

# **Exploring the challenges of school curriculum advisors in a selected district in Limpopo, South Africa**

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## PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

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## **ABSTRACT**

Monitoring and supporting of teachers in the classroom, as well as the implementation of curriculum changes pose a problem in South Africa. This is due to an array of challenges such as a lack of resources, communication barriers within the Department of Education as well as a lack of proper infrastructure.

This study investigated the challenges faced by curriculum advisors in the Vhembe-West District and provided some insight into some of the curriculum advisors' daily challenges. The primary and secondary research questions form the basis of this study and allowed for the research questions to form a path leading to the themes. Data was collected by means of a literature review and semi-structured interviews. The findings of this data were presented in the study below.

The data was grouped and presented as 5 different themes with the aim of highlighting the challenges as well as providing recommendations to the challenges faced. The data revealed that curriculum advisors receive minimal support from their superiors and that the resources at their disposal prove minimal. The data also revealed operational challenges encountered by curriculum advisors which include but are not limited to things such as access to subsidised vehicles and material needed to conduct teacher training workshops.

This study highlights the strain the lack of resources/infrastructure and or effective management places on proper curriculum implementation. The data further proposed recommendations for future research as well as for the Department of Education to consider implementing in the curriculum advisory section at the Vhembe-West district.



## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

|      |                                        |
|------|----------------------------------------|
| ATP  | Annual Teaching Plan                   |
| CAPS | Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement |
| CASS | Continuous Assessment                  |
| DCES | Deputy Chief Education Specialist      |
| HOD  | Head of Department                     |
| NCS  | National Curriculum Statement          |
| NWU  | North-West University                  |
| OBE  | Outcome Based Education                |

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Addendum 2: Informed consent

Addendum 3: Interview schedule

Addendum 4: Letter requestion permission from the Department of Education.

Addendum 5: proof of language editing

# **1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study investigated the challenges pertaining to curriculum advisors within the context of the Vhembe-West District, Limpopo Province. Although the roles and functions of curriculum advisors are declared in the draft collective agreement (X of 2016) as part of the job description for office-based educators (South African Democratic Teachers Union [SADTU], 2017:2-9). It is argued that curriculum advisors are required to have certain resources to best allow them to execute their duties. This chapter presents the background and problem statement that led to the proposed methodology. Strategies to enhance the rigour in this study as well as the ethical considerations undertaken and declared are discussed. It was also decided to follow the article format for this mini-dissertation and the NWU and FEMS (Faculty of Economic Management and Sciences) guidelines were adhered to.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

The South African education system, under apartheid, was divided into four education departments that offered different curricula along racial lines (Fiske, 2005:5). There were different curricula for black, coloured, Indian, and white students. Since the democratic government took over in 1994, it restructured – among other things – the Department of Education (Mzangwa, 2019:11). Today, there are nine provincial Departments of Education and one national department (Provincial Government of South Africa, 2021). This implies that the public education system should be similar across all of South Africa. According to the School Education Act (nr 84 of 1996), the education system in South Africa aims to “*provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools; and to provide for matters connected therewith*” (School Education Act nr 84 of 1996).

The public schooling education system reform also meant that the old system content, which was racially divided and unequal, was replaced with outcome-based education (OBE), which failed and thereafter was amended and replaced by the revised national curriculum statement (NCS) and finally by the national curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS) (Gumede, 2016:69). In 2009, Umalusi, the education regulatory board, released a paper on whether the continuous assessment (CASS) method done at the end of each quarter to monitor progress in the classroom was worth keeping in the education system (Umalusi,

2009:5). Umalusi oversees the quality assurance of examination results throughout all South Africa (Umalusi). To effect curriculum implementation and allow for easier monitoring of the implemented curriculum, the Department of Education formed the provincial, district and circuit offices optimally (Government Gazette, 2016:2-55). In the districts, curriculum sections were introduced (Department of Basic Education, 2002). Curriculum sections in the Department of Education deal with the development, support, and monitoring of educators (Department of Basic Education, 2019). Its responsibility is to train, implement, monitor, and support educators in the development of curricula. Curriculum advisors train educators quarterly in their clusters to prepare them for the quarter ahead. Furthermore, educators are informed, by means of circulars, about the dates of the workshops and the content to be trained on.

Curriculum advisors are responsible for curriculum implementation in the form of teacher training workshops (School Education Act nr 84 of 1996). The implementation of the education policy is monitored during school visits. Moderation of the term's work, which is known as CASS, is done to improve learning. CASS deals with continuous improvement of the educator's capacity of which the ultimate results should be quality delivery of education (Poilah, 2009:15).

The training of teachers on content and policy implementation as well as CASS is conducted or carried out by curriculum advisors (Mbatha, 2016:16). Curriculum advisors are employed officials of the Department of Education and their functions are to monitor and support the implementation of the curriculum in their relevant subjects (Government Gazette, 2016:2-55). Curriculum advisors are qualified teachers and hold a BEd degree or the equivalent thereof. The role that curriculum advisors play in the optimal implementation and execution of an ever-changing curricula cannot be over-emphasised (Rasebotsa, 2017:19).

Advising educators on the curricula requires various resources to perform their duties in an efficient and effective way (Department of Basic Education, 2019). For example, curriculum advisors find it difficult to conduct workshops with insufficient or no infrastructure. They also find it difficult to travel to different schools where they are to provide support to educators in the classroom without subsidised vehicles (Mandukwini, 2016:63).

The draft collective agreement (nr X of 2016) states that curriculum advisors' functions are to: interpret, monitor, and implement policies in schools, and render support and development to educators who fall under their area of responsibility. This is applicable also to the schooling system within Limpopo. The Limpopo Province can be described as a semi-rural and underdeveloped province (Elsenburg, 2005:1). There are forty-nine (49) curriculum advisors

in the Vhembe-West District. Curriculum advisors in Vhembe-West District struggle to get even those most basic resources, such as overhead projectors, to allow them to conduct workshops, which, in turn, makes it difficult for curriculum advisors to fulfil the functions of the draft collective agreement (nr X of 2016) mentioned above.

### **1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The democratic and uniformed basic education schooling system in South Africa requires curriculum advisors to monitor the relevant curricula is implemented congruently throughout the country. The roles and responsibilities and minimal academic requirements for curriculum advisors are stipulated in the draft collective agreement (nr X of 2016:16). Curriculum advisors seem to be encountering many difficulties to fulfil their tasks. Chief among these challenges is a lack of resources.

The provincial department of education in Limpopo Province ought to ensure that curriculum advisors are equipped with the necessary resources (such as offices and office furniture, that each subject has enough curriculum advisors, subsidised vehicles, laptops, cell phones, data, vehicles, stationery, textbooks, and other relevant resources) to execute their tasks. In addition, the curriculum advisors should also be equipped with special skills requisite in their subjects and be kept up to date with developments in his or her subject. This means that apart from physical resources, the curriculum advisor should have some operational skills in the subject. This could be achieved by taking curriculum advisors to workshops on a regular basis (Department of Education, 2013:69).

Lack of resources influences the quality of teaching and learning as well as motivation to perform their best at times. Furthermore, the lack of proper infrastructure for curriculum advisors is the leading factor that affects curriculum delivery. This cripples the effectiveness of the education system. These setbacks make it difficult to attain the main goal, which is an education system that is worth its weight. Curriculum delivery and implementation are also a challenge; and the implementation of the curriculum by teachers during workshops so that they may deliver the curriculum in the classroom is hindered by a lack of financial and material resources.

Another problem faced in the curriculum advisory sector is that the collective agreement (nr X of 2016) states that curriculum advisors are meant to report to line managers, but the curriculum advisors report to the circuit manager as well as the line manager. This often causes confusion and a flow of miscommunication. Therefore, it is necessary to find ways to

assist curriculum advisors as well as to find necessary support when they encounter challenges.

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Expanded from the background and problem statement, the following primary and secondary research questions were formulated:

### **1.4.1 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION**

What are the challenges for curriculum advisors to curriculum implementation in the Vhembe-West District, Limpopo Province?

### **1.4.2 SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION**

The secondary questions that followed from the primary research questions were:

- What are the roles of curriculum advisors within the curriculum monitoring system in the Vhembe-West District?
- What challenges do curriculum advisors face when monitoring the implementation of curricula in schools?

## **1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The primary and secondary objectives aligned with the research questions.

### **1.5.1 PRIMARY OBJECTIVE**

The primary objective was to explore and describe the challenges for curriculum advisors to monitor the implementation of curricula in the Vhembe-West District, Limpopo Province.

### **1.5.2 SECONDARY OBJECTIVE**

The secondary objectives are:

- To determine the roles of curriculum advisors within the monitoring system.
- To explore and describe the challenges that academic advisors face when monitoring curriculum implementation in schools in the Vhembe-West District, Limpopo Province.

## **1.6 THE BENEFITS OF THE STUDY**

This study will assist the Department of Education to gain an understanding of the monitoring challenges faced by curriculum advisors. It will further assist the Vhembe-West District as well as policymakers in terms of where and how resources can be adequately allocated. It will

enable them to find ways of supporting the curriculum section and implementation in schools with both infrastructure and proper resource allocation. Cost-effective monitoring of the system will ensure better and improved performance in current strategies. It may also assist to gain understanding of governance and sustainability.

## **1.7 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

The Limpopo Province is situated in the top northern region of South Africa. The Vhembe District is approximately 100kms north of Polokwane and close to the Beitbridge Border. Vhembe consists of rural villages and semi-urban suburbs. Vhembe consists of 144 schools with 49 curriculum advisors. The schools comprise farm schools with very few teachers, to schools in townships and villages where some schools have dilapidated buildings and are understaffed. The number of workshops held each year depends on the training schedule received from the district for that year; however, there are four major workshops held at the beginning of each term to prepare for the quarter ahead.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative, explorative, descriptive, and contextual design (Creswell, 2018:215) was followed. A qualitative design was appropriate to obtain a deeper insight into the opinions of curriculum advisors and other significant role-players by means of conversation (Creswell, 2018:65). Gaining insight into the opinions of participants and the meaning they attach to it is best investigated from a qualitative perspective. Furthermore, the design enabled the researcher to obtain input from participants directly in verbal format (Creswell, 2018:113). Finally, the researcher focused only on primary, public schools in the Vhembe-West District in the Limpopo Province, and therefore this research was also contextual.

