

Culture as an external determinant of the education system of BRICS member states: A comparative study

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work that is presented in this thesis titled **Culture as an external determinant of the education system of BRICS member states: A comparative study** is a result of my own research except as cited in the references under the supervision of Dr L De Beer and Dr D Vos of the North-West University Education Department. I further declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title recognition to any other university or institution.



SL Simelane

08 December 2021

Date

PREFACE

"Culture as an external determinant of the education system of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South (BRICS) member states: a comparative study" was inspired by my interest in the inclusion of external determinants in education systems and determining how culture in particular has been incorporated into the systems since it has such a big impact on learners from an early age. The dissertation has been written to fulfil the graduation requirements of the Master's Degree in International and Comparative Education at the North-West University's Faculty of Education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors Dr De Beer and Dr Vos who pushed me throughout and aided in the constant reminder of my end goal. They allowed me to do this study on my own while steering me in the right direction whenever I needed it. Their invaluable advice, continuous support, and patience during my study was impeccable. I would also like to thank the North-West University's Faculty of Education and the Postgraduate Bursary office for their continued financial support from the beginning of my studies. Lastly, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my mother, my brother and the rest of the family and friends who have supported and encouraged me all through my study.

ABSTRACT

Culture is one of the external determinants of an education system that influences its generality and the uniqueness of its characteristics. As such, culture is an outside factor that is used to shape learners' minds as it provides the tools, they require to build their self-perspective, making it an important element in the education systems of the BRICS member states in particular, which include Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. These countries are part of one of the most organised, supportive, and co-operative international organisations that currently exist worldwide. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to determine the nature of culture within the above-mentioned states as an external determinant of their education systems. At the same time, it will identify the best practices in recognising cultural diversity in these systems. Therefore, the study focuses on the similarities and differences in terms of culture as an external determinant of the BRICS member states' individual education systems.

In order to identify the best practices of the BRICS member states, the study utilises the interpretivist research paradigm, which is implemented by means of a qualitative research method to analyse documents such as relevant constitutions, educational policies and legislation to generate the research data. Furthermore, it makes use of the comparative method throughout. The findings can be summarised as follows: all the BRICS member states recognise education as a basic human right that every citizen is entitled to and so is the embracing of cultural diversity, which varies within each member state. The following themes were analysed in depth: education sector, cultural influence, curriculum, unity in diversity and subjects. The study identified the best practises during its research, namely the recognition of the diversity and the inclusion of diverse cultures into their curricula to benefit the education system.

Key terms: BRICS member states, education system, learners, culture, influence.

OPSOMMING

Kultuur is een van die beslissende faktore in die onderwysstelsel wat oor die algemeen 'n onderwysstelsel en sy unieke kenmerke beïnvloed. Kultuur is 'n eksterne faktor wat gebruik word om die intellek te vorm, aangesien dit die gereedskap verskaf waarmee mense hulle self-perspektief en vermoë bou - wat dit 'n belangrike element maak vir die BRICS lidlande om te ondersoek. Die BRICS lidlande bestaan uit Brasilië, Rusland, Indië, China en Suid-Afrika. Die BRICS lidlande is een van die mees georganiseerde en ondersteunende internasionale samewerkingsorganisasies wat tans bestaan. Die doel van hierdie studie is om te bepaal wat die aard van die kultuur in die BRICS lidlande is as eksterne determinant t.o.v. die onderwysstelsel, en om die beste praktyk te identifiseer in die erkenning van die kulturele diversiteit binne die onderwysstelsels. Die studie fokus op ooreenkomste en verskille in kultuur as eksterne determinant op die onderwysstelsels van die BRICS lidlande.

Die vergelykende metode is deurgaans in die studie gebruik om die beste praktyk uit die BRICS lidlande te bepaal. Die interpretivistiese navorsingsparadigma is gebruik in hierdie studie, saam met die kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetode om dokumente soos grondwette, onderwysbeleide en wetgewing te analiseer en sodoende data te genereer. Die bevindinge uit hierdie studie is as volg: al die BRICS lidlande ag onderwys as 'n basiese mensereg waarop elke landsburger geregtig is, asook die insluiting van kulturele diversiteit wat verskil binne elkeen van hierdie BRICS lidlande. Die volgende temas is in diepte geanaliseer m.b.t. die BRICS lidlande: onderwyssektor, kulturele invloed, kurrikulum, eenheid in diversiteit en (skool)vakke. Die beste praktyke geïdentifiseer tydens die navorsing sluit in die erkenning van diversiteit en die insluiting van die diverse kulture in die kurrikulums, aangesien dit elk van die BRICS lidlande se onderwysstelsels sal bevoordeel.

Sleutelterme: BRICS lidlande, onderwysstelsel, leerders, kultuur, invloed

ABBREVIATIONS

ASCD	- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
BCLF	- Brazil Constitutional Legal Foundation
BRICS	- Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CAPS	- Curriculum and Assessment Policy
CBSE	- Central Board of Secondary Education
CGC	- Commisceo Global Consulting
CISCE	- Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations
ENEN	- Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio
EU	- European Union
FET	- Further Education and Training
GEMS	- Global Education Management Systems
GET	- General Education and Training
HET	- Higher Education and Training
IBGE	- <i>Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística</i> (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics)
NCCA	- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCS	- National Curriculum Statement
OECD	- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SA	- South Africa
UNESCO	- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO- UIS	- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics
US	- United States

LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE



EDITING CERTIFICATE

08 December 2021

To whom it may concern

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

Re: Culture as an external determinant of the education system of BRICS member states: A comparative study. (*Master's dissertation submitted for the degree Master of Education in Comparative and International Education at the North-West University.*)

This serves to confirm that I, Tanya-Lee Ruby Stewart, a SATI-registered language editor and translator, undertook the language editing of the above-mentioned document on behalf of Miss SL Simelane, NWU student number: 25911414 for the purpose of meeting the submission requirements of a Master's degree.

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Yours sincerely

TR Stewart
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the influence of culture as an external determinant of the education systems of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS countries). It further aims to identify how cultural differences and associations affect the education system of each of these countries. The term 'culture' can be viewed as the work and product of people, therefore both cultural differences and similarities can be distinguished (Steyn *et al.*, 2017:74). Furthermore, it can also be defined as shared characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people in a communal or environmental setting, which encompasses their language, religion, food, music, and social habits (Zimmerman & Pappas, 2017:1).

In this regard, Bruner (cited by Demmert, 2010:13) reports that culture can also be seen as an instrument to shape minds as it provides the tools for people to improve their own self-perspective and influence. Furthermore, Demmert (2010:14) believes that one cannot fully understand the mental activity of another unless one has taken into account their cultural setting and resources. This is because such factors shape an individual's mind in a particular way through learning, talking, and remembering while participating in a particular culture (Demmert, 2010:14).

When linking the concept of culture to education, it is important to be cognisant of the fact that, the more aware learners are of where they come from, as well as the core values that bind them, the more reflective they will be not only of their own culture, but also the cultures of those around them. This awareness thus contributes to their development as culturally aware individuals (Times Reporter, 2017:1). In a school setting, specifically, where learners come from different backgrounds, they can therefore learn from each other's histories and cultures, which, in turn, broadens their own knowledge of diversity and culture (Times Reporter, 2017:1).

1.2 Background to the study

This study aims to build upon previous research into the impact of higher education and society (Schwartzman *et al.*, 2015:6), and the incorporation of science and technology into education in the BRICS countries (Kovalev & Shcherbakova, 2019:534). However, the mainstream research pertaining to BRICS academic literature still contains gaps that leave room for exploration in this particular research field (Muhr & De Azevedo, 2018:534).

According to previous studies, there tends to be a significant gap between learners' cultural backgrounds (which are taught at home), and the culture they are expected to embrace in their schools (Pedrus, 2005:5). Educators often struggle to engage their learners in a manner that is both linguistic and cultural to ensure the learners are able to provide them as educators with a holistic response since the educators and learners also come from different backgrounds (Ballie, 2016). This is supported by Alrubail (2016:25), who believes that it is imperative that educators can recognise and distinguish relevant cultural differences since it assists them to create a safe learning environment for all learners, while also aiding the creation of a culturally responsive and pedagogically practising classroom.

The above-mentioned culture gap between learners and their respective educators contributes to the achievement gap that has been identified among different learner groups. This gap has to do with far more than race - it rather involves the understanding, or lack thereof, between educators and their learners (Walker, 2011:2). Furthermore, Walker (2011:2) states that learners require their educators to assist them in connecting what they are taught in the classroom space with the life that they know outside that setting. This indicates that the core of cultural competency is an educator's skill in being able to help learners find the balance between these two worlds (home and school). Moreover, educators should be careful to find a balance between helping learners to adapt to the demand of mainstream culture and embracing the challenges that may be associated with any new culture the latter may want to embrace (Vassallo, 2014:148).

1.2.1 Defining 'culture'

For the specific purpose of this study, culture is defined as a particular society's way of life and thinking, with the view that educational institutions, educators, and educational materials are components that are effectively active agents of cultural development, change and transfer (Giorgetti *et al.*, 2017:1).

1.3 Problem statement

This study explores how the education systems of the BRICS member states differ in terms of how they incorporate different cultures into their specific education systems, to effectively accommodate all their learners. The sphere of education utilises a process known as 'enculturation', which takes place when learners are introduced into the culture of the society by observing other members of the society (Williams, 2015). Maurice (2012:3) supports this view by stating that schools tend to selectively transmit the values and knowledge of a certain society through appropriate programmes in which culture determines the standards of behaviour. In order for individuals to perform skilfully in the society they are in, they must have been effectively raised and trained (as learners) in that culture. Since education also aids in the process by which society deliberately transmits cultural heritage to learners through schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions (Mathews & Savarimuthu, 2020:1), it can thus be seen as an initiation into a particular society's culture. In light of this, culture can further be defined as part of the content of education, and therefore has an obvious bearing on schools' administration (Mathews & Savarimuthu, 2020:3).

When educators think about diversity in the classroom, culture does not often cross their minds as a potential influencing factor. It is for this reason that most educators do not account for how culture will impact a learner's ability to participate and learn when they select their curriculum content and develop their lessons (Pusey, 2018:4). Learners are born into a particular society and are taught its conventions and "rules" by their parents or guardians. Later, the educator transmits even more societal knowledge to the learner, making culture one of the most authentic and valuable lessons learned in society (L'Astorina, 2020:3).

Since culture includes the values and beliefs that learners bring to the classroom, it can be identified as a social construct, and is therefore not a genetic trait. According

to recent studies, in most cases, learners have at least three aspects that influence their cultural construction, namely their home, their peers and their school (Pusey, 2018:4). Furthermore, Pusey (2018:4) states that the language and behaviours of each one of these aspects are different, which implies that for many learners, entering their schools is like going to a foreign country and speaking a completely new language because of the difference between their home language and culture, and that which they encounter in the classroom. From Maurice's (2012:3) above-mentioned statement, we can see that the education system in a country plays a vital role in the upbringing of culturally inclined children. Additionally, learners' cultural backgrounds play a role in the manner that they behave and their ability to learn (Pusey, 2018:4).

1.4 Research question

The problem statement above leads to an initial formulation of the research question as follows: What is the nature of culture as an external determinant on the education systems of the BRICS member states?

To narrow it down, a study in this regard would need to focus on the education system in a specific country or countries. Although these countries are very different from one another, together they represent the biggest emerging economies in the world. According to Schwartzman *et al.* (2015:2) education plays an important role in the transformation of these countries while they grow as world-leading economies, since education (amongst others) ensures a skilled workforce which is imperative for economic growth.

It therefore follows that the research question can be defined as: What is the nature of culture as an external determinant on an education system of the BRICS member states?

1.4.1 Research sub-questions

The following sub-questions can be formulated to aid in answering the research question:

- In investigating culture as an external determinant on the education systems of the BRICS member states, what are the similarities and differences between these systems?
- What best practices can be identified in the recognition of the diversity of cultures within the education systems of the BRICS member states?

1.5 Research aims

The purpose of this study is to investigate the nature of culture as an external determinant of the education systems of the BRICS member states.

1.5.1 Research sub-aims

In investigating the nature of culture as external determinant of the education systems of the BRICS member states, the following research sub-aims can be formulated:

- To determine the similarities and differences between cultures when viewing this as an external determinant of the education system of the BRICS member states.
- To identify best practices in the recognition of the diversity of cultures within the education systems of the BRICS member states.

1.6 Research objectives

This study's main research objective is to understand the role of cultural influence in the education systems of the BRICS member states, in order to gain more insight into ways to improve current deficits or difficulties pertaining to the question of culture within an educational context. As such, this research can be incorporated, firstly, into the current body of knowledge, and secondly, add value to the respective education systems of the five countries.

Recognising the similarities and differences in each country may contribute towards the progression of each system, as one system can learn from the other. This may in turn cause comparative development to occur and provide input for making decisions and suggesting practices to improve the education systems of each member state.

1.7 Theoretical framework

The suggested framework draws support from time-tested theories that embody the findings of many researchers on why and how a particular phenomenon occurs (Regoniel, 2015:2). This study will investigate the cultural difference theory, which is based on the idea that learners who are brought up in different cultural settings may approach education and learning in different ways (Watson, 2017:3). When working in a cross-cultural environment, one needs to be aware of different learning and teaching approaches to education, which may include but are not limited to traditional and non-traditional approaches (Wittwer, 2018:1).

Since the educator-learner relationship can be seen as an archetypal role in virtually any society, many perplexities may arise when these two parties come from different cultures and backgrounds (Hofstede, 1986:302). Hofstede (1986) also notes that the confusion may be due to the different social positions each party may have in their respective societies, from the difference in their cognitive abilities to the difference in their expectation of educator/learner interaction. However, rather than being averse to those differences, educators may find more success in embracing the cultural differences in their classes, which in turn helps to appreciate the cultural uniqueness of everyone in the classroom (Bolima, 2011:5).

In the above context, it is crucial that educators are aware of the differences between the school atmosphere and learners' home environments, since learners may have a different viewpoint from that of the mainstream approach used in most schools (Watson, 2017:3). Furthermore, Watson (2017:3) warns that educators need to ensure that they incorporate methods of teaching in their classrooms that accommodate the varied beliefs and cultural notions that learners bring to school. Not only does this require each educator to develop an understanding of their learners' cultures, but also to get to know their learners as individuals. Educators are further required to ensure they treat all their learners the same and have the same high expectations for each one so that all individuals can reach their full potential (eventually) as members of society (Watson, 2017:3).

1.8 Conceptual framework

This study incorporates several relevant concepts as part of the conceptual framework, to guide the research: culture; the education systems of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, respectively; external determinants; and lastly the comparative method. Each of these concepts will be discussed next.

1.8.1 The nature of culture

Research has suggested that a person's culture and upbringing influence how they see the world and process information (Lynch, 2016:25). A study by Lynch (2016:25) has found that children from Muslim-dominant countries like India see the world in terms of the relationship between things, whereas children from an Americanised background see the world in terms of objects as distinct entities. In terms of education, such information is helpful since cultural backgrounds influence the approach of both learning and school performance (Lynch, 2016:26). Furthermore, culture plays a significant role in the school space since each different background compounds the diversity within the classroom that educators must deal with. The problem which may arise when dealing with such diversity in a classroom is that many learners are unaware that most problems, they face are a result of cultural differences between themselves, their peers and their educators (Viewpoint Innovation, 2011:1). The mere concept of diversity, as a lived experience, emphasises the concepts of liberty, freedom, and equality as foundations of the successful embracement of diversity since it has always been seen as the understanding of encompassing race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, and political and religious beliefs (Vavrus, 2015:11). With time, people have developed a widened and more insightful understanding of diversity, focusing on strengthening intercultural tolerance, inclusion, and new creative ideas in order to embrace it (EU Business School, 2019).

Viewpoint Innovation (2011:2) indicates that learning styles are also influenced by culture since learners from certain cultures may learn best by observing and then doing. Some may prefer verbal instructions, while others prefer visual/written instructions. Viewpoint Innovation (2011:2) further gives the practical example of a learner that asks an educator to show him how the work is done. In this, the educator may easily assume that the learner is expecting the learner to do the work for him.

However, it could simply be that the learner comes from a cultural background where children learn by watching their parents or guardians doing the task first before trying it themselves (Viewpoint Innovation, 2011:2).

South Africa is known as one of the most culturally and racially diverse nations in the world and has come a long way from being colonised by the British, through the apartheid era to emerge as one of the leaders of the African continent (Watson, 2017:4). Since it is the melting pot of different African and European cultures, it has not yet discovered a sense of identity that is based on the commonality of culture and language. Thus, education has played an important role in spurring the younger generation into an integrated society and giving them a sense of identity that is not based on allegiance to any one tribe, race, or language (Watson, 2017:4).

Cultural differences where hierarchy and equality feature as opposing dynamics may cause problems (Hewitt, 2015:17). A study by Hewitt (2015:18) found that educators from cultures with hierarchical structures tend to expect learners to behave in a certain way e.g., in showing respect towards the educators, while the learners may expect the educator to act in a different way. Such misunderstandings may lead to a lack of debate and discussions between learners and their educators, as it can be seen as a lack of respect for the learner to question/challenge what their educators have said. This may result in a tendency towards rote learning (Hewitt 2015:18). In cultures that favour equality, educators also function as facilitators, and they expect discussion and debate from their learners. This practice leads to learners learning more productively (Hewitt, 2015:19).

1.8.2 The Brazilian education system

Brazil's educational system is regulated by the Brazilian Federal Government through its Ministry of Education. While the government is responsible for funding and providing the educational guidelines for each area, the responsibility for implementing and enforcing thereof remains with the different states. The country encompasses both public and private schools. Where private schools are superior and costly, the public schooling is free of charge (Meyer, 2010:1).

Preschool education (*Educação Infantil*) is optional for children between three to six years of age. The primary and lower secondary education stage (*Ensino Fundamental*)

is compulsory for children between the ages of six to 14 and free to all citizens of those ages (Saidi, 2013:3). The upper secondary education (*Ensino Médio*) is aimed at children between the ages 15 to 18. Brazilian higher education (*Ensino Superior*) can only commence once a child has completed his/her formal schooling (Saidi, 2013:3).

