeking answers. Our teacher formations sometimes do put us at loggerheads with our educators. You motivate educators to go the extra-mile by teaching in the morning lessons and afternoon lessons, then the union would tell them the Department must pay you for working extra hours”.

When the principal of school B was engaged on how the policies are drawn up and implemented, his response was not different from the principal of school A. In his words he said that;

“In our school a procedure is that school policies are drawn by the relevant structures or stakeholders as drafts, submitted to the highest structures like the SGB or office of the principal for ratification. When it comes to the Departmental policies, they are to be implemented without discussion, e.g. Working 7 hours daily and Period registers. These are non–negotiable issues”.

The researcher also engaged the principal on the issue of his leadership style. A focus group interview was conducted on educators from school A and B. When asked about their principal’s leadership style, the educators from school A, FGIE, 1&2 (A) said;

“The principal is a dictator. He used an autocratic leadership style. No engagement. No opportunity to know our challenges. What he needs is to go to class, submit the work and discipline the learners. He cannot motivate you. Even when you come to school depressed and stressed, he can’t have time for you. He is not at ease to share problems with him. Working with such kind of principal cannot motivate you to work for extra hours. That is why the results are year by year sinking down”.

From school B, FGIE, 3&4 (B), the educators praised the good leadership from the principal. They said the following;

“The principal is at ease and kind with us. Even when you mistakenly missed going to class, he will politely talk to you, that this is wrong. Sometimes he will organize lunch for the whole staff. He initiated that on birthdays of the staff members we should come together and enjoy lunch as a staff. He tries to unite the staff although a big challenge lies on the learners who are not co-operative and are unteachable. We enjoy working with our principal”.

From the interview above it is clear that the two principals know the types of leadership style. What is needed is to encourage the principals that a leader must have a big heart. Good results are from the schools where there is a spirit of team work, unity compromise and sacrifice on the extra hours to teach the children.

4.3. SOCIO – ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE COMMUNITIES

4.3.1. THEME 11: SOCIAL LIFE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekend bashes ● River sand bashes 	<p>*The impact of taverns in the life of school children</p> <p>*Immorality practice during the extravaganza</p>

Weekend bashes

Bolobedu is a deeply rural area suffering from poverty stricken conditions. A business which is most successful is the selling of liquor. Most of the clients or customers are school learners. From the schools sampled, about 3 of the grade 12 learners were found to be working as deejays (DJs). To earn a living, the DJ’s and liquor restaurants organize the weekend sessions and bashes with many local DJs performing.

The bashes start on Friday at noon to Sunday midnight. The learners who attend these events are unable to attend Saturday classes which are organized by the schools and

the circuits. The Dj's are invited to perform in the tavern's and liquor restaurants on weekends. One DJ, who is a grade 12 repeating learner testified that he earns a living to feed his family from this job. When asked about the time for learning, he replied that he studies on weekends when he is off or during the week.

TABLE 6: A TEMPLATE FOR A WEEKEND BASH

Date & Time	Situation and Event	Participants	Actions Observed	Reflection
02/09/2017 21h30pm	Month-end bash	+ - 60% are school learners	Children dancing and taking and drinks	All night party which starts Friday night and is supposed to end Sunday midnight
21/10/2017 20h30pm	Pre – Exam Bash	+ - 80% school children	Boys and girls who are school learners carrying cooler boxes and camp chairs	The school learners go for 6pm to 6am bashes to drink and dance
25/11/2017 22h00 pm	Pens down	+ -90% school children	Matriculants having a braai	Learners drinking liquor and dancing

The venues for these events are pinned up in the liquor restaurants yards.

4.3.1.1. River Sand Session

Two Sundays in a month or fortnightly, the extravaganza called river sand sessions are organized in the river where there is enough space to allow space for the games. The event takes place on Sundays in the afternoon and ends in the evening. Sports games such as volleyball, tenniquit and beach soccer are organized and end up with dancing. The majority of the clients who attend these events are young school-going girls and family men. Monday morning after the extravaganza, the girls are absent from the classes while some will be suffering from hangovers. These events can lead to immoral behaviour.

TABLE 7: A table of Observation Grid for Sunday session.

