




**The role of the Systems Theory in school
management in the North West
Province: A case study**

V. Hove

 **orcid.org/ 0000-00029138-9204**

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Supervisor:

Prof Van Wyk

Co- Supervisor:

Dr Martha Matashu

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Student number: 23351659

DECLARATION

I, Viola Hove, declare that the dissertation entitled “**The role of systems theory in school management in the North West Province: A case study**”, hereby submitted for the degree of Master in Education Management, Training and Development (MED) has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other higher education institution before. I further declare that this is my work in design and execution and that all sources cited and materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged by means of complete references.



.....
Signature

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the Systems Theory in school management in the North West Province. Although the literature suggests that the systems theory could be used to manage systems as one whole unit, recent observations indicate that schools continue to face challenges with regard to school management. Thus, there is a need to assist members of School Management Teams(SMT's) with regard to Planning, Leading, Organising and Controlling (PLOC) using the systems theory. Two schools were selected in Rekopantswe Area Office, Mafikeng, North West Province, South Africa. Eight participants were selected per school, thus making a total of sixteen participants. A qualitative approach was used in conducting this study. An interview questionnaire and an observation list were used to collect data from participants. This was done to capture data based on the experiences and perceptions of participants. The findings of the study revealed that most SMTs do not implement PLOC as an input, transformational process and output in accordance with the different stages of the systems theory. It is, therefore, concluded that the systems theory is not used in school management functions of PLOC. It is therefore, recommended that SMTs should implement PLOC as an input, transformational process and output in accordance with the systems theory to ensure that SMTs manage the school as one whole instead of managing it as separate entities.

Key words: School management, Systems theory, Input, Transformational process, Output, North West Province

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Acronyms

ACE: Advanced Certificate in Education

BEd: Bachelor of Education degree

CAPS: Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

HOD: Head of Department

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

PLOC: Planning, Leading, Organising, Controlling

LTSM: Learner Teacher Support Materials

NCS: National Curriculum Statement

PGCE: Post Graduate Certificate in Education

SMTs: School Management Teams

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

1 Introduction to the study

The aim of this study was to examine the role of the systems theory in school management in the North West Province, South Africa. According to the Oxford South African Dictionary (2011), a system is a set of connected parts or things, devices which operate together to achieve a purpose, or set of organs or structures of a body, which have a particular purpose to achieve set goals. The systems theory thus, provides a set of assumptions, concepts and principles that could be used to understand a set of relationships. From a systems theory perspective, the above definition indicates that school management involves integrating different parts and departments of the school as interconnected with the view of ensuring the attainment of desirable educational outcomes of the school. It further suggests that the systems theory could provide a framework that demonstrates how educational activities and concepts are related, how the sub-systems work in harmony and coordination in order to ensure a holistic management of educational activities such that the interconnected framework achieves the desired educational outcomes. Although the systems theory is considered as an effective and robust management theory, its role in school management has been poorly investigated in research.

The absence of research on the role of the systems theory in school management prevails against a background where literature and authorities have observed that a great number of schools in South Africa are not well-managed. For instance, according to the North West Provincial Department of Education (NWPDE) (2013), in the North West Province in particular, it was established that a substantial number of school managers failed to meet basic administrative requirements and expectations due to lack of requisite practical skills and theoretical understanding of the field of school management. This is an indication that school management is, indeed, a challenging practice and schools have complex and multifaceted systems that are meant to steer the organisation towards efficiency. A study of this nature is important as the application of principles from management theories in general, and the systems theory in school management, in particular, could assist in addressing school management problems. Based on these circumstances, the systems theory could play an important role in terms of assisting members of school management teams to better

understand how to achieve the desired outcomes by managing the school and all other subsidiary systems related to it as one whole unit instead of managing it as separate entities).

Shield (2011) define school management as involving planning, leading, organising and controlling. The above definition stresses the fact that school management should follow specific principles and guidelines with regard to planning, leading, organising and controlling as core duties of school management. Considering the fact that members of school management are responsible for planning, leading, organising and controlling for educational activities, they are usually confronted with a number of options when making managerial and administrative decisions with regard to their duties and roles. Thus, their choices are determined by some idea of what they think would work best, and this is just a theory. Van Wyk & Marumola (2012) point out that school management teams are tasked with day-to-day school management activities. It can be deduced from above that, principals and school management teams are thus, required to use management theories to achieve maximum educational outcomes on a daily basis. It is, therefore, necessary to conduct an investigation into the role of the systems theory in school management as such a foundation could lead to improved school management.

Samuelsson & Lindblad (2015) posit that school management consists of the interlocking functions of creating corporate policy and organising, planning, controlling, and directing an organisation's resources in order to achieve the objectives of the school policy, and extend it to education policy. It could be deduced that a holistic understanding of the interrelated educational activities and functions is required, in order to culminate in an effective school management that can achieve desired goals. Against this backdrop, it is argued in this study that the systems theory, which is grounded on the philosophy of interrelated and intricate relationships, could assist schools in terms of providing principles for efficient and effective management of schools.

The systems theory, as a management theory, has the potential to play a role in school management. Pelser & Van Wyk (2015) moot that different theories could be applied in practice in the field of school management. This underlines the reality that school management is a function of the application of principles, assumptions and guidelines from different theories. This further suggests that with regard to enhancing the overall performance of the school, it is necessary to use relevant management theories to enhance school management and, by extension, the management of schools by School Management Teams

(SMTs). Thus, it is important to explore the role of the systems theory in school management since the education policy in South Africa tasks school management teams to implement the curriculum without a prescribed management style. The logic that there is no prescribed management style highlights the reality that many school administrators operate either on an ad hoc functionalist style, or at best, on a *laissez-faire* basis. If such is the case, then the quest for a systematic and theory-driven administrative style in schools in the North West Province, South Africa, is justified in this study.

An investigating of the role of the systems theory in school management is primarily to establish and understand how the theory could be implemented in order to assist school management teams to plan, lead, organise and control educational activities in schools. This is because the systems theory has the potential to provide an analytic framework for viewing an organisation, stresses synergy, interdependence and interconnections. The systems theory is conceptually designed to deal with organisational complexities, hence, it takes a holistic view (Lundstrom & Parding, 2011; Samuelsson & Lindblad, 2015). It is, by and large, a theory of the emergent: actions and outcomes are conceptualised at the collective level. According to Weijrich & Koontz (1993), school management is a process of planning, leading organising and controlling diverse people within a group in order to achieve educational goals. It is also the guidance and control of actions required to execute an educational programme. Planning requires that managers be aware of environmental conditions faced by their organisations and forecast future conditions. It also requires that managers be good decision-makers. This justifies the purpose of this study (to explore how school management functions should be conducted from a systems theory perspective).

Katz & Kahn (1978) explain the different stages of the systems theory as follows: input; transformational process or throughput; and output. These stages are important in constantly checking the activities of school management teams to ensure effective school management. Managing schools from the perspective of the systems theory entails that all activities of school management that is Planning, Leading, Organising and Controlling (PLOC) be considered as input, transformational process and output.

The first stage in the systems theory is the input stage. Potocki & Brocato (1995) consider input as resources and skills injected in the school for it to effectively function. Sometimes, input is derived from gaps identified after assessment and feedback that requires refinement as input. Input has to be planned for it to enhance the transformational process. Input is the

process of bringing human resources and material resources into an organisation in this case in a school to ensure that development takes place. Coburn (2001) submits that input entails teacher cultures such as convictions, values and ways of acting. All inputs examined within the totality of institutional logics, representing the frames of reference that condition the choices made by teachers, learners and administrators as they highlight the ways school management functions in the broader social, academic, economic and cultural spheres of the school. Coburn (2001) further asserts that the composition of inputs from the external environment may include people, capital, managerial skills as well as technical knowledge. It also includes various claimants – groups of people making demands on the organisation, such as employees, consumers, suppliers, stockholders, provincial, state and local governments. This means that the environment has some expectations from the school and the demands placed by claimants on the organisation are part of the input, which the school management should PLOC and process as a part of the transformational process. The above tallies very well with the systems theory and how it assists school management (Katz & Kahn, 2001). Input comes from outside of the organisation and creates a need for transformational processes to take place in a bid to produce results, which is the output.

The second component is the transformational process. In an organisational system, inputs are transformed in an effective and efficient manner into outputs. According to Katz & Kahn (2001) the transformational process is a conversion of input into being useful in practical terms. In a school context, transformation is a process of profound and radical change that re-orientates a school in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. This is an indication that inputs are secured and utilised by transformation into outputs through managerial functions with due consideration for external variables. Thus, the relay of the transformational process is when input is converted into usable products or useful entities and produce the desired output. The transformational process involves improvement where barriers to good performance are eliminated. In other words, well-evaluated input gives rise to an effective transformational process where input is continually converted to yield better outcomes.

The third component of the systems theory is output. Output is achieved after input and the transformational process. Output is the expected result or outcome where the product is returned to the environment. Output is the end product of what the system aims to produce or achieve (Potocki & Richard, 1995). It usually includes many of the following: products; services; profits; satisfaction; and integration of the goals of various claimants to the

organisation (Katz & Kahn 2001). Processing the input is important since these are the practical activities that will solve the needs of the organisation in order to yield results (output). Therefore, output in a school situation includes achievement of excellent results, positive self-esteem, skilfulness and transformed attitudes, among others. It is argued in this study that effective school management could be achieved if school management activities are viewed as an input, transformational and output processes in accordance with the systems theory.

An understanding of the role of the systems theory in school management is important for the purpose of gaining an insight into how principles from the theory could be used to efficiently and effectively manage schools as a single unit. Bush & Oduro (2006) maintain that throughout Africa, there is no formal requirement for principals to be trained as school managers. The absence of training for members of school management teams is a concern since it is not clear how they are expected to competently perform their duties if they have not been adequately equipped with the requisite administrative skills and knowledge. Bush & Oduro (2006) further point out that principals are often appointed on the basis of a successful record as teachers, with the implicit assumption that this experience provides a starting point for school leadership. It is difficult to understand how school management is expected to achieve administrative and academic efficiency in schools, and ultimately enable a country achieve the desired national educational outcomes, in the absence of an understanding of management styles that could be used in school management. Moreover, it is important to understand how schools could be managed successfully since school management does not regard management as an integrated set of input, processes and output in accordance with the systems theory.

Van der Westhuizen, Mosoge & Van Vuuren, (2004) reiterate that most serving principals lack basic management training prior to and after their entry into headship. The authors maintain principals lack formal school management training, which could negatively influence the performance of school management duties and responsibilities. Against this backdrop, it could be argued that an insight into the role played by the systems theory in school management is important in enhancing the management of school activities.

The role of the systems theory in school management should be explored since in the 21st century, there is a growing realisation that headship is a specialist occupation that requires specific preparation. Effective leaders promote an atmosphere that is conducive to learning,

that is, they generate creative tensions between the vision of where the school organisation could be and the reality of the current school organisational situation (Goodson & Lindblad, 2011). Bush (2008) stipulates that the role of school principals, school management teams (SMTs), decentralised systems and the scope of leadership has increased in schools. Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2004) argue out that wide-ranging changes in the education systems have rendered many serving school principals ineffective in the management of their schools. It can thus, be suggested that management systems, such as the systems theory, which maintains that the interrelated and intricate interdependent relationships between the system and its environment, could be the most convenient approach in school management in the modern world.

Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2004) posit that most of these serving principals lack basic management training prior to and after their entry into headship. The authors point out that although schools require and expect to be managed by the school management team, there is no formal school management training. For instance, in an attempt to enhance teachers' competence and prepare them for a new role, an Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE) course was piloted in six provinces in South Africa from 2007-2009. ACE also provided training for principals. This was an excellent idea as most principals who obtained ACE, appear to be better in the management of their schools compared to their counterparts who did not take part in this course. However, the discontinuation of the ACE programme around 2014 was disconcerting as it was seemingly effective in terms of providing training relevant to school management. If the ACE programme had been allowed to gain traction, some of the challenges (such as lack of organisation and how to implement the curriculum) with regard to school management could have been mitigated.

The above view suggests that there is a lot to be learned by school management teams in order to manage educational activities as a sub-set of systems from the perspective of the systems theory. For example, SMTs need to use management theories such as the systems theory to address these increasing demands in school management in diverse societies. If there is no longer a formal requirement for the training of principals, then there is a need for other means of developing them to manage schools as a single entity in accordance with the systems theory. One such possible way is through research that explores the role of the systems theory in school management. Findings from such studies could assist SMTs to improve their school management skills and expertise to manage the school as a whole set of interrelated sub-systems.

A holistic management of school activities is required because principals have to engage with their complex environments to lead and manage effectively. Katz & Kahn (2001) consider the systems theory as an interrelationship of many parts or departments that work together to achieve set goals. It could be inferred that school management, in accordance with the systems theory, is seen as a complex system with many parts; that is, the school, the community, SMTs, parents, learners and government, which must all work together for school management to achieve set goals. The systems theory could play an important role in enabling the school management to plan, lead, organise and control different activities and functions in their entirety as a single system where each part has an impact on the performance of others.

The systems theory could also play a role in ensuring PLOC for school management in an integrated manner since the theory consists of three stages (input, transformation and output). Input entails external resources from the environment, including human resources. The second stage is the transformational process, which involves the conversion or transformation of resources within a system to bring about desired results. The third stage is output, which is the end product of what the system aims to produce or achieve (Potocki & Richard, 1995). It should be noted that at every stage of the systems theory, feedback is of utmost relevance for keeping the school management informed and in check as they perform their duties. In other words, the systems theory approach to school management entails that SMTs continuously evaluate and check whether or not school management activities are systematically considered as an input, transformation and output of school management.