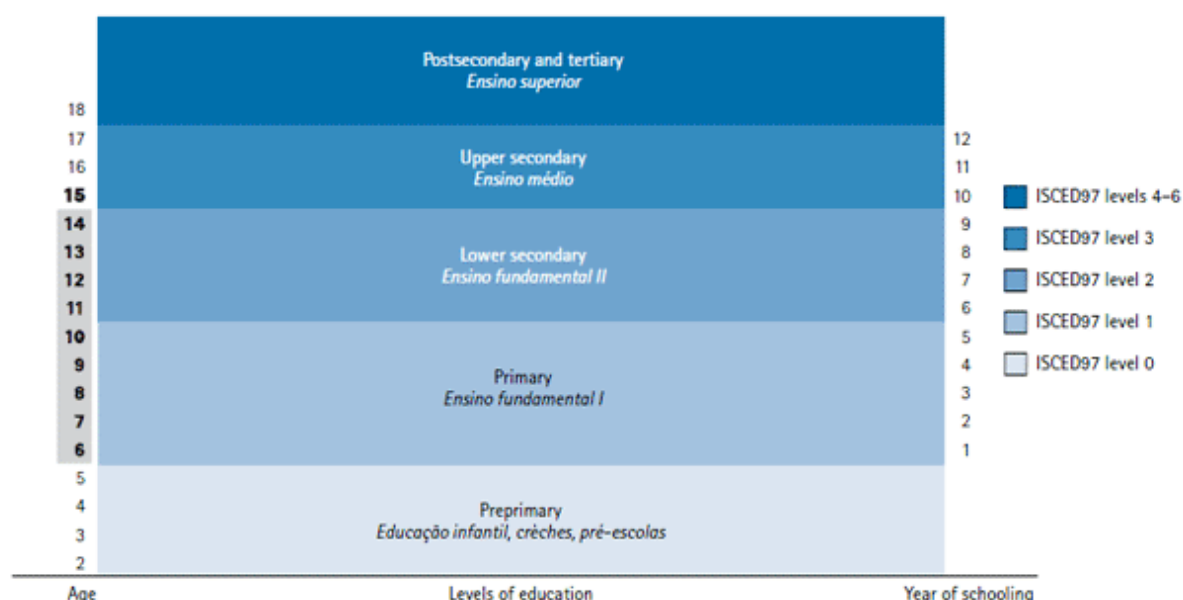


Figure 1: The Education System in Brazil (NCES, 2015).

Regarding the universities, there is an option to attend either a public or private institution. The publicly funded universities are completely financially dependent on the government and offer a superior education to those that are privately funded (Scholaro, 2018a:6).

Meyer (2010:2) is of the opinion that this is difficult to implement compulsory schooling for ages six to 14 in practice, as most children live in rural areas and are unable to attend school, in fact, they are required to start working from a young age in order to provide for their families, instead of going to school.

Meyer (2010:2) further notes that the public schools are usually not well taken care of, which, in turn, leads to the country's high rate of illiteracy and unemployment. The number of students making it to high school seems to be steadily decreasing - only a third of those in the schooling system make it to Grade 6 (age $\pm$ 11 years). Consequently, the Brazilian Government has started working on plans to improve the country's education system (Meyer, 2010:2).

1.8.3 The Russian education system

Education is compulsory for children between the ages of six and 15 in the Russian Federation. The Russian primary education system comprises both private and public schools, both with a prescribed state curriculum that has to be followed from starting with Class 1 at the age of seven to ending with Class 4 at the age of 10 (Just Landed Guides, 2016).

The secondary phase of the Russian education system is divided into two phases. The first phase is called basic general education ('*osnovnoe obshchee obrazovanie*'). It is then followed by two years of secondary general education or upper secondary education ('*srednee obschchee obrazovanie*') (Nuffic, 2010:2). The learners have five years of basic general education - classes 5 to 9 between the ages of 11 to 15 years old, followed by the two upper secondary phases for classes 10 and 11 (ages 16 to 17 years old). Both the phases of the secondary education require that learners complete their schooling with an exam and a diploma (Nuffic, 2010:2).

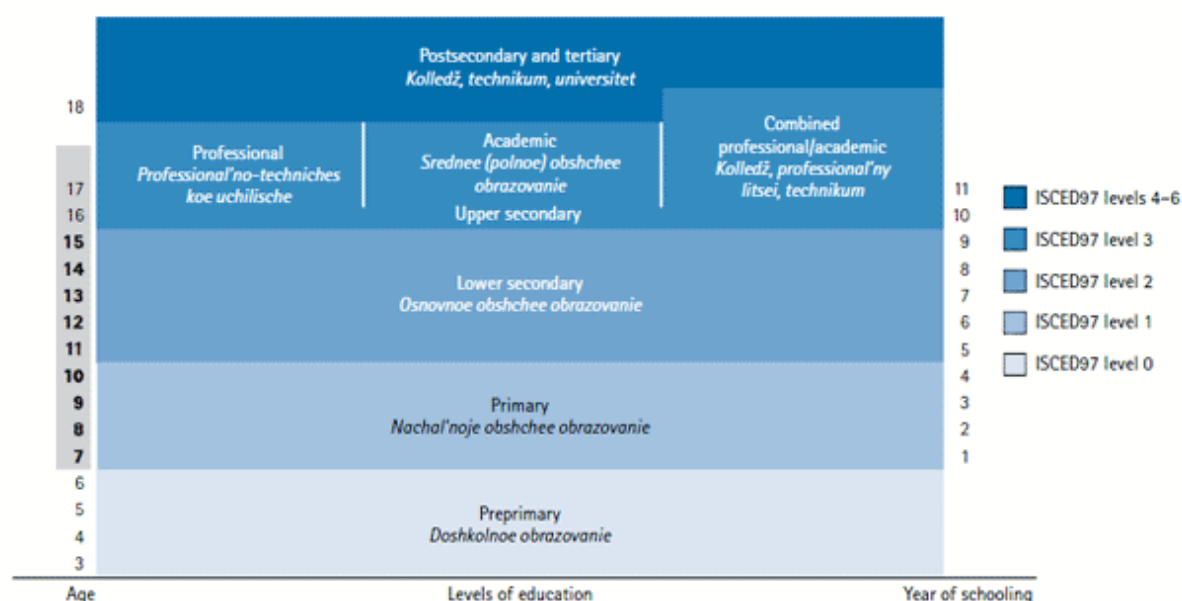


Figure 2: The Education System in the Russian Federation (NCES, 2015).

The Russian state determines the basic curriculum for secondary education. Certain aspects of the curriculum are compulsory and cover science subjects, social science, and humanities. The schools may determine their curriculum that will fall within the guidelines of the basic curriculum given by the state. In addition to general schools, others cater for special profiles like specialities in mathematics, language, or natural

science. Some schools focus on art or a specific activity. Learners may then choose to transfer to vocational secondary education after their lower or upper secondary years have been completed (Fursenko, 2011).

1.8.4 The Indian education system

In the distant past, India had the Gurukula system for education where anyone who wished to study went to an educator's (guru) house and requested to be taught. If accepted as a learner by the guru, the learner would then stay at the guru's residence and help in all activities at home. This created a strong bond between the educator and the learner while it also taught the learner everything about running a household. The guru taught the child everything, from Sanskrit to the Holy Scriptures and from mathematics to metaphysics. The learner was allowed to stay if they wished or until the guru had felt that he had taught them everything he could teach. All the learning was closely linked to nature and life and was not confined to memorising information (Kumar, 2011:3).

The modern school system (including the English language) was originally brought to India by Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay in the 1830s. The curriculum was then confined to "modern" subjects considered unnecessary. Teaching was restricted to classrooms and the link with nature was broken, as well as the close relationship between the educator and the learner (Kumar, 2011:3).

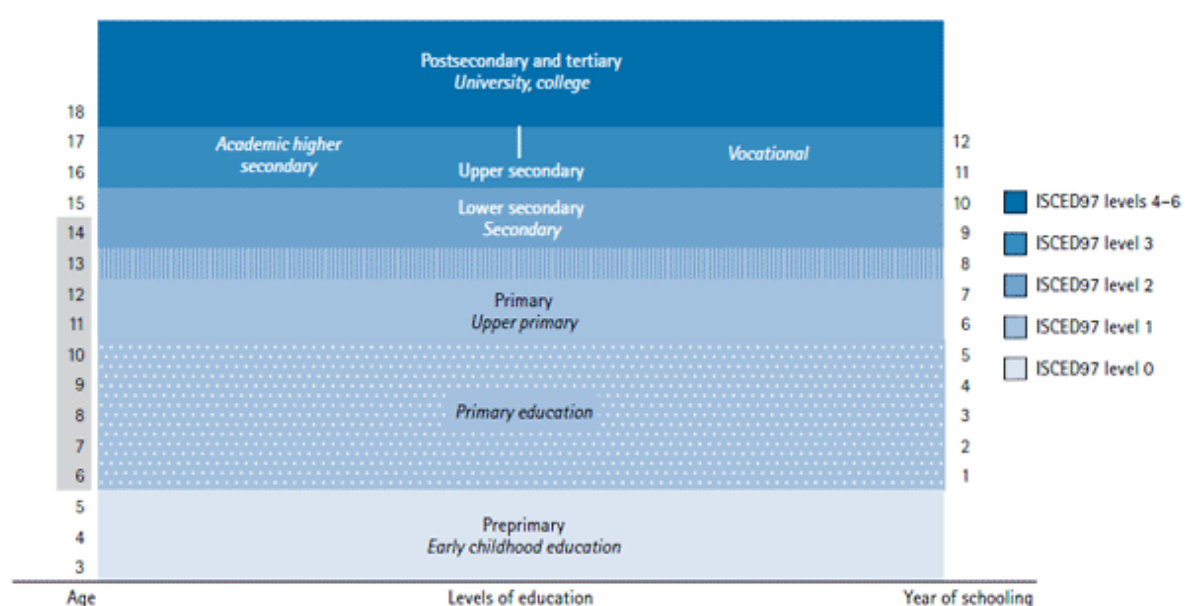


Figure 3: The Education System in India (NCES, 2015).

As seen in Figure 3 and confirmed by Scholaro (2018b:2), the Indian school system has four levels, namely: lower primary (ages 6 to 10), upper primary (ages 11 and 12), secondary (ages 13 to 15) and higher secondary (ages 17 and 18). The lower primary section is divided into five "standards", upper primary into two, high school into three, and the higher secondary into two. Generally, learners must follow a common curriculum (except for regional differences in term of mother tongue) until the end of high school. There is some amount of specialisation possible at the higher secondary level. Learners throughout the country must learn three languages (being English, Hindi and their mother tongues), except in regions where Hindi is the mother tongue.

The education system in India is sometimes called a "10 + 2 + 3" system. This means that the first decade of a child's education is mandatory, as decreed by the federal government. Most learners begin their schooling at age five, in the form of preschool. By the time they are six, their primary schooling begins. Learners remain obligated to attend school until age 14, at which point they may choose to discontinue their education (Wise, 2017).

1.8.5 The Chinese education system

The Chinese education system is divided into three categories, namely: basic education, higher education, and adult education. Each child is obligated by law to nine years of compulsory education, from primary to junior secondary stages (Kan, 2019:15).

Basic education includes preschool education of 3 years, followed by primary education of six years, which the child may only start in the year they turn six. This is then followed by six years of secondary education (Davids, 2019:16).

The secondary education category has two options that learners may choose to follow - the first being an academic secondary education and the second being specialised, vocational, or technical secondary education. The former consists of three years of junior education and three years of senior middle schooling. After the three years of junior education, learners are required to take a locally administered entrance

examination which will then determine their future options. Their results help determine whether they are able to continue to the academic senior middle school or enter the vocational middle school for two to four years of training. Learners may also choose to leave school at this point after the examinations (Martin, 2020:2).

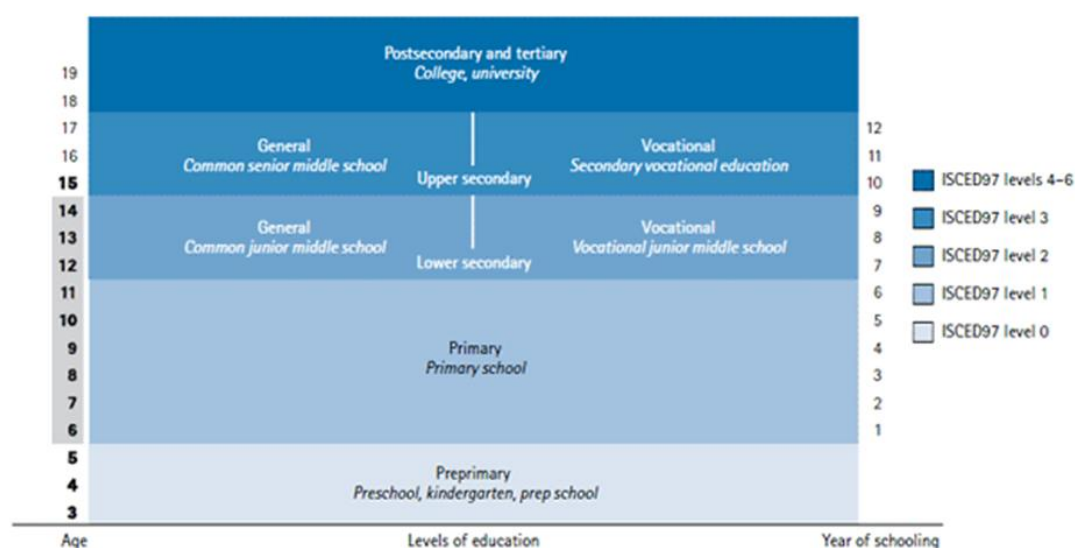


Figure 4: The Education System in China (NCES, 2015).

If Chinese learners choose to continue their education after their senior middle education, they must pass the National Higher Education Examinations ('Gao Ka'). This examination will determine if they qualify for university studies (Kan, 2019:16). Higher education is divided into two categories: firstly, universities that offer four-year and five-year undergraduate qualifications, and secondly, colleges that offer three-year diplomas and certificate qualifications for both academic and vocational subjects (whereas universities only award qualifications based on academic subjects). Universities are also the only institutions that offer postgraduate and doctoral programmes (Kan, 2019:16).

In the adult education sector, the education levels range from primary education to higher education, with primary education comprising workers' primary education and peasants' primary education. These levels were instituted to increase literacy levels in remote areas of the country (Kan, 2019:17).

1.8.6 The South African education system

The South African education system consists of three main components namely, General Education and Training, Further Education and Training and lastly, Higher Education and Training (Tibane, 2019:4).

1. General Education and Training (GET): Grade R up to and including Grade 9 comprise the compulsory school-age years (Tibane, 2019:4) although Grade R - the reception year - is not part of compulsory schooling.
2. Further Education and Training (FET): Grade 10 up to and including Grade 12 comprise further academic schooling, as well as intermediate vocational education at technical colleges, community colleges and private colleges (Tibane, 2019:4).
3. Higher Education and Training (HET): a tertiary level to attain diplomas, as well as undergraduate, masters' and doctoral degrees (Tibane, 2019:4).

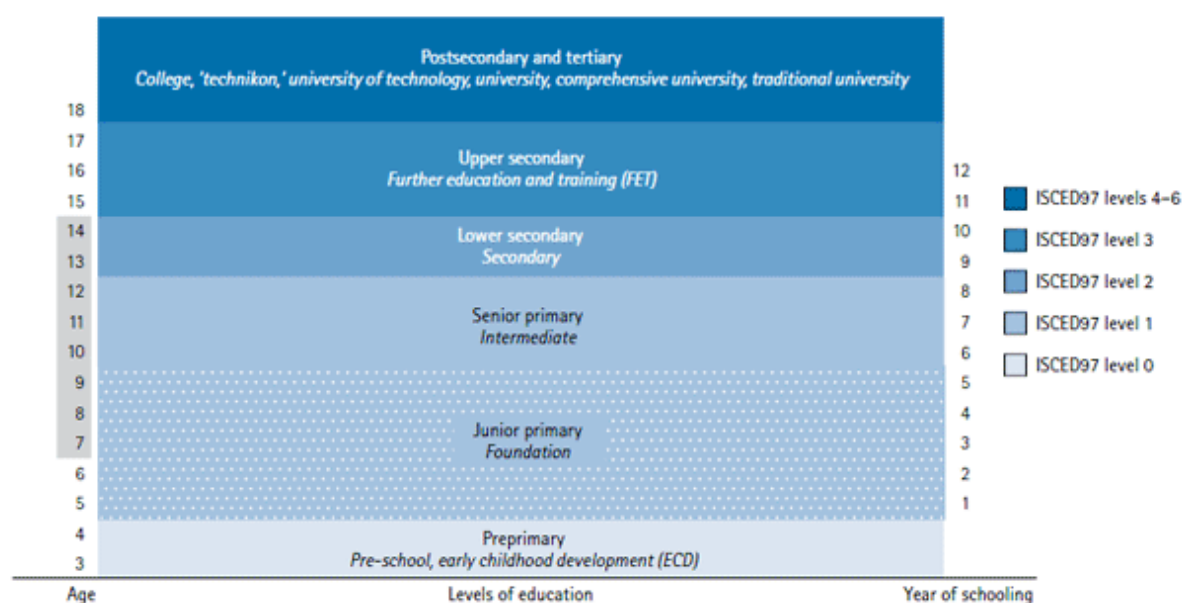


Figure 5: The Education System in South Africa (NCES, 2015).

South Africa has 11 official languages. Section 29(2) of the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) grants primary school learners the right to be educated in their home language when admitted to a school where this is reasonably practicable, permitted that this home language is one of the 11 official languages. From Grade 4, however, learners are obliged to take another approved language in addition to their language of

education. While any of the official languages may be taken as a home language, first additional language, or second additional language, from Grade 4 upwards education is offered exclusively in English and Afrikaans (Njoroge, 2018:7).

The South African Constitution affirms that everyone has the right to basic education, adult education, and secondary education. Education in South Africa is compulsory for children between 6 and 15 years of age (or up to Grade 9, depending on which is attained first). This obligation to attend school is imposed by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

1.8.7 External determinants

The last of the framework concepts to be discussed in this section is external determinants, also known as contextual determinants. These are defined as outside factors that influence (education) systems - these factors usually relate to the target group (Steyn *et al.*, 2017:10).

The main external determinants in an education system can be summarised as follows: demographics, climate and geography, socioeconomic situations, languages, political situations, philosophy of life, science, and technology, as well as culture (Steyn *et al.*, 2017:50), with culture being the focus of this study.