Observation	Description
1. Who is in the group or scene"	Target group is the school learners particularly the secondary school boys, girls and family men
2. What is happening" a) What behaviors" b) How do people in the group behave towards one another" c) What is the content of their conversations"	a) Playing sports games and dancing b) Since they are drunk what is taking place is immoral c) Love affairs, current affairs and politics
3. Where is the group or scene located"	In the river sand, camp chairs, braai stands and taking hard drinks
4. When does the group meet and	On the second Sunday of the month-

interact”	fortnightly. From afternoon to midnight
5. Why does the group operate as it does”	The purpose is entertainment although the consequence and aftermath of these settings to the youth is destruction to their future.

4.3.2. THEME 12: SOCIETAL CHALLENGES (POVERTY, TEENAGE PREGNANCY AND CHILD HEADED FAMILIES)

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poverty ● Teenage pregnancy ● Child headed families. 	<p>*Means of living coming from social grant for many families</p> <p>*Money for the social grants used for personal reasons by the mothers of the infants.</p>

Bolobedu also has a high rate of unemployment. The means of survival for many families comes from the government social grants. The issue of teenage pregnancy is common in the schools especially in the GET and FET band. Some female learners have two to three children while in secondary school. Pregnant teenagers go on maternity leave for 3 weeks to a month depending on the complications at birth. When a child is sick, the female learner needs to take the child to a clinic. On the pay date of social grants, the boyfriends who are mostly school learners also accompany the teenage mother to avoid the money being misused or to get a share. While these couples are absent, the process of teaching and learning continues at school. On their return to school the teacher has to give these learners the tasks he/she missed so they

are in time for Cass submission. The tasks given are for the purpose of recording only since they are not authentic and valid. At the end of the year these learners contribute to the high failure rate in the schools from lower grades to the FET band.

The issue of poverty in the communities has the effect of the school girls' attempting to get social grants for their children while in secondary school. Some of the girls are heads of their households since in some families parents live far away due to employment while for others they do not have parents. Their babies are dropped off at the Nursery schools on their way to school. They are already parents and have to do household activities like cleaning, fetching water, cooking and fetching wood. When other learners are engaged in studies and group discussion at work, these girls are expected to be at home for the daily chores. There is little time for homework since they are tired. Concentration during school hours is also a challenge to them. A focus group interview was conducted on the grade 12 repeating learners from the two schools, FGIRL, (A&B). When asked about why they are repeating the class, the respondents who are female learners had the following to say about their experiences;

"I lost my parents while in grade 8. I am the breadwinner. My younger siblings expect me to provide them with food and other basic needs. I got pregnant in grade 9 with the first child and the second child in grade 11. I dropped twice to raise my two kids. At least I get a social grant and also manage to feed my family with the little I get. I drop my kids in a Nursery School."

"There is a competition of clothes and hairstyle amongst girls of our age. I get a social grant and my child also get social grant. I manage to buy my clothes and hairs and an expensive cell phone with the grant money".

The female learners from school B were asked why they are repeating grade 12. The female learners shared the same sentiments with the ones in school A. Their response were that;

"I have two kids from different boyfriends and I get a social grant. It helps me to buy food during break because I don't take nutritional food at school."

“My mother and sister warned me not to take prevention medication from clinics but to first conceive with a first child, then I’ll prevent later. I have only one child. He is so disturbing. I must do homework and study at school because at home I must relieve my mother and take care of the child. I did not perform well because sometimes I would be absent from school to take the child to clinic and at school they can’t wait for me.”

The participant’s responses reflect the lifestyle within these communities. There is a dire need for the health and social welfare department to assist in these communities. The girls have children for the sake of a social grant and there is a perception that taking pills for prevention might lead to a barren future. Both the girls and their parents need information from health workers in order to stop this cycle.

From the experiences above one could establish that there is a serious need for education and workshops in these communities about the issue of teenage pregnancy. This problem needs the stakeholders, school, health sectors, churches, non-governmental organizations to join hands and visit these communities to educate them on how this behaviour affects their future.

4.3.3. THEME 13: THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS OUTCOME.

SUBTHEME	MAIN ISSUES RAISED
*Abuse of cell phones in school premises	*Cell phones usage in the school yard with music on. *Cell phones used to record actions taking place in classroom situation. *Learners chatting during the lessons.