The systems theory could assist members of the school management team to strategically plan for the efficient use of resources for the purpose of achieving set outcomes. Shied (2011) states that school management is a process that includes strategic planning, setting objectives, managing resources, developing the human and financial assets needed to achieve the objectives and measuring results. Management and leadership are similar terms that could be used interchangeably depending on the context, however this is debatable. Lammond (2004) considers planning as a process that begins with environmental scanning, which essentially means that planners must be aware of the critical contingencies faced by their organisation in terms of economic conditions, their competitors and their customers. Planners must then attempt to forecast future conditions since such forecasts form the basis for planning. According to Lammond (2004), planners must establish objectives, which are statements of what needs to be achieved and when. Planners must then identify alternative courses of action

for achieving objectives. After evaluating the various alternatives, planners must make decisions about the best courses of action for achieving objectives. In terms of the stages of the systems theory, planning could be viewed as input, transformational process, and output as explained above. This implies that school management should consider planning as input in the management of educational activities of schools. In this study, planners comprise the team in school management.

Leading involves the special and informal sources of influence that leaders use to inspire action taken by others in subordinate but complementary positions (Lammond, 2004). If managers are effective leaders, their subordinates are likely to be enthusiastic about exerting complementary effort to attain organisational objectives. According to Shied (2011), the term management comes from the Latin word '*manu agere*', which means to lead by hand (that is, giving direction). It also implies that the leading person first goes where he or she wants to send followers, thus an indication of PLOC. The school management must forecast the needs of the school first and then plan. The subsequent step lies in implementing the concepts according to the systems theory in order to achieve effective output. It is the guidance and control of actions required to execute a programme. According to the systems theory, implementation of the curriculum is one of the programmes to be executed by school management teams. Shield (2011) stress that school management involves planning, organising, staffing, directing, controlling and coordinating. In other words, school management encompasses setting budgets, monitoring the progress of the school, planning, organising, controlling, directing, leading, staffing, communicating and reporting. Thus, with the above range of functions, school management needs the assistance of the systems theory to be able to boost its functions as members PLOC. Training members of school management teams and staff development is necessary considering the wide range of functions expected of them. In all the above processes, school management is central to all the activities and to ensure that PLOC is done at all levels.

In this study, the role of the systems theory in school management was investigated. It is necessary to establish whether or not a systems approach is used in school management since such theory could lead to a holistic approach to the management of educational activities in schools. According to Bush (1986), for example, systems management theories emphasise the unity and interconnectedness of the organisation and focus on the interaction between its component parts. According to Shied (2011) school management involves planning, leading, organising and coordinating to implement the curriculum through the systems view, and

outlines the three stages of the systems theory (input, transformational process and output) to create a holistic view in school management. PLOC, in this case, is considered as an interconnected concept and viewed as input, transformational process and output). If PLOC is applied as an input, all aspects of curriculum implementation, for example, teaching and learning, are considered as resources that should be injected with the view of being transformed for desired outcomes to be achieved.

Bloom, Lemons & Van Reenen (2014) emphasise that assessing the role of school management practices on student outcomes is a difficult task, mostly due to challenges of measuring such practices. There is need for school management teams to make great use of the systems theory for effective implementation of the curriculum. Such use would heighten the degree of measurement in PLOC as an input, transformational process and as an output in accordance with the systems theory. It is submitted in this study that planning, leading, organising and coordinating are core duties of school management teams to work on in order to implement the curriculum in accordance with the systems theory.

1.2 Background to the research problem

Although several studies have been conducted on school management, very little research has been done on the role of the systems theory on school management in schools in South Africa. There are several perceptions about schools as organisations in crisis (Ringarp & Rothland 2010) and within the South African context, schools have been increasingly seen as lacking the business-like ways of organising and governing (Samuelson & Lindblad, 2015). Some 20 years after political sovereignty, reform policies have reshaped school leadership and management practices associated with teacher evaluation on dimensions of leadership, performance and student outcomes (Shinkfield & Stufflebeam, 2012). In 2016, failure to achieve 'adequate yearly progress' became a performance yardstick that could result in the dismissal of teachers and principals (McGhee & Mulson, 2005; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). A similar change in teacher evaluation could be observed in other societies (e.g. England, Belgium, Italy, Hong Kong and Korea) where an evolving platform of accountability policies has changed the institutional environment in which principals work (Devos & Tuytens, 2014; Terhart, 2013; Walker & Cooke 2011). System centralisation represents another relevant force that shapes the task and environment of principals (Addi-Raccah & Gavish, 2010; Buchmann & Dalton, 2002; Fullan, 2004). Although these studies broaden ones understanding of how schools are managed in different parts of the world, such studies are of

limited use in terms of providing readers and scholars with insights on the role of the systems theory in school management.

Some studies have focused on the role of principals as members of the SMT. Principals in highly centralised (e.g. Russia, Korea, China, Thailand, Turkey, Greece and Vietnam) and relatively decentralised systems (e.g. US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Hong Kong) operate under different set roles (Guarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006). For example, it would be unimaginable for most American, Canadian and British principals not to be able to hire their own teaching staff (Guarino *et al.*, 2006). Yet, this is not the case in Thailand, Vietnam, South Africa and many other countries, where teachers are assigned to schools by the Ministry of Education. Principals play no role in teacher recruitment and selection; they simply do the best that they can with teachers assigned by bureaucrats at the Ministry of Education (Hallinger & Truong, 2014). The above is what obtains in schools in other parts of the world. However, according to this study, school management theories are used to assist school management teams to perform their duties instead of dismissing them. In this study, the role of the systems theory is examined in order to understand if it could be used to assist school management teams to PLOC. It is assumed in this study that the more members of the school management team are developed (through the systems theory), the better they would be and improve on their PLOC duties. This is because developing school management through the adaptation of educational theories, such as the systems theory, could assure stakeholders of constant improvements in output.

Scholars such as Hoyle (1986) and Bush (1986) have argued that the systems management theory could be successfully applied in educational practice, thus enriching the field. Van der Westhuizen (2008) argues that in view of this complex interplay of theoretical modelling and practical decision-making, the practical development of management systems informed by the constructs in systems management could go a long way towards solving management problems in practice.

The need to consider the role of the systems theory in school management is supported by a review of literature which seems to suggest a gap in knowledge and training in the current school management education systems. School management is a very crucial and practical undertaking in schools, a practice that requires significant conceptualisation of administrative and practical problem-solving capacities (Arnold, 2000). Kiguundu & Moorosi (2012) maintain several authors, including Kitavi & Van der Westhuizen (1997), Bush and Oduro

(2006), Mestry & Singh (2007) and Mathibe (2007), have noted the absence of formal training as a requirement for school principals on the African continent. There is, therefore, a need to explore how other forms of school management theories could be implemented to assist school management teams.

The main premise of this study is that the systems theory has the potential to play an important role in school management and could assist in minimising managerial inefficiencies linked to lack of suitably qualified educators, lack of expert leadership skills and shortage of administrative and managerial capabilities. These premises are linked to the findings of Leithwood (1999), the Ministerial Review Commission (1996), Pandor (2007), Vaccaro, Jansen & Van Den Bosch (2012), who urge greater emphasis on basic management and making the school as an organisation functional. Vaccaro *et al.*, (2012) further points out that part of the successful functioning of managerial functions that embrace PLOC in schools are closely linked with teaching since good teaching “opens up the mind, challenges preconception, destabilises everyday truths, sharpens the capacity to question, broadens the scope of what is known and instils habits of thought...”. The notion also assisted in terms of providing direction for this study (towards a better understanding of the open systems theory since both derive their concepts from the environment as input, where situational conditions are integrated into the theory, implemented in practice as school management PLOC).

School management also emphasises personal development of individual opportunities, equality of educational opportunities, equity of access, participation and outcomes, values and attitudes (Tavares, 2015). School management basically brings out the ultimate goals of a country’s national education system. Little research has been conducted on the role of the systems theory with regard to school management, yet the systems theory is based on a principle that espouses a holistic integrated management approach to different school activities. Considering the fact that school management involves the management of different activities, it could be argued that implementation of the systems theory could lead to enhanced school management. This is because the systems theory approach focuses on managing a school as a set of interrelated activities and sub-sets of a system, whose survival is dependent on each other.

In South Africa, school management was also affected by the transition into democracy in 1994 (that brought with it new political policies, including educational ones, which sought to redress inequalities prevalent during the apartheid era in South Africa). Thus, there was an

expansion in the education system, resulting in many schools not having skilful and knowledgeable school managers to efficiently administer schools at the new and qualitative expectations of set benchmarks. According to Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi (2009) the pilot of the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in some South African universities and its subsequent adoption as a professional and administrative requirement for school principals, was hailed as the first of its kind on the continent. Until then, promotions to school headship were based on a successful teaching record, which, as many authors agree, was not necessarily an indication of management or leadership capability (Kitavi & Van der Westhuizen, (1997). This is true because ACE was implemented in 2007 and phased out between 2013 and 2014. The phasing out of ACE looms large as a sore point in the history of educational training and it remains a patent fact that school management is faced with many challenges in managing schools.

There is dire need to understand the role of the systems theory in school management in South Africa. For example, Van der Westhuizen *et al.*, (2004:717) focused on recommendations on the need to design content that would equip trainees with management skills but did not explore the role played by management theories in general and the role of systems theory in school management, in particular. The main assumption is that the application of the systems theory in school management considers all activities as one whole and not separate units. An investigation of the role of school management, thus implies an exploration of the extent to which all activities of school management are considered as an input, process and output in the management of school activities.

The researcher is an educator and Head of Department (Natural Science and Technology) in one of the schools within Rekopantswe Area Office. Terreblanche & Durrhein (1999) points out that subject specialist workshops (for in-service training, or to develop and equip them with the necessary administrative skills) are held on an annual basis in this educational area for all educational managers. He further argues that these development exercises are extended by ad hoc weekend administrative workshops for HoDs and administrators. The add-on and ad hoc workshops are held in main centres such as Johannesburg or Klerksdorp (for the North-West Province) and are intended to impart useful day-to-day tools directed at administrative efficiency and the promotion of educational quality (Dhlamini & Thomas, 2016). This study, although very useful in terms of highlighting gaps in school management and training, does not intend to explore the role of the systems theory in school management. Exploring the role of the systems theory in school management is, therefore, of crucial

importance as it could contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical outlook that informs management practices and, perhaps, effectively assist in resolving the educational crisis identified in this study.

It is based on this background that the researcher decided to undertake a study in order to understand how the systems theory could assist school management in PLOC. Based on personal experiences in the Rekopantswe Area Office, challenges with regard to school management (such as management of resources, curriculum implementation management, and output or pass rate) are so glaring, thus the need for its improvement. It is suggested in this study that administering all duties related to school management (through PLOC as input, transformational process and output) would ensure a thorough assessment of all activities of curriculum implementation. As head of department, the researcher also observed that management practices in some schools in the Rekopantswe Area are often ad hoc and not fully informed by any systematic application of theoretical principles that have been tried and tested in the theoretical field, for instance, the systems theory.

The core duties of school management is to PLOC all school management activities. Effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and quality of schools (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, (2008) Hence, once school management PLOC are logically guided by the stages of the systems theory, the envisaged output is considered to be a result of inputs that would have been processed. Potocki & Brocarto (2009) state that it is important to align school management duties with the systems theory in order for school management activities contained in PLOC to be viewed as many parts of an organisation that work together to achieve set goals. In understanding how the individual components of the systems theory reinforce each other in the validity of school management, SMTs need to PLOC in accordance with the stages of the systems theory (input, transformational process and output). This could assist school management teams to implement the curriculum in a logical and systematic manner.

1.3 Statement of the research problem

Little is known in the literature about the role of the systems theory in school management in South African schools in general and the North West Province in particular. A review of the literature suggests that implementation of the systems theory in school management has the potential to enhance the management of various systems of the school as a whole unit rather



than as standalone units (Potocki & Brocato, 1995). The systems theory posits that functions should be considered as a larger part of a whole system. Scholars such as Tavares (2015); Samuelsson & Lindblad (2015) and Potocki & Brocato (1995) have conducted studies on the role of the systems theory in school management. However, most of these studies focused on developed countries, whose context is different from South Africa which is a developing economy and the focus of this study. Due to contextual differences, findings from studies conducted in developed economies might not be relevant to developing economies. Moreover, studies that focus on the role of the systems theory in school management are scant, and none has addressed this challenge observed in the North-West Province of South Africa. Against this background, it is imperative to close the existing gap in knowledge in the literature by conducting a study that focuses on the role of the systems theory in school management within the South African context.

According to Jansen (2017), these leaders must manage budget constraints from the outside of the organisation and manage discontent inflamed from the inside of the organisation. Jansen (2017) further maintains that school management must also manage the discontent from outside the organisation, which implies that output is achieved according to organisational goals or benchmarks of the whole society. This suggests that school management must PLOC, taking into account environmental factors, in this case, the input in accordance with the systems theory. The above duties of school management teams dovetails with the different stages of the systems theory described since the outside environment must be considered in dealing with administrative challenges faced by school management teams in order to achieve organisational goals. Motshekga (2015) the Minister of Education Basic Education maintained that, there was much more work that needs to be done and it starts on the first day of school. The Department of Basic Education (2013) states that “*there are efforts being made by government to make sure much work is done to improve school management*”. This is an indication and emphasis that even school management needs improvement. This ministerial observation further justifies the need to explore the role of the systems theory in school management in terms of implementing the curriculum as it PLOCs all activities of the school.