1.9 Research methodology

The study will apply a qualitative research method combined with a case study methodological approach. Ellis *et al.* (2011:5) define the focus of qualitative research as understanding how people make sense of their world with the manipulation of different aspects and different expressions, while providing a discovery for both the researcher and the participants. This design is best suited for this study as it allows the topic to be evaluated in detail. Nieuwenhuis (2019a:53) is pursuant of the view that the qualitative research design focuses less on the metrics of the data being collected than on what can be found in the information, meaning that this design focuses on the outcomes as being a process, rather than a product.

The dictionary of the social sciences defines case study research as a study that engages a detailed and close examination of a single phenomenon or example. It can

also be seen as the detailed analysis of a group or an individual from a psychological point of view (Calhoun, 2021). Simply put, one would say that such a case study is an in-depth study of a situation, rather than a sweeping statistical survey. This method is used to narrow down a broad field of research into one easily researchable topic (Shuttleworth, 2021:1). As stated by Mauldin (2019), case study research is a concentrated, longitudinal study of a phenomenon at one or more research sites for the aim of deriving detailed, contextualised inferences and an understanding of the dynamic process underlying the phenomenon of interest. Case research is unique as it can be used in an interpretive or positivist manner. Furthermore, the case researcher is a neutral observer (by direct observation) in the social setting rather than an active participant. As with any other interpretive approach, drawing meaningful inferences from case research depends heavily on the observational skills and integrative abilities of the researcher.

1.9.1 Comparative method

The comparative method finds sound application within this research study. The core definition of the comparative method is nothing more than the practice of making a comparison between situations, whether it be cultures, groups, or anything in which differences and similarities can be found (Harvey, 2019:1). When this method is applied to look at the identified education systems, it helps to explain educational systems, processes, or outcomes, while aiding the development of a better understanding of educational institutions and practices and emphasising the relationship between education and society (US Legal, 2019:2). While Collier (2011:3) states that the comparison can be seen as a fundamental tool in the analysis as it sharpens the power of description, it also plays a central role in the formulation of concepts, whether it be the bettering of existing concepts or the formation of new ones. All this is done by bringing into focus suggestive similarities and contrasts among cases (Collier, 2011:3).

1.10 Study context

1.10.1 Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm, which is used in the study, is also known as social constructivism. It allows one to view a participant's world through his/her own

perceptions and experiences (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:24). Furthermore, it allows the researcher to interpret participants' lived experiences through the data that is gathered and construct an understanding thereof (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:25). As stated by Dean (2018:3), the interpretive paradigm, unlike positivism that accepts only one reality, believes that reality is subjective, multiple, and socially constructed. The idealist perspective of the interpretive paradigm aims to focus on *how* people make sense of their worlds, rather than their conclusions of them (Schnelker, 2006:45). In keeping with the idealist approach, Schnelker (2006:46) maintains that this approach to interpretivism is aimed at generating idiographic knowledge, and descriptions of the individuals and their unique realities to provide the researcher with a deeper understanding of the individual's lived experience or event of interest.

1.10.2 Demarcation

The education systems of five countries will be investigated. These are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, which will be referred to as the BRICS member states throughout the study.

1.10.3 Sampling

Qualitative research commonly utilises several types of sampling including purposeful, snowball, random or convenience sampling (Etikan & Bala, 2017:2). This study uses a purposeful sampling method since the documents are handpicked and deliberately selected with a specific purpose in mind to get the most relevant information from the specific population by focusing on its relevance and the required knowledge (Moser & Korstjens, 2018:10).

The BRICS member states have been identified as the largest developing countries on a global scale, having four core factors that are used to indicator economic growth being, macro stability, institution, openness, and education (Bell, 2011:19). Therefore, this makes them the most relevant to this study.

1.10.4 Data generation

Data can be generated through various techniques within a qualitative research design (Mostafa & Mahmood, 2015:157). These include documentation, observations,

interviews and focus groups. Document analysis focuses on all types of written communication as secondary data sources, such as journal publications, reports published by international organisations, and newspaper and magazine articles. Data from the different sources is compiled and can be presented in tabular form to provide logical support to the arguments (Mostafa & Mahmood (2015:157).

The documents used for data collection in this study are freely available in the broad public domain from the Department of Education websites, government sites related to education, constitutions, school acts, and gazettes, amongst others.

1.10.5 Data analysis and interpretation

The main principle of the data analysis is to establish how participants find meaning in the phenomenon being researched while making use of an ongoing, non-linear, intertwined process, and looking at how appropriate the data being analysed is for the research design and approach (Bhattacharjee, 2012:105). The content analysis, one of five analysis methods used in qualitative research (Sunday, 2016:26) is used in this study. It is concerned with studying and analysing written text and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality, and bias, and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within a specific social, economic, political and historical context (Nieuwenhuis, 2016c:113).

1.11 Validity and reliability

As maintained by Pilot & Beck (cited by Connelly, 2016:435), the trustworthiness of a study pertains to the degree of confidence in the data, and its interpretation, as well as the methods used to ensure its credibility. Research trustworthiness is based on the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of a study, with creditability relating to the researchers' confidence in their findings (Forero *et al.*, 2018:1). Furthermore, Forero *et al.* (2018) state that with qualitative research, researchers make use of triangulation or crystallisation to prove that their findings are credible. Their ability to demonstrate that their studies' findings can be applied to other contexts shows the transferability of their study. The researcher may use the thick description to show that the study's findings could be applied in other contexts, situations, and circumstances (Olivia, 2018:1).

Confirmability, according to Olivia (2018:1) is "the degree of neutrality in the research study's findings, meaning that the findings are based on participants' responses and not any potential bias or personal motivations of the researcher. To establish confirmability, qualitative researchers can provide an audit trail, which highlights every step of data analysis that was made to provide a rationale for the decisions made".

Dependability is the extent to which other researchers would be able to repeat the study with consistent findings. In this regard, a qualitative researcher can use an inquiry audit to establish dependability. This requires an outside person reviewing and examining the research process and the data analysis to ensure that the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Olivia, 2018:1).

The trustworthiness of a study is ensured by keeping all four factors that influence the trustworthiness throughout the study. With reference to credibility, Koch (cited by Elo *et al.*, 2014:4) states that self-awareness is essential to the researcher so that the research is not biased.

In order to achieve the above and produce a valid and reliable research paper, all data collected for the study must be backed by facts from credible sources. The data is received from official websites and public domains, which can be easily accessible for verification purposes. The tabulation of the information received from the data collection is put in plain text for interpretation purposes.

1.12 Ethical consideration

Ethics serve to reach the aims and goals of research while upholding a set of standards that promote the aims of the research and promote the values that are essential to collaborative work while holding the researcher accountable for their conduct during their research (Resnik, 2015). While there will be no physical participants for the study (in which case special ethical permission would be required), the study is done in an honest, objective manner using facts to prove a point and the ethical guidelines of the North-West University are upheld throughout the study. The study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the University as a "no-risk study" and assigned the ethics number NWU-01002-21-A2.

1.13 Summary

This chapter firstly discussed the problem statement, to demonstrate the current gap in the research as background to the present study. The purpose of the study was presented by describing the research questions and aims. The conceptual and theoretical framework of the study was also introduced. Lastly, the chapter presented an overview of the research design and methodologies. A brief description of the BRICS member states' education systems was provided to provide the reader with a basic understanding thereof and an insight into the concepts that Chapter 3 later discusses in more detail.

Subsequently, the next chapter focuses on the literature, examining the study's conceptual and theoretical framework to gain a better understanding of the BRICS member states and core concepts, and assist with answering the various research questions.

CHAPTER 2: THE BODY OF SCHOLARSHIP

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the present study by examining the main factors contributing to cultural influence. It briefly explored the research designs and methodologies to be used and presented the research problem statement. The research questions and aims which were listed, will be answered throughout the study.

This chapter investigates the conceptual framework in depth. This is done by giving a thorough literature review of the individual, conceptual keywords, namely the nature of culture, the different education systems of the BRICS member state, the external determinants, and the comparative method. Next, the keywords are defined from a general perspective before concentrating on their application in the educational sphere.

2.2 Concepts

2.2.1 Culture

The first highly influential definition of culture is attributed to Edward Taylor in 1871 (cited by Prinz 2011:1), who defined culture as a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, law, moral, custom and other capabilities that can be acquired by man as a member of the society. Prinz (2011:2) regards the problem of defining culture to lie in the fact that there are so many definitions of the term. However, it seems that most definitions agree that it is something shared by many which is transmitted socially.

Cole (2020:1) defines culture as the snowballing deposit of knowledge, skills, philosophies, values, outlooks, meanings, hierarchies, faith, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the world and physical objects and belongings acquired by a group through both individual and group effort endeavouring through generations that pass. Miller (2017:5) notes that the term can be seen as the shared knowledge in a large group of people, consisting of patterns, explicit and implicit, which can be transmitted by symbols that may portray the group's core traditional ideas and values. Miller (2017:5) further says that these values may add to the group's individuals as a

product of action or the conditioning influence of future action, since the culture can influence many places that individuals may find themselves in.

Based on the opinion of Mae (2013:1), within a school setting, the term can be considered as the beliefs, views, associations, outlooks, and the written and unwritten rules that shape, as well as influence, each aspect of how a school function. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (2020:1) refers to school culture as the way in which the teachers and other staff members work together while upholding a set of values, beliefs, and assumptions they may share. Bates (2016:1) says that when looking at culture from an education perspective the term encompasses more than just beliefs and values; rather, it goes deeper, examining the emotional and the physical wellbeing and safety of learners while simultaneously considering the orderliness of the classrooms and public spaces that the learners use. Bates (2016) further defines school culture as the level at which each school finds a way to embrace race, ethics, linguistics, or even the diversity that comes with different cultures in the school setting.

The ASCD (2020:1) further states that in the education sector, many aspects contribute towards the cultivation of the school culture and the learners are among the main contributors along with the parents, the teachers, administrators, the location of the school and the community who all play a role in the culture of the school. As far as Mae (2013:2) is concerned the education sector culture pertains to more deep-rooted aspects that play a role in building an individualistic school culture for each school. This all happens while maintaining a culture that is conducive for learners to learn and gain knowledge that will lead them to be better individuals, so that one day they can contribute to society as well-groomed adults. School culture can either be negative or positive in nature (Mae, 2013:2).

Shafer (2018:1) maintains that school culture is shaped by the history, context and the people sharing its deeper-level assumptions and beliefs - often regarded as the 'heart' of the school. Shafer (2018) says that school culture is seen as the description of how things are and the way learners act - creating a shared reality for those within the social organisation, giving them support and identifying and creating a framework for occupational learning.

In addition to the above-mentioned definitions of culture, it is also defined as shared meaning that brings about a common understanding among its members as it distinguishes an organisation or group of people from another (Gwalior, 2017:2).

The culture of a particular society inevitably impacts its educational system, according to Zimmermann and Pappas (2017:1). It has been reported that the earliest universities in Europe employed the idea of using theology to manifest the importance of the church and the Christian culture. Zimmermann and Pappas (2017) also state that since the modern industrialised world found a way to invest more of its time in technical and management-related fields, it is evident how culture is reflected in the education system in the society.

2.2.1.1 Brazilian culture

Brazil, which is officially known as the Federative Republic of Brazil, is one of the world's largest countries alongside Russia, Canada, China, and the United States of America (James & Burns, 2019:14). According to James and Burns (2019:14), the Brazilian culture that is seen today is a blend of indigenous Indian, African, and Portuguese way of life, having the Portuguese as the most dominant cultural influences from which most Brazilians adapted their language, main religion, and customs. The Brazilian culture is often seen as a melting pot of nationalities because of the European dominance in previous centuries, which lead African migrants across the Brazilian borders. Here they were influenced and grew accustomed to the local cultures and their ancient customs and ideas, mixing with those of the European settlers who brought their own innovations and belief systems which shaped the local societies in a significant manner (Meyer, 2010:1).

The Brazilian Tourist Board Embratur (2019:1), attributes the drivers of the Brazilian culture to five regions of dominance namely the 'Northern Brazilian folklore' which is popular for its festivals, followed by the '*Festas Juninas*' in the Northeast which is known not only for its lovely landscapes but also its culture of being extremely expressive, followed the Central-West region, also known as 'Brasilia architecture' and '*Festa do Divino*' which is known as the centre of the political decision making in the country. The south-eastern cultural liveliness is popularly known for its carnivals, as is

the European charm in Southern Brazil which has dominant traces of the European culture (Embratur, 2019:1).

The Brazilian education structure is a collaboration of national cultural influences on the organisational aspect of culture in schools, school leadership and management. It encompasses the complexities of how territorial vastness, cultural diversity and the education system are affected by the culture of the country (De Albuquerque Moreira & Rocha, 2018:5). The Brazilian Government created an experimental programme in 1995 that evaluated the academic performance of university students based on their cultural and societal background, called the '*prova*'. In 1997, the programme was extended to high school level, creating the ENEN (*Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio*), which provides learners with the necessary skills required to either choose to continue with their studies on a tertiary level, or enter the job market with the required cultural skill set (BCLF, 2020).

As estimated by the IBGE (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística*) (cited by Tirosch, 2020:1), the Brazilian indigenous population was roughly 897,000 with 305 ethnic communities and 274 languages in 2010. Of this population, 37.4% was aged 5 years or above and spoke an indigenous language, while 76.9% of them spoke Portuguese. Consequently, the schooling system had to become pluri-lingual and intercultural in its pedagogical material to provide learners from the indigenous community inter alia with activities related to disease prevention in both their school and community contexts. "The material offers to teachers' contents to work with students of different age groups, genres and school levels" (UNESCO, 2019:1).

2.2.1.2 Russian culture

In Europe and Asia, Russia is the largest country in terms of territory. Spanning from west to east, it consists of a diversity of geographical and ethnic differences (Kubilius, 2020:1). According to Kubilius (2020:1), the country's size and diversity allow for certain regions to maintain specific region-restricted cultural elements which are not typically found in other regions. In relation to culture, Riasanovsky (2018:9) states that like the country itself, the vibrant and unique culture of Russia developed over the years from a complicated interplay of native Slavic culture and borrowing from a wide variety of foreign cultures to become what it is today. In the Kievan period, spanning

from the tenth to the thirteenth century, such borrowing was mainly due to the regional influence from the Eastern Orthodox Byzantine. Later, during the Muscovite era, which spanned from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, the already existing Slavic and Byzantine culture was enriched and modified by the Asiatic influences of the Mongol hordes. The modern-day period, which commenced in the eighteenth century, further added Western European influence on the country's existing cultural fusion (Riasanovsky 2018:9).

As stated by Advantour (2020:1), the development of Russian culture has been heavily influenced by the country's geographical location extending from East to West. Its seemingly limitless diverse landscape is represented in both artistic and literary work as artists seek to portray the uniqueness of Russian reality. These works are greatly dependent on the region in which a particular artist resides. Due to such regional diversity, traditions evolved and meshed with existing cultures to gradually reshape and become what is seen as Russia's modern-day culture, however, it still differs from region to region (Advantour, 2020).

The country's evolution of culture is distributed over five phases, namely: the culture of ancient Russia, the thirteenth to seventeenth century culture, the culture of imperial Russia, Russian Soviet Union culture, and lastly, modern-day Russian culture (Bishhek, 2020). As mentioned by World Travel Guide (WTG, 2020:2), Russian culture tends to be both highly patriarchal and hierarchical, which can be seen by the chivalrous acts of males, but this also means that women are taken less seriously.

According to Webber (2011:215-216), cultural initiatives for change may come from within a school or its environment, since schools have become more open to improvements, post-Soviet Union. This enables them to clearly examine their strengths and weaknesses and be motivated to and capable of handling necessary changes. As a result, change has now become part of the school culture in an evolutionary approach to education as opposed to the stop-go reactionary model which was common in most schools earlier.

2.2.1.3 Indian culture

India's culture ranks among the world's oldest cultures. The country has no official language, although Hindi is the official government language. The Indian Constitution,

however, recognises 23 official languages. India is known as the birthplace of Buddhism and Hinduism, which are the two of the biggest religions in the world (Zimmermann & Pappas, 2017:1).

The Abhyasa is a practice followed widely in India and has been built on the foundational strength of Indian culture and ethos. It also believes that every individual is truly a world citizen and part of the human fraternity which is based on the pristine maxim that is "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*"- "*The Earth is a family*" (Gwalior, 2017).

Since school education is the provider of the tools of communication, it is important to note the role that language plays in socialising (i.e., transferring cultural influences), (Warsi, 2018:1). As reported by Murgai (2016:1), learners must be familiar with the existing native language of the country, and, because of this, schools give their learners the option of selecting their own native language including Hindi, Sanskrit and Urdu, amongst others. Furthermore, Murgai (2016) maintains that these options allow both educators and learners to understand their cultural pillars more intensely. Research by Warsi (2018:1) supports this by stating that school leaders and heads of departments are assisted by community elders, who play an important role in culturing the education of learners, since such elders often transfer stories and skills that younger generations were not aware of. School leaders tend to record these stories and skills, after which they write them down in the vernacular and English. Consequently, this then helps to carefully blend the present curriculum with the skills, knowledge and stories of the traditional community, making sure that learners grow up to be culturally aware and educated adults, who remain proud of their heritage (Warsi, 2018:2).

2.2.1.4 Chinese culture

China is said to be one of four ancient civilisations, along with Babylon, India, and Egypt and boasts a varied and vast geographic expanse of 3600 years of written history and rich, diverse, and unique yet harmoniously blended culture (Lin, 2017:2). It is an extremely large country in terms of both population and area; furthermore, its customs and traditions vary according to geography and ethnicity with its largest ethnic group being the Han Chinese. As in other countries, individuals in China create their

own culture within specific communities, which includes religion, food, style, marriage, music, and the morals that make up how such community members interact (Lin, 2017:2).

The Chinese culture, also known as '*Zhōnghuá wénhuà*', is one of the world's oldest cultures as it originated thousands of years ago and endures to this very day. Its ancient civilisation's culture exerted a profound influence on Chinese philosophy, virtue, etiquette, and traditions (Elman, 2018:21). In modern China, there are 56 officially labelled ethnic groups alone. China's majority ethnic group, the Han Chinese, are East Asian and constitute approximately 92% of the country's population. Moreover, they also make up about 95% of the Taiwanese (Han Taiwanese), 76% of Singaporean, 23% of Malaysian and 17% of the global populations, As a result, they are the world's largest ethnic group, numbering over 1.3 billion people.

Throughout Chinese history, many groups of non-Chinese ethnicity have integrated with the Han Chinese, retaining, and integrating their distinct ethnic identities. At the same time, the Han Chinese majority has maintained distinct linguistic and regional cultural traditions throughout the ages" (Elman, 2018:21).