South African school children are connected to communication devices. About 6 out of 10 learners in primary and secondary schools are in possessions of a cellphone. Some have more than one cell phone from different companies. The schools display boards at

the gate where items such as cell phones, cigarettes, drugs, firearms, knives and pets etc. are prohibited from entering the school premises. The SAPS in Bolobedu have adopted the two schools to give support and motivation to learners every quarter. In their visits they introduce a campaign of operation clean up where cell phones, cigarettes, knives, drugs are confiscated.

Although these operations are established in the schools, the learners continue to bring cell phones to schools. Learners are addicted to social media like whatsapp, face book, twitter and instagram even during school hours. Some learners use their phones in the classrooms while teaching is on.

A focus group interview with educators, FGIE, 1& 2 from the two schools was conducted about the usage of cell phones on school premises. Their responses were that;

"Nearly every day we confiscate 3 to 5 cell phones from learners especially from grade 8 – 10. Sometimes when you are teaching, some troublesome learners would be busy chatting".

"During break the cell phones are competing playing music. One day I confiscated a smartphone where learners were watching pornography when I entered class for teaching".

"One day in my class when I was punishing those who did not do the homework, I instructed them to stand on one leg with the hands raised high. I was surprised when I saw a flashlight whereby one learner on the floor was shooting a photo to those learners at the wall".

The researcher had to test the characteristics of rigor for qualitative research using conformability and credibility to establish consistency from the data collected. I therefore conducted a focus group interview with the school governing body FGISGB,1& 2 as the parents" representatives. They responded as follows;

"We are living in the world of technology. Children should use the cell phones to get information and do research that educators have given them. Parents live far from home. They are bound to communicate with their children".

"It is not good for the learners to come to school with cell phones because they spend most of the time chatting with friends while sitting in the classrooms. A learner who is found in possession of a cell phone should be suspended from school for a week. This will send a message to others that cell phones are not wanted in the school yard".

The repeating learners from grade 12 were engaged through a focus group interview FGIRL, 1& 2 from the two schools. Their experience about the use of cell phones was that;

"The cell phones are playing a significant role to our studies because when educators are giving us assignments and tasks to do in the classrooms we can google and get the answers. The cell phones help us to do the homework and research".

"There is no problem with the cellphones, the issue is how we use them. If we abuse them by chatting with friends, getting into whatsapp and facebook during the school time, the principal must confiscate them".

"There is a lot of segregation in our school because we are prohibited to come with cell phones, but the teachers do come with them in class. When it rings, the educator goes out to answer it. Sometimes the ringtones used are music tracks and do disturb us. Some of the educators come to class with 2 to 3 cell phones, a small phone, a smart phone and a tablet just to shine".

"Cell phones take most of our time of studying. There is no way you can be disciplined and think that you can study with a cell phone near you. Once a message gets in, you are tempted to open and read or view it. Then you are bound to respond. If the person chatting with you is free, you are going to chat with him until the data bundles lapse".

The principals who are the school managers maintaining discipline in the school were engaged to establish their feelings about the learners who come to school carrying cell

phones while some could be seen with their earphones during break. An individual interview with the school management team IISMT, 1 & 2 was conducted to get their views about the issue of cell phones. The two principals from the two schools agree in their condemnation of the possession of cellphones by learners.

The principal from school A responded that;

"We have burnt the use of cell phones in our school. Even educators are to use them in the staffroom and the ringtones should be off or silent. As an agreement with the SGB, the parents of the learners are given the cellphone numbers of the principal and school phone which is handled by the admin clerk so that messages from the parents to learners are disseminated to the respective learners".

The principal from school B remarked that;

"The issue of cell phone is a challenge to our school. One day a female learner fell at the Assembly. While the learner was screaming, learners took her the videos which were send on social media within hours. We do not allow the cell phones in our school yard. Those which are found are confiscated and stored in a safe. Their owners will get them on the day of issuing the reports when schools are closing for 4th term in December".

The uses of cell phones are helpful for learners so that they can do their assignments. The unwelcome outcome is that they are being abused and used at the wrong time and the wrong place namely on school premises. The use of cell phones is abused by some learners when they should be studying. There are cases where learners are suspended for days due to the code of conduct hence missing lessons. Sometimes cell phones are used for copying during tests and exam and are a distraction during class.