### **1.8.1 DATA GATHERING**

The researcher obtained ethics approval from the University (ethics number:0000-0002-6805-561X). Furthermore, the researcher also applied and obtained approval from the Limpopo provincial Department of Education research ethics committee (Addendum 1). The participants were provided with the informed consent document for them to peruse before agreeing to take part in the study (Creswell, 2018:169) (Addendum 2). In this research study, the researcher utilised semi-structured interviews to gather data. The interview times were scheduled with the curriculum advisors to be conducted at a time most convenient for the participants. The researchers schedule appointments with the curriculum advisors and due to the risks and limitations due to the lockdown during COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were not conducted face-to-face, but rather computer-aided, using either ZOOM or Microsoft Teams,



depending on the most accessible virtual platform for the participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher with the participants (Jamshed, 2014:87).

The interview schedule was prepared by the researcher beforehand (see Addendum 3), and the semi-structured questions were sent out via email to the curriculum advisors. The following questions were asked:

- How many years have you been working in your current district?
- How long have you been working in your current position?
- Please describe your current position.
- Has the Department of Education provided you with a subsidised vehicle as stipulated in your contract?
- How many times have you applied for said vehicle and how do you conduct your monitoring without government transportation?
- Has the Department of Education provided you with a laptop, printer and overhead projector used to conduct teacher workshops?
- Has the Department of Education provided you with a cell phone on a government contract?
- Have you been provided with your personalised government email address contract?
- On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is relatively easy and 10 is difficult, how do you find the implementation of curricula with the resources at your disposal from the Department of Education? Please provide an answer and explain the reason for your answer.
- Please feel free to provide any suggestions you may have for the Department of Education towards effective curriculum implementation by curriculum advisors.

These questions were asked to gain more insight into the experiences of the participants. The interviews were recorded and then anonymously transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and the researcher experienced that the participants were eager to participate and were able to respond to all the questions.

### **1.8.2 DATA COLLECTION**

This study made use of thematic analysis (Creswell, 2018:333) to analyse the transcribed interviews. There are six steps to collecting data through the thematic method, as summarised in Table 1 hereafter:

**Table 1: Creswell's (2018:254) steps of data analysis**

| Steps                                                | Strategies to enhance trustworthiness                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Step 1</b><br>Organise and prepare the study data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transcribed interviews.</li><li>• Optically scanned material.</li><li>• Typed field notes.</li><li>• Arranged the data into different types.</li></ul>                                                                                                          |
| <b>Step 2</b><br>Read through the study data         | Obtained an overall sense of the study information and reflected on its complete meaning by reviewing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What common ideas came from participants?</li><li>• What the character of the ideas was.</li><li>• The general view of the data.</li></ul> |
| <b>Step 3</b><br>Coding of the data                  | The process of organising data into parts of text before bringing meaning to information. This entailed taking text data and segmenting the sentences into categories and labelling these categories with a term.                                                                                       |
| <b>Step 4</b><br>Describe the themes for analysis    | Description involved a comprehensive version of information about people, places, or events in a setting.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Step 5</b><br>Present themes                      | This was a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Step 6</b><br>Interpret data                      | Researcher's interpretation of the meaning of the study data.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

Firstly, familiarisation with the content is needed, followed by coding. This involves highlighting sections of the work that stand out and creating codes for them. Thirdly, the research generated themes come from the codes that were generated in the previous step. Then, the researcher reviewed the themes to ensure their accuracy to the study and that they represent the data accurately. Thereafter, the themes were named and defined. This helped the researcher explain what each theme represents as well as providing a better understanding of the data. The themes were lastly transcribed, which included an introduction to the purposes of establishing the research question together with the aims of the study and the approach taken.

## 1.9 RIGOUR

Trustworthiness is a word coined by Guba and Lincoln (1985), who suggested several techniques to address credibility, including activities such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, data collection triangulation, and researcher triangulation (Nowell & Norris, 2017:6). The strategies implemented to enhance the trustworthiness of this study are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Strategies to enhance trustworthiness in this research, adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1985)**

| <b>Criteria for trustworthiness</b>                                                                                                                                                | <b>Strategies to enhance trustworthiness</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Credibility:</b> This amounts to how trustworthy or reliable a source is. The researcher used verified scientific sources.                                                      | Prolonged engagement: Allows the researcher to gain in-depth data from the participants. Allows for in-depth answers to the research questions.                                                                                                            |
| <b>Transferability:</b> This refers to how the results or rather findings of the research can be generalised. The researcher described the results that were crucial to the study. | Persistent observation: Ensured dependability of the data gathered from the study.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Conformability:</b> How objective the researcher was during both data collection and analysis. Conformability is also seen as a quality assurance method.                       | Peer debriefing: The researcher discussed matters pertaining to the research such as data analysis and collection as well as the research methodology with a person not involved in the research study, but who has knowledge of the research method used. |
| <b>Dependability:</b> This helps establish whether the research findings are repeatable; the research findings need to be consistent with the raw data collected.                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

## 1.10 LITERATURE REVIEW

The document titled 'Perspectives in Education' (Long, 2014:32) investigates whether the current assessment method is conducive and supports instruction. Long furthermore investigates whether the method of instruction does not propose an instrument model that contains a monitoring component dealing directly with the curriculum advisory department. The 2017 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report (OECD) ranks the South African Education system second last on the international league table.

According to a 2018 report in the Business Insider (Daniel, 2020:8), South Africa ranked 28<sup>th</sup> in maths scores and 24<sup>th</sup> in science against other OECD countries. These rankings do not match the millions of rands that are poured into the education budget each financial year. South Africa spends more on education than most European Union countries, and the European Cambridge syllabus far surpasses CAPS in both education and value for money. According to Laframboise in the Borgen Project (2006:5), the South African government spends a higher percentage of the country's overall gross domestic product (GDP) than most

countries in the EU. South Africa spends an estimated 6.4%, whereas most EU countries spend 4.8% of their overall GDP (Laframposie, 2019:2). Surprisingly, South African schools remain under-resourced and poorly staffed regardless of the financial muscle poured into them (Laframposie, 2019:2). It is evident from these statistics that there is a recurring trend in South Africa, year after year, where those in charge of the education system fail to elevate the education system to have South Africa compete with other countries even though they have the budget to do so (Mohamed, 2020:3).

According to the government's statistics, the 2013 country report stated that a significant problem in civil services is both a lack of transparency, as well as accountability. Mouton, Louw and Strydom (2013:13) agree with the above statement in Critical Challenges of the South African School System that there is indeed a lack of accountability in the education system.

Du Plessis (2013:03) shares a view like that of Smith and Gillespie (2007:216-218), who state that professional development can be useful if it is designed to be of longer duration. Longer-term professional development permits more time for teachers to learn about their practice, mainly if it includes follow-up training, focus on subject-matter knowledge, and consists of a strong emphasis on analysis and reflection, rather than just demonstrating techniques. This is where the curriculum advisor section is applicable. Curriculum advisors are an integral part of ensuring that teachers are trained on the curriculum, including any changes made to it. This also includes follow-up monitoring and support in the classroom (Government Gazette, 2016:2-55). The next section will define and expand on some of the essential concepts used in the study.

### **Curriculum advisor**

A curriculum advisor is a facilitator specialising mostly in a specific subject, employed by the district to assist schools in developing and implementing programmes. This officer deals with clarifying, monitoring, and implementing policies and rendering support and development to educators who fall under his or her area of responsibility (SADTU, 2017:16). Curriculum advisors are fieldworkers, as their responsibilities include school visits for curriculum monitoring, organising, and conducting teacher development workshops, facilitation of cluster meetings and doing cluster and circuit moderation. The immediate supervisors of curriculum advisors are deputy chief education specialists (DCES) (SADTU, 2017:16).

## **Curriculum implementation**

A curriculum is a set of learning activities designed by the education system for learners to achieve desired goals and objectives. The curriculum in our country is a 'scripted curriculum'. This simply means that the curriculum is in a prescriptive form and pre-packed. This is done so that the curriculum can be quality assured or improved across educational systems. Implementation refers to a process where an agreed planned activity, decision or policy is put into action. Curriculum implementation can therefore be described as a process to help learners to acquire relevant knowledge. Social, economic, and other factors can have a serious impact on curriculum implementation (Mandukwini, 2016:5).

## **Monitoring**

Monitoring refers to an activity whereby a monitor observes, interviews, and checks the progress and quality of a project over a period. This process may be conducted on daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual basis (draft collective agreement nr X of 2016). Monitoring is done to guide the management decision and it focuses on processes such as when and where activities occur, who delivers them and how many people or organisations are monitored (National Research Council, 2007:178).

## **Resources**

A resource is a source or supply from which a benefit is produced and that has some utility. Resources can broadly be classified upon their availability. There are many types of resources, namely assets such as cars, buildings, laptops, printers, cell phones, money, human resources, and services, such as training, teaching, and monitoring. In this study, the researcher focused on the resources that curriculum advisors need to discharge their duties effectively and efficiently. Curriculum advisors are not office-based officials (Government Gazette, 2016:2-55).

## **1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In this study, the researcher applied for ethics clearance from the North-West University (NWU) and Silverman's (2010) ethical goals were applied. Each participant also completed a voluntary informed consent form (refer to addendum 2). All Covid-19 protocols as stipulated by the government and the NWU have been strictly adhered to.

**Beneficence and non-maleficence** signify the maximising of benefit and the minimising of harm and require that the risks of harm posed by the research must be reasonable considering anticipated benefits (North-West University [NWU], 2018:1).

**Distributive justice (equality)** is a fair balance of risks and benefits among all role-players involved in the research. It should reflect the principle of equality, with no segment of the population being unduly burdened by harms of research or denied the benefits of knowledge derived from it (NWU, 2018:1).

**Respect (dignity and autonomy)** for research participants, signifying the opportunity for self-determination about their choices. It recognises the importance of dignity, well-being, and safety interests of participants, as well as autonomy (NWU, 2018:1).