Some efforts have been made by government to upgrade school management and to implement the curriculum. For example, the North West Department of Education schedules workshops for school management every quarter in respective Area Offices. However, this is

not enough since the duties of school management are much more complex and need theoretical input to merge with practices in schools. The partial workshop approach to enhancing effective management in schools does not meet with current requirements for effective school leadership, whereby managers are required to play a leadership role in a transformed school system with 21st century goals laid down in the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs, 2010). Captain (2008) moots that there is considerable and growing evidence that principals could play a pivotal role in initiating school effectiveness, particularly as it pertains to learners' excellent scholastic performance. Pont, Nusche & Moorman (2008:4) stated that "*school leadership has become a priority in education policy agendas internationally. It plays a role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers as well as the school climate and environment*". This implies that there is need to develop school management to be up-to-date with the ever-changing concepts in education systems.

According to Ntseto (2015), leadership is a process that involves setting clear goals, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating educators regularly. Implementing leadership in accordance with the systems theory entails that leadership of school activities, namely curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, human resources, learner-teacher support materials as well as finances should be considered as an input, process and output that all contribute to the attainment of the desired outcomes. Mathibe (2007) found that South African principals are not appropriately skilled and trained for school management and leadership. Based on the above finding, most principals and school management teams do not have the necessary skills and expertise to match the growing demand for expert school management in South Africa today. Mathibe further maintains that school management teams (SMTs) are required to possess the necessary skills and competences that could assist them to effectively PLOC educational activities of schools. This further justifies the need to investigate the extent to which management and leadership is considered as input in school management.

Potocki & Brocato, (1995) describe organising and controlling the school as a system implies an 'integrated assembly of interacting elements designed to cooperatively carry out successful undertakings'. With the school context, this takes into consideration a multiplicity of people as agents, processes, technologies and materials that, together, perform significant

functions and contribute to the successful management of schools. In terms of control, school leadership should optimise such things as an undertaking through strategic planning. In this instance, strategic planning improves school performance as results are measured against the expectations initially set as goals. The distinction between control and strategy lies in the fact that strategy works through the full commitment of key stakeholders who have specific tasks and are empowered to accomplish these specific tasks, for instance, parents. As Potocki & Brocato (1995) submit, 'the test of efficient management is in the commitment of resources to ensure the strategy succeeds'.

Effective school management is necessary for achieving administrative and academic efficiency in schools. A general observation is, however, that a great number of schools in South Africa are not well managed. For instance, in the North West Provincial Department of Education (NWPDE, 2013), the report points out that a considerable number of schools are faced with the challenge of improper management. The NWPDE (2013) further points out that it seems that many school managers fail to meet basic administrative requirements and expectations due to lack of requisite practical skills and theoretical understanding in the field of educational management. This is an indication that a great number of schools in the North West Province are not well managed due to lack of adequate school management skills. Considering all matters discussed above, it is proposed that alternative ways of managing schools should be considered to improve challenges faced by SMTs.

Despite suggestions from the literature that the systems theory could play an important role in school management, schools in the North West Province continue to face challenges with regard to school management. Samuelsson & Lindblad (2015) and Tavares (2015) point out that the systems theory has the potential to assist an organisation or school to become a more organised, purposeful structure that consists of interrelated and interdependent elements (components, entities, factors, members and parts.) This is an indication that the systems theory could enhance the school management since it enables the different elements to continually influence one another directly or indirectly in order to maintain their activity and the existence of the system and to achieve the goal of the system.

1.4 Research questions

This main research question asked in this study was: What is the role of the systems theory in school management in the North West Province? In order to answer the main research question, the following subsidiary questions were asked:

- i. Do school management teams implement PLOC as an input in school management in the North West Province?
- ii. Do school management teams implement PLOC as a transformational process in school management? and
- iii. Do school management teams implement PLOC as an output in school management?

1.4.1 Aims and objectives of the study

The main aim of this research was to determine the role of the systems theory in school management in the North West Province.

The subsidiary objectives of the study were to:

- i. Explore whether school management teams implement PLOC as an input in school management;
- ii. Determine whether school management teams implement PLOC as a transformational process in school management; and
- iii. Establish whether school management teams implement PLOC as an output in school management.

1.5 Justification of the study

Establishing the role of the systems theory in school management could assist in closing the knowledge gap in the literature (whether SMTs PLOC educational activities as input, transactional process and output). An insight into the role played by the systems theory in school management could be useful in assisting schools to improve the current challenges faced in school management. Findings obtained by Leithwood (1999), Pandor (2007) and Vaccaro, Jansen & Van Den Bosch (2012) urge greater emphasis on basic management and making the school as an organisation functional. Vaccaro, Jansen & Van Den Bosch (2012) further points out that part of the successful functioning of managerial functions in schools is the close link with teaching because good teaching “opens up the mind, challenges preconceptions, destabilises everyday truths, sharpens the capacity to question, broadens the scope of what is known and instils habits of thought. This notion assists in directing this

study towards the open systems theory, where situational conditions are integrated into the theory implemented in practice. Thus, as SMTs carry out PLOC in accordance with the systems theory, all management activities will reflect a systematic approach to school management, where there is a flow of activities, that is, input flows into the transformational process and into output, which is the outcome of the whole process. This implies that as school management PLOCs for the success and development of operations in schools, PLOC should just flow with all school activities to ensure efficiency in schools.

Moreover, Msila (2017) observes that in a PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Report, published in 2015, the Professional Management Development Programme contends that managers and leaders of South African schools must be held accountable for what happens in their workplaces. However, this is not a new finding. Research over the past few years has shown that schools will be as good as their leaders or managers at the helm (Bush, 2007; Msila, 2017). Yet, school principals will be accountable only when they have a road map to achievement; one that is charted by sound theoretical constructs. The road map implied here is PLOC in accordance with the systems theory. Without PLOC (in accordance with the systems theory), school management may not achieve curriculum implementation. Taylor (2011) contends that holding people accountable is important, and the institution of accountability measures in South African schooling is long overdue, but if educators do not know what to do or how to do it, no accountability system can improve administrative inefficiency. Thus, school management needs to PLOC in accordance with the systems theory. in order to improve school management and accountability of administrative activities. This will bring interconnectedness of the many parts or departments of the school. There is a clear disconnection between theory and practice in school management practices in the study area that solidly provides justification for such research.

1.5.1 Scope and delimitation of the study

The study focuses on the role of the systems theory in school management. An investigation was also done on whether the functions of PLOC are conducted as an input, transformational process and output according to the tenets of the systems theory. In South Africa, districts tend to fulfil almost exclusively, a monitoring role and, thus, are often ineffective in providing administrative support that is theoretically informed in schools. This is done to assist school management to better plan, lead, organise and control every activity in the school according to the principles of the systems theory. At every stage of the systems theory,

assessment, evaluation, intervention and development are done without delay, thereby improving the standards of school management functions and curriculum implementation.

1.6 Significance of the study

According to Samuelsson & Lindblad (2015), teachers could also benefit indirectly from adhering more diligently to well-structured and expert instructions from school management. The contribution of this study lies in the fact that the findings could be used to contribute to the body of existing knowledge on the role of the systems theory in school management practices. This is because the study has the potential to provide an understanding on the extent to which SMTs implement PLOC as an input in school management. In addition, it will determine the extent to which SMTs implement PLOC as a transformational process in school management. Lastly, it will establish the extent to which SMTs implement PLOC as an output in school management. Overall, an understanding of the role of the systems theory in school management could assist the Department of Education to identify and develop theoretical constructs from the systems theory, combined with the open system theory and could benefit schools in terms of administrative strategies and competencies.

SMTs could further be empowered to perform their functions of PLOC more effectively and diligently by using aspects of the systems theory more efficiently. In addition, it is also possible that the findings of this study could be used by international, regional and local educational authorities to re-imagine, revisit and refocus their school management and leadership practices and establish links with institutional performance, teaching, learning and overall student outcomes.

In other words, school management means directing, planning and developing the mission and goals of a school to achieve its intentions or intended outcomes. In the school system, this entails delegation of responsibilities from the head to the deputy to the HoDs and the teachers in a series of PLOC procedures. This cascades down to the prefects and ultimately the rest of the learners. The process is also framed by the responsibilities of the School Governing Body (SGB), who also connect to Area Officers and the overarching specifications of the parent department of education. This flux of power, control and responsibilities entail the recognition that there is personnel who do the management and the subordinates that they manage. What they manage, it is not a singular project but includes

curriculum delivery at the forefront. This brings in the perspective of the systems theory since PLOC is usually performed at each level of school management.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The study was limited to two schools in Rekopantswe Area Office, Mafikeng. The limits in terms of scale, therefore, did not allow for the generalisation of findings to other schools in the Mafikeng Area, not even to the greater management practices in public and private schools in South Africa. In terms of research design and methodology, the qualitative design adopted here has produced significant insights into practices in the two schools, but a more statistical quantitative design could have added to these insights in measurable ways.

1.8 Outline of the study

Chapter One presents the background to the study, the problem statement, the purpose, rationale, overview of the research methodology, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter Two provides the literature review on the systems theory and the theoretical framework that informed the study. Linkages and possible gaps in relation to this study are also identified and presented in this chapter. Administrative styles employed in schools in order to tease out connections to the systems theory also examined in this chapter.

In chapter Three a detailed account of the research design, research methodology and philosophical paradigms is provided. The account reflects the significance of conducting research of this nature and the justification of the choice of the research design, data collection strategies and sample size for this study. Data analysis, findings and the interpretation of the theoretical framework are linked to the current study.

Chapter Four presents the data obtained from the field.

Chapter Five presents conclusions drawn from the interpretation of the findings and answers to the research questions. Limitations of the study are revisited and recommendations to relevant stakeholders made in this chapter. The chapter closes with suggestions for further research.

1.9 Summary of chapter

This chapter has provided the introduction and background to the study. A review of the literature revealed that very few studies have been conducted on the role of the systems theory with regard to school management in South Africa, however, the theory has the potential to contribute to systematic and holistic approaches to school management activities. The research questions raised in this study informed the type of data collected in order to answer the main research questions. The justification, delimitation and contribution of the study were also highlighted and discussed. The next chapter is the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Introduction

The purpose of a literature review is to provide theoretical explanations for the research questions. Based on the literature review, interview questions could be derived that aim to answer the research questions. Leedy & Ormrod (2005) consider a literature review as what other researchers have investigated related to one's own topic of study. The literature review assists in adding value to the body of knowledge in the subject area. The purpose of a literature review in this study is to establish if the role of the systems theory in school management or a theoretical understanding of school management activities in accordance with the system theory is required. The literature review also enabled the researcher to explore the role of the systems theory in school management.

This chapter begins with section 2.1, namely The North West Province . Section 2.2 looks at theoretical suppositions of systems theory. Section 2.3. elaborates on the systems theory delineation while Section 2.4 shows the three functional model. Section 2.5 elaborates the application of systems theory in school management. Section 2.6 deals with school management functions throughout all the stages of systems theory. Section 2.7 discusses planning as a transformational process. Section 2.8 depicts school management function as an output and section 2.9 summarises the benefits of using systems theory in school management.

2.1 The North West Province

The North West Province is one of the nine provinces of South Africa. Mafikeng is the capital and the largest city is Klerksdorp. Majority of the people are Batswana-speaking. The Province has four district municipalities (Bojanala, Ngaka Modiri Molema, Dr Kenneth Kaunda and Dr Ruth Segomotsi). The study was conducted in Ngaka Modiri Molema District. In this District, there are public, private and independent schools (all of them assisted by the government). There are two university campuses of North-West University in the Province (Mafikeng and Potchefstroom) where some teachers are trained and subsequently deployed to teach and administer schools in the area under investigation. Key touristic attractions are the Magaliesburg Mountain range, Haartebeespoort Dam, Pilanesburg and Sun City and the Vaal River, among others.

The research sites (schools A and B) are situated in Rekopantswe Area Office around Mafikeng town. These schools are within walking distance of each other in Montshioa area. The schools are well-built and have a high enrolment. Rekopantswe Area Office is found in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District. Rekopantswe Area Office used to have 95 schools but currently, there is re-zoning of schools to integrate them with other area offices, hence the numbers may vary. Rekopantswe Area Office shares geographical borders with Mafikeng, Makgobistad, Mareetsane and Mooifontein (Department of Education, Circular no. 10 of 19 June 2014). These schools were selected for the study because of the challenges encountered by the researcher and other colleagues with regard to school management in the Area Office. The Department of Education schedules intervention workshops every quarter to train SMTs on certain administrative skills to be learned and effected in running schools (Department of Education, Circular no 5 of 22 February 2018).

2.1.1 School management

According to Wejrigh & Knoontz (1993) and Shied (2011), school management is a process of planning, leading, organising, and controlling (PLOC). Shied (2011) state that planning, organising, staffing, controlling and coordinating are the functions of school management and managers, who perform such functions, have formal authority in the office, while inspiration and motivation fall within the framework of leadership. In dealing with the above functions, school activities are developed to a high level. On the other hand, according to Shied (2011) school management consists principally of administrators; these include principals, deputy principals and heads of departments (HODs). In short, this management group is called the school management team (SMT), which writes plans, sets budgets, and monitors the progress of the school, and develops strategies to make teaching and learning a success. In other words, school management is key to ensuring that schools function effectively.