4.4. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter focused on data presentation and analysis. Data was collected from many sources such as individual interviews, focus group interviews and observation. The researcher created themes and subthemes which were used as topics to guide the

discussion with the respondents or participants. From the themes and subthemes that emerged new information, labeled the main issues, emerged during data gathering. The main findings will be discussed fully in Chapter five under the heading conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on data presentation and analysis. In this chapter I discuss the main findings from the interpreted data, draw some conclusions and make some recommendations. I compare these findings with those discussed in the literature review to establish what similarities and differences exist, and discuss the findings under the themes which emerged from both the literature review and the data presented in chapter four.

5.2 TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

The findings from the SMT and educators in Chapter Four revealed that there is minimal support for the educators from both the Department and the SMT. Some of the HODs were found to be incompetent to develop the educators within their departments and were not respected by their juniors. Some HODs are compelled to support the subject educators without considering their specialization. This happens to HODs who have been appointed through rationalization or redeployment. From the Department's side, Curriculum Advisors are not doing their job well since they could not be seen at schools but make themselves available during continuous assessment task programmes and examination monitoring periods. This bears out allegations by Mbalati (2010) and Mphahlele (2007) that most teachers do not receive the necessary support from Curriculum Advisors. Teachers need development to keep them abreast of innovations, either from external agents or internal departmental officials. A highly skilled teaching force is essential if standards are to be raised in the schools. Another concern on part of the SMT and educators is the fact that workshops are organized for grade 12 educators only, ignoring the GET band. In-service training and workshops should be extended to other subjects and grades, especially to help lay a good foundation for newly-appointed teachers.

School development and staff development are fundamentally interdependent and interrelated. They cannot be separated since staff development results in improvement in the school as a whole. If this initiative is taken, schools can change and become good environments for teaching and learning. It can serve to restore the culture of effective teaching and learning, while improving results at matric and lower levels. The respondents share the views of Spaul (2013) and Mutangwa (2007) in maintaining that teachers who are capacitated and developed will work effectively and efficiently to enable the school to perform well. The school must bear responsibility for organizing programmes of teacher development to be inserted in their Subject Improvement Plan (SIP), Academic Performance Improvement Plan (APIP), and Curriculum Management Plan. The programmes should be budgeted for by the SGB.

5.3 EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP , MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

Poor management and leadership on the part of the school management teams are seen as among factors contributing to poor results in the schools. For instance, the principal in School A was labeled a dictator, an autocrat, and a figure distant from his staff. His word seemed to be final although he defended himself as behaving democratically in respect of most of the resolutions taken. He misses co-operation from the staff and team work. The findings from School B indicate that educators enjoy being at school, feel motivated and are not reluctant to go the extra mile in teaching and supervising learning after hours. The findings from School A reflect that support and engagement is minimal, no doubt a factor that impedes performance. This finding concurs with those of Spaul (2012) and Hofman et al. (2015), who note that when a school is not performing well, there is probably no effective leadership to create transformational conditions and establish a sound culture of teaching and learning. Lack of teamwork amongst the staff and the leadership result in ill-discipline and can leave the learners in a laissez-faire environment hostile to learning. This is supported by Mothiba's (2010) observation that ill-discipline among learners in schools disturbs teaching and learning and leads to poor performance. The parents and the Department also share Mothiba's (2010) view that ill-discipline at school is indirectly caused by the

SMT and the educators. It is the responsibility of the SMT to ensure that educators are in class on time and teaching the correct content. Educators' and learners' work should be monitored weekly if we are to expect good results. It is the responsibility of the SMT to ensure that there is a system of accountability in place. The schools that perform well invariably have good and effective instructional leadership, while as Hamid, Bishof and Botha (2016) point out, the lack of instructional leadership inevitably results in laissez-faire attitudes in schools. The main role of the principal is to give instructional leadership and show transformational leadership to create an environment which is safe for everybody. Principals should also motivate the teachers and learners, and acknowledge and appreciate their daily work. This will alleviate the perennial crisis at the year-end, when teachers would be giving excuses regarding the lack of learner support materials, content gap etc.

Schools that perform well annually are those with good policies which are implemented and reviewed time and again. Most of the schools do in fact have good policies that have been drawn up in line with the laws and the regulations of the Department of Education. These policies look very impressive to officials, posted on notice boards. But they are not implemented. Implementation of policies like period registers and a code of conduct ensures that everybody goes to class on time and does what they are supposed to be doing, which is teaching and learning.