## **1.12 THE LAYOUT OF THE STUDY**

The study is presented in the following chapters:

Chapter 1 has provided the overall rationale and background of the study, problem statement, aims and objectives, and has also provided the research methodology that will be employed.

Chapter 2 develops the understanding of the essence of monitoring through a literature review. This chapter also explains the nature of resources through a literature review.

Chapter 3 includes the article that has been send to the South African Journal of Education for review.

Chapter 4 concludes the study, presents an evaluation, and formulates limitations and makes recommendations on how the education system should manage the effect of monitoring and support given to curriculum advisors while monitoring and supporting schools.

## **1.13 SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the background of the study as well as the research problems, objectives of the study, and the research methods that were used to conduct the study. The background of the study covered where the problems in the curriculum advisory section stem from, and thereafter research questions were formulated. Chapter 2 will expand on the literature applicable to the study.

## **2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 1, the background of the study, problem statement and objectives, and research methodology of the study, were discussed. This chapter covers the literature that was dealt with in this study. An array of literature was reviewed to assist with answering the primary and secondary research questions. Creswell (2018:75) states that the literature review assists the researcher in determining whether the topic is worth studying. The literature review process may even expose the fact that there might not be enough literature on a certain topic, which then, firstly, shows the need for the research study to be conducted as it will provide much insight into a topic not widely covered; secondly, it may prove difficult for the research to realise because there will be no departure point in terms of literature.

### **2.2. REALISATION OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

The researcher utilised Google Scholar as dominant search engine and the search strategy was based on the following keywords: Monitoring, curriculum advisor, Vhembe-West District Limpopo and curriculum monitoring in South Africa, to name a few. Literature included scientific and non-scientific sources as well as publications on qualitative research methodology.

The researcher also analysed relevant policy documents from the Department of Education regarding curriculum advisors and curriculum implementation. Once all the literature had been gathered, the researcher went through the process of narrowing the literature down to literature that had specific relation to this research topic. The researcher selected literature that dealt with not only monitoring of curriculum implementation in South Africa, but also that of Limpopo and specifically the Vhembe District.

### **2.2 THE ROLE OF CURRICULUM ADVISORS**

Addressing the roles and functions of the curriculum advisors on whom the study is based, is the point of departure in this literature review. According to the Policy on

Organisational Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts (notice 180 of 2012) (Department of Basic Education, 2012:9), the South African National Department of Education proposes that the role of the curriculum advisors is to assist principals and teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their institution (Smith, 2018:83). Usually, advisors work from professional development centres, but, inevitably, spend a great deal of time travelling to schools and training centres in the local area (Bredeson, 2000:394). The district office of the curriculum advisors assists in developing structures for curriculum implementation and work with school principals to create an environment that is conducive to the improvement of learner achievement and learning (Department of Basic Education, 2018:8).

The roles of curriculum advisors are as follows (Department of basic education, 2012:47):

- Monitor and support the implementation of the curriculum in the relevant subject.
- Provide and/or source relevant teaching and learning material through research.
- Improve performance in the subject.
- Ensure that teachers have all the requisites curriculum and assessment documents for the subject.
- Support teachers in effectively delivering the curriculum in mainstream and special schools.
- Support teachers in the development and review of subject improvement plans.
- Support teachers in strengthening their content knowledge.
- Moderate school-based assessment, including annual national assessments.
- Analyse assessment results and plan interventions; and
- Support teachers in organising relevant/related co-curricular activities.

### **2.3 MONITORING OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS**

Firstly, monitoring of curriculum implementation should be defined within an educational context (Bediako, 2019:14). Miller (2020:2) defines monitoring of



curriculum implementation as seeing if you are doing what you said you would do and done in a systematic approach to overseeing planning, learning, and teaching.

When monitoring and evaluation of curriculum implementation take place, the curriculum advisors assess the teachers' work. This consists of cycle tests, examinations, and projects to see whether the required learner outcomes have been met and whether the teachers are implementing the curriculum correctly, in a manner that the students understand and can satisfy the learning outcomes (OECD, 2013:505). The monitoring phase during the assessment of curriculum implementation is essential. Without regular monitoring of curriculum implementation and curriculum changes (which is external to the school administration itself), the DoE and circuits in the district (Department of Basic Education, 2013:29) would only find out when students sit for their final exams in the fourth term that learning outcomes were not met and as a result several students on the bell curve cannot move forward into the following grade (National Research Council, 2001:222). Monitoring and evaluation of schools regarding curriculum implementation and curriculum changes help in providing a consolidated source of information showing the progress of the school (Miller, 2020:3).

Monitoring of curriculum implementation also assists with planning, when assessments have been conducted and conclusions and reports drawn; then a way forward can be mapped out (National Research Council, 2016:166). The progress of one school can be compared to another school in the same district, or even the same province. Curriculum implementation assists with three (3) important aspects of the education system, which will be discussed hereafter, namely planning, accountability and performance.

### **2.3.1 PLANNING**

The planning phase assists with setting annual targets and assessment plans (National Education Evaluation and Development Unit, 2018:3), the implementation of the curriculum as well as programmes on when to workshop teachers.

With the current COVID-19 climate, teaching time was lost due to the hard lockdown, which means that the work lost must be recovered during the new academic year (Bonai, 2020:635). The DoE has implemented amended teaching plans with a revised curriculum where certain topics are shaved off from the curriculum to allow for time to not only catch up on the work that was missed but also cover the relevant work for the current academic year. All this is implemented in the planning phase (Circular S13 of 2020).

### **2.3.2 ACCOUNTABILITY**

This part of the planning phase allows holding the relevant parties accountable, e.g. holding teachers accountable for completing as well as executing the curriculum programmed in the desired manner (Department of Education, 2008:12). There is also a level of accountability that is necessary for the curriculum advisors themselves in terms of ensuring that they, too, monitor the re-opening of schools, conduct school visits, and assist teachers via workshops and other material or assistance they may need from curriculum advisors (Mavuso, 2013:58).

### **2.3.3 PERFORMANCE**

This area of the monitoring phase allows for curriculum advisors to be effective in the implementation of the curriculum (Moddley, 2013:47) as well as their responsibility to ensure that teachers are following the curriculum and have the necessary resources that are at the curriculum advisor's disposal (Tshiredo, 2013:40). Performance can be negatively affected (Franklin & McLaren, 2015:152) due to the curriculum advisors not being able to implement the current curriculum changes or workshop the teachers due to a lack of resources (Tshiredo, 2013:3) because of under budgeting by or mismanagement of resources by the DoE.

## **2.4. CHALLENGES CURRICULUM ADVISORS FACE WHEN MONITORING CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS**

Like many government departments in South Africa, under-resourcing and mismanagement of state funds are far too common (Beukes, 2017:3). A lack of resources, be it financial or infrastructural, is detrimental, especially in the foundation phase (West and Meier, 2020:10). A lack of resources has a ripple effect on the entire

education system, and this is one of the biggest challenges faced by curriculum advisors when monitoring and supporting schools (Mnatwana, 2014:81).

Seeing that curriculum advisors are not office-bound officials, they first and foremost need transportation to move from their operational base to the various schools in their allocated districts (Mazibuko, 2007:15). Some curriculum advisors utilise their vehicles and are then reimbursed by the Department of Education (Seshoka, 2016:84). Often, the reimbursement is insufficient to cover the full maintenance of a motor vehicle, and this can lead to demotivation and the neglecting of schools that are on the outskirts of their relevant districts (Seshoka, 2016:84).

The dilapidated classrooms with little to no textbooks also make the task difficult for curriculum advisors, as it does for the teachers and students alike (Tshiredo, 2013:94). Curriculum advisors cannot be expected to conduct workshops with teachers or go to the schools to assess the teacher's files and curriculum implementation with either no textbooks to work from or outdated textbooks (Tshiredo, 2013:21). Resources within the Department of Education are sometimes stretched so thin that the hiring of new curriculum advisors is sometimes delayed (Rasebotsa, 2017:78).

The Department of Education is then faced with having to put curriculum advisors in a situation where they must support and monitor subjects, which they are not qualified or suitable to monitor (Mbanjwa, 2014:45). Curriculum advisors are usually put in a situation where they must learn 'on the job' (Mavuso, 2013:42).

## **2.5. EXTENT OF ADAPTATION TO THE CURRICULUM CHALLENGES FACED BY CURRICULUM ADVISORS**

Curriculum advisors are faced with a mirage of daily problems (Smith, 2018:3). There is a constant stream of challenges dealing with curriculum implementation (Mandukwini, 2016:38).

When changes to the teaching plan are implemented, as in the case of the current global pandemic (Barron, 2021:10), there are certain changes that must be made to the curriculum because of the teaching time that was lost (Maimela, 2020:10).

Curriculum advisors need to work quickly yet efficiently to implement these changes and workshop the teachers on how to tackle the changes that have been implemented (Department of Education, 2020:5).

The current annual teaching plan (ATP) for 2020 made provision to remove some of the content without detrimentally affecting the quality of education received (Department of Education, 2020:7). In 2021, the ATPs that were introduced are recovery ATPs to make provision for the teaching time that was lost. These will be effective for the next three years as it has been estimated that it will take around three years for the education system to recover from the teaching time lost (Hoadley, 2020:9).

A problem that has been widely noted among curriculum advisors themselves in the Vhembe-West District is that they are having trouble conducting these workshops virtually due to a lack of laptops. This is currently a major problem because the whole world has turned to virtual means of doing things and as it stands, the education system should adapt and follow suit. The budget should, especially now, make means for each curriculum advisor to have a laptop so that they can host workshops remotely and in line with the COVID-19 regulations. The above has been experienced by the researcher in the line of duty as a curriculum advisor in the Vhembe-West District. Resource allocation remains one of the biggest problems faced by curriculum advisors when monitoring and supporting schools, especially in the Vhembe-West District, as it is an already impoverished and rural district (Tshidaho, 2018:4). This assists the business with tax write-offs and the curriculum advisors with the material they need to effectively monitor and support schools (Musviba, 2014:3).