According to the Policy Document Guidelines (Department of Education, 2000 and 2002), HODs and SMTs are positioned as instructional leaders who should assist educators in setting and achieving personal and professional goals related to the improvement of school instruction, monitoring and management that promote successful achievement of goals through PLOC. This entails that school management needs to PLOC with expert knowledge derived from educational theories, in this case, the systems theory, to promote school management efficiency. The same Policy Document Guidelines spells out the duties of school management to do regular formal and informal class observations and post-classroom

conferences with educators to improve standards. This shows that school managers have many duties that require skills and knowledge to carry out.

Wood, Seobi & Setlhare (2015) found that SMTs struggle to interpret the prescriptions of what they should do and to translate these prescriptions into coherent transactional leadership styles, which did not foster the trusting relationships necessary for effective monitoring, coaching and teamwork (essentially the provision of quality school management). The concept portrayed above indicates the need for the systems theory to be integrated into school management in order to assist SMTs to effectively and efficiently PLOC in accordance with the systems theory to achieve maximum output in schools. Bush, Glove & Bischoff (2006) point out that South Africa's education system needs theories on management and leadership that are relevant to the context of the country. Thus, the need to investigate how the systems theory could assist SMTs to PLOC as an input, as a transformational process and output in order to develop quality management strategies which yield desired outcomes as outputs. The systems theory takes into account challenges encountered by SMTs in the implementation of PLOC. It is posited in this study that expert knowledge in PLOC is key to school management in order to create effective and efficient schools.

According to Lamond (2004), the functions of school management involve determining the course of action, that is, decision-making strategies for the school. Management plans and sets objectives, and scans opportunities and threats within the school environment in order to find solutions. In other words, successful implementation of the curriculum is ensured through effective teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

Curriculum is the main aim of education, which will be scaled down to teachable units in schools. It is the bulk of what is to be taught and managed. The role of the school management team is to PLOC curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation. The Department of Education National Curriculum Statement NCS (2011) spells out that curriculum implementation encompasses knowledge, skills, expertise and values necessary for self-fulfilment and societal participation that lead to social and academic transformation, which bridges educational imbalances. In this study, the systems theory is used to implement the curriculum to match what is stipulated in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Thus, sound curriculum implementation by SMTs, using the systems theory to PLOC, would equip SMTs with intellectual abilities

and capabilities that would create credible quality management through the use of the systems theory.

Teaching and learning is the process of imparting knowledge and skills to learners using a variety of methods and theories of education to enhance understanding of what is being taught. It is an interactive process where learners receive knowledge and process it during learning and feedback (output) as results are assessed and analysed. Teaching and learning is at the centre of the systems theory where input is provided, the transformational process takes place and output determines whether success is achieved or not Department of Education National Curriculum Statement NCS (2011) spells The school management PLOC's the teaching and learning to ensure effectiveness in this activity. According to Lamond (2004), teaching and learning involves subject matter mastery, curriculum development, course design and delivery of instructional practice. There must be a systematic assessment that matches what is being taught. Improvisation and resources of all kinds enhance teaching and learning in a school set-up.

The role of SMTs in the above activities is to PLOC activities. According to the systems theory, these are undertaken to maximise school management efficiency on PLOC. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation are measurement instruments that assist school managers to put a scale on how their schools are performing. This is where school management skills and managerial expertise are tested and valued in accordance with the systems theory (Potocki & Brocarto, 1995). In other words, the role of SMTs is to supervise, monitor and evaluate activities of curriculum implementation. They also measure the input and the transformational process against the output base on how PLOC was implemented in each case (Huimgf, 2004).

The role of SMTs in the management of Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) resources is to ensure that PLOC is done in the first place. When SMTs PLOC on LTSM, they also put measures on how to get the supplies of these resources timeously and to determine storage facilities for such resources. The distribution strategies of LTSM must be done equitably to create a fair balance of LTSM. Some LTSM come from the Department of Education while some are donated by stakeholders, hence SMTs need to secure them so as to account for these resources of the school.

The management of human and financial resources and LTMS are some of the activities school management embark on to ensure attainment of educational objectives (Huimgf 2004).

The role of SMTs in human resources is to PLOC for them first and foremost. SMTs must make sure that the personnel are qualified for the job description they are undertaking. If the staff are not competent, then strategies must be created to alleviate the situation through training to meet the job specifications and requirements or to replace them altogether. SMTs need to mentor this resource to the standard that optimises performance and generate constant renewal in all departments of the school. This way, the benefits of the output component in the structure of the systems theory could be guaranteed. Potocki & Brocato. (1995) state that effective human resources selection enhances implementation of the systems theory in schools.

SMTs must PLOC for their financial resources in accordance with the systems theory. This would ensure that SMTs focus on the assessment of the budget, set financial priorities and determine their budget for the year. Activities such as fund raising, marketing platforms, advertising and competitions could be scheduled to keep within the budget limits or to add onto what is already available. SMTs need to control the income and expenditure in their budget so that the desired output is met.

2.1.2 Duties and roles of school management: PLOC

School management duties and roles are mostly centred on PLOC for curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation as well as management of resources such as LTSM, human resources and financial resources. According to Karnaka (2012), planning is a policy statement for SMTs to achieve the aims and objectives required by the school, planning is a process that determines the future focus of the organisation, it is a continuous process of perceptions, analysis and conceptualisation of school management issues. Lamond (2004) considers planning as a process that begins with environmental scanning of the economic conditions, their clients (parents, stakeholders) and establishing goals and objectives or statements of intent. According to the systems theory, planning is regarded as input from the environment and from within the school. Planning using the systems theory makes a forecast of the whole school management system, thus the necessary resources of the organisation as input required to be transformed in order to achieve the planned and desired output.

Leading is a key function of school management. According to Huimfg (2008), leading involves social and informal sources of influence that inspires action to understand personalities, values, attitudes and emotions. In teaching and learning, for example, values



and attitudes need to be inculcated to ensure emotional balance. This would result in strategic decision-making, teamwork and group effort. Hence, when using the systems theory, all different departments work systematically in an interconnected way to achieve the aims and goals of the school. Thus, understanding the values, attitudes, and emotions of educators would create teamwork and group effort so that the many parts (departments) of the school are coordinated to serve one purpose.

Therefore, when leading for curriculum implementation, there ought to be sufficient motivation encouraged by SMTs to promote teamwork and cooperation in teaching and learning activities so that the planned and desired output is realised. SMTs need to create a sense of ownership so as to assess, monitor and evaluate with the aim of realising the planned output.

School management duties and responsibilities involve organising educational activities in order to enable the school to achieve its overall educational objectives. According to Lamond (2004), organising involves design of individual jobs, departmentalising or clustering jobs, duties and activities into departments to coordinate efforts effectively. Using the different stages of the systems theory (input, transformational process and output) would coordinate and strengthen school management functions to sustain school effectiveness, especially in the selected schools. This would also highlight job description initiatives, which constitute clear systems of school management and channels of PLOC. According to Karnataka (2012), organising is a means of bringing planning into action: it is a map or medium through which goals, aims and objectives of school management and administrations are achieved since PLOC takes place according to the systems theory. School management PLOC would take into account all activities, which are curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, monitoring, assessment, evaluation, human resources, financial resources and learner-teacher support materials. In this scenario, all domains of school management activities would be harnessed together, in accordance with the systems theory. It could be deduced that organising then is a structural framework of the activities, which SMTs embark on as they PLOC.

Huimfg (2008) emphasises that controlling involves ensuring that performance does not deviate from set standards. Controlling consists of three stages as follows: establishing performance standards, comparing actual performance standards against set standards and then taking corrective active action or measures on administrative problems from getting out

of hand. This ensures that the three stages of the systems theory are reflected here. This implies that every activity of school management must be measured, evaluated according to the systems theory and feedback given. The systems theory thus, evaluates every stage and constantly checks school activities to ensure the school system is managed efficiently. Therefore, controlling is about measuring performance standards, comparing them with actual standards achieved by learners and the standards set as targets by school management. After that, SMTs evaluate results and analyse these to come up with feedback. The feedback is ultimately used to embark on corrective action that addresses the gaps in the PLOC process.

2.2 Theoretical suppositions of the systems theory

The systems theories were developed by a number of theorists, including (Laszlo & Kripner, 1998). Thereafter, other theorists continued to develop the systems theory. According to Von Bertalanffy (1969), there is a general tendency towards integration of the systems theory into various sciences, natural and social. Such theory could be important for developing unifying principles that run vertically and horizontally through the universe of individual sciences. Thus, the systems theory brings one closer to the goal of unity in the sciences, which could lead to a much-needed integration in the science and practice of educational management (Von Bertalanffy, 1969). This implies that the systems approach could be used to ensure that SMTs recognise the interdependent relationship between different school management functions that assist them to PLOC. Through this approach, the administrative components of an organisation are examined as part of one larger system (Saylor Foundation, 2014). If implemented effectively, a systems approach would find an equal balance between the extremely impersonal Scientific Approach and the individually-focused Human Relations Approach in educational management. However, in order to understand the systems theory approach properly, it is important to recognise that different divisions and departments in school management play an equally important role. Divisions or sub-systems could be viewed as single standing entities to determine their fit into the entire organisation and to determine the role they play in the larger administrative system.

2.2.1 Katz and Kahn's Open System Model

The figure below represents Katz & Kahn's Open System Model and how it operates in practical terms, that is, the input is transformed and the output comes out. When the output comes out, it is analysed and evaluated, feedback given and the system starts all over again.

All the elements that were not useful will be discarded and new strategies used to keep the systems functional.

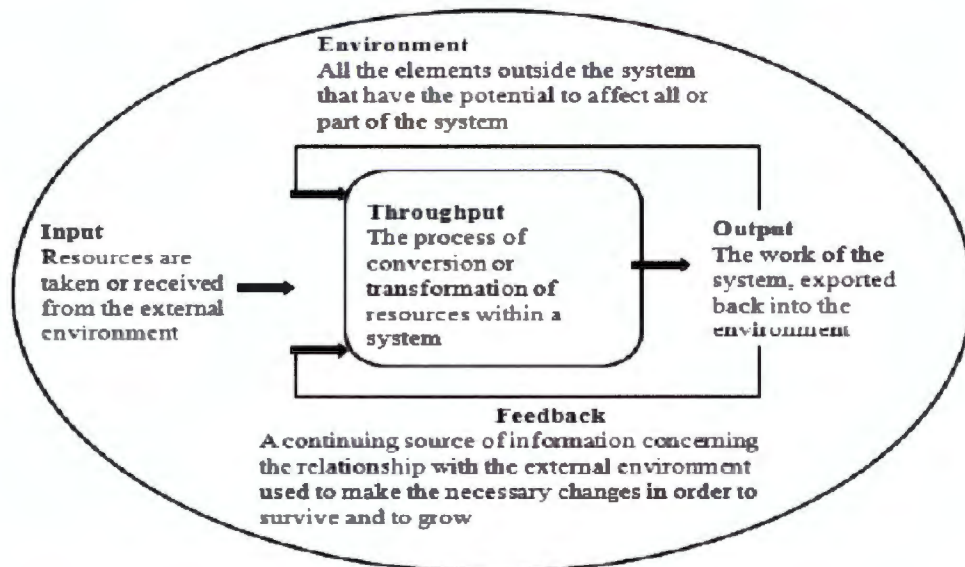


Figure 2.1: Katz & Kahn's Open System Model

Adapted from Katz & Kahn (1978)

The figure above shows how the systems theory operates in practical terms: input, transformational process or throughput, and output are constantly reviewed or evaluated to determine how effective school management is in PLOC in accordance with the systems theory. This is deemed to increase efficiency and effectiveness of school management in PLOC in the two selected schools through the school management hands-on practices. The section that follows provides an explanation and discussion of the different stages and processes involved in the systems theory.

2.3 Stages of the Systems Theory

The stages of systems theory are input, transformational process and output. These stages are also called elements which operate on how the systems theory works. Each of the stages has a role to play in the operation of this theory. The following sections explain the role of each of the systems theory stages in school management practices.

2.3.1 Input

McGinn & Welsh (1999) state that input is any information, resources, contribution of feedback, or work put in a system for processing. The definition goes on to say input is what is put in, taken in, or operated on by a system or process. McGinn & Welsh (1999) further maintain that input are resources needed to provide for the needs of schools. Katz & Kahn (1978) moot that input is the first process in the systems theory where the school management team recruits human resources, brings in teaching and learning material resources, brings in skills and expertise. Input in the systems theory entails the teachers, learners, curriculum specifications, skills and expertise in the context of the school. Since much of input in administration entails human beings rather than machine inputs that are objects, a lot has to be considered in terms of the interactions that link policy directives to human performance. However, for the purposes of this study, input constitutes all the duties of the school management team (that is, PLOC). All the above input needs SMTs to PLOC using the systems theory in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Zipin (2017) traces how shifts in post-apartheid curriculum policy reforms have been bi-polar. The NCS (2005) emphasised everyday knowledge with outcomes defined in terms of vocational skills and competences. This is how the school management team determines the type of input it is going to deal with by analysis of what is within the environment according to the systems theory.