From the data collected through interviews and observation, the two schools are in need of motivation to correct the wrongs on all sides. This was attested by Adelabu et al. (2016), who stress that underperformance and truancy are the results of lack of motivation, poor pupil-teacher relationships, and insufficient counselling and guidance. All these variables can be corrected only by the parties at school. Educators should spend eighty percent of their time teaching and supervising learners to learn. This is the model supported by Hoffman et al. (2015), who observe that educational effectiveness compels the teacher to do teaching role modeling and effective management of time, in making the classroom a learning environment. Schools that are performing well from grades 8 to 12 are those that function well right from the beginning of the year, and are committed and dedicated to their work throughout the year. If schools can have good

programmes of monitoring and support in the classroom, problems with discipline, the bunking of classes and content gap in both the GET and FET bands will be things of the past. This will encourage teachers and learners to be self-motivated themselves. Performing schools set a target percentage pass, from the learner with his subjects to an educator in his subject, to departmental targets that inform the school target for the year.

Educators and learners need motivation to work effectively. Some schools conduct motivational gatherings from time to time, while others do it once a year and mostly at the beginning of the year. For learners to compete for excellence in performance, the school should reward them with small gifts, either during assembly or in an organized function on the school premises. Some schools do reward learners who perform well on a quarterly basis, to encourage them to keep it up. Local motivational speakers within the communities like pastors and celebrities should be welcome to visit schools and motivate learners and educators in the morning assembly. Acknowledging and giving a pat on the back to a hard working educator who sacrifices his/her time and resources, teaching extra hours, is also a great source of motivation. Reimbursing the educators for assisting learners on weekends and during Easter, winter and spring holidays can produce good results at the end of the year.

5.4 THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS IN SUPPORTING SCHOOLS

Learners who behave badly at school, bunking classes and being disrespectful to educators are mostly those whose parents do not set foot on the school premise. A lack of involvement of parents in the school to support educators contributes to ill-discipline among learners. The observation of the parents' meetings in school A and school B reflects a situation of minimal support by the parents. This finding confirms that of Mahlomaholo et al. (2010), who observe that parents are not always there to support their children, tending to shift all responsibility for their education to professional educators. These learners have no family support while some are from child-headed families. To address learners with behavioural disorders, the school must have a programme of home visits by educators, and have interviews and engage with parents

or any adult supervisor in the family to establish the cause of their bad behaviour or poor performance. The poor visitation of parents to the two schools looks like a form of culpable ignorance on their part, leaving their children in the hands of educators and expecting a miracle to happen at the end of the year. The school is viewed as an extension of the family. The presence of parents, guardians and other stakeholders in the schoolyard can motivate and give positive support to educators (Hofman et al., 2017). Such an initiative can minimize bullying and misbehavior at school. Interventions in the child's home environment, assisting him/her in mediating socio-economic challenges, may help the child become a changed person and usher in the beginning of performance and progress at school.

5.5 NON-COMPLETION OF THE SYLLABUS AND CONTENT COVERAGE

The findings from the SMT's and repeating learners in grade twelve revealed that some subject educators did not complete the syllabus, so that candidates had to face new content in the final exam papers. This supports the audit report on content coverage by the District Director that some of the schools do not finish the syllabus (DoE.Mopani District report on matric results, 2017). This is a clear indication that some teacher has not done his /her job, as well as the senior teacher in management responsible for monitoring content coverage regularly. It is the responsibility and function of SMT members to check content quarterly or more frequently, to make sure that the progress being made is adequate. Content coverage should be checked simultaneously with written work. According to the policies regarding written work for each subject teacher, each item in the pace setter is concluded by giving learners written work.

Monitoring of content coverage is non-negotiable in the teaching fraternity, since an educator is being remunerated to do the job. It was discovered through the focus group interview with repeating learners that there is a tendency on the part of educators to focus on certain topics while leaving others unattended. It is a form of suicide on the part of the teachers not to teach all the prescribed topics as per the pace setter. The learners have the right to be in possession of the pace setters so that they are aware of what should be taught. It is also advisable that parents who are literate at home check

the content coverage, so that if a child experiences difficulty in certain topics, the parents can assist him or her.