## **2.6. CHALLENGES IN THE CURRICULUM**

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) came into being in 2004 to improve the quality of the curriculum implemented in South African public schools (Du Plessis & Marais, 2011:11). The Ministerial Review Committee chaired by Linda Chisholm, confirmed that the OBE curriculum had weaknesses that made it difficult for educators to implement (Chisholm, 2005:3). According to Chisholm (2000:18:21), the weaknesses ranged from a skewed curriculum structure, lack of alignment between

curriculum and assessment, low quality of learning and teaching support materials, time frames that were unmanageable and unrealistic, inadequate teacher orientation and training to limited transfer of learning into classroom practice (Seleso, 2017:81).

The implementation of the NCS took place on an unequal basis between the previously advantaged schools and previously disadvantaged schools (Badugela, 2012:27). Strides to remedy this situation have not been successful, especially in rural parts of the country such as the Vhembe-West District (Tshidaho, 2018:15)

Another challenging factor of the NCS is that educators were expected to select appropriate learning content and develop a curriculum (Badugela, 2012:10). The reality was ignored that some teachers did not have the skills, the resources, or the time to develop learning content (Sethusa, 2012:30). Curriculum development is a specialised activity and there is a need to inform educators about what they should be teaching in each learning programme in each grade (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016:11). What makes the role of the curriculum advisors so vital in the education system especially, is the creation and implementation of the curriculum.

## **2.7 CURRICULUM ADVISOR SUPERVISION**

Curriculum advisors work under a circuit manager (Mthembu, 2014:22) who is meant to handle most of the administrative problems they encounter. However, the methods used when making these appointments mean that a district is sometimes stuck with an inefficient circuit manager who is not very helpful towards the problems encountered by curriculum advisors (Mthiyane, 2014:4).

## **2.8 CLASS VISITS AND ASSESSING TEACHER FILES**

Curriculum advisors monitor and support teaching in schools. One way this is done is by assessing teacher files and sometimes doing class visits. These class visits are a contentious issue as the teacher's unions did not want curriculum advisors conducting class visits.

Curriculum advisors request files from the teachers, which can be done by prior arrangement or a surprise visit. The purpose of the latter is to ensure that teachers

remain up to date with their work and that the portfolios with the learners' work are to allow the curriculum advisors to monitor not only the quality of work done but the quantity as well. The curriculum advisors check both formal and informal tasks as well as PAT (practical assessment tasks). The assessment of files allows for the curriculum advisors to know which schools or teachers are behind and need extra support and which ones are excelling. This also allows the curriculum advisors to be able to spread out their already thin resources accordingly. The curriculum advisors stated that it is impossible to check every learner's book and they often request a few books from the teachers to paint a picture of what is happening in the classroom. The disadvantage of this is that teachers can select the books of their top students and as a result this does not provide an accurate representation of what is taking place in the classroom, thereby leaving the curriculum advisors unable to provide adequate support where it is sometimes most needed.

## **2.9 EXPERIENCES OF CURRICULUM ADVISORS WHEN MONITORING AND SUPPORTING SCHOOLS**

Due to the resource allocation challenge, the proper supporting and monitoring of schools can sometimes be challenging. As discussed in the previous chapters, the general pattern from the data collected showed that the curriculum advisors selected had either never been successful in their application for a subsidised vehicle or had not received since 2014. The data collected also showed that the curriculum advisors had each applied for a subsidised vehicle on a minimum of three or more occasions.

The application process is tedious and takes time away from curriculum advisors' monitoring and supporting of schools. The general feeling seems to be that applying for a vehicle is a futile task as there is already the feeling that said applications will either not be processed or there will be countless requests from the department to provide the same supporting documents time and time again.

A few curriculum advisors indicated that the model of vehicles they had applied for even changed while their applications were still being processed. When asked detail about the support they receive from the Department of Education, curriculum advisor nr 5 had this to say: *"There is no suitable accommodation for the type of work I do; office space is limited."* It is evident from the statement above that curriculum advisors

are faced with a variety of challenges on a day-to-day basis. A recurring theme that occurred while studying the data collected from the questionnaires was that of office space – the need for curriculum advisors to have office space as they have no space in which they can handle their administrative tasks. When asked to provide suggestions on how the department could assist curriculum advisors, curriculum advisor nr 2 stated that curriculum delivery could improve if *“office accommodation and availability of subsidised vehicles were provided upon appointment”*.

The responses above illustrate the themes that occurred most when studying the collected data. It is evident from the information above that the curriculum advisors are faced with long-term challenges and there seems to be no solution implementation in sight. These challenges hinder their effectiveness when working on the ground with teachers conducting curriculum implementation.

## **2.10 CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

The study found that the curriculum advisors are of the feeling that changes made to the curriculum are often not communicated well enough and as a result are difficult to train teachers on. This affects curriculum implementation in the classroom, which curriculum advisors see when they monitor and support schools.

This can be seen because of workshops that are not well executed for curriculum advisors. At the time of writing this chapter, the department is at the stage of introducing robotics and coding to the curriculum. Due to COVID regulations, the workshops for curriculum advisors in which they are trained on robotics and coding are held virtually. There are often network issues meaning teaching time is lost.

There is also the problem of data. As stated, curriculum advisors are provided with cell phones on a government contract, and these data bundles run out before the workshop has been completed, which means that the curriculum advisors are now not able to finish the workshop and cannot be fully taught robotics and coding. The results of this will be evident when curriculum advisors must host their workshops and implement what they have learned with the teachers. The coding and robotics workshops are also very poorly planned, and some curriculum advisors were only

notified of the workshop a day or two before its commencement, meaning they could not continue with the school visits they had planned for that week.

The time spent trying to get everyone connected to the workshop and registered took the whole morning, meaning that the first day of the workshop was not a good use of time. Curriculum advisors running out of data bundles also means that they have learned a fraction of the work, which also places a huge burden on curriculum implementation. These changes to the curriculum come at a vital time because of the fourth industrial revolution as well as COVID-19.

The world is moving towards a more technical way of operation and it is a pity that learners will not receive a proper implementation of the coding and robotics because it has been faulty from its implementation and the curriculum advisory level. The lack of resources from which to operate is evident now more than ever during the pandemic.

## **2.11 CURRICULUM ADVISOR DEVELOPMENT**

Currently, the Department does not offer curriculum advisor development in their career fields. Curriculum advisors are required to fill in PMDS reports and are asked what kind of development they would like offered to them. Nothing fruitful ever comes from these PMDS reports.

The PMDS reports also offer curriculum advisors with performance-based initiatives that are to be signed off by the circuit managers. If one does not get along with their circuit manager, they are given fewer performance bonuses than the rest of their peers and there is no method of verification used to remedy this situation. When asked about this situation, curriculum advisor nr 4 confirmed that *“we often compile reports, and they just sit on the circuit manager’s desk without being processed.”* The statement above by curriculum advisor nr 4 clearly illustrates the job dissatisfaction on the end of the curriculum advisor.

It is important that curriculum advisors are offered methods to better their skills, and not just poorly planned workshops so that they too can offer better support to teachers in terms of curriculum implementation and development. The world is constantly



evolving and, with it, so does the curriculum. Curriculum advisors need to be better prepared to face the changes that are constantly taking place and assist teachers so that they too can better assist learners in the classroom.

## **2.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has presented a literature review that describes the challenges as well as the role of the curriculum advisors regarding the execution of their duties. It has demonstrated that curriculum advisors encountered various obstacles while implementing the National Curriculum Statement, which included limited resources, inadequate instructional leadership, poor monitoring and support, financial constraints, and poor change management skills (Badugela, 2012:38). This chapter has also investigated who supervises the work done by curriculum advisors as well as different policy documents put in place to assist curriculum advisors to execute their duties.

The Department of Education was expected to ensure that there would be curriculum alignment and assessment (Sebate, 2011:4); there would be enough classrooms, monitoring, and support; curriculum activities would be learner-paced; and there would be enough money so that the curriculum could be implemented without any difficulty. Chapter 3 will include the article.

## **CHAPTER 3: ARTICLE**

This chapter provides the full article that was sent to the South African Journal of Education. It also includes the article abstract and reference list used for the article.

### **ABSTRACT**

Monitoring and supporting of teachers in the classroom, as well as the implementation of curriculum changes pose a problem in South Africa. This is due to an array of challenges such as a lack of resources, communication barriers within the Department of Education as well as a lack of proper infrastructure.

This study investigated the challenges faced by curriculum advisors in the Vhembe-West District and provided some insight into some of the curriculum advisors' daily challenges. The primary and secondary research questions form the basis of this study and allowed for the research questions to form a path leading to the themes. Data was collected by means of a literature review and semi-structured interviews. The findings of this data were presented in the study below.

The data was grouped and presented as 5 different themes with the aim of highlighting the challenges as well as providing recommendations to the challenges faced. The data revealed that curriculum advisors receive minimal support from their superiors and that the resources at their disposal prove minimal. The data also revealed operational challenges encountered by curriculum advisors which include but are not limited to things such as access to subsidised vehicles and material needed to conduct teacher training workshops.

This study highlights the strain the lack of resources/infrastructure and or effective management places on proper curriculum implementation. The data further proposed recommendations for future research as well as for the Department of Education to consider implementing in the curriculum advisory section at the Vhembe-West district.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The South African education system, under apartheid, was divided into four education departments that offered different curricula along racial lines (Fiske, 2005:5). There were different curricula for black, coloured, Indian, and white students. Since the democratic government took over in 1994, it restructured – among other things – the Department of Education (Mzangwa, 2019:11). Today, there are nine provincial Departments of Education and one national department (Provincial Government of South Africa, 2021). This implies that the public education system should be similar across all of South Africa.

According to the School Education Act (Nr 84 of 1996), the education system in South Africa aims to “*provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools; and to provide for matters connected therewith*” (School Education Act, Nr 84 of 1996). Furthermore, the roles and functions of curriculum advisors are declared in the draft Collective Agreement (nr 4 of 2016) as part of the job description for office-based educators (South African Democratic Teachers Union [SADTU], 2017:2-9) where it is indicated that curriculum advisors are required to have resources to best allow them to execute their duties. The agreement also states that curriculum advisors’ functions are to: interpret, monitor and implement policies in schools, and render support and development to educators who fall under their area of responsibility.