Chinese education has been influenced greatly by the Confucian religion and its values for respect for seniority and authority. The Chinese education system culture is based on collectivism and power distance (Haarms *et.al*, 2018:3). Research by Basu-Zharku (cited by Haarms *et al.*, 2018:3) indicates that the collectivism aspect in culture in education can be related to identifying in-groups and out-groups, working on a task together and focusing on commonalities that can be found within the group. The power distance refers to the strong feeling of respect for age and the hierarchical position (Haarms *et.al*, 2018:3). Both collectivism and power distance are universally applicable concepts when studying human behaviour since these factors of cultural diversity tend to contribute to an ideological value, which is quite distinct in Chinese society, often referred to as '*Face*'. This term can be described in simple terms as "the need to be respected by others and not be embarrassed in social situations" (Teon, 2017:4). As a cultural characteristic, it can lead to misunderstandings in situations where Chinese students must attend Western-based educational institutions, since these place stronger cultural emphasis on questioning, discussions, and teacher-learner interactions. It is expected and encouraged because it is believed that the

value of classroom participation enhances academic performance (Teon, 2017:4), but Chinese students may be reluctant to participate because of their deeply rooted cultural beliefs (power distance).

As Bush and Haiyan (2013:60) state, Chinese culture in the People's Republic of China evolved through different stages, each its own respective influence on education and school leadership. Among these recognised stages are traditional culture, socialist culture, enterprise culture and patriarchal culture. These stages have developed sequentially to a certain extent, although they are all still relevant in the present-day. Traditional culture is reflected in continued respect for authority, collectivism, and harmony in schools. Socialist culture has, in many ways, reinforced aspects of traditional culture, while at the same time, further politicised the principal's role and enterprise culture has served to integrate market values into the education system. The influence of patriarchal culture continues to influence role of men and women in schools, and particularly in school leadership."

2.2.1.5 South African culture

South Africa is known to be one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world and has given the true meaning of the term 'Rainbow Nation'. The country has 11 official languages and eight further recognised languages, with each group bringing their vibrancy to the diversity (Showme Community Websites, 2009:1). South African culture has been found to have a good blend of Western technology and indigenous technology with a touch of Western traditions mixed with African tradition (Vigne *et al.*, 2020:10). In terms of culture, Vigne *et al.* (2020) note that South Africa provides an essential lesson of how, in the blending of culture, it can also collide, for example how an elite tar road can be a block away from the shack-filled township gravel roads.

Lottering (2018:3) believes that culture is an integral part of a human being as it shapes many facets of life and gives people insight into their understanding of the world. Lottering (2018:4-5) mentions that many factors influence the South African traditional culture, which includes the history of arts and crafts, ceremonies, dress and adornment of each cultural group, the homesteads, the original San rock art and all the other different aspects of each cultural group. These cultures include Sotho, Ndebele, Tswana, Pedi, Tsonga, Swati, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu, English and Afrikaans. Evason

(2015:5) adds that South African culture is greatly influenced by the country's rich history as is evident in its art, food, music, and literature.

Apart from people from European descent, there are four major ethnic groups in South Africa: the Nguni, which is made up of the Zulu, Xhosa, and Ndebele and Swati tribes, the Southern Sotho, the Shangaan-Tsonga, and lastly the Venda (Vigne *et al.*, 2020:4). The first two are the largest and will briefly be described in more detail in the next few paragraphs.

The Nguni group bases its beliefs on the presence of ancestral spirits, which tend to appear to them in dreams, and the power of a supreme being which seldom involves itself in the matters of mortals. Therefore, magic is believed to help heal the sick and get rid of bad luck, which is an evil spirit. A chosen diviner will communicate with spirits or make use of natural herbs and prayers to solve problems (Showme Community Websites, 2009:2).

Lottering (2018:5) states that there has been a clear distinction between genders and their respective responsibilities in the Nguni culture. Homestead-related duties are divided according to the sex, age, and rank of community members. This means that the young boys take the cattle out into the veld to graze, while the girls, alone or with their mothers, go to the river to fetch water. As a result, children are exposed to nature at an early age, inculcating in them deep and lasting understanding and empathy for their environment (Lottering, 2018:5). Dance has always been an important part of maintaining a sense of group solidarity, especially during times of stress, joy and change like before battles, at weddings or all the important transition ceremonies marking the entry to a new stage or group (Gentle, 2018:1).

Some of the cultural characteristics of the Southern Sotho groups, which include the Sotho, Pedi and Tswana tribes, are different from the Nguni groups such as the way they organise their villages and their marriages. Unlike the Nguni, the Sotho tend to organise their homes into villages instead of scattered homesteads. Furthermore, villages group men and women in the same village by age, with each age group being responsible for specific tasks (Showme Community Websites, 2009:2).

Potential brides are found within an individual's cousins on their maternal side (Kompi, 2016:1). Each Sotho age set graduates from one set of tasks to the next and this often

celebrated with rituals, and, in some cases, these include certain initiation ceremonies for boys and girls (Showme Community Websites, 2009). These initiations are seen as month-long ceremonies where initiates are taken into the bush during winter to partake in initiation processes (Showme Community Websites, 2009). Kompi (2016:1) further explains that Sotho speakers are distinguished from each other by means of praise names derived from animals and totems, while the Nguni are grouped by clans.

Pauls (2017:2) illustrate how the Basotho people are identified by their blankets, which they wear instead of coats or jackets. The designs on these blankets distinguish the respective villages from each other and include from aeroplanes to crowns to geometric shapes and patterns. Traditions of folk art include beadwork, sewing, pottery making, house decoration and weaving of functional items such as sleeping mats, baskets, and beer strainers which are manually woven from grass materials (Pauls 2017:2)

When the early Europeans settled in South Africa, they were from different cultures and languages. Dutch (originally from the Netherlands) was the most influential of these, and, as a result, it became the official European language of the region, which gradually transformed into a local pidgin, and evolved into the language now known as Afrikaans. Although it is heavily based on Dutch, Afrikaans has been influenced by other languages and have roots in English, Khoi, Xhosa, Asian Malay, Malagasy, San, Portuguese and French, despite many of the words sounding extremely different (Tami, 2019:2). The Afrikaans culture has a large population that still speaks the language as their first or second language and as such, it is an official language taught in most South African schools (Tami, 2019:2). This language's heritage and culture are deeply entwined with its character.

While South Africa has 11 official languages, Afrikaans or English are commonly used for communication and in schools.

2.2.2 Education systems

2.2.2.1 The Brazilian education system

As described by De Albuquerque Moreira and Rocha (2018:5), the Brazilian education system has been set up by the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988, and the Specific

Education Law (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional—LDB/1996*) of 20 December 1996. This legislation divides the principles, goals, and the structure of the country's education system into two main levels, namely basic and higher education levels, with the former comprising of three stages: early childhood education, primary education and secondary education. The higher education level includes bachelor's degrees, licentiates, technology graduates and postgraduate studies (De Albuquerque Moreira & Rocha, 2018:5).

The educational history of Brazil dates to 1549, through an agreement between King Dom Manuel III and the *Companhia de Jesus* (Jesuit priests) which made a certain priest, Padre Manoel da Nogueira, responsible for education. In present-day terminology, Brazilian education was "outsourced", as it was provided by the Portuguese State Agents (De Souza Vieira, 2011:125). De Souza Vieira (2011:126) support this by stating that some changes suggested by Marques de Pombal prompted the country and in 1759, teaching became more secular, with the educational infrastructure being controlled by the Catholic Church since some religious orders and congregations were already incorporated into their functioning.

Brazil's federative regime includes three spheres of power that play a role in education matters: federal union, state level and municipalities. The federal system is administrated by the Ministry of Education (MEC), while each state of the federation manages its own system through their secretaries of education, as well as the municipalities through their own secretaries. Public and private schools coexist in each sphere of the federation. The education service in public schools is free at all levels. Legislation defines the responsibilities of each federated entity regarding education. As far as public institutions are concerned, the union gives priority to university education, while the states give priority to secondary education. Municipalities are focused on early childhood to primary and secondary education, as do the federal districts (De Albuquerque Moreira & Rocha, 2018:5).

The Brazil education journey starts with preschool (including kindergarten) which is available to children up to the age of six (Transferwise, 2017a). The preschool is divided into two subcategories, namely the '*Maternal*', which is usually state funded for children between the ages of two and five years, and the '*Jardim*', which is sometimes private and is attended by children between the ages of three and six years

old. The prominent difference between these two school types in their educational role is that the '*Maternal*' acts more like a day-care, while the '*Jardim*' has a very academic approach and is therefore seen as the better precursor to primary school (Transferwise, 2017a:2). "Primary school, or *Ensino Fundamental*, is mandatory for children between the ages of 6-15 Five-year-olds can enter primary school, if they are due to turn six before the close of the first semester. Secondary school, or *Ensino Médio* in Brazil, is made up of students aged 15-18. At this stage, philosophy and sociology are added to the curriculum on top of the existing core subjects. The Brazilian school year usually starts at the beginning of February but is rescheduled in relation to when Carnival is celebrated in any given year. Students are typically in school for most of the year, except for July (which is a holiday month), and a government-mandated school holiday, *Recesso Escolar* at the end of the year" (Transferwise, 2017a:3).

The Brazilian education system is characterised by some wide disparities in resources, access, and quality due to geographic location, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity (Monroy *et al.*, 2019:1). Monroy *et al.* (2019:1) explain that the lower secondary pass rate in the main cities tend to be 30% higher than that of the undeveloped states, and the same is true for the upper secondary as it has a 23% difference between the cities and the rural areas. The higher education attendance is 47% in the rich regions of the society and only 5% in the poorer segment of the society. Unfortunately, good private schools, which tend to outshine the public schools in terms of learning outcomes, are so expensive that the fees can cover one poor household's total earnings. Therefore, these schools are reserved for the elite (Monroy *et al.*, 2019:2).

2.2.2.2 The Russian education system

During the Soviet Union era, education was highly centralised with the state owning and running nearly all the schools within its borders. The curriculum was rigid and aimed at indoctrinating the learners with the communistic way of living (Vodovozov, 2018:8). As a result, schools were forced to operate in overcrowded facilities with limited resources (Vodovozov, 2018:8).

Karlvägen (2019a:1) states that during the next decades the curricula for primary schools were systematically revised and altered, depending on the political and

economic situation in the country. In the 1970s, the number of grades in primary school was reduced to three. The educational crisis of the 1980s made it obvious that the standardised school programmes permeated by communist ideology required urgent changes. The 1984 school reform lowered the school starting age to six, thus, returning to a four-year primary school while trying to incorporate the world experience into Soviet education. The revolutionary political changes of the late 1980s initiated the "de-ideologization" and "depolarisation" of the country's school system.

In 1992, the Federal Government passed legislation that enabled non-Russian predominated regions to exercise some degree of autonomy in education, while still maintaining that diplomas can only be conferred in Russian, Bashkir and the Tatar languages (Vodovozov, 2018:8). However, only the federal government may design and distribute textbooks, they control the licensing of educators and set the requirements for instructions in the Russian language.

According to Potapova and Trines (2017:1), the Russian Government ensures that general education is free for everyone. Most schools are state-owned, coordinated by the education system of Russia but there are private schools as well. The education begins with preschool, which is not compulsory, but recommended, before going to the next level, being primary. The preschool level focuses on both the intellectual and physical aspect preparation for the primary level (Potapova & Trines, 2017:1). OECD (2016a:5) explains that general education schooling in Russia consists of three stages, namely the elementary level that has the Grades 1 to 4, the basic secondary level, which is made up of the Grades 5 to 9, and the upper secondary level that comprises Grades 10 to 11. There is no formal division between levels, and the learners (*'ucheniki'*) usually remain in the same building from Grades 1 to 11 with separate primary and secondary schools only existing in rural areas (OECD, 2016a:5).

The school year always starts on September 1. Though uniforms are no longer enforced in most schools, children, especially first graders, wear white shirts or blouses. Primary school students' study five or six days a week and usually have four 40–45-minute classes a day. The intervals between classes vary from five to 25 minutes" (Nikolaev & Chugunov, 2017:2).

As stated by Karlavägen (2019a:1), it takes 11 years to complete the secondary education level in Russia. Before a learner can enter the higher education system, they must possess both a basic general education certificate and their certificate of completion of the secondary education. The basic general education certificate is conferred after a learner has completed their full nine levels of general schooling where they can then choose to pursue the two additional years of secondary education where they will receive their certificate of complete secondary education after completion (Karlavägen, 2019a:1).

2.2.2.3 The Indian education system

The historical education background of the Indian people is fascinating as the Indian people used to follow what was known as the Gurukula education system, which was based on guru as the teacher (Akash, 2016:1). This meant that all who wished to study would send a request to the guru and if they were accepted, they would stay at the guru's home where they would learn all the activities and the guru would teach the children all they wanted to learn (Akash, 2016:1). This included teaching from the Sanskrit and the Holy Scriptures to mathematics and metaphysics. This type of learning was seen to be one that was closely related to the link between nature and life itself and not restricted to memorising information given (Akash, 2016:1).

Over time, two systems of education emerged, namely the Vedic and Buddhist systems. The Vedic system revolved around the Vedas, Vedangas and Upanishads, while the Buddhist system preached the thoughts of the major Buddhist schools. The language of education was Sanskrit for the Vedic system and Pali for the Buddhist system (Jain, 2018:2). Both systems of education had different subjects of study. The Vedic system comprised of the four Vedas (Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda), six Vedangas (ritualistic knowledge, metrics, exegetics, grammar, phonetics, and astronomy), the Upanishads, Tarka Shastra (logic and reasoning), Puranas (history), and more. The main subjects in the Buddhist system were the three Pitakas (Vinaya, Abhidhamma and Sutta), the most recognised works of all 18 Buddhism schools. Certain other subjects common to both the systems were arithmetic, military science, law, performing arts, ethics, art and architecture (Jain, 2018:2).

As time progressed, the British brought a revolution that would change the education system in the country. 1757 to 1947, which was the colonial period, came with the rise of various government universities in Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai. Along with these, several non-government and private schools were established by Western Christian missions to bring about the opportunity for elementary education (Akash, 2016:2).

Education of women become more dominant, and the curriculum ranged from Urdu, Persian, writing, language, arithmetic, needlework, and Islamic studies of Punjabi. English was believed to be the language that would make Indians more capable to receive knowledge over international borders and therefore become the medium of instruction (Akash, 2016).

Present-day India's education system includes primary, secondary, senior secondary education and higher education (Trines, 2018:1). Trines (2018) explains that elementary education comprises eight years of education, while secondary and senior secondary education consists of two years each, respectively. Higher education starts after passing the higher secondary education, while most post-graduation courses generally take two or three years to complete. Many colleges and institutes have emerged all over the country to provide better educational opportunities to learners. The development in the education sector has been one of the major contributors to the country's national progress (Trines, 2018:1).

2.2.2.4 The Chinese education system

Innovation is seen as a critical component of national power in any country as it propels it to develop new products or methods of production that can drive economic progress and later enable the state to tackle transnational challenges, such as climate change and global health crises (Gong, 2016:1). This is also true for China. Gong (2016) postulates that the ability of a country to cultivate its capacity for innovation rests heavily on its domestic education system, as a well-educated workforce - which is instrumental to technological and scientific discoveries - can propel the state to an apex of the increasingly innovation-based global economy. This is particularly salient for China as its leaders seek to push its economy up the global value chain. To promote sustainable development, its government has sought to improve educational quality and increase access across the country (Gong, 2016:1). The most notable

government policy in China is the 1986 Law on Nine-Year Compulsory Education, which calls for the achievement of the two basic levels, also known as *liangji*: universal enrolment among school-aged children from the age 6-15 years and full literacy among those under the age of 20. Other measures have centred on revising the national curriculum and enhancing teacher training programmes (Gong, 2016:2).

Higher education in China started with the establishment of the country's first universities in 1896. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese higher education developed largely in conformity with the Western university model. After this breaking point in Chinese history, Chinese education cut ties with the Western world and turned towards a university model more like that of the former Soviet Union (Karlavägen, 2019b:1). This meant a reconstruction of higher education during the early 1950s. During this time, larger and more comprehensive universities were broken up into smaller specialised institutions such as universities of engineering, agricultural colleges, medical colleges, and railway institutes. After the reorganisation of the 1950s, Chinese universities have since the 1990s returned to a more Western model with larger schools and more general education (Karlavägen, 2019b:21).

In 2014, China had the largest education system in the world with almost 260 million students and over 15 million teachers in about 514 000 schools (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2014). These numbers exclude graduate education institutions. China's education system is not only immense but also diverse as education is state-run, with little involvement from private providers in the school sector, and it seems to be increasingly becoming decentralised. The county-level governments have a primary responsibility of governing as well as the delivery of school education at primary level, and as for the most part, provincial authorities administer the higher education institutions (OECD, 2016b:9). However, in recent years, the Ministry of Education has shifted its direct control to a macro-level monitoring of the education system, as it steers education reform via laws, plans, budget allocation, information services, policy guidance and administrative means (NCEDR, 2008). In China, learners usually enrol in preschool at ages two or three, until the age of six. Since preschool education is not compulsory, and many pre-schools are privately owned,

most parents choose to start their children's education at primary level (OECD, 2016b:9).

The OECD (2015:11) states that the schooling age starts from as young as three up to 27, ending with a doctorate. In China, students must complete nine years of compulsory education. Most students spend six years in primary school, although a few school systems use a five-year cycle for primary school. As stated above, primary education starts at age six for most children. This is followed by three to four years of junior secondary education. Before the 1990s, secondary schools recruited students based on an entrance examination. To emphasise the compulsory nature of junior secondary schools, and as a part of the effort to orient education away from examination performance and towards a more holistic approach to learning, the government has replaced the entrance examination with a policy of mandatory enrolment, based on the area of residence (Loveless, 2014:1).

After finishing compulsory education, students can choose whether to continue with a three-year senior secondary education (UNESCO-UIS, 2016). There are five types of senior secondary schools in China, namely general senior secondary, technical or specialised secondary, adult secondary, vocational secondary and crafts schools. The latter four are referred to as secondary vocational schools. China has made significant efforts to expand participation in secondary vocational schools in recent years to meet its fast-evolving economic and manpower needs. In 2014, secondary vocational schools accounted for a little less than 22% of the total senior secondary school enrolment in China (UNESCO-UIS, 2016). Although senior secondary education is not compulsory, in 2014, 95% of junior secondary graduates continued their studies (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2015).