2.3.2 The transformational process

According to Katz & Kahn (1978), the transformational process entails the conversion of input into practical processes. This is when resources that are put in the school system, are processed and used to yield results. Transformation or throughput, also known as transformational process in education settings, is compared to the manufacturing industry where input is processed to bring about desired products or refinement of intended educational outcomes (Bush, 2010). In the design of this study, PLOC of curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation as well as management of LTSM human resources and financial resources are activities that must be refined to produce targeted output according to the systems theory. In addition, the most important aspect of the systems theory that deals with transformation is that there is a continuous interaction between the environment and elements or departments in the organisation. This interaction acts as a mirror that reflects what needs to be corrected before more interactions take place. Moreover, principles of the systems theory namely , inputs,

transformational and outputs could be easily linked with traditional management theories. By applying these principles to schools, they could become more effective and efficient and be transformed into better organisations. Houghteling (2006) further suggests that schools have open systems and a dynamic environment. In such an environment, the principal and school management team must manage the transformational process in such a way that it will lead to improved quality in the teaching and learning process as PLOC takes place using the systems theory. The ever-improving and new skills, knowledge, expertise and culture should thus, be inculcated in the school set-up through the use of open systems principles and ideas (Calderwell & Spinks, 1992). This implies that school activities need to be transformed to suit the different stages of the systems theory of school management. Transformation comes about through the expert knowledge of school management as they PLOC activities such as curriculum implementation, teaching and learning. The school management team carries out PLOC on every department and activity of the school to transform the input so that the output will benefit the school and the community. Thus, input such as human resources, LTSM and financial resources must be put into PLOC by the school management team using the systems theory, hence making SMTs PLOC relevant to all school activities.

2.3.3 Output

According to Bernhardt (2004), output from an educational planner's point of view is the number of learners who successfully complete the educational cycle. Output is the final step in the systems management process. At this level, end results are experienced by learners, educators, school managers, parents and the community as a whole. In the systems theory, output in education forms part of and could be seen in self-advancement, self-esteem, academic achievement and school attendance by learners. Staff turnover, attitude towards teaching as a profession as well as work satisfaction are output that are definitively related to teaching. Other output that is visible in a school is related to financial matters and conditions of service. It is clear in this review of output as a component of the systems theory that in narrowing the focus to the specific leadership behaviour that successful leaders implement in order to effect change and increase student achievement (Chenoweth, 2009; Dufour & Marzano, 2011; Haycock, 2006; Reeves, 2009), certain behaviours emerge as follows: leader as a change agent; leader as the vision creator; and leader as a supporter. Zipin (2017) points out that the most powerful curriculum would focus on problems that matter in learners' local life world, and that link to matters of global concern, including teachers, into collaborative work upon them. This points to output, that it originates from the local environment, and

undergoes a transformational process to come out as a globally desired outcome to serve the society. All that starts with school management PLOC, according to the systems theory. Hence, using the systems theory in school management will develop efficient schools that will produce effective products that will develop global economies.

2.3.4 Environment

The environment in this study means stakeholders; that is, the department of education, and parents, the community and the physical features of the environment around the school and other schools. All these constitute the environment in this study. In a school scenario, environment could also mean the conditions prevailing in schools such as orderly and disciplined schools, or hostile schools (Department of Basic Education Curriculum Statement NCS, 2011). In other words, environment may also mean the physical environment of the school.

2.3.5 Feedback

Feedback, according to this study, consists of the results and reports discussed after the implementation of an educational process in order to provide solutions to the education gaps. In other words, feedback refers to intervention strategies to bridge gaps discovered during educational assessment, evaluation and analysis of educational output. Feedback is the last of the crucial facts after analysis and adds value to the process of analysis and evaluation in the systems theory.

2.4 The three function model

The figure below is a three functional model that represents how the systems theory works on a practical basis.

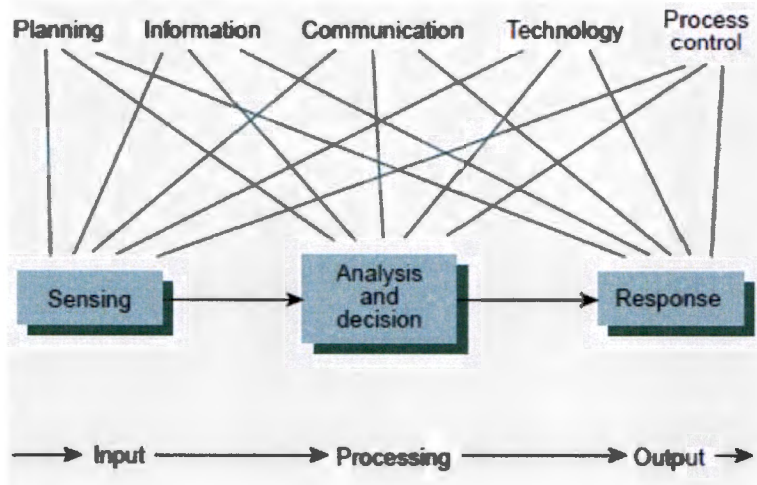


Figure 2.2: Three –function systems model

Adapted: Johns Hopkins Technical Digest, 1995

The three function systems model depicts the systems theory as an integrated assembly of interacting elements designed to carry out cooperatively predetermined functions. In the case of a school, the components of school management (manpower, planning, leading, organising, controlling, information and communication, technology and teaching and learning materials) work together to perform a significant function that contributes to the achievement of specific aims, services, or product development in accordance with the systems theory. Thus, SMTs need to match their activities and functions with the systems theory to PLOC as an input, as a transformational process and as an output.

The diagram above shows input is provided to the school from the environment and even from the organisation itself (through expert individuals within the school management team). The processing component entails all these strategies and activities that take place in the school and which are driven by the school management team. This is achieved through the professional use of PLOC and through selective and diligent use of information communication technologies and systematic control of the entire processes (through PLOC). The systems theory, therefore, tends to have similar elements with other models briefly outlined as used in organisations such as schools.

2.5 Application of the systems theory in school management

The school, as an organisation, is an open system which interacts with the environment and is continually adapting and improving. The principal, as a leader, motivates members of the

school to seek a worthy vision since it promotes learning and growth for all, thus gaining buy-in from staff and the community of stakeholders. The ultimate support of such a vision is accomplished through feedback, reflection, resources, professional growth opportunities and developing skills in learners (Bush, 2003). Thus, when school management operates as an input, transformational process, and an output in accordance with the systems theory, all the stages of the theory would facilitate curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring, evaluation, learner-teacher support materials and financial resources as highlighted above. All would work together to achieve desired outcomes.

The school has boundaries that is, the community. It is surrounded by other schools which constantly interact with and influence each other. Jordan, Brooks & Hmelo-Silver (2014) observes that the boundary's quality of permeability makes it possible for the organisational system of the school to get feedback from its environment and use it for purposes of developing to a greater extent. This means that the systems theory views school management as an act that seeks to ensure interactions of processes and mechanisms that control and measure the relationships and interactions among the subsidiary parts of the school - individuals, groups, departments and business centres. This implies that there is team work and sharing of ideas in the school management functions of PLOC and implementing certain strategies from the community/environment that are relevant to the development of school management. Jordan *et al.*, (2014) and Corlett (2014) point out that the systems approach recognises two key points about the mechanisms at play as follows:

(a) Something that affects one part or level of the system, affects all other parts and levels. This implies that if one department of the school is malfunctioning, all the other departments will be affected since all the departments are interconnected and function as a team to achieve the goals of the school; and

(b) No single part of the organisational system can be allowed to sub-optimize, or over-achieve.

Each part must operate in concert with all other parts Jordan *et al.*, (2014) and Corlett (2014) further explain that the key point here is that differentiation must precede integration, that is to say, individuals, teams and groups must themselves, have the opportunity to operate as open system before the whole organisation can operate as an open system on a bigger scale. In some instances, the systems theory is equated to the open system theory since both have the same three stages of how SMTs should manage their schools, that is, PLOC as an input,

as a transformational process and an output. All school activities, which are the management of financial and human resources and LTSM, should be viewed from the holistic perspective of the school. All departments need to be developed in a school set-up, thus explaining why it is important to use the systems theory in school management. Curriculum implementation and teaching and learning need to be under the microscope of the systems theory. When the school management team PLOC's for every school activity, it needs to be mindful that input has an impact on the transformational process and ultimately, the nature of the output. The systems theory approach depends on all the three components for its successful implementation.

Katz & Kahn (1978) developed a model (Figure 2.1) for the interpretation of organisational mechanisms and actions in an open systems model in terms of input, throughput and output (Hassard, 1995). This model factorises the environment into the functioning of the system theory and could be seen as the building block for the open systems theory. Hassard (1995) argues that systems management theories have a lot in common with the open systems theory. This is so because the open system and systems theory both interact with the external environment to achieve common goals and aims of stakeholders. Furthermore, the two theories both have input, transformational process, and output as the stages for SMTs to follow as they PLOC. The fact that the systems theory and the open system theory interact with their environments to determine the type of input to be dealt with, shows the similarities of these theories. The figure above shows how the systems theory works with its environment to improve school management with regard to PLOC. Kearney, Wood & Zuber-Skerritt, (2013) state that schools pride themselves on being community schools. That is to say, PLOC that is done by SMTs in school activities such as curriculum implementation, derives its strength from the environment (external and internal input) to make such transformational processes viable. Community schools collaborate with many partners to offer a range of support and opportunities to SMTs, educators and learners. This agrees with the systems theory and how the environment is involved in interacting with all departments of the school to achieve the desired outcome. Partners also provide financial support, learner-teacher support materials, monitoring, assessment and evaluation. In an attempt to explain the role of the systems theory in school management, the section that follows provides a discussion on how school management could be conducted as input, transformational process and output.

2.6 School management function as input

When school management functions as an input, it means that school management skills, knowledge and expertise all contribute to enhance the transformational process to produce desired outcomes. The school management team would PLOC for different educational and school activities as interrelated units using the systems theory.

2.6.1 Planning as input in the school management process

Lamond (2004) considers planning as an important function that provides very useful ways of classifying activities of school management as they attempt to achieve organisational goals. In other words, planning assists SMTs in terms of directing the vision of the school and how to set goals and objectives of the school management team. Planning allows school management teams to find strategies that could assist in achieving the goals of the school in accordance with the systems theory. In curriculum implementation, the school management team needs to break down the contents of the curriculum into teachable topics in the form of lesson planning as well as drafting the time table to fit all subjects to be taught. The school management team must see to it that for teaching and learning, lesson planning constitute input that assists in forecasting what must be achieved by the school. On the other hand, planning for monitoring, assessment, evaluation and analysis is done through the drafting of year plans, and departmental year plans taking into account the cyclic nature of the systems theory (Bush, 2010). School management team also plan for learner-teacher support materials (LTSM) to make sure that there is sufficient material for the relevant groups in the school. Human resources are recruited according to qualification and experience to achieve goals in accordance with the systems theory. On financial resources, SMTs need to budget to avoid over-spending before departmental allocation of funds is done.

2.6.2 Leading as an input in the school management process

Leadership assists SMTs with decision-making and communication networks in the school as a system. Leading also assists SMTs with establishing team work among different departments to achieve the goals of the school. Leadership provides motivation for different departments to work together to achieve the set goals of the school. Leading curriculum implementation, according to the systems theory, involves guidance on how to implement the curriculum (Huber, 2014; Leithwood, 2008). On teaching and learning, SMTs need to give direction on how to plan and suggest methodologies that could make learning successful in the easiest methods to comprehend. According to Wejrich & Koontz (1993) monitoring,

assessing, analysing and evaluation enable SMTs to embark on lesson observation and to develop staff where need be in order to accomplish desired goals. Human resources need to be inducted into the school as an interconnected system where rules and regulations of the school are an integral part of enabling the system to function as a totality. The supply of LTSM and financial resources need to be regulated according to the needs of each of the departments.

2.6.3 Organising as an input in the school management process

According to the Random House Revised Dictionary (1983), organising is to form as or into a whole consisting of interdependent or coordinated parts to combine as an organisation. This description connects well with the perspective of the systems theory. Koontz (1980) posit that organising provides the structure and design of the school according to departments, rules and regulations and social networks. They outline four principles of management efficiency which assist school management to logically follow-up all activities of the school. SMTs need to ensure curriculum implementation by allocating it to a time table so that implementation can take place. Also, in teaching and learning, staffing must be done according to member qualifications and area of specialisation. Monitoring, assessment and evaluation by the school management team is done through a schedule of class visits, inspection of books and files. When organising human resources, staffing must be varied according to age, gender and experience to promote interdependence according to the systems theory. In as far as LTSM is concerned, quantities of materials must match the number of learners and teachers to promote accountability in accordance with the systems theory. When organising for financial resources, income and expenditure should be balanced in a bid to ensure an even spread in the finances of the school in accordance with the systems theory.

2.6.4 Controlling as an input in the school management process

According to Huimfg (2008), controlling involves ensuring that performance does not deviate from set standards. This implies that all departments in the school must comply with standards set by the school management team. Thus, PLOC becomes interconnected with the different departments to form a system. The implementation of the curriculum by the school management team means that the time table must be followed strictly and that subject schedules must be completed before examination as an input in accordance with the systems theory. On teaching and learning, a log in and log out time book and learner registers must be

used as input in accordance with the systems to control absenteeism that negatively affects desired outcomes in an organisation. SMTs must monitor, assess, evaluate and analyse school activities through moderating tasks to ensure effective measurement and evaluation in accordance with the systems theory. Human resources must be controlled by workable teacher-learner ratios to avoid huge classes that negatively impact on the output if not controlled. SMTs need to show that learner-teacher support materials are relevant to the subjects taught and that they are equitably distributed. There is need for SMTs to limit financial spending and to fund-raise to keep the financial resources afloat for the functioning of the school.

2.7 Planning as a transformational process in the school management process

According to Katz & Kahn (1978), the transformational process involves a practical process whereby input is processed to produce expected end results. This transformational process assists SMTs in planning for monitoring, assessment, evaluation, analysis and reporting all school management activities in accordance with the systems theory. The transformational process of planning is the actual process of using lesson plans to carry out teaching and learning. Here, SMTs seek to find out whether lesson plans are actually used in lesson delivery to achieve desired results in accordance with the systems theory.