Based on the above information, curriculum advisors are responsible for curriculum implementation in the form of teacher training workshops (School Education Act, 84 of 1996). Although policy is clear, there are ongoing challenges that curriculum advisors must face on a daily basis which have not yet been resolved since the first implementation of the stated policy by unions in 2017.

The researchers are aiming to address and investigate the challenges pertaining to curriculum advisors within the context of the Vhembe-West District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The Limpopo Province can be described as a semi-rural and underdeveloped province (Elsenburg, 2005:1) and is situated in the top northern region of South Africa. The Vhembe District is approximately 100km north of Polokwane and close to the Beitbridge border. Vhembe consists of rural villages and semi-urban suburbs with 144 schools and 49 curriculum advisors. The schools comprise farm schools with very few teachers, to schools in townships and villages where some schools have dilapidated buildings and are understaffed.

The public schooling education system reform also meant that the old system content, which was racially divided and unequal, was replaced with outcome-based education (OBE), which

failed, and thereafter was amended and replaced by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and finally by the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Gumede, 2016:69). In 2009, Umalusi, the education regulatory board, released a paper on whether the continuous assessment (CASS) method done at the end of each quarter to monitor progress in the classroom was worth keeping in the education system (Van der Berg, 2009:5). Umalusi oversees the quality assurance of examination results throughout all South Africa (Umalusi). To effect curriculum implementation and allow for easier monitoring of the implemented curriculum, the Department of Education formed the provincial, district and circuit offices optimally (Government Gazette, 2016:2-55). In the districts, curriculum sections were introduced (Department of Basic Education, 2002). Curriculum sections in the Department of Education deal with the development, support, and monitoring of educators (Department of Basic Education, 2019). Their responsibility is to train, implement, monitor, and support educators in the development of curricula. Curriculum advisors train educators quarterly in their clusters to prepare them for the quarter ahead. Furthermore, educators are informed, by means of circulars, about the dates of the workshops and the content to be trained on.

Du Plessis (2013:03) shares a view like that of Smith and Gillespie (2007:216-218), who state that professional development can be useful if it is designed to be of longer duration. Longer-term professional development permits more time for teachers to learn about their practice, mainly if it includes follow-up training, focus on subject-matter knowledge, and consists of a strong emphasis on analysis and reflection, rather than just demonstrating techniques. This is where the curriculum advisor section is applicable. Curriculum advisors are an integral part of ensuring that teachers are trained on the curriculum, including any changes made to it. This also includes follow-up monitoring and support in the classroom (Government Gazette, 2016:2-55). Curriculum advisors are employed officials of the Department of Education and their functions are to monitor and support the implementation of the curriculum in their relevant subjects (Government Gazette, 2016:2-55). They are qualified teachers and hold at least a BEd degree or the equivalent thereof. The role that curriculum advisors play in the optimal implementation and execution of an ever-changing curricula cannot be over-emphasised (Rasebotsa, 2017:19). These specialists require various resources to perform their duties in an efficient and effective way (Department of Basic Education, 2019). For example, they need proper facilities and other resources, including transport to and from schools in the district. It is argued that lack of resources may influence the quality of teaching and learning as well as motivation of curriculum specialists to perform their best at times. This could cripple the effectiveness of the education system. These setbacks make it difficult to attain the main goal, which is an education system that is worth its weight.

The district office of the curriculum advisors assists in developing structures for curriculum implementation and work with school principals to create an environment that is conducive to the improvement of learner achievement and learning (Department of Basic Education, 2018:8).

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Like many government departments in South Africa, under-resourcing and mismanagement of state funds are far too common (Beukes, 2017:3). A lack of resources, be it financial or infrastructural, is detrimental, especially in the foundation phase (West and Meier, 2020:10). A lack of resources has a ripple effect on the entire education system, and this is one of the biggest challenges faced by curriculum advisors when monitoring and supporting schools (Mnatwana, 2014:81).

The dilapidated classrooms with little to no textbooks also make the task difficult for curriculum advisors, teachers and students alike (Lizer, 2013:94). Curriculum advisors cannot be expected to conduct workshops with teachers or go to the schools to assess the teacher's files and curriculum implementation with either no textbooks to work from or outdated textbooks (Lizer, 2013:21). Resources within the Department of Education are sometimes stretched so thin that the hiring of new curriculum advisors is sometimes delayed (Rasebotsa, 2017:78).

The implementation of the education policy is monitored during school visits. Moderation of the term's work, which is known as CASS, is done to improve learning and carried out by curriculum advisors (Mbatha, 2016:16).

According to the Policy on the Organisation Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts, notice 180 of 2012 (Department of basic education, 2012:47), the roles of a curriculum advisors are as follows:

- monitor and support the implementation of the curriculum in the relevant subject.
- provide and/or source relevant teaching and learning material through research.
- improve performance in the subject.
- ensure that teachers have all the requisite curriculum and assessment documents for the subject.
- support teachers in effectively delivering the curriculum in mainstream and special schools.
- support teachers in the development and review of subject improvement plans.

- support teachers in strengthening their content knowledge.
- moderate school-based assessment, including Annual National Assessments.
- analyse assessment results and plan interventions; and
- support teachers in organising relevant/related co-curricular activities.

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Monitoring of curriculum implementation should be defined within an educational context (Bediako, 2019:14). Miller (2020:2) defines monitoring of curriculum implementation as seeing if you are doing what you said you would do and done in a systematic approach to overseeing planning, learning and teaching.

When monitoring and evaluation of curriculum implementation take place, the curriculum advisors assess the teachers' work. This consists of cycle tests, examinations, and projects to see whether the required learner outcomes have been met and whether the teachers are implementing the curriculum correctly, in a manner that the students understand and can satisfy the learning outcomes (OECD, 2013:505). The monitoring phase during the assessment of curriculum implementation is essential. Without regular monitoring of curriculum implementation and curriculum changes (which is external to the school administration itself), the DoE and circuits in the district (Department of Basic Education, 2013:29) would only find out when students sit for their final exams in the fourth term that learning outcomes were not met and as a result several students on the bell curve cannot move forward into the following grade (National Research Council, 2001:222). Monitoring and evaluation of schools regarding curriculum implementation and curriculum changes help in providing a consolidated source of information showing the progress of the school (Miller, 2020:3).

Monitoring of curriculum implementation also assists with planning, when assessments have been conducted and conclusions and reports drawn; then a way forward can be mapped out (National Research Council, 2016:166). The progress of one school can be compared to

another school in the same district, or even the same province. Curriculum implementation assists with three (3) important aspects of the education system, which will be discussed hereafter, namely planning, accountability and performance.

## **PLANNING**

The planning phase assists with setting annual targets and assessment plans (National Education Evaluation and Development Unit, 2018:3), the implementation of the curriculum as well as programmes on when to workshop teachers.

With the current COVID-19 climate, teaching time was lost due to the hard lockdown, which means that the work lost must be recovered during the new academic year (Bonal, 2020:635). The DoE has implemented amended teaching plans with a revised curriculum where certain topics are shaved off from the curriculum to allow for time to not only catch up on the work that was missed but also cover the relevant work for the current academic year. All this is implemented in the planning phase (Circular S13 of 2020).

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

This part of the planning phase allows holding the relevant parties accountable, e.g. holding teachers accountable for completing as well as executing the curriculum programmed in the desired manner (Department of Education, 2008:12). There is also a level of accountability that is necessary for the curriculum advisors themselves in terms of ensuring that they, too, monitor the re-opening of schools, conduct school visits, and assist teachers via workshops and other material or assistance they may need from curriculum advisors (Mavuso, 2013:58).

## **PERFORMANCE**

This area of the monitoring phase allows for curriculum advisors to be effective in the implementation of the curriculum (Moddley, 2013:47) as well as their responsibility to ensure that teachers are following the curriculum and have the necessary resources that are at the curriculum advisor's disposal (Lizer, 2013:40). Performance can be negatively affected (Franklin & McLaren, 2015:152) due to the curriculum advisors not being able to implement the current curriculum changes or workshop the teachers due to a lack of resources (Lizer, 2013:3) because of under budgeting by or mismanagement of resources by the DoE.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative, explorative, descriptive, and contextual design was followed. A qualitative design was appropriate to obtain a deeper insight into the opinions of curriculum advisors and other

significant role-players by means of conversation (Creswell, 2014:65). Furthermore, the design enabled the researcher to obtain input from participants directly in verbal format. Finally, the researchers focused on challenges that curriculum advisors face in primary, public schools in the Vhembe-West District in the Limpopo Province, and therefore this research was also contextual.

As a point of departure the interview questions were set and piloted to check the validity of the questions. The latter was then adjusted and consisted of 8 questions as indicated below:

- How many years have you been working as a curriculum advisor?
- How long have you been working in your current position?
- Has the Department of Education provided you with a subsidised vehicle as stipulated in your contract?
- How many times have you applied for said vehicle and how do you conduct your monitoring without government transportation?
- Has the Department of Education provided you with a laptop, printer and overhead projector used to conduct teacher workshops?
- Has the Department of Education provided you with a cell phone on a government contract?
- Have you been provided with your personalised government email address contract?
- Please feel free to provide any suggestions you may have for the Department of Education towards effective curriculum implementation by curriculum advisors.

The interview times were scheduled with the curriculum advisors to be conducted at a time most convenient for the participants. Due to the risks and limitations of the lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews were not conducted face-to-face, but rather computer-aided, using either ZOOM or Microsoft Teams, depending on the most accessible virtual platform for the participants. Semi-structured interviews were sent to the curriculum advisors via email and this was followed by the virtual interview process.

The population was 49 (N) curriculum advisors from the Vhembe-West District of which 12 (N) participated in this study. All-inclusive sampling of curriculum advisors was done based on the following inclusion criteria:

- Curriculum advisors appointed from 2003-2019.
- They had access to technology needed for the study.
- They were willing to participate in semi-structured interviews that were recorded.



- They participated using English as the preferred mode of instruction.
- All ethical considerations were honoured.