2.2.2.5 The South African education system

In the past, the South African education system reflected its apartheid and colonial-era policies in the education levels of different ethnic groups (Watson, 2017:1). For example, the 2011 national census showed a glimpse of the divide in the statistics between the Black, Coloured, Indian, Asian and White citizens who had completed their high school, where the White population still had higher numbers of citizens who Grade 12 (last level of high school) in comparison to the other ethnic populations

(despite the White population being smaller in numbers). This is widely believed to be due to the legacy of the apartheid-era, where people were defined by their ethnic identity to restrict their social and political choices. A person's ethnicity determined the school they were allowed to attend, the medium of instruction that they would receive their class in, the type of syllabus they would receive, the course they could be offered, and the institutions that they would be allowed to enrol in. This, however, changed when the apartheid era collapsed in the 1990s (Adeaga (2018:1).

Macha (2017:5) reports that, in the 1990s, while the Black population still faced economic hardships, they were no longer controlled by the government policies restricting their opportunities in terms of education. Macha (2017) further states that the restriction of the past have hampered the English language proficiency of Black people, who makes up nearly 80% of South Africa's total population. To help counteract this problem, English education was introduced to first graders after 1994 and all subjects were also taught in English from Grade 4 onwards (Macha, 2017:5).

As mentioned by Expatica (2020:1), the South African education system comprises of three main types of schools aside from international schools, which include public government-funded schools, the governing body-funded schools, as well as private schools. Public schools that rely mainly on government funding tend to be operated at a local level according to province, which means that the quality of education varies significantly between the different areas in each province, as well as from one province to another (Expatica, 2020).

In the opinion of Mbiza (2018:1), educational standards tend to be higher in the bigger cities of each province, however, a lack management of government funding results in certain schools having neither enough qualified teachers nor the specialist equipment required by some subjects. Expatica (2020:1) reports that public schools, which were known as "Model C schools" during the apartheid era solely because the schools were not only dependent on the government funding but also on their governing bodies and parents, tend to have better educational standards and facilities. Lastly, private schools have a good reputation for their smaller class sizes in comparison to that of a public school (Expatica 2020:1). Mbiza (2018) states that private schools, like most top city schools, tend to have more extracurricular activities,

including the teaching of foreign languages, and in some cases, their learning system is closely related to those of the United States and Britain.

The South African school year usually extends from January to November annually. State schools follow a four-term system, while private schools follow a three-term system (Expatica, 2020).

The South African education system has three main components:

- General Education and Training, also known as the GET level, which comprises Grade R up to and including Grade 9 (Nuffic, 2015). As reported by Vigne *et al.* (2020:9), the country's constitution guarantees basic education as a right. As a result, these grades are known as the compulsory school years and every child must complete all nine levels (Grade R, which is the reception year, is not part of the compulsory schooling).
- The next level is the Further Education and Training, known as the FET level, which starts with Grade 10 up to and including Grade 12. This level includes the academic schooling as well as intermediate vocational education at a technical college, community college or private college (Nuffic, 2015).
- The last level is Higher Education and Training, also known as HET, which includes university and college levels (Nuffic, 2015).

As mentioned by Vigne *et al.* (2020:9), South Africa has 11 official languages and the government's policy regarding language in schools is that school pupils in primary schools have the right to be educated in their home language when admitted to a school. This home language must be one of the 11 official languages. Vigne *et al.* (2020) highlight that from Grade 3, pupils are obliged to take another approved language in addition to their language of education. All official languages may be taken as either the home language, first additional language and/or and second additional language, depending on the school's demographics. For other subjects, from Grade 4 onwards, the language of instruction is English and/or Afrikaans (Nuffic, 2015).

The structure of the South African education system starts with the kindergarten level, with the primary school level divided into foundation phase being Grade 1-3, followed by the intermediate phase, which includes Grade 4-6 and ending with the first Grade

of the senior phase being Grade 7 (Smith, 2020:1). Once all these grades have been passed, the learner is ready to enter high school, which has the two other grades of the senior phase, namely Grades 8 and 9. Grade 9 is the last compulsory grade, after which learners may choose to not continue with their FET schooling, which comprises Grades 10-12. Grade 12 is the last grade in the formal schooling level (Expatica, 2020:1). Smith (2020) explains that learners may choose to continue with their schooling on the HET level after receiving their matriculation endorsement in Grade 12 and then progress to the different NQF (National Qualification Framework) levels according to their matriculation marks.

2.2.3 External determinants

Determinants influencing each of the BRICS member states' education systems can be either internal or external. Internal determinants depend on how the present situation of the education system enables or limits its further development (Steyn, 2017) while external determinants are regarded as the external factors which should be recognised in the description or planning of an education system, and which also relate to the target group of the education system (Steyn, 2017).

As an example, in terms of language as a determinant, section 29(2) of the *Constitution of South Africa* (1996) confers upon everyone the right to be taught in the language of his or her choice, where this is reasonably practicable, and to cater to the country's diversity the same constitution provides for 11 official languages. Nonetheless, there seems to be a shift towards unilingualism within the public sector (Steyn, 2017), which is an internal determinant influencing the educational sector.

Language further plays a role in the development of a child, in the educational context, language is important for comprehension and application of knowledge (Kelly, 2010:2). The role of the teacher in the ideal educational process covers four elements: firstly, the teacher and the learner determine and validate what the learner needs to know, secondly based on what is determined, the teacher may provide additional declarative knowledge. Thirdly the teacher and the learner negotiate the meaning of what is being taught to them - the assumption is that the teacher will clarify points for the learner, but in the best exchanges, the teacher also gains understanding. Lastly, through

repetitions of steps two and three, both the teacher and the learner advance in their knowledge, and the learners' knowledge is validated by the teacher (Kelly, 2010:2).

Unfortunately, a great amount of actual schooling time is spent conveying information, rather than ensuring comprehension of the work being done, this often makes it difficult to have the formation of an interactive learning environment in which learning is an ongoing process shared between the teacher and learner (Jones, 2012: 240). Jones (2012: 240) also notes that the difference in knowledge between teachers and learners is so great that it simultaneously justifies and impedes the educational process. In the limited amount of time spent in a class, teachers conveying information do so at the expense of negotiation of meaning (Kelly, 2010:2).

Science and technology are also determinants impacting on aspects like social, economic, and political life, as the development in science and technology are important for the development of a country. If, for example, the South African education system aims to create a community of lifelong learners, technology plays an important role in the development of a learning society. However, most schools in South Africa cannot afford this as they do not have enough funding. Innovative ways to provide learners with access to technology will have to be created (Steyn, 2017).

Another big factor is the socioeconomic situation. Steyn (2017) reports that the need to alleviate poverty is high on the agenda of almost all countries. More hope is directed towards education as an opportunity to escape from poverty. Research by Morgan *et al.* (2009:37) indicated that children from low socioeconomic household backgrounds and poor communities develop academic skills slower than children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Low socioeconomic circumstances increase the chances of a child having poor cognitive development, language, memory, socio-emotional processing and, consequently poor income and health in adulthood (Morgan *et al.*, 2009:37).

Families of higher socioeconomic status have the income and the time to supplement their children's schooling with educational camps, private lessons in art, music or performance, test preparation and targeted tutoring. Applying these extracurricular tools can lead to higher test marks and better grades. On the other hand, learners of lower socioeconomic status are not only largely without access to these additive

programmes, but they may be at a disadvantage at school (Young, 2018) due to not having access to private lessons and additional tutoring etc.

Other external determinants to consider are climate and geography, the political situation, philosophy of life as well as culture, which is what this current study is based upon.

2.2.4 Comparative method

Comparison is a fundamental tool of analysis as it sharpens our powers of description and plays a role in concept formation when it brings the focus to the similarities in topics that are being dealt with. The comparison method is usually used when testing a theory as it can contribute to the inductive discovery of new theories or hypotheses (Collier, 2011). The method is useful when looking at the different theoretical frameworks affecting the topic at hand, being the cultural deficit theory, the expectation theory, as well as the cultural difference theory, which was found to be the most relevant one for the research being conducted. Background on each of these theories are provided in the sections below.

2.2.4.1 The cultural deficit theory

A cultural deficit theory encompasses two parts, one being the achievements of an individual's attribution to cultural factors alone without regard to the individual's characteristics, and the second being the acknowledgement of failure to a cultural group. Individuals from some cultural groups will therefore lack the ability to achieve based on their cultural background (Silverman, 2011:446).

This theory further suggests that deficiencies experienced in the home environment result in the shortcomings of the learners when it comes to certain skills, knowledge, and behaviour that contributes to poor school performance (Watson, 2017).

The cultural deficit theory in an education setting can be applied because learners come from different backgrounds and have different home environments. For example, some children are given opportunities to read in their home environments while others do not have the same opportunity which may leads to those learners having a bad attitude towards reading (Watson, 2017). Reading plays a significant role

in the vocabulary development of learners and if they do not have access to the appropriate resources at the correct time, it impairs their cognitive development. These learners will arrive at school with inadequate vocabulary which affects them negatively since they will be at a deficit in terms of those learners with better vocabulary - if a learner cannot understand what they are taught due to limited vocabulary, they cannot learn (and this is not limited to language teaching only).

2.2.4.2 The exception theory

This theory looks at what teachers expect from their learners and focuses on how they treat their learners. If teachers do not expect much from a group of learners, this low expectation tends to have a negative impact on learners' manner compared to those who are imparted a high expectation from the teacher. This is based on individual teachers' approaches to group teaching: if they have a negative expectation of the group, their method of teaching is often aligned with this. Consequently, if teachers have a poor expectation of their learners, the learners' performance will be poor as the method of delivery from the teacher would likely be negative (Watson, 2017).

This theory was tested by Rosenthal and Jacobson as quoted by (Watson, 2017) by means of a Pygmalion effect study, in which teachers were told their learners were due for an intellectual growth spurt during a particular school year. The teachers had a goal to yield a positive report from this spurt which led to the approach to their teaching being positive and, therefore they had higher expectations of their learners. This led to positive results from the learners, even with the learners being a group of average academic performers. It was concluded that learners who experience a high expectation, seek to reach the level of expected behaviour. Correspondingly, learners who experience low expectations act to meet the level of expected behaviour. The gist of this theory is that the learners perform based on the level of expectation they receive/perceive from their teachers (Watson, 2017).

2.2.4.3 The cultural difference theory

This theory is based on the idea that learners are raised in diverse cultural settings and, therefore, their approaches to learning and education may differ. Teachers must be aware of these differences as they affect learners' views of their school atmosphere and home environment and affect the degree to which they are able to find balance

between the two. People from different cultural traditions may have approaches that differ from a particular mainstream education approach used in the school. As such, it is important that teachers find a way to incorporate different teaching and learning methods in their classes to accommodate the different beliefs and cultural notions of individual learners. However, this requires teachers to not only develop an understanding of their learners' culture but to also know them as individuals. It is crucial that all learners are treated the same, irrespective of cultural notions (Watson, 2017).

The cultural difference theory was identified as the most relatable theory for the current study's research topic; hence it was chosen to be the main theory that is being applied in this study.

2.3 Summary

This chapter presented a literature review of key concepts concerning the topic at hand, including culture, and an overview of the education systems of Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa and China and how these systems change in relation to governmental and social development over time. From this investigation, it is noted that the various education systems in the BRICS countries are different in certain areas, yet alike in others.

It is evident that culture plays a pivotal role learners' upbringing and social development. The chapter investigated the manner in which the various factors (external determinants) of education systems influence educational outcomes.

Lastly, different theories to consider for a research study such as this were investigated, from which the comparative method was selected as the most suitable.

In the next chapter, the research design and methodology will be discussed, while unpacking the brief descriptions touched on in chapter one of the study. The chapter will also provide a better understanding of the reasoning for the chosen research design and method.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 provided readers an overview of previous knowledge, the literature, and research applicable to the present study and its research topic. It concentrated on the key concepts relating to the research question and the literature review looked at culture as a whole and how it is dealt with within each country. The chapter also briefly explored the education system of all BRICS member states and the functioning of each. In addition, the comparative method was discussed in detail, along with the external determinants that may influence individual education systems.

This chapter introduces the research methodology for the study - being the qualitative method - which focuses on the case study methodology approach regarding how culture influences the education system of the BRICS member states. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of culture from an education perspective in terms of the BRICS member states and provides a theoretical perception from the data to have a better understanding of culture as an external determinant in this regard.

3.2 Research design

A research design can be defined a master plan for a research study, based on the methods used to collect evidence for a study and answer its specific research questions. A proper research design ensures that the evidence obtained in a study enables researchers to address research problem as effectively and unambiguously as possible. The evidence can be collected by utilising surveys, interviews, experiments, observations, archival research, document data collection, and/or a combination of these methods (Kirshenblatt-Gimblet, 2020:2; Sileyew, 2019:58; Vogt *et al.*, 2012:16). It follows that the research design of any study is an important factor since everything else relating to it flows from the specific design choice that is made. As such, this choice is that ultimately closely and fundamentally tied to investigators' research questions and theories (Vogt *et al.*, 2012:16).

In order to achieve the objectives of the present study, a qualitative research method was used. This method, based on social science, allows the researcher to study social

and cultural phenomena by observing the feelings, thoughts, behaviours, and beliefs of a societal majority (Aziz, 2015:39). Typically, this type of research can involve narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, case studies, appreciative enquiries, or action research, depending on which is best suited to answer the research question most effectively (Bhandari, 2020:2). Overall, qualitative research focuses on understanding the research query from a humanistic and idealistic approach (Aspers & Corte, 2019:142).

3.2.1 Methodology

As mentioned above, the research approach applied in this study to answer the research question, is the qualitative method of research. Rehman and Alharti (2016:52) define methodology as the guide that leads the researcher in their decision of the type of data that will be required for the study and which data collection tool will be best suited for the study. It is the specific means of analysing and collecting data, the method chosen depends on the with culture as the phenomenon being investigated (Rehman & Alharti, 2016:52). This particular study employs of the latter, which will now be briefly discussed to show why it was regarded as relevant for this study.

The quantitative research design is based on the testing of objective theories by examining the relationship between variables. It uses a deductive approach, which allows for a generalisable design, however, because this approach is more structured, the complexity of the social world may not always acknowledge (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:40). Qualitative research is the process of naturalistic enquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within its natural setting. This type of research focuses on the 'why', rather than the 'what' of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of people through making everyday agents of their lives (Abram, 2015:3).

One of the characteristics of qualitative research is that it is more appropriate when working with a smaller sample. While its outcomes may not be measurable and quantifiable, its advantage is that it offers a complete description and analysis of the research subject without limiting either the nature of the participants' responses or the

scope of the research (Langkos, 2014:24). However, Langkos (2014:25) mentions that the effectiveness of this type of research is that is densely based on the researchers' abilities and skills, since outcomes may not be perceived as reliable if they come from the researchers' judgements and interpretation of the data. It is for this reason that this research methodology is appropriate for smaller samples since the results can be perceived as reflective of the opinions of a wider population (Langkos, 2014:25).

Qualitative researchers are known for their use of multiple systems of enquiry for their study of the human phenomena, including case study and historical analysis, rather than logical and statistical procedures (Abram, 2015:3). Attia and Edge (2017:34) concur that qualitative research demands an empathic ability to relate to social and psychological realities other than one's own. Furthermore, humility that acknowledges that a particular standpoint may be altered, is required (Attia & Edge, 2017:34).

The major focus areas of qualitative research are individuals, societies and cultures, and language and communication. Although there may be many methods of enquiry in qualitative research, its most common assumptions are that knowledge is subjective rather than objective, and that the study's researcher learns from participants in order to understand the meaning of the participants' contribution. Consequently, the researcher attempts to always maintain a position of neutrality when engaged in the research process to ensure the rigour and trustworthiness of their study (Abram, 2015:3).

3.2.1.1 Case study methodological approach

Since this study makes use of a qualitative methodology as its research design, it will utilise a case study methodological approach. This approach allows for an in-depth and multi-faceted exploration of complex issues in real-life settings. As a result, it can be advantageously used by studies that require in-depth knowledge on a specific issue, event, or a phenomenon of interest, within a natural real-life context (Crowe, *et.al.* 2011:1). Further, it enables an in-depth, comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon as it allows for a pragmatic and flexible research approach across a range of different disciplines (Harrison, *et al.* 2017). Ridder (2017:282) echoes

Harrison's sentiment by stating that "case study research scientifically investigates into a real-life phenomenon in-depth and within its environmental context".

A case study approach can therefore assist researchers to identify the phenomena being investigated, and as a result, may lead to both research questions and problems (Coy, 2019:73). Coy (2019) maintains that the research question guides the case study in identifying an activity, event or programme that is overlooked and has or can change over time with the use of research. For this reason, the researcher tends to make use of purposive sampling as the participants have the information sought out for by the inquiry within the perimeters of the study. Stake (cited by Coy, 2019:74) further states that the case study approach focuses on experience, identifying emerging themes, utilisation of the interpretation of data, engaging in dependable and credible data analysis and eventually asserting the lesson from the case.

For the purpose of this study, we focus on culture as the case study phenomenon, making it a holistic approach case study design focusing on the single phenomenon of culture in the education system of the BRICS member states.

3.2.1.2 Paradigm

The paradigm chosen for research helps to define the framework or the model where world views or belief systems for the nature of knowledge and existence are derived from (Cohen & Crabtree, 2016:1). Sławecki (2018:9) states that a paradigm is working within a certain framework of socially established and accepted views that gives ways to arrive at the conclusion of the research or study. Qualitative research favours two main dimensions in this regard: the interpretive perspective, which focuses on uncovering its participants' views on the topic as well as the critical perspective which happens to build on the interpretive perspective, however, it also examines ways in which (Lapen, *et al.*, 2011). For this study, the interpretivism paradigm is applied.

The interpretive perspective is generally based on constructed social actors and people's perspective of a given situation (Wahyuni, 2012:71). Rehman and Alharti (2016:55) assert that the aim of interpretive research is not to determine universality, context and value free knowledge and truth, rather it seeks to comprehend the interpretations of individuals of the social phenomena they interact with. Furthermore,

it acknowledges that individuals have different backgrounds, experiences and assumptions which contribute to the ongoing construction of the reality existing in their broader social context through social interaction. Subsequently, these human perspectives and experiences are subjective (Wahyuni, 2012:71). Ryan (2018:43) mentions that subjectivism considers that there are multiple and varied perspectives of what may be perceived as real. Therefore, subjectivism asserts that our perceptions, experiences, and feelings make up our reality. Interpretivism has a 'relativist' ontological perspective since relativists propose that reality is only comprehensible through socially constructed meanings and there is no one shared reality (Ryan, 2018:48).