2.7.1 Leading as a transformational process in the school management process

Leading, according to Shied (2011) plays a role in terms of inspiring, motivating and encouraging teamwork in the transformational process, which involves the actual monitoring, assessment and evaluation by SMTs. This assists school management in terms of involvement with all departments in the school as they monitor and give feedback in order to achieve set standards. This interaction is expected to encourage teamwork among all departments thus, making the task of school management effective and efficient as a transformational process. All these is reflects the systems theory perspective in the organisation.

2.7.2 Organising as transformational process in the school management process

Shaik (2011) state that organising involves designs and structures of school departments, educators, learners, workers and SMTs. This organising process assists SMTs in identifying and locating areas where staff development is required, and also other resource materials such as human resources, financial resources and teacher-learner support materials. SMTs should

organise the above resources and manage them using the systems theory. Close monitoring of the financial and human resources assists in terms of creating structures of trust.

2.7.3 Controlling as a transformational process in the school management process

The transformational process involves measures put in place to ensure that PLOC is effectively carried out (Potocki & Brocato, 1995). SMTs would make follow-ups to see that time allocation is adequately utilised in all departments and monitoring, assessment and supervision is carried out according to the systems theory. Essentially, the view is that curriculum implementation, teaching and learning and the management of resources such as financial, human resources and LTSM need to be wholly controlled and regulated such that none of the components impedes the functionality of the system. Each undertaking is seen as a part of an entire system that cannot be seen in isolation of other activities; that is, curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation are all enshrined components of the systems theory in PLOC where all activities work towards the achievement of set goals as output. For the organic function of the system, each component contributes to the dynamism of administrative efficiency and efficacy.

2.8 School management as an output

This is a process where the school management team assesses and evaluates the whole system of PLOC and provides feedback for refining the management process. It is also the process where SMTs follow-up from input, the transformational process and then verify the output of PLOC in line with the systems theory on curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, evaluation and monitoring as well as management of the human and financial resources and LTSM.

2.8.1 Planning as an output

Output is the end result or the expected outcome of a process (Katz & Kahn, 2001). SMTs could be assisted in planning for output by determining the outcomes through the amount and nature of the input and how this is processed to bring about the outcome, which is the output in accordance with the systems theory (Welsh & McGinn, 1999). This comes in the form of learners who proceed to higher levels of learning, or the high pass rate of the school. In other words, output is the final product and the ultimate goal. In this case, the school management team should assess and evaluate results of curriculum implementation, monitor the teaching and learning processes and analyse human and financial resources and LTSM to determine

output in all cases. If this is done in accordance with the systems theory, then output is anticipated to be desirable.

2.8.2 Leading as an output in school management

Leading as an output could assist school management by providing career guidance to its learners and direct successful learners to opportunities that best suit their achievement. Educators would benefit through incentives provided by SMTs to motivate them and other workers (Potocki & Brocato 1995). If incentives are provided in teaching and learning, in curriculum and implementation and in assessment and evaluation, then output would be high since rewards are a motivational tool.

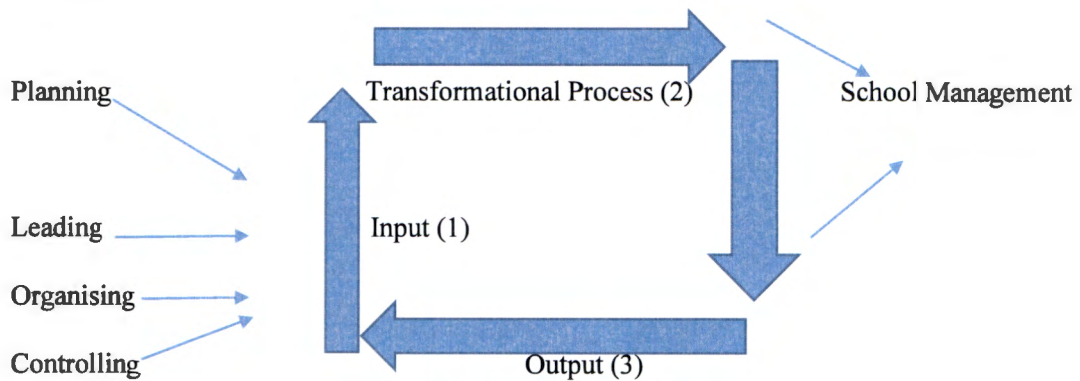
2.8.3 Organising as an output in school management

Organising, as an output, could assist SMTs to categorise expected outcomes against the actual performance of learners and this will give the school management team the forecast for intervention and feedback to determine the type of staff development required (Saylor Foundation, 2014). When analysis of results is finalised by management that is when new strategies of feedback are formulated to bring about desired results. This implies assessment, evaluation and analysis of all school activities from the management of human and financial resources to LTSM. The school management team needs to determine the organisation of curriculum implementation and teaching and learning as an output through setting up panel discussions that are charged to identify the nature of the output. This is the essential feature of the systems theory.

2.8.4 Controlling as an output

According to Lammond (2004), controlling assists SMTs in terms of re-evaluating and analysing the whole process of PLOC in accordance with the systems theory. When this is done, feedback could be implemented and formulated into new strategies to improve management systems in schools. In this case, school activities need to be re-evaluated, for instance, curriculum implementation, teaching and learning and assessment, monitoring and evaluation. SMTs need to analyse these activities in order to come up with the desired output.

2.8.5 Towards PLOC as an input, transformational process and output in school management



Source own

Figure 2.3 Towards PLOC as an input, transformational process and output in school management

The diagram above emphasises the process of PLOC on input, transformational process and output. It shows the different stages of the systems theory at all levels of PLOC and its impact on curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, evaluation and analysis, and, in the same way, management of resources such as financial and human resources as well as LTSM. The diagram also shows that PLOC should be implemented as an input, as a transformational process, and as an output of activities of the curriculum.

2.9 Benefits of using the systems theory in school management

The school, as an organisation, is made up of interdependent parts, each with its own specific function, and each part interacts with other parts to achieve the holistic aims and goals of the organisation (Katz & Kahn, 1978). This implies that the core elements of the systems theory could be of relevance to the school management team. The school system could be structured into parts and these parts could be the whole organisation, or a division, a department, or teams set up to perform functions that affect the whole organisation. This means that the different parts or departments of the school (as an organisation) are interconnected to achieve common goals and aims of the organisation. Hence, teamwork would operate in all departments, that is, financial management, learning materials and learner support strategies, monitoring, and managing the type of input injected in school management and how it is



utilised. Teamwork is achieved in departments, for example, the department of science and technology draws up departmental policies or subject year plans that tally or are in conjunction with other departments and tap into the aims and objectives of the school. SMTs also PLOCs for human resources, learner-teacher material resources, financial resources and teaching and learning. All these add up to school management in accordance with the systems theory.

William (2010) identifies the benefits of using the systems theory in schools as follows:

- i. It compels education managers to view their organisations as part of the competitive, economic, social, technological, and legal sites and forces in their environments. According to this view, school management must compete with other schools on academic and administrative excellence in achieving the goals according to global standards;
- ii. Education managers are also compelled to be aware of how the environment affects specific parts of the school as an organisation. This denotes that as a school management team PLOCs, it must be aware of the demands of clients and put measures in place to solve these demands before the clientele expresses dissatisfaction;
- iii. Because of the complexity and opportunities of trying to achieve synergies between different parts of the school as an organisation, the systems theory encourages managers to focus on improved synergy and communication and cooperation within the school as an education site. In other words, the systems theory encourages team work and considers the whole school as operating under one umbrella with different departments; and
- iv. It makes school managers acutely aware that good internal school management of the school as an organisation may not be enough to ensure survival in this world of diversity. Thus, schools will have to improve their performance through the systematic application of systems theories, implying a lot could be achieved by SMTs using the systems theory as it PLOCs.

The above-mentioned aspects are supported by Shava (2015) who states that the notion of effective school leadership is crucial towards the performance of learners and in providing good learning opportunities for them. This can be achieved through school management

PLOC as input, transformational process, and as output. Expert internal school management is sure to achieve set standards. Transformational processes in a school refers to the managerial responsibilities which involve the principal, heads of departments, educators who are appropriately qualified for the job they are doing, that is, they have subject content, knowledge and pedagogic skills that answer to the demands of the school. It has been established that committed and competent school leaders and managers are able to transform schools into real community centres of excellence (Mathabatha, 2015). According to Mchunu (2012), all schools need to become centres of excellence and, to this end, dedicated and committed school leaders and managers are the cornerstone. They have the expertise and experience to push the school to the next level. The above could be achieved when the school management team is assisted with the use of the systems theory to PLOC as an input, as a transformational process, and as an output. This is so because at every level of the stages of the systems theory, evaluation takes place and feedback is done to ensure that curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring, evaluation, human resources, teacher-learner support materials and financial resources are done according to the systems theory.

This implies that the school interacts with the community where learners come from, to join the school. Parents pay school fees to make schools functional and the school management team uses the money to buy resources and materials for the school to function. Thus, PLOC by the school management team is performed to deal with financial resources from the environment in order to benefit the systems within the school. Resources from parents are channelled through the School Governing Body (SGB) as input according to the systems management theory. The school, on the other hand, influences the community through the education imparted to learners. In a nutshell, the components of the systems theory are derived from observations made by Smallwood, Ulrich & Sweetman (2008) who state that “the quality of leadership helps meet the expectations of investors, customers and employees”. Closely related to astute leadership in the domain of the systems theory is the effective functioning of complex organisations (Marzano, McNulty & Waters 2005). Considering the vast importance of the role of the leader within an organisation, there has not been a substantial amount of research on school leadership with regard to sustaining high student achievement (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008). An analysis of the study by Marzano *et al.* (2005) found over five thousand articles and studies that address school leadership, “but only 69 that actually examine the interconnected relationship between building leadership

and the theoretical underpinnings of the systems theory and how such connections spur the achievement of students". Thus, when school managers PLOC, they need to visualise all the above and see how the environment can positively assist the school management team. They must also be aware of the threats that are in the environment and address them before these can negatively affect the school. If the school management team is assisted by the systems theory, there would be clear direction to achieve the above because when school managers PLOC, all aspects of the school will be under the microscope of finding solutions to all areas of concern in the school using the systems theory.

Katz & Kahn (2001) integrated the notion of the open systems to match the systems theory. The open systems approach views the world in terms of irreducibly integrated systems. It focuses attention on the whole, as well as on the complex interrelationships among its constituent parts. This could assist in school management because the school has many departments that need to work as one unit. This way of seeing is not an alternative, but a complement to the specialised way of managing schools as organisations. It is all-embracing and comprehensive, incorporating the specialised perspective as one aspect of a general conception. On the other hand, the general systems approach encourages the development of a global, more unitary consciousness, team work, collaboration, learning for life, and exposure to the broader storehouse of accumulated knowledge and wisdom in educational management practices (Laszlo & Kripner, 2007). The above is useful to school management because in schools, there is need for teamwork, collaboration, learning for life, exposure to the environment, with all these focusing on global expectations. This is the aspiration of SMTs to make their schools meet the global benchmarks. Hence, the need for SMTs to use the systems theory to PLOC in order to meet the set demands above.

The important contributions of the systems theory are derived from a deliberate focus upon the type of leadership behaviour found in successful schools (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Schools with such achievement have been identified to have leaders with distinctive leadership styles that demonstrate specific leadership behaviours (Marzano *et al.*, 2005; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Successful schools come about through expert school management assisted by the systems theory. Thus, there is need for SMTs to PLOC using the systems theory in all aspects of school management.

2.9.1 Systems management theory as total quality leadership

The above is a perspective that taps into the systems theory because once the systems theory is implemented, the advanced form of the systems theory would be total quality of school management. Within the conceptual framework of effective leadership, the framework of Total Quality Management (TQM) has been a recent proposition to schools as organisations. The emphasis is placed again on the leader as a change agent wherein teachers and students want to do their best for the school as much as for the principal. As noted by Yukl (2009), principals who lead change, strive to work closely with teachers to establish and work towards a shared vision of that envisaged change by building leadership capacity within stakeholders (Dufour & Marzano, 2011). Bass (1999) argues this is being demonstrated when the leader, as a change agent, envisions a desirable future, articulates how it could be reached, serves as a role model for colleagues, sets high expectations and displays confidence. If the systems theory is effectively used in school management, aspects of total quality will be experienced in the school.

Fullan (2001) indicates that leadership is about solving complex problems, such as how to meet the competitive edge by raising achievement for all students, thus closing, and hopefully eliminating the achievement gap. Chenoweth (2009) also argues that “all schools could learn something from the qualities shared by schools that have been successful in educating students to high levels”. In fact, effective leaders have, as one of their highest priorities, learning from the best practices of high performing schools. The behaviours of leaders within successful schools need to be examined so that ultimately, students receive higher quality and more focused instruction in their classrooms on a day-to-day basis. Researchers in South Africa and elsewhere have identified a positive correlation between the leadership of the principal and increased student achievement (Cotton, 2003; McEwan, 2003), but have not specifically examined the theoretical orientations of leaders in these successful schools and specifically how an integrated theory-practice framework could be of great use to school management. It is important in this time of high accountability in schools, as organisations, to understand the specific leadership behaviours that effect student achievement within successful schools so that attempts could be made to fully understand the combination of factors that lead to such. School managers need staff development themselves, using educational theories, in this case, the systems theory to PLOC, so as to harness all departments of the school as one unit of a system.