The biographical information of the participants is analysed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Biographical information of participants**

| Research participant number | Gender | Age | Number of years in service |
|-----------------------------|--------|-----|----------------------------|
| 1                           | Male   | 60  | 14 years                   |
| 2                           | Male   | 57  | 10 years                   |
| 3                           | Male   | 61  | 13 years                   |
| 4                           | Female | 47  | 2 years                    |
| 5                           | Female | 50  | 2 years                    |
| 6                           | Male   | 41  | 6 years                    |
| 7                           | Male   | 45  | 8 years                    |
| 8                           | Female | 55  | 10 years                   |
| 9                           | Female | 40  | 2 years                    |
| 10                          | Male   | 47  | 5 years                    |
| 11                          | Male   | 52  | 11 years                   |
| 12                          | Female | 39  | 2 years                    |

This table indicates the following: Five (5) have less than 5 years' experience, 5 curriculum advisors have 10 years' or more work experience, and 2 of them have between 5-9 years' experience. The group is also presented by 7 males and 5 females which also indicates that there is a balance in work experience as well as the gender that they represent.

The interviews were recorded and then anonymously transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The Word documents were then imported into Atlas Ti8 and coded where themes, categories and sub-categories were identified.

**Table 2: The themes, categories and sub-categories that emanated from the semi-structured interviews**

| Themes                                | Categories                                                                                                                                  | Sub-categories                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Subsidised vehicles                | Long and tedious application process is a barrier for curriculum advisors                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum advisors must make use of their own vehicles because the applications are either rejected or not followed through</li> <li>• Administrative problems with the transport department, where vehicle models change while applicants are still waiting for approval</li> <li>• Applicants making use of own vehicles through scheme B but compensation for such is not enough to cover their transport costs</li> <li>• Newly appointed (+ 2yrs) curriculum advisors have not yet been granted the opportunity to apply for cars</li> </ul> |
|                                       | Applications are sometimes lost in the system and must be started afresh, delaying access to transport                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum advisors complained that they submit applications and nothing materialises from these applications</li> <li>• Indication that administration office of transport department does not run effectively</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2. Insufficient operational resources | <p>Resources are inadequate for the operational requirements</p> <p>Shortages impact negatively on curriculum advisors' ability to work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum advisors do not have laptops, which they need to produce presentations for workshops</li> <li>• Curriculum advisors only provided with a cell phone,</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|                                                      |                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                      |                                                                                    | which is not practical for attending and hosting virtual meetings as well as presenting workshops                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 3. Insufficient office space for curriculum advisors | Curriculum advisors are concerned about the lacking infrastructure                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum advisors acknowledge that they are not office-based, but require office space none the less to conduct their administrative duties such as compiling month-end reports.</li> <li>• Those with subsidised vehicles need to compile reports regarding the kilometres they have travelled that month to meet the threshold</li> <li>• Meetings are sometimes held between teachers and curriculum advisors at the circuit office and there is nowhere to host these meeting</li> </ul> |
| 4. Insufficient communication                        | Issues with communicating important administrative matters                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum advisors complained of being notified at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of workshops they are to host and meetings they should attend leaving them with no time to prepare</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 5. Insufficient management                           | Ineffective management might cause uncertainty among curriculum advisors           | Curriculum advisors do not know who they report to; there is confusion within the circuit on whether to report to the curriculum coordinator or the circuit manager                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                      | Curriculum advisors do not have a body that is taking their grievances to a higher | Circuit manager at Vhembe-west not stepping up to tackle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|  |                                   |                                                                    |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | authoritative<br>level/department | challenges experienced by<br>curriculum advisors at district level |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|

## FINDINGS

### THEME 1: SUBSIDISED VEHICLES

The Department of Education provides curriculum advisors with subsidised vehicles to allow the curriculum advisors to travel to the various schools in their districts. Seeing that curriculum advisors are not office-bound officials, they first and foremost need transportation to move from their operational base to the various schools in their allocated districts (Mazibuko, 2007:15). Curriculum advisors must go through an application process to be eligible for a subsidised vehicle.

The interviews revealed that curriculum advisors find the application process both long and tedious. Curriculum advisors also indicated that applications for these subsidised vehicles are often lost and cannot be traced. This then forces the curriculum advisors to start the application process afresh and highlights misadministration on the side of the transport department that has the task of processing said applications. As a result, it hinders curriculum advisors' effectiveness in the scope of their duties, because, not having access to transport means they are unable to travel, and consequently support, the various schools allocated to them.

The lack of appropriate transport results in curriculum advisors being requested to make use of their personal vehicles while waiting for their applications to be approved. Research also indicates that some curriculum advisors make use of their own vehicles because of the long and often unsuccessful attempt to obtain a subsidised vehicle from the Department of Education (Seshoka, 2016:84). Upon interviewing, these curriculum advisors highlighted that the compensation received for making use of one's own vehicle is not enough to cover their running costs and maintenance as also stated by Seshoka (2016:84). This can lead to demotivation and the neglecting of schools that are on the outskirts of their relevant districts.

The cohort who had less than 5 years' experience, also indicated that they were yet to be granted the opportunity to apply for subsidised vehicles, which stresses the backlog in the application process.

Participants indicated that their applications for a subsidised vehicle, had either never been successful or were not successful in their applications since 2014. The data collected also showed that the curriculum advisors had each applied for a subsidised vehicle on a minimum of three or more occasions. The general feeling seems to be that applying for a vehicle is a futile task as there is already the feeling that said applications will either not be processed or there will be countless requests from the department to provide the same supporting documents time and time again. A few curriculum advisors indicated that the model of vehicles they had applied for even changed while their applications were still being processed.

## **THEME 2: INSUFFICIENT OPERATIONAL RESOURCES**

Operational resources such as laptops, data projectors and basic stationery requirements, to name a few, are according to the curriculum advisors scarce in the Vhembe-West District.

The participants indicated that the resources at the curriculum advisors' disposal were inadequate for their operational requirements, meaning that, as a result, curriculum advisors are unable to conduct their duties both effectively and efficiently.

Another challenge that has been widely noted among curriculum advisors is that they are having trouble conducting these workshops virtually due to a lack of laptops. This is currently a major problem because the whole world has turned to virtual means of doing things and as it stands, the education system should adapt and follow suit. Owing to COVID-19 regulations and protocols, curriculum advisors are also tasked with hosting teacher training workshops virtually; all these tasks require the curriculum advisors to be in the possession of a laptop that is in proper working condition to assist them. The curriculum advisors did however acknowledge that the Department of Education had made strides to try and assist them in this regard by providing them with cell phones on capped government contracts. They also highlighted that these devices were not user friendly when it came to conducting virtual workshops and presentations. It was almost impossible to type up monthly reports and keep record of the teachers' files that they monitor on their cell phones.

The interviews also confirmed that a lack operational resources is a hindrance on effective curriculum implementation. According to the participants, conducting teacher training workshops as well as attending curriculum advisor workshops are made difficult by the lack of laptops as well as basic stationery requirements needed to fulfil these tasks (Lizer, 2013:3).

Resource allocation remains one of the biggest problems faced by curriculum advisors when monitoring and supporting schools, especially in the Vhembe-West District, as it is an already impoverished and rural district (Tshidaho, 2018:4).

### **THEME 3: INSUFFICIENT OFFICE SPACE**

Curriculum advisors are described as being “mobile” because their jobs require them to move around between the schools that they have been allocated to provide monitoring and support to teachers. Although true, all the participants highlighted that there is a need for designated office space to accommodate curriculum advisors in the Vhembe-West District. The participants indicated that they have no space to host meetings with either teachers or principals. The participants also indicated their job description requires them to provide the curriculum coordination with an assessment report at the end of each month indicating what they have done and observed at the schools they visited. The participants stressed the need for adequate office space from where to conduct all their administrative tasks.

When asked detail about the support they receive from the Department of Education, one said: *“There is no suitable accommodation for the type of work I do; office space is limited.”* It is evident from the statement above that curriculum advisors are faced with a variety of challenges on a day-to-day basis. Another interviewee replied that curriculum delivery could improve if *“office accommodation and availability of subsidised vehicles were provided upon appointment”*.

### **THEME 4: INSUFFICIENT COMMUNICATION**

Communication is important in any organisation; a proper flow of information ensures that all different levels of the organisation run smoothly. The participants indicated that they were concerned by the lack of proper communication of information within the Vhembe-West District. The participants also indicated that the poor communication hinders their effectiveness as it leaves them with no time to properly plan their schedules. The participants noted that they were almost always notified of important meetings and workshops at the last minute and were not granted any time to prepare for said meetings and workshops. They also noted that these workshops sometimes require from them to be away from home for an extended period and left the curriculum advisors having to organise childcare and other personal matters in a short space of time.

## **THEME 5: INSUFFICIENT MANAGMENT**

Curriculum advisors work under a circuit manager (Mthembu, 2014:22) who is meant to handle most of the administrative problems they encounter. However, the methods used when making these appointments mean that a district is sometimes stuck with an inefficient circuit manager who is not very helpful towards the problems encountered by curriculum advisors (Mthiyane, 2014:4). Although they report to the circuit manager on administrative challenges, their direct day-to-day reporting line is the curriculum coordinator.

The interviews emphasized revealed that there is confusion in the Vhembe-West circuit on who the curriculum advisors are who they have to report to directly. The participants indicated that according to policy, they must report to the curriculum coordinator, who then reports to the circuit manager. The interviewed participants revealed that they often find themselves in a position where they are reporting the same information to both the curriculum coordinator as well as the circuit manager. This often causes confusion and a flow of miscommunication. Therefore, it is necessary to find ways to assist curriculum advisors as well as to find necessary support when they encounter challenges.

This highlights two things: firstly, there is a lack of communication or understanding between the circuit manager and the curriculum coordinator; and secondly, proper procedures and protocol are not being adhered to in the Vhembe-West District. The result is that curriculum advisors find themselves torn about who their first right of recourse is when facing challenges that are out of their depth to handle. The implication will be that issues are resolved at a slower pace because the correct channels are not followed. The curriculum advisors also highlighted that once their grievances are brought to the correct person in the circuit, being the circuit manager, there is no resolution as the circuit manager often does not follow the escalation process by reporting these grievances to the district office if they are not able to be resolved at the circuit level.

Furthermore, once the curriculum advisors have finished monitoring schools and have compiled reports, these reports are given to the relevant circuit managers who then have the responsibility of assessing the problems raised and assisting the schools and teachers to resolve these problems.