As stated by Jansen (2016:23), this paradigm allows the social context, conventions, norms and standards of a particular person or community to be seen as crucial elements in the assessment and understanding of human behaviour. Since the behaviour is constituted by social convention, interpretation is required as the facts do not speak for themselves in this case (Jansen, 2016:23).

3.3 Population sampling

The population of a study is described by Fazilah (2015:41) as amongst others, target community or group of people which will be involved or selected for the study by the researcher (Fazilah, 2015:41). Rafeedali (2017:1) defines the population as the comprehensive group of individuals, institutions, objects, and so forth, with a common characteristic that forms the core interest of a researcher's particular study. A population group is therefore not restricted to a mere physical group of people but is rather a specific group that aids in the sampling process.

Sampling is a technique used by researchers to systematically select a relatively small number of representative items or individuals from a predefined population to serve as subjects for data collection in terms of the objectives of their study (Sharma, 2017:749). Qualitative research has four main methods that can assist in the selection process of the population (Maree & Pietersen, 2016:197). Methods of sampling include snowball, convenience, quota, and purposive sampling and are used to sample the population that will be used. These methods are used mainly in studies of limited time to do the research quickly but efficiently, where there are preliminary studies that need

to be done, in the development stage of a survey, when financial resources are limited and lastly where the population is difficult to access (Maree & Pietersen, 2016:197).

As there are no financial resources or time to physically conduct the study in the respective BRICS countries' education systems, purposive sampling was selected for this study. This sampling method will allow the researcher to handpick data and focus only on information that is relevant and required (Sharma, 2017:751).

This study uses documents outlining each country's official education system policies and their developments through relevant, consistent changes country wide. The official documented resources from each country, official policies, legislation, constitutions, and ministries of education, from which the main resources are obtained from the population giving the historical and cultural foundation for the study.

3.4 Data generation

Data collection for qualitative research can be done in many ways, such as observations, interviews, focus groups, visual and audio material, as well as document data collection (Hawkins, 2018:493). The observation method regards the researcher as an outsider, or a participant-observer and it is intentionally unstructured to allow it to be free-flowing. A potential problem that may arise from using this method is that it can lack objectivity (Iyamu, 2018:2250). The interview method can produce a great deal of information as it tends to be unstructured and open-ended. This method may occasionally make use of focus groups to get the data. The audio and video material method focuses on photographs, art objects, videotapes, or any other forms of sound (Iyamu, 2018:2250). Qualitative data collection makes complex ethical issues more apparent because of the personal nature that comes into play when qualitative methods are used (Mertens, 2018:33). Barret and Twycross (2018:63) believe that qualitative data collection needs to be holistic, rich and nuanced to allow the themes and findings to emerge through careful analysis thereof.

The method of data collection that was chosen for this study is that of documents and textual data which focuses on public documents, such as newspapers, minutes of meetings and official reports. The document study, which is also known as document

analysis, refers to the review by the researcher of written materials which includes, but is not limited to, personal and non-personal documents such as archives, annual reports, guidelines, policy documents, diaries, or letters (Busetto, *et. al.* 2020:3). The reason for this method of data collection is based on the variety in countries and the need to look at each country's individual system and the impact of culture on that system. Official documents that have been made available for public use like the education policies of the countries, their constitutions, and their different curriculum documents, like the CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy) for South Africa and the CISCE (Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations) and CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) in India will be used for the research.

3.5 Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis for qualitative research by means of conversational analysis is the study of the general interactive talk in the attempts to describe the orderliness, structure, and sequential patterns of the interaction (Nieuwenhuis, 2016c:111). Hoey & Kendricks (2016:2) describes this method of analysis as that which is inductive and micro-analytic in its study of social human interaction and offers the researcher a well-developed descriptive tool for exploring conversational interaction while meticulously supporting the empirical procedure of the analysis method. Hermeneutics is another approach to consider - this is the philosophical approach to human understanding of textual data, hermeneutic circle, understanding the text as a whole and the interpretation of certain parts (Nieuwenhuis, 2016c:112). Gadamer, cited by Van Leeuwen *et al.* (2017:2) defines it as the science or the art of interpreting a philosophical framework and research methodology of understanding the world and human experiences while giving special attention to the environment of human science. The analysis focuses on understanding rather than explaining, seeking to acknowledge the situated location of the interpretation while recognising the role of historicity and language in interpretation; as such, it views enquiry as a conversation and is comfortable with ambiguity (Van Leeuwen *et al.*, 2017:3).

Content analysis is a third option - it is the systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories, based on the explicit rules of coding (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:112). A successful content analysis is shaped by

data that can be condensed into concepts that describe the research phenomenon by creating categories, a model, concepts, conceptual systems, and conceptual maps with the help of the research question which specifies what to analyse and what to create. The content analysis abstraction process is the phase during which concepts are created and some of these aspects of the process can be readily defined, however, it is also moderately depending on the researcher's insight or intuitive action, which may be very difficult to describe to others (Elo, *et al.*, 2014:2).

This study uses discourse analysis, which is concerned with studying the written text and trying to illuminate the ways in which the dominant forces in society construct versions of reality that may favour their interests and uncover the ideological assumptions that are hidden in the words of written text or oral speech (Nieuwenhuis 2016c:112).

It is important to remember that discourse analysis is not made up of only one approach but rather incorporates a series of interdisciplinary approaches that can be used to explore the many different social domains of the different types of studies (Clark & Vealé, 2018:482). Mullet (2018:119) defines discourse as the creative use of language as a social practice that consists of talks, text and media that help to express the ways of knowing, experiencing, and valuing the world. Boréus & Bergström (2017:24) depict this particular method of analysis as systematically describing the data in successive parts of the text, as nothing is measured or counted. For this study, the content will be broken down into what relevant documents have to say about the topic, i.e., the cultural influence on the education system.

3.6 Validity and reliability

While reliability is referred to as the stability of findings, validity refers to the truthfulness of findings (Mohajan, 2017:59). According to Hayashi *et al.* (2019:98), validity in a qualitative research design may have many different meanings, such as rigour, trustworthiness, appropriateness or even quality, and it can be described in a great variety of terms. Validity, as mentioned by FitzPatrick (2019:211) is dependent on the purpose and context of the research and refers to the conclusions based on methods used to address validity threats that may be significant to the research.

Hayashi *et al.* (2019:99) further explain that validity can be divided into two categories, namely internal validity, which is based on whether there is a casual relationship between two variables, and external validity, which questions whether the results of the study can be generalised beyond the specific research context. Trustworthiness will be one of the main aspects that affect this study as it focuses on how data is collected and classified, especially when dealing with verbal and textual data. The reliability aspect uses different instruments to measure stability on separate occasions (Queirós *et al.*, 2017:371).

This study used the crystallisation method to ensure that the data that is collected is valid and trustworthy enough to draw accurate conclusions. Crystallisation allows for a deeper, more complex understanding of a phenomenon, instead of looking at it in a fixed and rigid manner (Nieuwenhuis, 2016c:216). The information found during the data collection will be vetted against the body of scholarship and the chosen theoretical framework. The key aspects looked at in the body of scholarship will be checked to make sure that the data corroborates and confirms the reason for the study. The main question to keep in mind when dealing with the data and to be sure that it is valid and trustworthy, is when it can answer the research question and/or the main aspects of the research being done.

3.7 Ethical consideration

For this study, the ethical guidelines of the North-West University with the following ethics number given ethics number NWU-01002-21-A2, which was given and used and upheld throughout the study since there were no physical participants that will be used. The research was done in an honest manner avoiding any form of biased language or reporting. The research will be presented in a manner as not plagiarise in the reporting of the data being sure not to misrepresent or fabricate any data collected.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has provided an in-depth look at the methodology that will be used during the study. Different research design options open to researchers were examined so that there is a deeper understanding of the specific research design that was chosen for this study, i.e., the qualitative research design. The specific paradigm that was

chosen and the reason why it was seen to be the best suited for this study, was also discussed.

Furthermore, the method of sampling which is used (being purposive sampling) and the data collection method and data analysis and interpretation were discussed. Trustworthiness, validity and reliability in terms of the study were explained as ethical measures to ensure that the study is reliable and unbiased throughout.

In Chapter 4, the data that has been collected will be analysed and compared to the of the body of scholarship to find the differences and similarities between the five BRICS countries, focusing specifically on culture in their respective education systems.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 focused on the study's research design and the methodology chosen to execute the process. Firstly, it provided some definitions and clarified various aspects thereof. The study's research paradigm was examined in detail in order to provide insight into the interpretive perspective. Furthermore, it presented the population and method of sampling, combined with the data collection method, concentrating on the relevant methods involved. Lastly, it discussed trustworthiness, validity, and reliability of the study and how it can be measured.

Chapter 4 provides an analysis and interpretation of the study's collected data by means of identified themes in each of the BRICS countries' official documents. In addition, it touches on relevant literature and research. It is important to analyse the data collected to answer the research question: what is the nature of culture as an external determinant on the education systems of the BRICS member states? The aim of the study is to determine the nature of culture as an external determinant of the education system of the BRICS member states.

As cited by Vosloo (2014:355), Marshall and Rossman describe data analysis as the process of bringing order, meaning and structure to mass-collected data. While it does not proceed linearly, it is the process of making sense, theorising, and interpreting data that signifies a search for general statements among categories of data. The data in this study was analysed by examining the similarities and differences between the education systems of the five BRICS countries: what they have in common regarding their respective constitutions, regulations, policies, and acts; and what complements or contradicts each other.

4.2 Data collection

Data was collected from the five countries' constitutions, education policies and curriculums. Some countries have legislation that could be investigated by focusing on the themes and how each country finds a way to incorporate these themes in their systems.

Data in the table is discussed under key words/themes relating to each of the BRICS countries, followed by a discussion in terms of relevant literature review across all five countries. The key words/themes are: Education Sector, Cultural Influence, Curriculum, Unity in Diversity and Subject-based (promoting culture).

Table 4-1: Data interpretation.

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
A. THEME: EDUCATION SECTOR				
Article 205 of the Brazilian Constitution (1988) determines that education is the right of all and the duty of the government (<i>Estado</i>) and the family, must be promoted and encouraged with societal collaboration, seeking the full development of the individual, preparation for the exercise of citizenship, and qualification for work. The Constitution states that the government must fulfil the duty to free compulsory	Article 43 of the Russian Constitution (1993) provides for the right to education as follows: 1. Everyone shall have the right to education. 2. General access and free preschool, secondary and secondary vocational education in State and municipal educational institutions and enterprises shall be guaranteed. 3. Everyone shall have the right to receive on a	The Indian Constitution (1950) under the fundamental rights in section 21(A) states that "the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to 14 years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine". Section 21(B) states that "education is on the concurrent list of shared subject matter, which enables both the central government and the individual states to regulate education."	Article 19 of the People's Republic of China (1982) Constitution states that the citizen shall have the right and obligation to receive an education. All citizens, regardless of ethnic group, race, sex, occupation, property status or religious belief, shall enjoy equal opportunities for education in keeping with the law. Article 10 states that the state, considering the characteristics and needs of the different minority ethnic groups, aids	In terms of section 29(1)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996, everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education. Section 29(1)(b): To further education, which the state, through measures, must make progressively available and accessible. Section 29(2) Everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
elementary education from four to 17 years of age. Article 208 states that access to compulsory and free education is a subjective public right. Elementary education in Brazil is free in all state schools and compulsory for all citizens between the ages of 7 and 14. Secondary education is not compulsory, but it is still free.	competitive basis free higher education in State and municipal educational institutions and enterprises. 4. Basic general education shall be compulsory. Parents or guardians shall ensure that children receive a basic general education. 5. The Russian Federation shall establish federal State educational standards and shall support various forms of education and self-education. Education is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 15 consisting of primary school for ages 6-10 and senior school for ages 10-15.	Section 45 secures, under the provision for early childhood care, education to children below the age of six years. The State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.	the development of educational undertakings in regions inhabited by the minority ethnic groups. The State supports and assists the development of educational undertakings in the outlying and poverty-stricken areas. The State supports and develops educational undertakings for the disabled. Article 19(2): The state runs schools of various types, makes primary education compulsory and universal, develops secondary, vocational, and higher education, and promotes preschool education. Article 45(1): Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the duty as well as the right to receive education.	public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable. In order to ensure the effective access to, and implementation of, this right, the state must consider all reasonable educational alternatives, including single medium institutions. The South African Schools Act (SASA), 84 of 1996 is aimed at ensuring that all learners have access to quality education without discrimination and makes schooling compulsory for children aged seven to 15.

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
			The Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China states under Article 2: The state shall institute a system of nine-year, compulsory education. Article 4: The state, the community, schools, and families shall, in accordance with the law, safeguard the right to compulsory education of school-age children and adolescents. Article 5: All children who have reached the age of six shall enrol in school and receive compulsory education for the prescribed number of years, regardless of sex, nationality, or race. In areas where that is not possible, the beginning of schooling may be postponed to the age of seven. Article 7: Compulsory	

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
			education shall be divided into two stages: primary school education and junior middle school education. Once primary education has been made universal, junior middle school education shall follow. The department in charge of education under the State Council shall decide on the duration of each stage (National People's Congress Order no. 38).	

HIGHLIGHTS FROM LITERATURE: EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education in the present Indian education system includes primary, secondary, senior secondary education and higher education. Elementary education has eight years of education, while secondary and senior secondary education consists of two years of education, respectively. Higher education starts after passing the higher secondary education in India, while most post-graduation courses are generally having a two- or three years duration to complete. Many colleges and institutes have emerged all over the country to provide better educational opportunities to the students. The development in the education sector has been one of the big contributors to the country's national progress (Akash, 2016). In China, learners must complete nine years of compulsory education. Most students spend six years in primary school, though a few school systems use a five-year cycle for primary school. Primary education starts at age six for most children. This is followed by three to four years of junior secondary education which is followed by the secondary schools.

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
To emphasise the compulsory nature of junior secondary schools, after finishing compulsory education, students can choose whether to continue with senior secondary education (Loveless, 2014:1). The Russian education begins with the preschool, which is not compulsory but recommended before going to the next level being primary that is part of the general education programme (Potapova & Trines, 2017:1). The general education school in Russia is made up of three stages, namely the elementary level that has the Grade 1 to 4, the basic secondary level, which is made up of the Grade 5 to 9, and the upper secondary level that is Grade 10 to 11. There is no formal division between the levels (OECD, 2016a:5). It takes 11 years to complete the secondary education level. However, before a learner can enter the higher education system, they have to possess both the basic general education certificate and their certificate of complete secondary education. The basic general education certificate is received after a learner has completed their full nine levels of general schooling where they can then choose to pursue the two additional years of secondary education where they will receive their certificate of complete secondary education after completion (Karlavägen, 2019a:1). The structure of the South African education system starts with the kindergarten level also known as 'Grade 0' or 'Grade R'. The primary school level is divided into the foundation, intermediate and senior phases. The high school level is divided into the last compulsory schooling phase of the senior level as well as the FET phase which ends in Grade 12. The formal schooling level is complete after Grade 12. A learner may choose to continue with the HET level after receiving their matriculation endorsement in Grade 12 and move to the different NQF levels in line with the marks of their matric endorsement (Expatica, 2018).				
B. THEME: CULTURAL INFLUENCE				
Section 2 (Art. 215) of the Brazilian Constitution states: The National Government shall guarantee to all full exercise of cultural rights and access to sources of national culture and shall support and grant incentives for	The Russian Federation constitution states in article 44 (3): Everyone shall be obliged to care for the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage, and to protect monuments of history and culture	Section 29(1) of the Indian Constitution (1976) states that section 29 under culture "any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of	Article 10 of the Chinese Constitution states that the State, considering the characteristics and needs of the different minority ethnic groups, assists in the development of educational undertakings in regions	Section 9(3) of the Constitution (1996) of the Republic of South Africa states that "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status,

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
appreciation and diffusion of cultural expression. Article 215(3) The law shall establish a National Cultural Plan, of multi-year duration, seeking the cultural development of the country and the integration of public actions that lead to (iii) formation of qualified personnel for the multiple dimensions of cultural management (Constitution p148)	Article 72 (1(f)) The following shall be within the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and constituent entities of the Russian Federation: (f) general issues of upbringing, education, science, culture, physical education, and sport. Article 114 (1(c)) The Government of the Russian Federation: shall ensure the implementation in the Russian Federation of a uniform State policy in the sphere of culture, science, education, health, social security, and ecology	its own shall have the right to conserve the same." Section 29(2) then further states that "no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language, culture or any of them".	inhabited by the minority ethnic groups. The State supports and assists the development of educational undertakings in the outlying and poverty-stricken areas. The State supports and develops educational undertakings for the disabled.	ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth." In terms of section 31(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) under the cultural, religious and linguistic communities' states that, persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community— (a) to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language; and (b) to form, join and maintain cultural, religious and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
HIGHLIGHTS FROM LITERATURE: CULTURAL INFLUENCE Culture has many definitions. However, they all have the common factor that brings them together and that is the sharing of knowledge in all aspects including beliefs and values among others from generation to generation. Each organisation has a set culture that they embrace known as the organisational culture and regarding education, the schools have their own culture too. The school culture is influenced by the learners, the staff and the community with each member playing a different role in the embracing of school culture. In Chapter 1 it discussed that learners come from different cultural backgrounds which are influenced by many aspects and their home upbringing is the main influencer. With that being said, different learners come from different homes with different cultural understanding and must get to school and adapt to a school culture that is diversely natural and inclusive of all cultures, having to have a balance between the knowledge gained at home and that being gained at school.				
C. THEME: CURRICULUM				
The National Education Guidelines and Framework (<i>Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação</i>) requires a common national basis for curriculum in primary and secondary education, increased the length and number of teaching days, accounted for the evaluation of courses and institutions at all education levels, allowing for the integration of	The end of communist in the Russian Federation led to an extensive curriculum revision. The Law of Education which was developed in 1992 focused on the humanistic nature of education, common values as well as freedom of human development and citizenship (Library of Congress, 2016) The (<i>An roinn oideachais agus eolaiochta</i>) is known as	The Indian school curriculum aims to promote and celebrate Indian culture and values. The teacher and the learners' families share a common belief that a good education is a passport to life opportunities (GEMS, 2019). "There are two key versions of the Indian curriculum: the CBSE and the CISCE. The CBSE curriculum prepares students for the All-India	The 1986 Compulsory Education Law of the Peoples Republic China implemented the nine-year compulsory education which is six years of primary school and three years' junior high. The curricula being guided by two documents: the Teaching Plan and the Teaching Outline. The main curricula of China for primary and junior high is divided into Basic, Extended	The NCS (Department of Basic Education, 2011b) makes provision for a learning environment that is a place or a setting, which is not restricted to just the physical classroom but also the characteristics of the setting. The two key influences of a learning environment are psychosocial and the physical.