2.9.2 Mechanisms that control the functioning of the systems theory in schools

Kahn & Katz (2001) perceives the system theory as it illuminates and energises processes: the myriad ways in which the organisation affects and is affected by its environment. This tells us that as school managers PLOC using the systems theory, creativity and new strategies surface and will improve school management, learning and teaching.

2.9.3 Other systems and models that tap into the functionality of the systems theory

Although this study focuses specifically on the integration and application of the Systems Theory in school administrative practices in two selected schools in Mafikeng, the researcher is aware of other contributions to school management practices. This segment of the literature review provides an overview of these management practices in order to justify the focus of the study. Educational management involves a number of models that principals and administrators tap into in their day-to-day chores of managing schools. These models include the following:

The structural model, according to Marzano *et al.*, (2011), advocates for structures in management, and that organisations exist to achieve certain goals through the structures they set up. Marzano *et al.*, (2011), point out that the bureaucratic model values the hierarchy of authority. In this model, bureaucracy is at play in all sectors of the school system. Each singular act that pertains to the administration is authorised by an immediate superior authority before implementation. Essentially, there are tiers of authority and sanctions in order to monitor accountability, though such a system has inherent delays experienced through the hierarchy of authority.

- Knowledge to make decisions on the curriculum
- Technology to make decisions on learning and communication
- Power to make decisions on authority and control
- Material to make decisions on distribution and use of resources, facilities, supplies and equipment
- Teachers' manpower to make decisions on allocation of duties according to expertise
- Time in making decisions on the timetable

Adequate provisioning of finance is to ensure proper accounting for the inflow and expenditure of such funds for the growth and efficient functioning of the school as an organisation. Once such a system is put in place and expert managers are appointed to run these departments, then schools can realise improvement of standards (Marzano, 2011).

The above theories and models point to some of the similarities and differences within the systems theory in that in all cases, many components of the organisation must pull together to achieve the aims and goals set by the school. Thus, the aim of school management is to see that all departments of the school must achieve the set goals. According to Smallwood *et al.* (2008), for a successful organisation, there should be unity of direction. This unity of direction means that the entire organisation should move towards a common objective in a common direction (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; McNamara, 2011). In the diversity experienced in schools as workplaces, factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and level of education all have to be carefully considered and factored into the performance targets set by the school. There is no gainsaying that the principal in a school has to recognise this diversity and seek to always use such diversity to advance the goals of the school system by harmonising the divergent views from each constituent element (McNamara, 2011).

The school, as an organisation, is set within the milieu of other schools. Such schools often offer the same curriculum, as is the case in Mafikeng in particular and South Africa in general. In order to compete for pride of place in terms of enrolment, teacher quality and retention, academic success and general administrative efficiency, it is apparent that the school has to do much to incorporate best practices. There is the reputation and perception of the school that is always at stake, where such constructs as comparability of standards against international benchmarks, constitute a matter of concern (Lambert, 2003). The competitive pressures of new technologies and innovative educational practices also weigh upon the administrative styles evident in each school. Together, these elements as shown in Figure 2.3, need to be integrated into the organisational and administrative practices such that there is appropriate scanning of the environment and subsequent adaptation of the essential components of the systems theory into the ambit of dynamic administration.

Although Figure 2.3 was meant to depict total quality leadership and its attributes, there is a close match with the constructs that shape the systems theory. The various national administrative policies such as the whole School Evaluation used in South Africa's education system, compel a synergistic interaction of school and society as depicted in the

TQM matrix above. This implies that in school management, gender, age, academic and professional qualifications are key to the input of school recruitment. Thus, with new trends in the environment, for instance, technological advancement, SMTs need to identify such trends and PLOC them within the school system in accordance with the systems theory.

The systems management theory enhances productivity and provides an orderly plan of action. This implies that responsibilities are well articulated to management and this ensures productivity through the use of expert planning. The systems management theory provides feedback in the form of output, which is a good basis of control or analysis that leads to high quality products (Yukl, 2009). Output or feedback promotes continuous improvement of the organisation and strategic management by managers. The systems management theory has more effective communication strategies that are ongoing among the many parts of the organisation. This implies that communication is important for the organisation to get the ideas to all departments of the organisation. Hence, SMTs need constant feedback through assessments, marking, monitoring, recording and reporting. Therefore, it goes without saying that the systems theory could assist SMTs to PLOC effectively and efficiently all activities of the school. However, the systems theory has a chain reaction that could spread across the system, affecting almost all parts of the organisation. The ripple effect could start as a small blip and may end up affecting other parts of the system. In other words, this snowball effect that characterises the systems theory is a serious limitation to such a management theory. However, the above effect could be addressed quickly using the systems theory by evaluation.

Although Fullan (2010) argues that it is the effective instructional leader who can create a change in instruction, through a collective vision, ultimately providing the best effective learning environment for all students, the environment also has a massive impact on the teaching and learning landscape. In South Africa's educational system, there are very dynamic and strong trade union structures such as the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU). The school, as an organisation, is concerned with teaching and learning, and cannot afford to turn a blind eye to such trade unionism.

The obvious implication is that the diverse teachers in a school are likely to have membership of such unions. In sensing and scanning the environment, the administrator and principal have to appraise themselves of such reality and contexts in which the school should thrive (Jansen, 2009). Thus, if the workers are rewarded accordingly, their performance is high and

automatically organisational productivity is high. According to Welsh & Luthans (1993), there are extrinsic and intrinsic rewards for managers who produce extensively. Trade unions represent the interest of workers on labour-related issues, providing work security between the employee and employer. It is this recognition that should spur the principal in a school to scan the membership of staff in a school and sensitively marshal such context to the benefit of the efficiency of the school. Teachers' unions are an input from the environment to provide security for teachers in their work-related grievances. This unionism is surely a systems theory idea of school management.

The comments highlighted here demonstrate the ever-changing functions in the systems management model. In essence, schools as organisations, need systems in place and constant injection of innovation; they need to adopt and adapt to other educational management theories that critically make schools functional along effective and efficient lines. As indicated already, a trade union is an external entity but interacts with members of the school as an organisation to ensure security on labour-related issues. This is an example of how the systems management theory operates with its environment. Management and leadership practices call for an awareness of core responsibilities as well as responding to the changing perspectives and attitudes of communities and the international world at large.

2. 10 Summary of chapter

This chapter has highlighted the functions of SMTs and the importance of the systems theory with regard to school management. Other models of school management have been discussed to support the function of the systems theory in school management. The literature review was key in delineating and supporting the use of the systems theory in PLOC. It is contended in this chapter that the systems theory could merge with other theories to strengthen activities of SMTs. The benefits of using the systems theory in school management were identified, showing on the whole that the theory encompasses all areas of PLOC on school management activities. The chapter revealed that the different stages of the systems theory are key to the success of implementation of school activities in PLOC. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology, design and processes used to collect data in order to answer the research questions asked in Chapter One.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the research design adopted in the study. The research methodology, data collection methods and procedures used in collecting data are identified and explained in this chapter. The major methodological strategies used in the study in order to respond to the research questions outlined in Chapter One are discussed. An outline of interview questions is provided, ethical issues, the role of the researcher as well as data analysis approaches.

3.1 Research design

Creswell (2009) defines a research design as a plan, strategies, and procedures for research comprising decisions from world views on the method of data collection and analysis. A research design is also described as the procedures for conducting a study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A qualitative design was chosen for this study. According to Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith (2005), qualitative research denotes the type of inquiry in which the qualities, characteristics or properties of a phenomenon are examined for better understanding and explanation. The reasons for selecting a qualitative approach in this study are in line with Leedy & Ormrod (2005), who maintain that the main feature of qualitative research is that it is interpretive and practical in character; in the sense that participants are consistently encouraged to express and explain their opinions and feelings.

Interpretative investigations provide rich descriptive accounts targeted to explain a phenomenon, processes or particular points of view to enlighten the perspective of different stakeholders. Maree (2010) defines research design as a plan or strategy which moves from underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of participants, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. Kumar (2005) considers research design as a procedural plan adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically. This means that research design is a plan that guides a researcher to carry out all aspects of the study. Leedy & Ormrod (2005) posits that research design is concerned with turning the research questions into objects. All the above explanations concur that research design is a plan that guides the researcher to successfully investigate the topic and come up with findings that represent the desired results.

The specific mode or strategy of inquiry followed in this study, that formed part of the research design, was a case study. Case studies can penetrate situations and provide unique examples of real people in real situations; enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). A case study was chosen in accordance with the view of Maree (2010) who maintains that a case study often focuses on a system of action rather than an individual or group of individuals, however, case studies can also be selective, focusing on one or two issues that are fundamental to understanding the system being examined. More specifically, the case study examined in this study focused on the role of the systems theory in school management. That is, how the different stages of the systems theory assist SMTs to PLOC. Woodside (2010) describes a case study as a research inquiry that focuses on describing, understanding and extrapolating meanings from those participating in the study. In this study, the purposively selected schools constituted the case study. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2007) define a case study as a research strategy that involves the empirical phenomenon within its real-life context. In this case, the selected schools were investigated using real life situations in a bid to understand how the systems theory was embedded into and utilised in educational organisations in the North West Province. Zainal (2007) posits that case studies are used for the investigation of contemporary real-life phenomena, through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. This implies that the two schools purposively selected were studied and the findings were context-specific to the two schools, thus limiting the generalisability of the findings to other schools within the research area.

3.2 Research methodology

Leedy & Ormrod (2005) consider research methodology as dictating how data is acquired and arranged in logical relationships, setting approaches for refining and synthesising data, suggesting how data will be interpreted and yielding one or more conclusions that lead to explanation of knowledge. The three sub-sections below form part of the research methodology: research sites and sampling, data collection methods and data analysis. Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil (2002) point out that there are three types of methods used in research as follows: qualitative; quantitative; and mixed methods research. A purely qualitative approach was used in conducting the study. This method allowed the researcher to describe, in detail, the findings through thick descriptions of the administrative practices of the two schools selected for the study. Silverman (2000) states that research methodology is an approach to

studying a research topic where one's choice of the research methodology should reflect an overall research strategy and the methodology shaping the type of study. The aspects outlined above justify the use of the qualitative approach in this study.

3.2.1 Research sites and sampling

McMillan & Schumacher (2001) consider research sites or population as a group of elements or cases. Research sites can also be considered as the relevant places from where the research information is going to be derived. There are fifty-three (53) schools in the Rekopantswe Area Office. Two schools were selected for the study. Factors such as time, expenses and accessibility were considered in deciding on the two schools. The decision was further taken in accordance with the advice of Rule & John (2011) that "good researchers are able to 'sniff out' which cases will be suitable for their study, bearing in mind that their own access to the case and ability to generate data from it are important factors".

Sampling is a selection of participants according to certain criteria. According to Maree (2010), purposive sampling means selecting participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to the research questions. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport (2002) state that in purposive sampling, a particular selection is made since it illustrates some feature or a process that is of interest for a particular study. Purposive sampling was thus, applied in this study with specific focus on the two selected schools in the cluster of the Rekopantswe Area Office. Two principals or their deputies, and six other members of senior management per school, with managerial responsibilities, were chosen for the interviews. Principals/deputies were included because they are the most senior managers at schools. It was realistic to expect that they had encountered theoretical examples in the functioning and usage of different models and theories in their postgraduate studies. In terms of experience in managerial positions, they were also in the best position to evaluate the possible implementation of systems theories based on experience in managerial positions. It was also important to include the second group of managers in the study. Most less experienced participants had obtained further qualifications in their field of study and should, in addition, have a different but very important managerial perspective than principals, based on their day-to-day management of academic departments.

3.2.2 Data collection methods

A data collection method refers to the techniques for physically obtaining data to be analysed in a research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). There are multiple types of data collection

methods in qualitative research such as observations, interviews, documents and visual materials (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the interview question method and observation list were used to collect data. The interview questions were arranged in a manner that sought to find out whether school managers PLOC using the different stages of the systems theory highlighted in Chapter Two. The observation list was used to record reactions of participants during the interview.

3.2.2.1 Outline of the interview questions

This segment provided an outline of the interview questions, justifying in the process, why specific questions were directed to elicit data relevant to the research questions. Section A focused on biographical information such as age, gender, qualification/s, experience and position held in school management team. Section B solicited responses on management styles used by the present school management team. Section C focused on PLOC as input, while Section D elicited information on PLOC as a transformational process. Section E solicited responses on PLOC as output in school management. These interview questions were used together with the observation list to record responses provided by participants during the interview sessions.

3.2.3 Interviews

During the interviews, the researcher kept the main research questions in mind and information generated was used to answer the primary research questions. Shaffer (2005) considers interviews as the most commonly used qualitative data collection method because it deals with a subject's opinions, perceptions, beliefs and feelings about the situation. The researcher, in this study, sought to collect information on one-on-one situations where participants felt free to express their views, perceptions, beliefs, feelings and opinions on the research questions. The interviews were conducted using an interview question guide consisting of a written set of questions. In constructing the guide, the researcher followed the guidance of De Vos *et al.*, (2002), who points out that the characteristics of a good set of questions are that they must deal with a specific topic that the respondent should be familiar with, and in printed form. The researcher used the research questions as main prompts and followed with subsidiary questions derived from the literature review. The sequence and wording of the main questions was meticulously crafted and selected to allow a relatively conversational and naturalistic approach during the interviews.