Often, a report will be handed to the circuit manager, who will sometimes make no effort to conduct follow ups. This is problematic and a huge area for concern. There are also no repercussions when the educator has not done his or her job.

A similar problem arises when curriculum advisors write up reports on the school visits conducted, and provide solutions to the teachers' problems, and, on the next visit, the same problems are persisting. There is often no other method of recourse for curriculum advisors in these circumstances because they too have a heavy workload and most attempts at bringing these problems to the attention of their superiors are not successful.

The factors mentioned above hinder effective curriculum implementation and create an even heavier workload for the curriculum advisors. It also affects job satisfaction because they are faced with challenge after challenge, which do not seem to get resolved. There is little to no satisfaction when they do not see any progress in their work. Teachers are also not very fond of being monitored by curriculum advisors. One curriculum advisor confirmed this by stating *"You will go to a school and a teacher will go and hide in the bathroom until you are done looking at the other teachers' files"*. This is yet another aspect of school visits that is challenging for the curriculum advisors and the school principals are either not available to assist or not at school at all due to other commitments.

## **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **THEME 1: SUBSIDISED VEHICLES**

Every curriculum advisor consulted had a problem with the way the subsidised vehicle programme operates. It is also clear that being mobile is an inherent part of the job. Proper curriculum implementation is hindered by the lack of transportation facilities, as the curriculum advisors need to visit schools to assess curriculum implementation and offer support to teachers. The department needs to either relook the current system where they offer compensation for making use of one's own vehicle or rather improve the application process for subsidised vehicles. The waiting time should be fast tracked and once all the requirements have been met, the process should not take more than two months such as when one applies for vehicle finance from a banking institution. The Department needs to improve their system as it is standing in the way of effective curriculum implementation.

### **THEME 2: INSUFFICIENT OPERATIONAL RESOURCES**

To keep the curriculum on par, curriculum advisors need the proper technological equipment to effect proper curriculum implementation. Curriculum advisors mentioned that they need laptops, which are very important considering the current COVID-19 climate, as a great deal of work is conducted virtually. Curriculum advisors also stated that they need data projectors,



printers and scanners, as well as subject-specific equipment for the curriculum advisors. It is therefore recommended that a proper budget allocation is given to the district in order for them to get the necessary technology and stationery to perform their everyday duties.

### **THEME 3: INSUFFICIENT OFFICE SPACE**

Another challenge was the need of office space from which curriculum advisors could execute their administrative duties as it cannot be expected to compile reports and review teacher files with no space to work from. The Department should investigate the possibility of hiring additional office in order to provide curriculum advisors with office space.

### **THEME 4: INSUFFICIENT COMMUNICATION**

The analysis of the interviews did not reveal that curriculum advisors were experiencing communication problems from their managers. The interviews revealed that curriculum advisors in the Vhembe-West District are experiencing poor communication from those in charge of allocating tasks to them. The interviews furthermore revealed that important dates and information were not being communicated timeously to them.

Based on the interviews, it can be recommended that to improve curriculum implementation and the overall experiences of curriculum advisors, the Department needs to improve communication among its employees. The communication that comes right from the top should not contradict that received from people on the ground.

Circulars, if possible, should be sent out in advance so that curriculum advisors are given time to familiarise themselves with any new information or changes that are set to take place.

Workshops should also not be sprung on curriculum advisors a day or two before. This disorganises the entire schedule of the curriculum advisors and sets them back in terms of the schools they are meant to visit, reports they should compile and other administrative issues they may encounter.

### **THEME 5: INSUFFICIENT MANAGEMENT**

The study revealed that curriculum advisors in the Vhembe-West circuit are experiencing problems with the way management is handling them and the challenges they experience in the execution of their duties. To enhance the level of curriculum advisors, the curriculum advisors should be sent on regular training courses to ensure that they are kept up to date

with curriculum changes and development. Management should improve, even if it means that there should be provincial intervention.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study investigated the challenges faced by curriculum advisors in the Vhembe-West District and highlighted the areas that curriculum advisors feel are hindering curriculum implementation. The challenges faced at this district emphasized that management on all levels should go back to basics. It was seen in this study, that the problems that they are facing can be rectified by especially good management and appropriate budget implementation. The requests of curriculum advisors are so basic, that one cannot imagine the low morale these educators must feel when trying to execute at least some of their tasks. It is so disappointing, that a generation of 1996, with all the necessary democratic structures in place, still need to complain that there is a lack of basic resources, training and transportation for the cohort of educators who need to support teachers in rural and deep-rural areas.

Lastly, one cannot fail to observe reports and research done in 2013, that according to the government's statistics, the 2013 country report stated that a significant problem in civil services is both a lack of transparency, as well as accountability. Mouton, Louw and Strydom (2013:13) agree with the above statement in Critical Challenges of the South African School System that there is indeed a lack of accountability in the education system. Sadly, the situation has not changed much from the 2013 experiences.

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## **CHAPTER 4: EVALUATION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 3 provided the article that dealt with the challenges curriculum advisors face in the Vhembe district. This chapter will evaluate the findings, proposed recommendations to improve curriculum implementation and the overall working conditions of curriculum advisors. This chapter will also provide conclusions based on the research findings which are aligned with the research questions.

### **4.2 EVALUATION OF THE STUDY**

The study made use of the proposed methodology referred to in Chapter 1. Both the primary and secondary research questions were answered through the literature review and the semi-structured interviews. The primary and secondary objectives aligned with the research questions and were successfully met. The study met the primary objective, which was to explore and describe the challenges for curriculum advisors to monitor the implementation of curricula in the Vhembe-West District, Limpopo Province, and subsequently satisfied the secondary objectives.

To recap, the research questions were as follows:

- What are the challenges for curriculum advisors to curriculum implementation in the Vhembe-West District, Limpopo Province?
- What are the roles of curriculum advisors within the curriculum monitoring system in the Vhembe-West District?
- What challenges do curriculum advisors face when monitoring the implementation of curricula in schools?

This was then followed by analysing the themes:

## **THEME 1: SUBSIDISED VEHICLES**

- The aim of this question was to gather data on the subsidised vehicle application process for curriculum advisors. The data collected revealed that accessing subsidised vehicles is a challenge experienced by curriculum advisors. The application process is long and ineffective due to administrative challenges encountered during the process and as a result not having access to said subsidised vehicles places a hindrance on the mobility of curriculum advisors. Which as a result affects the curriculum advisor's effectiveness because they are mobile employees.
- Furthermore, the interviews revealed that newly appointed curriculum advisors are also finding themselves at a disadvantage because they have not yet been granted the opportunity to apply for subsidised vehicles. The scheme B process is also just as ineffective because the compensation offered for one making use of their own vehicle is not enough.

## **THEME 2: IMPACT OF OPERATIONAL RESOURCES SHORTAGES**

- The resources offered to curriculum advisors are with the aim of enhancing better curriculum implementation as well as the effective monitoring and supporting of schools. The curriculum advisors revealed that it is almost impossible to effectively monitor and support schools without the necessary resources. The curriculum advisors also revealed that it is also difficult to handle their administrative tasks without the proper resources.
- The lack of operational resources places a burden on curriculum implementation as well as the effectiveness of curriculum advisors.

## **THEME 3: INEFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM ADVISORS**

There is clearly confusion in the Vhembe-west district regarding the management of curriculum advisors. The interviews revealed that not knowing who to report to leaves curriculum advisors in a difficult position as they do not want to skip the chain of command so to speak.

This theme also highlighted the poor communication protocols and procedures that are in place in the Vhembe-West district. The interview participants revealed that as a result of the poor communication problems are revealed at a much slower pace.

#### **THEME 4: INSUFFICIENT OFFICE SPACE TO ACCOMMODATE CURRICULUM ADVISORS**

The issue of insufficient office space is a contentious one amongst curriculum advisors in the Vhembe-West district. The interviews revealed that the curriculum advisors in Vhembe-West share a hall in at the circuit office which makes it difficult for them to host meetings or handle their other administrative tasks in a conducive environment.

#### **THEME 5: INSUFFICIENT COMMUNICATION AT CIRCUIT LEVEL**

The interviews revealed a link between theme 3 and 5. The participants indicated that the insufficient management of curriculum advisors and insufficient communication at circuit level have a direct correlation. The reason for the insufficient management of curriculum advisors is a result of poor communication from the managers of the curriculum advisors. It is apparent that one problem cannot be addressed without addressing the other.

### **4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CURRICULUM ADVISORS IN THE VHEMBE-WEST DISTRICT**

This section will be based on the outcomes of the research questions as analysed in the various themes.

#### **THEME 1: SUBSIDISED VEHICLES**

Every curriculum advisor consulted had a problem with the way the subsidised vehicle programme operates. It is also clear that being mobile is an inherent part of the job. Proper curriculum implementation is hindered by the lack of transportation facilities, as the curriculum advisors need to visit schools to assess curriculum implementation and offer support to teachers. The department needs to either relook the current system where they offer compensation for making use of one's own vehicle or rather



improve the application process for subsidised vehicles. The waiting time should be fast tracked and once all the requirements have been met, the process should not take more than two months such as when one applies for vehicle finance from a banking institution. The Department needs to improve their system as it is standing in the way of effective curriculum implementation.

## **THEME 2: IMPACT OF OPERATIONAL RESOURCES SHORTAGES**

Another problem that came up was that the curriculum advisors are in dire need of office space from which to execute their administrative duties. Curriculum advisors cannot be expected to compile reports and review teacher files with no space to work from. The Department should relook district offices and make attempts to provide the curriculum advisors with office space.

## **THEME 4: INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES**

To keep the curriculum on par, curriculum advisors need the proper technological equipment to effect proper curriculum implementation. Curriculum advisors mentioned that they need laptops, which are very important considering the current COVID-19 climate, as a great deal of work is conducted virtually.

Curriculum advisors also stated that they need data projectors, printers, and scanners, as well as subject-specific equipment for the curriculum advisors.

## **THEME 3 AND 5: INSUFFICIENT COMMUNICATION/MANAGEMENT AT CIRCUIT LEVEL**

To improve curriculum implementation and the overall experiences of curriculum advisors, the Department needs to improve communication among its employees. The communication that comes right from the top should not contradict that received from people on the ground.