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
vocational education, and made considerations for special and indigenous education (Stanek, 2013:2). The Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC), is a normative document for education.	the leaving certificate Russian curriculum whose general aim is to contribute to the development of the aspects of the individual. The aim is to generally prepare the students for the requirement of their next education level, so the junior certificate programme prepares for the leaving certificate program which prepares for further education or training for employment (NCCA, 2002,2).	CBSE Secondary Schools Examination at age 16 (end of Grade 10) and the All-India Senior School Certificate Examination at age 18 (end of Grade 12). The CISCE curriculum prepares students for the ISCE examination in secondary school and the ISC (Indian School Certificate) examination in the final year of secondary school (GEMS, 2019). The CBSE curriculum focus on nurturing life skills by prescribing curricular and co-curricular activities to help improve self-esteem, empathy towards others and different cultures (CBSE, 2019a:2)	and Research Curricula, the subject content and activities, the subject and integrated curriculum tailored to age and knowledge level (Li, 2016). The basic principles for the curriculum for high school are based on epochal character, fundamentality, and selectivity. The composition of the curriculum is made of the learning fields, subjects, and modules.	

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
HIGHLIGHTS FROM LITERATURE: CURRICULUM Borja (2012) states that cultural education is important to have in the curriculum. When learners are given the chance to learn about their own culture or ethnic history, it makes the learners feel that their cultures past experiences to the build of what it is now, are valid and valuable to the classroom. Learners who are quite knowledgeable about their own culture or ethnic history, presents an opportunity for to contribute to the lessons being given. That gives these learners the essence of feeling important in knowing that they are aiding in the inclusion process through the giving of knowledge in the classroom. Quite the opposite of creating divisions, the inclusion of culture in school the curriculum creates a space in which there is a mutual understanding and appreciation for different cultures from the learners (Borja, 2012).				
D. THEME: UNITY IN DIVERSITY				
Article 215(3) of the Brazilian Constitution states that the law shall establish a National Cultural Plan, of multi-year duration, seeking the cultural development of the country and the integration of public actions that lead to (v) valorisation of ethnic and regional diversity.	Fundamental rights 3(15) according to the constitution prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. (16) Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.	Article 30 of the Constitution under the cultural and educational rights states that All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.	Article 52 states that it is the duty of the citizens of the People's Republic of China to safeguard the unity of the country and the unity of all its nationalities. The People's Republic of China is a unitary multinational state built up jointly by the people of all its nationalities. Socialist relations of equality, unity, mutual assistance, and	Section 185 (1)(b) of the constitution states that the primary objects of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities are- to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance, and national unity among cultural, religious, and linguistic communities, on the basis of equality, non-

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
			harmony have been established among the nationalities and will continue to be strengthened. In the struggle to safeguard the unity of the nationalities, it is necessary to combat big-nation chauvinism, mainly Han chauvinism, and also necessary to combat local-national chauvinism. The state does its utmost to promote the common prosperity of all nationalities in the country. (Constitution, 1982:4)	discrimination and free association. Section 185 (2) The Commission has the power, as regulated by national legislation, necessary to achieve its primary objects, including the power to monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby, advise and report on issues concerning the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM LITERATURE: CURRICULUM The diverse population of the students' needs that may be in a school should be accommodated by ways in which the school plays a role in the educating of the society. This requires the needs of the student and their societal background to be considered in the planning. This can be done by providing informative and educational initiatives to the students from different cultures in that school setting. The content and approach of these school initiatives need to recognise and embrace the diverse cultural background of the students (Rahman and Alwi, 2018:89).				

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
E. THEME: SUBJECT-BASED (PROMOTING CULTURE)				
Preschool education (<i>Educação Infantil</i>) is entirely optional and for preschool children, there is a choice between: Maternal, or state-run crèches, for children aged two to five. Jardim, for children from three to six years of age The <i>Maternal</i> is a playgroup, whereas <i>Jardim</i> has a more academic focus for small children. These compulsory nine years of education are known as Fundamental Education (<i>Ensino Fundamental</i>) and are divided into two levels: Ensino Fundamental I. & II.	The preschool level focuses on both the intellectual and physical aspects of preparation for the primary level (Potapova & Trines, 2017:1). In primary school, children study mathematics, nature studies, the Russian language, reading, a foreign language, drawing, music, physical education, and chess (an option that has appeared in many schools since 2018). The curriculum of the secondary school looks like this: The Russian language and literature, a foreign language, algebra, geometry, informatics, history, social science, geography, natural history, biology, physics, chemistry, life safety	Under the Indian curriculum, some subjects are designed to promote cultural authenticity. "These subjects fall under the social science sphere which includes geography, history, economics and political science which intends to make learners understand their cultural, geographical and historical milieus and gain in-depth knowledge, attitude, skills and values necessary to bring about transformation for a better world. Social Science includes the learning of history and culture, geographical environment, global institutions, constitutional values and norms, politics, economy, interpersonal and	The curriculum is divided into two parts for subjects being compulsory and elective subjective. The learning fields are compulsory with subjects available being elective. Learning fields are language and literature, Mathematics, Humanities and Society, Science, Technology, Sports and health, Art, and Comprehensive Practical Activities. Learning fields include 12-13 subjects such as Chinese, mathematics, foreign languages (English, Japanese, Russian, and more), ideology and politics, history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, art (or music, fine arts), sports and	The CAPS subject of creative arts (Department of Basic Education, 2011a:8) is aimed at devolving an awareness of arts across South Africans diverse cultures, which teaching learner inclusivity. The subject's aim is to provide learners with exposure to different cultures through the means of dance, drama, music and visual arts through which the learners can have an experience of the diversity of each genera. In Grade 9 the learners are taught dance steps and styles from indigenous South African cultures (Department of Basic Education, 2011a:13). In the same grade, the learners are taught about stereotyping

Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
A core curriculum is set by the Education Council. During the <i>Ensino Fundamental I</i>, children study mathematics, Portuguese, science, arts, history, geography, and physical education. During <i>Ensino Fundamental II</i>, pupils also study at least one other compulsory language. The secondary school (<i>ensino médio</i>) is made up of learners ages 15-18. This is when philosophy and sociology is added to their curriculum on top of the existing core subjects (Transferwise, 2017a).	fundamentals, physical education, handcrafts. In senior high school, students get mechanical drawing, astronomy, and world art culture. In many schools, the 10th and 11th classes are divided into four specialisations: humanitarian, technological, mathematical, and social-economical.	societal interactions, civic responsibilities, and the incorporation of the above-mentioned learning. Learners appreciate and value everyone's right to feel respected and safe and understand their Fundamental Rights and Duties and behave responsibly in the society" (CBSE, 2019b:4). Another subject that is found at the high school level is "Horticulture" which is a subject learners may choose to have as their main subject which is a subject, specific to culture and indigenous knowledge (CBSE, 2019b).	health, and technology. Schools can choose the subject of either art or music and fine arts.	based on age, gender, class/ status, and culture. This exposes there to the need for inclusivity (Department of Basic Education, 2011a:16). The learners are taught to explore the cultural context with sensitivity and respect towards different cultures and cultural practices throughout the subject (Department of Basic Education, 2011a:43). After the senior phase of formal schooling, culture is not dwelt into like in the senior phase.
HIGHLIGHTS FROM LITERATURE: SUBJECT-BASED (PROMOTING CULTURE) Students are taught and imparted with knowledge in a school setting using school subjects. This knowledge that is given to them at an early age when they start school helps the student know more about life, nature, the environment, and culture among many other life skills. The development of critical and logical problem-solving skills helps the students in the long run as they can avert unwanted situations and make conscious decisions (Davis, 2021:2)				

4.3 Data interpretation

Data interpretation is the process of reviewing the data through certain predefined processes, which aid in assigning meaning to them in order to arrive at a relevant conclusion (Lebied, 2018:1). The interpretation of data is vital, and as such, must be done properly.

4.3.1 Education sector

4.3.1.1 Similarities

The interpretation started by looking at the main aspect, namely education, and specifically how education is preserved in each individual country. The constitution of Brazil (1988) states that education is a right for all and the duty of the government. The constitution states that the government must fulfil the duty to free compulsory elementary education from four to 17 years of age. Article 208 states that access to compulsory and free education is a subjective public right. Article 43(1) of the Russian Federation constitution states that education is a right applicable to everyone, (2) states that the general access to free preschool, secondary, and secondary vocation education by the state shall be guaranteed. India states that the state will provide free compulsory education for all children who are in the age of six up to the age of 14 under 29 of the Russian Federation constitution. This law was put under the fundamental rights given in the Indian constitution which means in line with LII (2013) these rights are the rights that have been considered by the Supreme Court to require a high degree of protection from any government encroachment.

In India, these rights are essential for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of everyone, these rights are essential or fundamental for the all-around development of individuals. The Peoples Republic of China's constitution (1982) article 9 states that the citizens shall have the right and obligation to receive an education regardless of the ethnic group and shall enjoy equal education opportunities. Article 10 states that the state supports and assists the development of educational undertakings in the outlying and poverty-stricken areas. The South African constitution (1996) states that everyone has the right to basic education, which includes adult basic education, the education has further interacted in section 29(1)(b) that the State will make take measures to make education progressively available and accessible to its people.

In the literature study that can be found in Chapter 2, the education systems for the five countries, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa can be seen.

4.3.1.2 Differences

Education is an important aspect in all the countries' constitutions, which contain the human rights of the country. In Brazil, there is a provision made for free compulsory elementary education and is the duty of the government to fulfil this duty. In Russia, it is the government's duty to make general access to free preschool, secondary and secondary vocational education. India has made provision for learners to attend compulsory schooling without having to worry about finances, which is usually the main reason why most children do not attend school. In China, citizens are obligated to receive their education, regardless of any hindrances. In South Africa, the right to basic education for compulsory schooling is not free, however, it is mandatory. This means that no child may be refused schooling because it is within their human rights to receive education, irrespective of age as the right includes basic adult education as well. The government is responsible for making basic education progressive and accessible to the citizens that need it. Literature has shown that education is an important aspect in all countries and the levels of education are very similar as mentioned above with Brazil, Russia, South Africa, and China having nine compulsory levels, while India has eight levels which are free until the child reaches the age of 14. The countries' foundation of their education system is very much alike with the only distinct difference being that India has eight levels of compulsory education while Brazil, Russia, China, and South Africa has nine, this is not including kindergarten/pre-primary.

4.3.2 Cultural influences

4.3.2.1 Similarities

In the Brazilian constitution (1988), section 2 (art. 215) the national government guarantees all full exercise of cultural rights and access to sources of national culture and shall support and grant incentives for appreciation and diffusion of cultural expression. Article 215(3) states that the law shall establish a National Cultural Plan, of multi-year duration, seeking the cultural development of the country and the integration of public actions that lead to (iii) formation of qualified personnel for the multiple dimensions of cultural management. Article 72 (1(f)) of the Russian Federation's constitution states that

the following shall be within the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and constituent entities of the Russian Federation: (f) general issues of upbringing, education, science, culture, physical education, and sport. Article 114 (1(c) of the Russian Federation government shall ensure the implementation in the Russian Federation of a uniform state policy in the sphere of culture, science, education, health, social security, and ecology.

The Indian constitution states that its citizens, each with their distinct language, script, or culture of their own have the right to conserve that. This means that no one may discriminate against any group of individuals because they are different from the common well-known groups, each group's language, script, and culture is seen as valuable in the eyes of the law. Section 29 further states that no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or rejected from receiving aid for their studies because of their religion, race, caste, or culture. In the People's Republic of China constitution (1982), article 10 states that the, considering the characteristics and needs of the different minority ethnic groups, assists in the development of educational undertakings in regions inhabited by the minority ethnic groups. The South African constitution states that no one may be unfairly discriminated against directly or indirectly based on their race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth. Section 31 further states that any individual belonging to a culture, religious may not be denied the right to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language. This includes those individuals who cannot be denied the right to form or join and maintain different cultural and linguistic associations in their community.

Literature has highlighted that learners come to school from different cultural backgrounds and understandings and must embrace each other's cultures while adapting to the school culture, which is influenced by the learners themselves, the staff of the school and the surrounding community. Learners are taught to be inclusive throughout their school career which is the starting point for embracing human rights that the learners will have to understand and live by as they need to respect them.

4.3.2.2 Differences

The Brazil constitution aims to promote the exercising of the right to culture by supporting and granting incentives for the appreciation and diffusion of cultural expression.

Consequently, the country has made it part of their constitution to train the formation of qualified cultural personnel in the assistance of embracing culture in all spheres including education. In Russia, the constitution covers the general issues that arise in the upbringing of culture in the education field making provision for the implementation of cultural role players in education, science, physical education, and sports. These states are responsible for the implementation of these policies that promote cultural education in education, health, social security, and ecology. In India, we see that culture is an important factor when it comes to the building of a future regarding the education sector of India. The individuals who go to state-owned schools have been protected by their fundamental rights to not be discriminated against based on their culture. South Africa can be seen as a country that embraces the cultural differences that are found in the country by not allowing any room for discrimination that will be based on cultural, religious, or linguistic differences. Like India, the South African constitution has made provisions to protect individuals' cultural and linguistic rights.

4.3.3 Curriculum

4.3.3.1 Similarities

The Brazil curriculum is called the common national curriculum base (BNCC), a normative document for education in the country which is used alongside the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação*) requires a common national basis for curriculum in primary and secondary education, (*An Roinn Oideachais Agus Eolaiochta*), known as the leaving certificate. The Russian curriculum, which generally aims to contribute to the development of the aspects of the individual. The aim is to generally prepare the students for the requirement of their next education level, so the junior certificate programme prepares for the leaving certificate program which prepares for further education or training for employment (NCCA, 2002:2). It has been found that the Indian education curriculum aims to promote and celebrate Indian culture and values as teachers and learners share a common belief that good education is the passport to life opportunities. India has two main curricula, namely the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE). These two curricula aim to nurture life skills by prescribing curricular and co-curricular activities to help improve self-esteem, empathy towards others, and different cultures. The education policy of India for 2020 states that the

curriculum content was to be reduced to focus on the core curriculum essential to help make room for more critical and holistic thinking with the students being more inquiry, discovery, discussion, and analysis based on their learning.

The 1986 Compulsory Education Law of the Peoples Republic China implements nine-year compulsory education, which is six years of primary school and three years of junior high. The curricula are guided by two documents: the teaching plan and the teaching outline. The main curricula of China for Primary and junior high are divided into Basic, Extended and Research Curricula, the subject content and activities, the subject and the integrated curriculum tailored to age and knowledge level. The basic principles for the curriculum for high school are based on epochal character, fundamentality, and selectivity. The composition of the curriculum is made of the learning fields, subjects, and modules. In South Africa, the National Curriculum Statement also known as NCS which can be found under the CAPS makes provision for the creation of a learning environment that is influenced by psychosocial aspects which include culture and the physical aspect of the classroom.

4.3.3.2 Differences

Consistent with the literature, the inclusion of culture in the curriculum is important as it opens the eye and perception of the learners to look at everyone as an individual and embrace all that comes with that, including cultural differences. Learners who may not know their cultural past can be taught more about their past and feel validated and valued in the classroom. The learners may already know their culture may contribute to the lesson about the culture, which makes the learners feel important and part of the teaching process in the classroom. This creates an atmosphere of inclusion for both the knowledgeable and the ones who are being given the knowledge giving all the learners the appreciation for different cultures and the learning process.

It can be seen that all the countries focus on having curricula that have a holistic approach to the development of the student, with Russia focusing on the humanistic nature of education, common values, and human development of the individual as to be a fully emerged citizen of the country. The Indian curriculum aims at the promotion as well as the celebration of the country's unique culture and its values. The Indian curriculum focuses on the nurturing of both the prescribed curricular and the co-curricular activities

in the school. The Chinese and South African curriculums make provision for both psychosocial and physical learning in the school environment.

4.3.4 Unity in diversity

4.3.4.1 Similarities

Diversity and unity can be seen as two of the factors that influence the incorporation of culture in society as a whole and impacts the education that the society receives. In Brazil, the constitution states that the law establish a National Cultural Plan of a multi-year duration, seeking the cultural development of the country and the integration of public actions that lead to (v) valorisation of ethnic and regional diversity under article 215(3). While in Russia the fundamental rights in the constitution under section 3(15) prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and section 3(16) states that there needs to be equality of opportunity in matters of public employment. In India, article 30 of its constitution under the cultural and educational rights states that all minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

The People's Republic of China is said to be a unitary, multinational state, which has been built up jointly by people of all its nationalities. "Socialist relations of equality, unity, mutual assistance, and harmony have been established among the nationalities and will continue to be strengthened as stated by the constitution" (Constitution of the People's Republic of China, 1982). Article 52 of China's constitution states that all citizens of the People's Republic of China must safeguard the unity of the country and the unity of all its nationalities.

In South Africa, section 185(1)(b) of the constitution states that the primary object of the Commission for the promotion and protection of the rights of cultural, religious, and linguistic communities is to promote and develop peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance, and national unity among cultural, religious, and linguistic communities, based on equality, non-discrimination, and free association. Section 185 (2) states that the above-mentioned commission has the power, as regulated by national legislation, to achieve its primary objects, including the power to monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby, advise, and report on issues concerning the rights of cultural, religious, and linguistic communities. In literature, it was found that the diverse population of the students' needs

that may be in a school should be accommodated by ways in which the school plays a role in the educating of the society. This requires the needs of the student and their societal background to be considered in the planning. This can be done by providing informative and educational initiatives for the students from different cultures in that school setting. The content and approach of these school initiatives need to recognise and embrace the diverse cultural background of the students.

It can be seen from the data collected for this theme that unity and diversity is important practice in all the BRICS member states.