5.6 AUDIT OF WRITTEN WORK

The secret to educational success for schools is giving more written work and remedial attention to learners to allow them to practice what they have been taught. The data collected through interviews with the SMT, educators and grade 12 repeating learners reveals that written work is still a big challenge to some educators, who would teach and leave the class without giving any task to the learners to practice. In short, from the data gathered from the focus group interview, it seems that the two schools are doing learners an injustice in terms of written work. The findings revealed that a lot of written work might be given in a day to learners, but that there was little monitoring or auditing of it by teachers and the SMT. The findings reported in Chapter Four concur with the findings of Spaul (2012) that learners from quintiles 1, 2, and 3 are given less work to do, while those in quintiles 4 and 5 are given written work daily that is duly assessed. This ensures a good performance at the end of the year.

The report by the District Director on an audit of written work supports the views of stakeholders within the schools. Klette (2007) and Spaul (2012) agree that written work like homework assists learners to revise the work done in class. Learners tend to forget what they have been taught. More practical work and written work are essential to enable learners to practice and acquaint themselves with the knowledge and skills they've received. It must be a non-negotiable issue for educators to comply with the policies in respect of written work as per subject.

A factor that contributed to the high failure rate was lack of true quality assurance in respect of the standard at which formal tasks were performed. Learners perform well during the year and fail drastically at the end of the year. The reason seems to be that the tasks for CASS (Continuous Assessment) during the year are set locally, while those at the year-end are common, standardized and set by the Department. It is the

responsibility of the school SMT to ensure that all formal tasks are quality assured and standardized. Maintaining a high quality in formal and informal tasks assists learners to be familiar with the standard of question they are to answer in the examination.

An audit of written work assists the monitors to check the content coverage as per pace setters. Parents also have a responsibility to check learners' written work and append signatures to indicate that they have gone through the learner's books at home. It is also the parents' responsibility to visit schools to check if teaching and learning are running smoothly and to engage the teachers about the progress of their children.

5.7. LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The issue of the language of teaching and learning is still a challenge in our schools. All content subjects must be taught in English as the medium of instruction. From the data collected through the interviews it was revealed that most of our teachers still use their mother tongue in teaching the content subjects. The data gathered on the use of English as a medium of instruction supplements that of Mahlomaholo et al. (2010) and Mutshaeni et al. (2011), as they both emphasize the problems associated with English as the language of teaching and learning. The findings from the learners reveal the injustice involved, when an educator spends most of his teaching time using the mother tongue yet expects the learners to answer all questions in English. The data collected on LoLT in the two schools concurs with the findings of Ramalepe (2013) regarding a survey by the Department of Basic Education which indicates that learners in the rural areas scores very poorly in language efficiency. It is an excuse to say learners find it difficult to understand the subject matter when one uses mother tongue the whole period of one hour on a content subject. Learners are at school to learn. It is the duty of the educator to familiarize learners with expressing themselves in English. It may be difficult on the first day but as time goes on, learners will get used to the usage of English as medium of instruction. Learners should also be encouraged to use English in their discussion groups, at home and in their playground. Learners who exit grade twelve to tertiary education are expected to express themselves in English, since at tertiary level there is no lecturing in one's mother tongue, especially since students will

all be from different language backgrounds. It is the duty of the SMT through class visits to detect this practice and condemn it at once, to avoid frustration at the end of the year for learners who cannot interpret the question papers.

5.8. SOCIAL LIFE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOMS

Entertainment is part of life, although responsibility and time management on the part of learners is needed. Learners' social life outside the classroom needs to be guided by professionals from different departments and organizations, to show them how to deal with this aspect of growing up without coming to harm. The observations by the researcher reflect that our youth are out of hand. This supports Mutshaeni et al.'s (2011) and Adelabu et al.'s (2016) contention that the community and environment where the learner lives play a big role in shaping the learners' lifestyle. The findings also complement the study by Rammala (2009), who remarks that an environment which is not conducive to good morals and education retard the learner's academic progress and ultimately success in life. Communities have many deejays who are on a mission to make money. It is the responsibility of the community leaders, tribal authorities and churches to condemn functions such as River Sand, extravaganzas and bashes that are taking place weekly and distracting learners from studying. It was observed that the target group for these social activities is the youth who are preyed upon by older men known as blessers. The observation of our learners' social life revealed that there are variables such as poverty which lead female learners to engage in adult activities which ruin their future. My observations in this study support Mothiba's (2010) finding that poverty can encourage adolescent learners to get involved in anti-social behavior. The restaurants serving liquor and tavern owners should be engaged in meetings of imbizos, QLTC (quality learning and teaching) programmes and the community, to persuade them to restrict involvement in bashes by school children.