Circulars, if possible, should be sent out in advance so that curriculum advisors are given time to familiarise themselves with any new information or changes that are set to take place.

Workshops should also not be sprung on curriculum advisors a day or two before. This disorganises the entire schedule of the curriculum advisors and sets them back in terms of the schools they are meant to visit, reports they should compile and other administrative issues they may encounter.

#### **4.5 LIMITATIONS**

The primary limitation encountered while conducting this study was that of the global COVID-19 pandemic as well as the restrictions put in place limiting social interaction. As a result of the global pandemic, the researcher was unable to facilitate in-person interviews as well as focus groups. This resulted in the study not being able to provide insight from a group external to the research participants.

#### **4.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There is minimal literature on curriculum advisor development as well as the curriculum advisory department. This study would have been extremely difficult to complete without the input of the research participants.

There are various sources available on transport provision for other government departments, but not for curriculum advisors as well as other departments in the Department of Education. Future researchers should investigate this section as well as that of the curriculum advisory development.

## **4.7 CONCLUSION**

The above chapter has provided recommendations that the department can implement to enhance the working conditions of the curriculum advisors so that they too can better enhance curriculum implementation and development.

This study has investigated the challenges faced by curriculum advisors in the Vhembe-West District and highlighted the areas that curriculum advisors feel is hindering curriculum implementation. The research has also proven that resource allocation influences how well curriculum advisors are able to monitor and support schools as well as implement the curriculum in their respective fields successfully.

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## ADDENDUM 1

CONFIDENTIAL



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

**TO: DR MAKOLA MC**

**FROM: DR T MABILA**

**ACTING CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE (LPRC)**

**DATE: JANUARY 2021**

**SUBJECT: EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF CURRICULUM ADVISORS IN SCHOOLS  
IN THE VHEMBE-WEST DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**RESEARCHER: MALUMBETE PB**

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Committee (LPRC). The committee is satisfied with the methodological soundness of the proposed study.

**Decision: The research proposal is granted full research approval.**

Regards

Acting Chairperson: Dr T Mabila

Secretariat: Ms J Mokobi

Date: 04/02/2021

CONFIDENTIAL



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

**TO: DR MAKOLA MC**

**FROM: DR T MABILA**

**CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (LPREC)**

**DATE: JANUARY 2021**

**SUBJECT: EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF CURRICULUM ADVISORS IN SCHOOLS  
IN THE VHEMBE-WEST DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**RESEARCHER: MALUMBETE PB**

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC). The ethics committee is satisfied with the ethical soundness of the proposal.

**Decision: The research proposal is granted full approval and ethical clearance.**

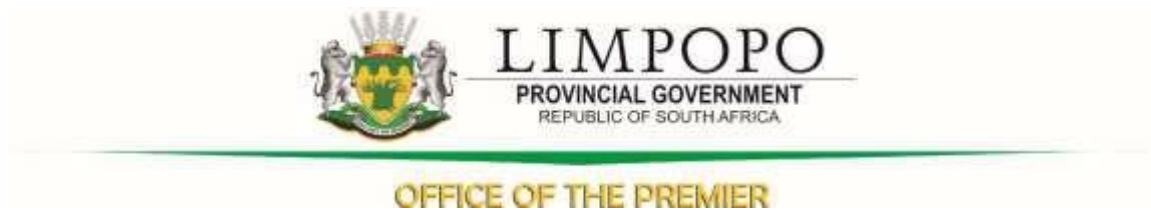
Regards

Chairperson: Dr T Mabila

Secretariat: Ms J Mokobi

Date: 04/02/2021

**CONFIDENTIAL**



Office of the  
Premier

Research and Development  
Directorate

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Private Bag X9483, Polokwane, 0700,  
South Africa

Tel: (015) 230 9910, Email:  
mokobij@premier.limpopo.gov.za

**LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH  
ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE  
CERTIFICATE**

**Meeting: January 2020**

**Project Number: LPREC/09/2021: PG**

**Subject: Exploring the Challenges of Curriculum Advisors in Schools in The Vhembe-  
West**

**District, Limpopo Province**

**Researcher: Malumbete PB**

Dr Thembinkosi Mabila

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thembinkosi Mabila", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Chairperson: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee

The Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) is registered with National Health

**111513-038. Note:**

- i. This study is categorized as a Low Risk Level in accordance with risk level descriptors as enshrined in LPREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- ii. Should there be any amendment to the approved research proposal; the researcher(s) must re-submit the proposal to the ethics committee for review prior data collection.
- iii. The researcher(s) must provide annual reporting to the committee as well as the relevant department and also provide the department with the final report/thesis.
- iv. The clearance certificate is valid for 12 months. Should the need to extend the period for data collection arise then the researcher should renew the certificate through LPREC secretariat. PLEASE QUOTE THE PROJECT NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

## **ADDENDUM 2**

### **Informed consent**

#### **INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF CURRICULUM ADVISORS IN SCHOOLS IN THE VHEMBE WEST DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

**ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBER : 0000-0002-6805-561X**  
**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR :**  
**POST GRADUATE STUDENT : PHAMELA BRENDA MALUMBETE**  
**ADDRESS : P.O BOX 4269, Louis Trichardt,**  
**0920**  
**CONTACT NUMBER : 0828904154**

You are being invited to take part in a research study that forms part of my master's in business administration Degree at the University of North West. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person clarifying the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is imperative that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect the participants negatively. Participants are also opened to withdraw from the study at any point even if they do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University. It will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes, and Structures (DH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

### **ADDENDUM 3**

#### Research questionnaire

Dear Participant,

#### **Research on experiences of curriculum advisors**

You are herewith invited to complete a questionnaire as part of my MBA research study at the North-West University (NWU). In this research, we are interested in your experiences in your role as curriculum advisors. It will take you approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete the survey. We can assure you that all the information we receive will remain confidential. Please note that the responses from everyone will not be identified, but rather the results of the group will be used in this study.

Please answer all questions as accurately and honestly as possible. Once you have completed the questionnaire, the researchers will analyse the data, and the summary findings will be presented to participating institutions, and we will work with them on how to respond to the results. In this way, your contribution to the research could benefit you and your colleagues in the future.

It is important that you understand that it will not be to your disadvantage if you choose not to participate. Participating is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time. If you are comfortable with the content and meaning and you have no objections, please complete the attached questionnaire. *By completing this questionnaire, you give consent that this information may be used for research purposes.*

If you have any queries that we have not addressed and would like to discuss these with us, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

**Ms P.B Malumbete**

Primary researcher

North-West University

[Phamela@lantic.net](mailto:Phamela@lantic.net)

**Dr N Mouton**

Study supervisor

North-West University

[Nelda.mouton@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Nelda.mouton@nwu.ac.za)

## 1. Background information

**Please provide your personal details in this section.** This information will only be used to describe the composition of the sample and will not be used to compare groups or make any inferences about individuals.

- 1 Age \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Gender \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Which cultural group do you belong to?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Home language?

|                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 English   | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Sesotho    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Afrikaans | <input type="checkbox"/> 8 isiNdebele |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Setswana  | <input type="checkbox"/> 9 Tshivenda  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 isiXhosa  | <input type="checkbox"/> 10 siSwati   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Xitsonga  | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 Sepedi    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 isiZulu   | <input type="checkbox"/> 12 other     |
- 5 Ethnicity?

|                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Asian    | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Black    | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Coloured |                                  |
- 6 How many years have you been working in your current district?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Year's \_\_\_\_\_ months
- 7 How long have you been working in your current position?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Year's \_\_\_\_\_ months
- 8 Please describe your current position.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The purpose of the following statements is to gain insights into how you experience the monitoring and support of schools in your district.** Read each statement carefully and answer the questions as elaborately as possible.

1. Has the department of Education provided you with a subsidized vehicle as stipulated in your contract?

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**PLEASE NOTE:**

**If you answered NO above, please answer question 2 below.**

**If you answered YES above, please continue with question 3 below.**

2. How many times have you applied for said vehicle and how do you conduct your monitoring without government transportation?

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3. Has the department of Education provided you with a laptop, printer and overhead projector used to conduct teacher workshops?

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4. Has the department of Education provided you with a cell phone on a government contract?



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5. Have you been provided with your personalized government email address?

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6. On a scale from one to ten. One is relatively easy and ten being difficult. How do you find the implementation of curriculum with the resources at your disposal from the department of Education?

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7. Do you feel that the PMDS method of review is effective?

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8. Does the department offer any courses for you to improve your skills? If not, would you like to attend said courses?

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9. How do you feel about the current structure regarding workshops and the communication throughout the department?

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9. Please feel free to provide any suggestions you may have for the department of Education towards effective curriculum implementation by curriculum advisors.

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**Thank you for your participation.**

#### **ADDENDUM 4**

Letter requesting permission.

23 April 2020

Department of  
Education  
Vhembe West District

PO BOX 4269  
Louis Trichardt  
0920

To whom it may concern,

I enrolled with the University of the North West, and as part of one of my courses to comply with the minimum requirements for my degree, I need to compile a research study. My topic is regarding the curriculum advisory section of the Department of Education, specifically the Vhembe West district.

I now formally request permission to distribute my research questions to colleagues in the department regarding the effectiveness of the role of curriculum advisors as well as any suggestions they may also wish to share with me.

All responses shall remain anonymous, and the views provided do not represent those of the Department of Education but rather those of the individuals responding.

Your approval would be highly appreciated.

Kind Regards,

P.B Malumbete

[Phamela@lantic.net](mailto:Phamela@lantic.net)

082 8904154

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## **ADDENDUM 5**

To whom it may concern:

Cecile van Zyl  
Language editing and translation  
Cell: 072 389 3450  
Email: Cecile.vanZyl@nwu.ac.za

Dear Mr / Ms

Re: Language editing of mini-dissertation **Exploring the challenges of curriculum advisors in schools in the Vhembe-West district, Limpopo province**

I hereby declare that I language edited the above-mentioned mini dissertation by Ms Phamela Malumbete 11840285

Please feel free to contact me should you have any enquiries.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cecile van Zyl', with a large loop at the top.

Cecile van Zyl

Language practitioner

BA (PU for CHE); BA honours (NWU); MA (NWU)

SATI number: 1002391