4.3.4.2 Differences

While all the above countries have made provisions for the inclusion of all in their diverse countries, there are differences, nonetheless. In Brazil and South Africa, the state is responsible for maintaining the inclusion of their diverse country with Brazil having a National Cultural Plan that seeks to embrace the cultural development of the country while endorsing the regional ethnic diversity includes the diversity within the education sphere.

While South Africa has a commission responsible for the promotion of unity among cultural, religious, and linguistic communities, among others. The basis of equality and non-discrimination is a big factor for commission, these commissions duties spread over into all sectors which include education, therefore, making diversity in education an important aspect. In Russia, the people of Russia are responsible for upholding the fundamental right and there is no commission like in South Africa or Brazil to oversee the process. However, citizens are responsible, just as in China and India, to not discriminate on grounds of sex, race, religion, caste, or place of birth in all areas, equality needs to be practised throughout the country. In China, the state is working to combat any national and promote prosperity in all nationalities in the countries, while, in India, the constitution states that all minorities shall have the right to establish and administer their educational institution, therefore not being hindered, or held back by culture, religion or language. The role of the state is made clear in the constitution in some counties while in others it is the duty and responsibility of the citizens to ensure that the rights are not hindered or taken away.

4.3.5 Subject-based similarities and differences

4.3.5.1 Similarities

Preschool education (*Educação Infantil*) is entirely optional and for preschool children, there is a choice between maternal, or state-run crèches, for children aged two to five, *Jardim*, for children from three to six years of age. The *maternal* is a playgroup, whereas *Jardim* has a more academic focus for small children. These compulsory nine years of education are known as Fundamental Education (*Ensino Fundamental*) and are divided into two levels: *Ensino Fundamental* I. & II. A core curriculum is set by the Education Council. During the *Ensino Fundamental* I, children study mathematics, Portuguese, science, arts, history, geography, and physical education. During *Ensino Fundamental* II, pupils also study at least one other compulsory language. The secondary school (*ensino médio*) is made up of learners ages 15-18. This is when philosophy and sociology are added to their curriculum on top of the existing core subjects Transferwise, 2017a.

The Russian Federation's curriculum focuses on both intellectual and physical aspects in preparation for the primary level at the preschool level. In primary school, learners study mathematics, nature studies, Russian language, reading, one foreign language, drawing, music, physical education, and chess. The curriculum of the secondary school looks like this: Russian language and literature, a foreign language, algebra, geometry, informatics, history, social science, geography, natural history, biology, physics, chemistry, life safety fundamentals, physical education, and handcrafts. In senior high school, students get mechanical drawing, astronomy, and world art and culture. In many schools, the 10th and 11th classes are divided into four specialisations: humanitarian, technological, mathematical, and social-economical.

4.3.5.2 Subject-based differences

In the Indian curriculum, some subjects are designed to promote cultural authenticity, which usually includes subjects in social science spheres such as geography, history, economics, and political science. which intends to make learners understand their cultural, geographical, and historical milieus and gain the in-depth knowledge, attitude, skills, and values necessary to bring about transformation for a better world. Horticulture is a subject option for the learners who wish to continue into higher level education after completing their compulsory schooling levels. This subject is one that can be chosen if

the learner would like to be knowledgeable in the progression of culture and indigenous knowledge from what it was to where it is now and where it is going soon. In China, the curriculum is divided into two parts for subjects, namely compulsory and elective subjective subjects. The learning fields are compulsory with subjects available being elective. Learning fields are language and literature, Mathematics, Humanities and Society, Science, Technology, Sports and health, Art, and Comprehensive Practical Activities. Learning fields include 12-13 subjects such as Chinese, mathematics, foreign languages (English, Japanese, Russian, and more), ideology and politics, history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, art (or music, fine arts), sports and health, and technology. Schools can choose the subject of either art or music and fine arts.

In South Africa, the subject that is found to embrace the teaching of culture creative arts, which were formally known as arts and culture. This subject aims to expose learners to different cultures through dance, drama, music, and visual arts. Learners are expected to learn from each other, using each medium to bridge the gap that may be there because of their cultural differences. Most of the core learning that is culture-based is done in Grade nine, just before learners exist their formal compulsory learning level. No subject is based on culture after that. However, each subject has the means to bring in the inclusivity while working with diverse learners which the teachers are expected to incorporate during their teaching lesson.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, the study's content analysis was analysed with focus on the themes that affected the study topic, in order to establish differences and similarities between the BRICS member states' education systems. The main themes were found to be education, which is the focus of the topic, and all countries were found to have a sense of importance in their viewing of education and its importance in the country. The second theme was culture, which is the main external determinant that the topic deals with. All countries were found to have made provision for the importance of culture in their constitution. The third theme was the curriculum and Brazil, China, Russia, and India were found to be culturally inclusive in their curriculum setting as their curricula are based on embracing the different cultures in these countries, while South Africa's curriculum just acknowledges that different cultures need to be noted by the educators. The fourth theme was unity and diversity within the educational sphere which is evidently part of each country. The last

theme is the subjects that can be found to promote culture. All five countries provide at least one subject that is based on culture and the embracing thereof in the schooling environment.

In the next chapter, we revisit the core aspects that were discussed in each chapter from chapter one to the final chapter, chapter five. The author will reflect on the findings of the study and give recommendations for future research to be done on the topic, also stating the limitations that were found to hinder the study.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter will assess whether the research question - to determine whether nature of culture as an external determinant on the education systems of the BRICS member states - has been adequately answered. It will also look at the research aims to see whether they have been reached. An overview of each chapter's contribution to this study will also be presented. Data analysis and interpretation is applied to conclude the findings for the study and identify best practices. The limitations that were present during the duration of the study will be highlighted and recommendations given that could be incorporated for future study on the topic. Finally, the study concludes with the implications of the findings.

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 What is the nature of culture as an external determinant on the education systems of the BRICS member states?

At the beginning of the study, the gap between learners' culture and cultural backgrounds and school culture/expectation was identified to be a problem (§1.2), as most learners and educators struggle to find the balance between the two and embrace both aspects without having one outweighing the other. This led to the main research question that focused on the nature of culture as the external determinant of the education systems of the BRICS member states (§1.4).

Literature on education systems of BRICS member states seem to focus on higher education and society and the incorporation of science and technology in education. Consequently, there is still a gap in the mainstream approach to the academic literature available on the topic (§1.2). In the education process, a deliberate transmission of cultural heritage to the learners by means of help from schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions is evident. The education system plays a role in the upbringing of culturally inclined learners who later fulfil their role in society.

The cultural difference theory (§1.7) focuses on the idea that learners in a school setting come from different cultural settings, which leads to their manner of learning and receiving education being different because of their differences in background and upbringing.

In chapter two (§2.2), it was demonstrated how an individual's upbringing influences his/her views the world and how he/she processes information. In terms of the school setting, educators and learners need to understand how to deal with diversity while enabling inclusivity. It was found that a learner's behaviour can be influenced by culture, just as a learner's learning style manner of debate and discussion and reaction to hierarchy can be influenced by culture (§2.2.1). It was also established that culture can either have a positive or negative effect on everyone in the school setting, whether it be the learner or the educator (§2.2.1). In all countries, education is used as a tool that helps to integrate the younger generation into society and give a sense of identity without being associated with any specific tribe, clan, language, or race (§1.8.1). This all answered the first question (§1.4), which was based on the nature of culture as an external determinant of the education system of the BRICS member states.

When looking at the different BRICS members' view of culture and nature, it was found that the Brazilian education structure has the objective to collaborate in terms of the national cultural influences on the organisational aspect of culture in schools and school leadership and management, by exploring the complexities of how territorial vastness, cultural diversity, and the education system are affected by the culture of the country (§2.2.2.1). In Russia, the cultural initiatives for change may come from within the school or the environment as the schools are becoming more open to improvements post-Soviet Union days to enable the schools to have a clear look at their strengths and weaknesses and have the motivation and capacity to be able to handle the changes. Change has now become part of the school culture, having the evolutionary approach to education in place of the stop-go reactionary model, which was common in most schools (§2.2.2.2). In India, the educational system was fixed on the use of theology to reflect on the importance of culture from a Christian perspective but later became more modern in the time invested in technical and management-related material culture. Taking the first step to incorporate culture into the education system ensures that the education system can reflect the culture of the society (§2.2.2.3).

In China, the evolution of Chinese culture in the People's Republic of China is happening through recognising several different stages and their respective influence on education and school leadership. Among the recognised stages are traditional culture, socialist culture, enterprise culture and patriarchal culture (§2.2.2.4). To a certain extent, these stages developed sequentially, although all are claimed to be of relevance today. Traditional culture is reflected in continued respect for authority, collectivism, and harmony in schools. Socialist culture has, in many ways, reinforced aspects of traditional culture, while at the same time, further politicised the principal's role. Enterprise culture has served to integrate market values into the education system. The influence of patriarchal culture continues to determine the role of men and women in schools, and particularly in school leadership.

5.2.2 What are the similarities and differences of culture as an external determinant on the education system of the BRICS member states?

The next questions that were dealt with were the identification of the similarities and the differences of culture as an external determinant in the education system of the countries being investigated. The discourse analysis method (§3.4) was used for the analysis of data to help answer the question and the outcomes were presented in table-format (§4.2).

5.2.2.1 Education section similarities

It was found that all the BRICS countries state education as a basic human right, that every citizen in the country is entitled to (§4.3.1). In Brazil, the government and the family must promote and encourage societal collaboration towards education for the children, while in India the parent or guardian must ensure that children receive basic education. In China, the right and duty are given to all citizens. Free education is the duty of the government in Brazil, Russia, and India. In Brazil free compulsory education is for elementary education (children aged 4 to 17 years), while in India education is free and compulsory provided by the state for the ages 6 to 14 years). Russia guarantees access to free state-owned institutions for preschool, secondary and secondary vocational institutions. South Africa and China do not offer free education, although basic education is compulsory for both countries. In Brazil, secondary education (ages 15 to 17) is free, but not compulsory, which included the ages 15 to 17.

In China, state-owned schools' primary education is compulsory and universal, with a 9-year compulsory education policy stating that children aged six must be enrolled in a school and receive free education. In South Africa, the education system is made to be equal and not discriminative for the compulsory education age of seven to 15.

5.2.2.2 Education section differences

It was found that education is considered to be an important aspect of basic living in all the BRICS countries. Brazil, Russia, and India seem to have an action plan to enrol more learners in the schooling system by providing free basic education, which helps to evade the main problem of finance being an issue stopping learners from coming to school. In both China and South Africa no child may be denied their right to basic education, and even if it is not free, the state is responsible for making education available and accessible. This shows us that education is seen as a necessity in all countries although it is catered for in different ways in each of the countries (§4.3.1.2).

5.2.2.3 Cultural influence similarities

The study found that all countries had made provision for cultural influence in their constitutions, confirming the fact that culture is indeed an important external determinant of the education system, amongst others (§4.3.2).

The Indian constitution states that no citizen may be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State, based on their religion, race, class, language, and culture, among many others that could be bases of discrimination (§4.3.2). This law also applies to the receiving of financial aid to assist learners with their financial needs. In Brazil, the cultural aspect in the constitution is aimed at promoting the exercise of the right to culture by supporting and granting incentives towards the appreciation and diffusion of cultural expression. In Russia, the issue of culture in education is covered by making provision for the implementation of cultural role players in education, science, physical education, and sports. The South African constitution has made provision for the inclusion of cultural diversity and prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth (§4.3.2.1).

5.2.2.4 Differences in cultural influence

Like South Africa, China considers the characteristics and needs of the different minority ethnic groups. However, unlike India, Russia and Brazil, South Africa and China do not have specific cultural legislation in terms of education, which shows that India, Russia and Brazil incorporate education in the most basic rights and has found a way to specifically address the need for education (§4.3.2.2). The curriculum was identified as a common factor in the data analysis, affecting education and the development and acknowledgement of culture in the education system (§4.3.3).

5.2.2.5 Curricular similarities

The Indian school curriculum is designed to promote and celebrate Indian culture, and the teachers and the parents seem to share a common belief when it comes to education and how they perceive it (§4.3.3.1). Such a collaborative approach leads to better opportunities for learners in their near future. Russia and Brazil's education curricula aim specifically to develop the students at each education level to prepare for employment and life after the schooling environment.

5.2.2.6 Curricular differences

The South African and China curricula, however, do not focus directly on culture but rather on creating a learning environment that is not just restricted to the physical classroom, but aims to create a successful learning environment. Physical and psychosocial characteristics were identified as the two main influencing factors. These can incorporate anything from race to culture and language, which are included in external determinants (§4.3.3.2). The Indian curriculum also focuses on nurturing life skills by having prescribed curricular and co-curricular activities designed to improve the learners' self-esteem and empathy towards each other (peers and different cultures).

5.2.2.7 Subject-based similarities

Subjects offered in the education system were also investigated (§4.3.5) and it was found that India offers subjects that are designed to promote cultural authenticity throughout the school career, giving learners the option to continue with subjects that are culture-based after completing their compulsory formal schooling level. In Russia, like Brazil, focused

cultural subjects are present on the higher level of education (secondary level). Russia, however, has subject specialisation at the higher school levels (like India but just at a later stage) and like India, Russia promotes their culture throughout the course of the learners' school careers. China includes compulsory learning areas, similar to what is offered in South Africa, which include culture from the primary school level to high school with the option for learners to choose their core subject in that area (§4.3.5.1).

5.2.2.8 Subject-based differences

In South Africa, there is one subject that is based on culture and art, which uses different means categories, namely drama, dance, visual art, and music. These categories are used to expose learners to different cultures in South Africa, however, this subject is only offered until the end of the compulsory formal schooling level. Brazil conversely has the sociologically and philosophically aspect of their subject only included in their secondary school level, meaning that the emphasis and focus on the cultural aspect only comes in at a higher school level compared to South Africa that has it at a lower school level (§4.3.5.2).

5.2.2.9 Unity in diversity similarities

Diversity and unity are identified as subtle factors that influence the incorporation of culture in society as a whole and impacts the education available to a particular society (§4.3.4). Brazil strives for the cultural development of the country in all areas, while Russia, India and China strive for the promotion of a non-discriminative country in all areas of their states. South Africa has a commission that aims to protect and promote the rights (including culturally diverse aspects) of all communities (§4.3.4.1).

5.2.2.10 Unity in diversity differences

There does not seem to be much difference in the five BRICS countries in striving for the promotion of unity in diversity - they all strive to have a non-discriminatory nation that is inclusive in all areas. South Africa has a commission that focuses on the promotion of culture and Brazil has a national plan for the cultural promotion in the country, while China, Russia and India have an overall inclusion plan but give no specifications to the implementation of an inclusion committee, if any (§4.3.4.1).

5.2.3 What best practices can be identified in the recognition of the diversity of cultures within the education systems of the BRICS member states?

The distinct difference pertaining to accommodation of culture as an external determinant in the BRICS countries (§4.4) is that Brazil, Russia, and India's education systems have all acknowledged culture as an external determinant and have found ways to embrace the different cultures throughout their education systems. These countries' constitutions also have a combined section on education and culture with a focus on the importance of non-discrimination (based on culture). Their curricula acknowledge culture as an external determinant and because the importance of culture is valued by the systems, educators, and communities alike, it makes the teaching of culture within the school environment easier. The focus culture is also evident from the subjects offered in schools, which includes a subject based on culture and indigenous knowledge at a higher level. In both South Africa and China, culture is acknowledged in the constitutions, however, it does not seem to have the same specific focus in the education system. The curriculum has not been adapted in a manner that moves toward embracing culture, neither as a value nor as part of the collective school system.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The main limitation encountered during the study was the small number of official documents that could be used for the data analysis, because of discourse analysis being applied as the means of data analysis. The author could only make use of documents made available to her, which limited the data to some extent.

Language was another barrier with some countries publishing their documents in their native language. Another aspect that hindered the research process was the limited literature available on this topic, which meant there were not many scientific journal articles available, and the author had to rely on other sources for information.

Due to the extent of the subject field, the study could not go into as much detail as far as the educational systems of the BRICS countries are concerned. The current study therefore could only touch on the most apparent cultural similarities and differences.

5.4 Recommendations

For the BRICS member states, a study can be attempted where the older educational policies and legislation is compared to the recent policies and legislation, in order to provide more detailed insight on the development of these countries in this regard. Such comparison need not be limited to culture alone but may also consider (for example) language.

One can also embark on a study for the BRICS countries where the influence of other external determinants on the education system are identified and document these in a comparative study.

Another recommendation would be to extend the study to other countries outside the BRICS member states, for example developing African countries ranking high on the list for cultural diversity or developed Western/European countries with well-established educational policies and legislation. This may provide interesting insight since the African countries may not have such advanced/well-developed constitutions governing cultural inclusion. It may also be interesting to see how the results for the (emerging) BRICS countries differ from that of the (established) Western/European countries.

5.5 Contribution of the study

The main contribution of the study is the identification and confirmation of the impact that culture has on learners and the role that the education system's inclusion of culture plays in the holistic development of learners within the constantly changing and developing BRICS member states.

It is evident from the study that bridging the cultural gap between the learners' home upbringing and their school environment in the education system is a recurring theme. Not giving the necessary attention to these external cultural influences in the educational system will be detrimental to the system as a whole. A skilled workforce is produced by a country's educational system, without which sustainable economic growth and development in these countries will not be possible.

5.6 Conclusion

Although culture as an external determinant seem to affect each of the five BRICS countries differently, all these countries regard culture as important and each country has a different approach towards the inclusion of cultural influences. What is evident, is that culture has a positive effect on education as learners are taught to be understanding towards each other while embracing their differences and allowing inclusivity to take place, irrespective of their differences. Recognition of the diversity and the inclusion of diverse cultures into the curricula of the BRICS countries will benefit the education system as a whole.

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ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (EduREC)** on 29 July 2021, this committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SCRE) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other **authorisation** that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

study title: Culture as an external determinant of the education system of BRICS member state: A comparative study

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Dr ZL de Beer

Student / Team: SL Simelane (MEd student - 25911414), Dr D Vos

Ethics number:

N	W	U	-	0	1	0	0	2	-	2	1	-	A	2
Institution				Study Number					Year			Status		

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional **Authorisation**; A = **Authorisation**

Application Type: Single Study

Commencement date: 29/07/2021

Risk:

No Risk

Expiry date: 29/07/2022

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- The study leader/supervisor/principal investigator/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the **EduREC**:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.
- The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the **EduREC** prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and **EduREC** reserves the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;

- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
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 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EduREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
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The EduREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EduREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof JAK Olivier
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