5.9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

- The Department of Basic Education to equip the team of Curriculum Advisors with enough staff.
- The District and Circuit offices to monitor the Curriculum Advisors so that they execute their daily work.
- The Department of Education at District level to organize continuous workshops on leadership for SMTs, to equip the newly appointed ones with the skills of management and leadership.
- Educator development and support be extended to other grades in the FET and GET bands.
- The Department at District and Circuit levels to organize compulsory workshops on career guidance for all grade 9 learners, to advise them on the choice of subjects.
- Regular audits of written work and content coverage to be a non-negotiable issue at school and circuit level.
- Stakeholders in the communities to address the issue of bashes and extravaganzas on weekends.

5.10. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

My research problem on this study was to explore the challenge that teachers and learners experience in their teaching-learning situation which hinder their performance at the end of the year. The main research question was; What are the factors that contribute to the low matric pass rate" This research question was sub-divided into sub-questions that guided this study so that it was focused. The main aim of the study was to identify the factors contributing to the low matric pass rate in the secondary schools.

The theory of educational productivity assisted the researcher in the study to establish factors that all stakeholders including the learners, teachers, parents and the department are phased with as daily challenges differing from their quintile levels of schools. While there are many challenges that affect the teaching and learning as contextual factors, some factors can be averted and rectified since they need commitment, sacrifice and leadership on the part of the school management team. Poor supervision on assessment of written work, monitoring of the periods, a content gap and minimal support on the newly appointed educators contribute a higher percentage on the factors that lead to a low pass rate.

Observation on the societal challenges and social life outside the classroom negatively impact on the education of the secondary school learners. Interviews conducted on the stakeholders attest that lack of vision on leadership and poor instructional leadership in the schools is assumed to be the main variable which ruin the schools' environment for teaching and learning. Should all the stakeholders play their role, the schools can be turned around to become centers of excellence.

5.11. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study aimed at exploring the factors and challenges that contribute to the low matric pass rate in our schools. The study attempted to establish the challenges involving the SMTs, the educators as the deliverers of the curriculum, the learners who are at the centre of teaching and learning and the parents who should be sharing responsibility with the school personnel for educating their children. The findings of this project reveal both challenges that differ from school to school and others that are faced in common. The study recommends that all stakeholders from departmental officials downwards to communities and parents join hands and work together to address and correct all the problems identified. Support from the Department and NGO's can help motivate teachers and learners, and turn the school around into an institution of excellence. Commitment, willpower and dedication on the part of the teachers and learners, and good management and leadership on the part of SMT's, will bring about good results in the schools. No one can come from another community to effect change

in a school: the stakeholders themselves must prioritize education as a societal issue. If all these stakeholders can own the education of our children, intervene, motivate and give support to the learners we produce, we can indeed produce citizens to serve our community.

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APPENDIX 1.

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13A Vygie Street
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02 AUGUST 2018

The Research Section
Limpopo Department of Education
Polokwane
0700

**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MOTUPA
SECONDARY SCHOOLS. (MOTUPA CIRCUIT)**

This serves to request a permission to conduct a research in the Secondary Schools of Motupa Circuit in Mopani District. I am currently studying Master of Education in Curriculum Studies in the University of Limpopo. My title of the study is : Factors Contributing to the low Matric Pass rate in Mopani District : A Case Study of Secondary Schools in Motupa Circuit. I have attended attended the training on Research Ethics in the University. I will adhere and consider all research ethical principles from the department during my study.

Hoping that my request will be attended positively.

Yours Faithfully

.....

MALATJI M M

APPENDIX 2 (a)

PARTICIPANTS CONSENT LETTER

Department of Education
University of Limpopo
Private X1106
Sovenga
0727
Date: _____

Dear participant

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study which focuses on the "" The factors contributing to the low matric pass rate in Mopani District. The aim to this study is to investigate the factors contributing to the low matric pass rate with a view to suggest possible solutions. Kindly answer all questions as honesty as you can. Your responses will remain strictly confidential. You are free to answer any question. Participation is voluntary and you are therefore free to withdraw from this study at any time. Thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards

Malatji M M (Master"s Student)

Date

Dr K S Malatji (Supervisor)

Date:

Prof N Wadesango (Co-supervisor)

Date:

APPENDIX 2(b)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

I..... give a consent that I agree to participate in the research under the title: Factors contributing to the low matric pass rate in Mopani District: A case study of secondary schools in Motupa circuit.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without penalty

I understand the purpose of this study and know about the benefits that this research entails.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research project.

I understand that the information provided will be treated with confidentiality.

I also agree to the recording of the interview.

I have studied the above information and understand my participation. I freely consent and voluntarily agree to participate in this research project.

Participant's Name & Surname.....

Participant's Signature..... Date.....

Researcher's Name & Surname.....

Researcher's Signature :..... Date.....

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDE and QUESTIONNAIRE

MAIN QUESTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS	POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Factors contributing to the low matric pass rate in Mopani District: A case study of Secondary schools in Motupa Circuit.	<p>¾ Explore the challenges that the teachers experience in grade 12.</p> <p>¾ Examine the challenges that learners experience in grade 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How often do you receive support from the SMT and curriculum advisors” ● What are the capacity of your classes and what challenges do you experience” ● How often do you get support from the teacher formations” ● Are you happy with the resources with the school premise and in your subject” ● Is the school offering extra classes” If no, what are the challenges” ● What are other challenges that you experience and which you think have contributed in this underperformance ” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the challenges that you experience in teaching and learning in class” ● How is discipline in class and within the school yard” ● Have you finished the syllabus/ pace setter in your subject” ● What were the challenges on the subjects content” ● Do you have enough resources like textbooks, library and laboratory” ● If not, how does this impact on your teaching and learning ” ● How do teachers give you informal tasks”
	¾ To recommend the solutions to improve matric results in Motupa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What do you think can be the intervention strategies by the Department of Education” ● How can the NGO”s support you to improve the results” ● How can the SGB and community assist you” ● What can be expected from teachers and learners to improve the results in our schools” ● What can the parents do to assist you to improve the results in your school” ● What can be done as possible solutions”



DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM TO THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: **PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT**

DATE: 11/05/2016

MEMBER:

MEMBER:

MEMBER:

MEMBER:

MEMBER:

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 1. The following information:
- 2. The Department wishes to advise you that you are required to provide a response with your response, copy of the response provided, to the Public Information Officer, PO Box 1234, Limpopo, 0301, in writing and email, within a period of 10 working days.
- 3. The following conditions apply to the information:
- 4. The request is made for the purpose of exercising a right of access (requested) of information.
- 5. Access to the information requested is for (state) office and for strictly confidential.
- 6. The request of access should not require access for academic purposes of the office.
- 7. A fee (requested) should not be charged for using the right of access to the information requested.
- 8. During the office, appropriate security risks should be advised to the public and the general public should be advised that the information should be confidential.

APPROVED AND FORWARDED:

MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (Name of Member) (Title of Member) (Signature)



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**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

MEETING: 27 November 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/221/2018: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Factors Contributing to the Low Matric Pass Rate in Mopani District: A Case Study of Secondary Schools in Motupa Circuit.
Researcher: MM Malatji
Supervisor: Prof N Wadesango
Co-Supervisor/s: Dr KS Malatji
School: Education
Degree: Masters in Education (Curriculum Studies)


PROF. TAB MASHEGO

CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:

- i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
- ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol.
PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Epsilon Editing

Judith Cornwell (BA, HDipLib)

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21 College Road
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083-9413811

judycornwell66@gmail.com

6 May 2019

To Whom It May Concern

This serves to confirm that I have duly edited the Master's thesis by M.M. Malatji, "Factors contributing to the low Matric pass rate in Mopani District: A case study of secondary schools in Motupa Circuit." I have corrected the language and presentation to my satisfaction. I have also checked the referencing system, both in-text and against the Reference List.



Judy Cornwell