The aim of the interviews was to obtain information from participants on their understanding and implementation of the systems theory in the day-to-day management practices at the school. All participants were interviewed for at least one hour. The interviews were conducted after school and, sometimes, on special appointments, that is, during weekends. What was also important was the fact that the researcher was well-prepared for different kinds of responses in order to be in control of the process of obtaining relevant information from participants. An observation form was used to record the responses of participants.

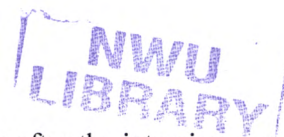
3.2.4 Observation list

In qualitative observations, the researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site (Creswell, 2010). It is the responsibility of the researcher to note that when making observations of real-world activities, the researcher specifically intrudes into the world of the participants being studied (Yin, 2014). The researcher used the observation in the form of field notes based on what the researcher saw and heard of the “participant’s activities at the research site” (Creswell, 2010). The researcher observed all mannerisms of participants and how they articulated their responses to the questions.

The observation was done by the researcher who was a non-participant observer. The researcher is a fulltime teacher but does not teach in either of the two selected schools. This allowed for ‘researcher distance’ where prior experiences and pre-conceived notions could not impede and cloud the observations made. In this way, a semblance of objectivity was anticipated in the evaluation of administrative styles and how these connect to the systems theory. According to Walliman (2011), observations help to determine whether people act differently to what they say and do and could be an efficient method in obtaining preliminary knowledge. Thus, the researcher decided to use the observation list to record non-verbal characteristics of the interview.

3.2.5 Data analysis

Participants were given a copy of the verbatim transcript shortly after the interview session. They were asked to read their transcripts and make necessary corrections where they felt their responses were incorrectly captured. After obtaining the corrected transcripts, a typical process of open-coding was followed to analyse the data. Basically, this means that the data obtained from the interviews was grouped, linked and explained systematically in categories to identify emerging and recurrent themes linked to the primary research question.



3.3 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the way in which the researcher is able to persuade the audience that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to (Maree, 2010). In qualitative research, validity and reliability are referred to as trustworthiness and can be obtained through attending to aspects such as the period of data collection, doing interviews in the participants' own language, conducting research in natural settings, providing verbatim accounts of transcripts, recording interviews mechanically and by using two or more methods to enhance the credibility of findings (Maree, 2010). In this study, the researcher ensured trustworthiness by explaining difficult concepts to participants in the language of their choice, which is an indication that, apart from English, Setswana was used during interviews. In addition, participants were interviewed at the schools where they work, or special arrangements were made. The researcher also described the intentions, feelings and views of participants clearly by using the interviews and making verbatim accounts of the transcripts. Triangulation was used by engaging interviewees, and the observation list as data gathering instruments in order to crystallise and get to a deeper understanding of the role of the systems theories in school management. This was deemed the best approach for ensuring that participants expressed and divulged their work experiences realistically.

3.4 Ethical issues

Research ethics, according to Johnson & Christensen (2008), are principles and guidelines that assist researchers to uphold data as valuable. According to Leedy & Ormrod (2005), most ethical issues in research fall into one of the four categories, namely; protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues. In this study, ethical issues were addressed by safeguarding the privacy of participants and guaranteeing informed consent.

The names of participants were provided as alphabetical codes and did not appear on any document. The codes were only known to the researcher. Informed consent was obtained and permission granted from the Research Committee of the North-West University to conduct the study. Permission was also obtained from the Area Manager and school principals to conduct the research. In addition, signed consent from individual participants was requested before conducting the interviews. The researcher visited the research sites for pre-arrangement with management to seek permission and access to conduct interviews.

Ethical considerations are particularly important in a research that involves people (Arthur, Waring & M.Coe,2012). There are ethical issues that surface during data collection in the field and in analysing and dissemination of reports (Creswell, 2013). Some of the ethical issues include voluntary informed consent procedures and assurance of confidentiality towards participants, among others. The researcher protected the anonymity of informants by using pseudonyms. The purpose of the study was fully explained to participants and there was strictly no engagement in deception about the nature of the study (Creswell, 2013). The researcher ensured that participants were provided with adequate information about the nature of the study, how it would be used and reported and its benefits, to enable them to decide whether or not to take part. The whole procedure was explained to participants and they were informed that they had the express right to withdraw from the study at any time (Arthur *et al.*, 2012).

The researcher obtained consent from the Ethics Committee of the North-West University (Mafikeng Campus), and permission to conduct field work and access to the research sites from the Director, Ngaka Modiri Molema District (North West Department of Education and Development) and from selected schools.

3.5 The role of the researcher

The researcher was personally involved in the process of data collection through being a non-participant observer and interviewer. During the interviews, the researcher directed and facilitated the interview process in order to meet the purpose of the study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The researcher promoted discussions by asking open-ended questions and providing directions. That is to say, the researcher explained only certain questions that appeared difficult for participants.

3.6 Summary of chapter

This chapter has presented the research design and methodology and provided justification for using the qualitative approach in the study. An outline and review of procedures followed in conducting the study was also presented. Interview questions and an observation list were the main tools to collect data in this study. The selection of participants was discussed, as well as measures to ensure trustworthiness. A brief outline of the interview questions was presented, including an outline of data analysis procedures. The role of the researcher was discussed. The next chapter focuses on the findings, presentation of data and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4 Introduction

The focus on this chapter is to present the findings on the role of the systems theory in school management in the North West Province using selected schools as a case study. The presentation of data and its analysis primarily seeks to find answers to the research questions raised in Chapters One and Two. Data presentation and findings in this chapter primarily aims to establish whether SMTs implement PLOC as an input in school management. Secondly, the presentation of data explains whether SMTs implement PLOC as a process in school management. Thirdly, the findings identify whether SMTs implement PLOC as an output in school management.

Data analysis and presentation of findings in this chapter are arranged as follows: Section 4.1 presents the findings on the demographic characteristics, formal training and school management experiences of participants, while section 4.2 identifies the management theories underpinning current school management practices. In section 4.3, data on school management is presented as input, section 4.4 provides data on school management as a transformational process, while section 4.5 focuses on the perceptions of participants on school management as output. Section 4.6 provides a conclusion on school management with particular emphasis on curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, human resources, LTSM and financial resources.

A research site is the location where a study was conducted. In other words, it is the setting where the research unfolds. In this study, two schools, anonymised as A and B constituted the sites, wherein eight members of the SMT were selected per school, making a total of sixteen participants. At each school, one principal, two deputy principals and five HODs were interviewed after school hours or at another scheduled appropriate time. Interview questionnaires, an interview question guide and an observation list were used in this study to collect data. The sections that follow present the findings that emanated from the data.

4.1 Demographic characteristics of participants, formal training and experience with regard to school management

Biographical information involves age, gender, training, experience and qualification levels of respondents. This information assist the researcher to know the characteristics of the respondents who are taking part in the interview.

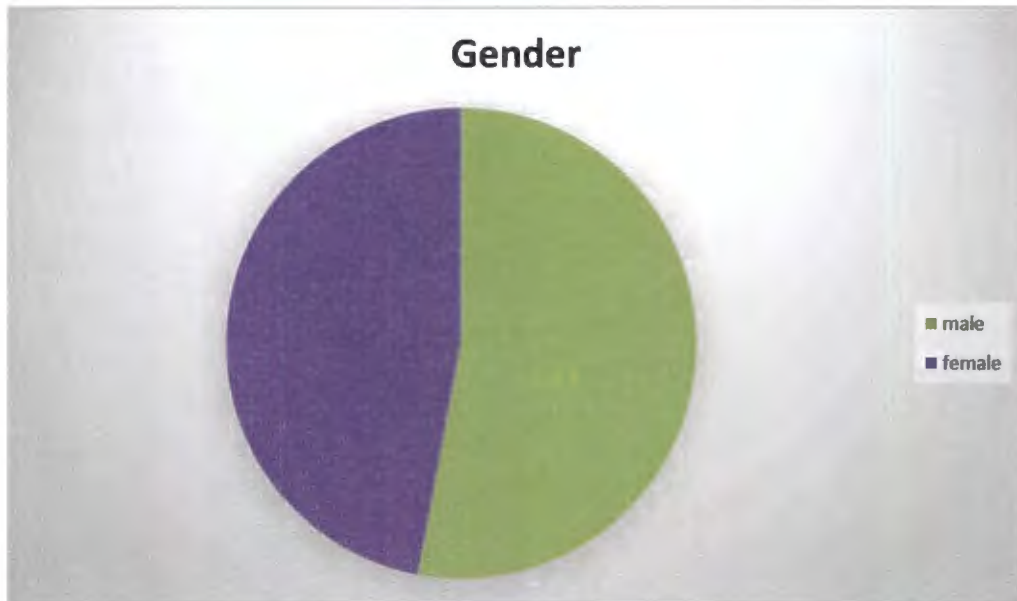


Figure 4.1: Gender of participants

According to Figure 4.1, 56.25% of participants were male while 43.75% were female. This is an indication that there are more males than females in school management positions, thus suggesting that there is gender inequality in schools and to promote gender equity in school management positions in order to empower female school managers to keep a balance of females and males in positions of influence.

4.1.1 Age of participants



Figure 4.2: Distribution of participants according to age

18.75% of participants were aged between 31 and 40 years, 25% were aged between 41 and 50 years while 56.25% were aged between 51 and 60 years. This graph reveals that most of those in school management positions are advanced in age, which could imply that appointment or promotion into school management positions is done according to experience in teaching. There were no participants of the age range of 30 years and below may be to suggest that those who are older can endure management tasks.

4.1.2 Teaching experience

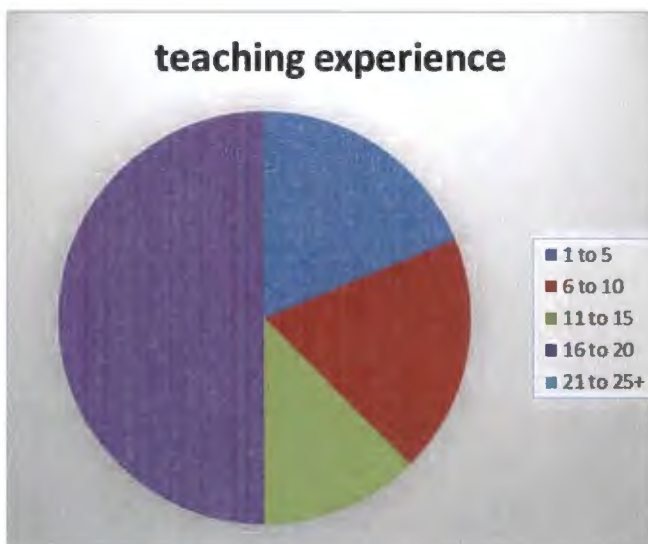


Figure: 4.3: Distribution of participants according to teaching experience

The pie-chart above presents the teaching experience of managers before appointment to school management positions. 18.75% of participants had 1-5 years teaching experience, 18.75% had 6-10 years teaching experience, 12.5% had 11-15 years teaching experience, while 50% had 16-20 years teaching experience. Judging from the results displayed above, it is evident that participants with less teaching experience were fewer than those with more years of teaching experience in a school management positions. It could, therefore, be concluded that experience in teaching is a pre-requisite for appointment in a position of management.

4.1.3 Management experience in years



Figure 4.4: Management experience in years

The results in the pie-chart shows that 37% of the participants in school management positions had 1-5 years' experience, 44% had 6-10 years experience in school management positions while no participants indicated 11-15 years experience and 19% of the participants had 16-20 years experience. 19% of the participants had less experience in school management as shown above while 44% had more years in school management. This is an indication of the need for more staff development courses to expose managers on the systems theory in order to enhance school management PLOC. Experience in school management should be boosted through understanding the systems theory to improve PLOC that derives

its practices from the systems theory, which could assist with instant feedback if implemented with expertise.

4.1.4 Qualification of participants

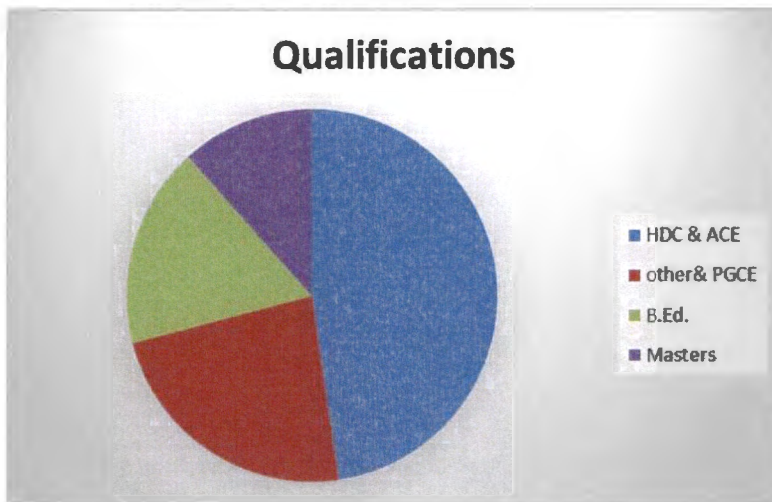


Figure 4.5: Qualification of participants

43.75% of the participants were holders of HDC & ACE, 25% of the participants (Four) were holders of the Post Graduate Certificate of Education and other qualifications, and 18.75% (Three participants) had a B.Ed, while 12.5% had a Master's degree. These figures show that members of the school management team in these schools went through professional education training programmes to handle school management duties (PLOC). However, further training in the systems theory could assist in raising the standards in these schools. This should be done to match the advanced trends in PLOC using the different stages of the systems theory (that is, input, transformational process and output) to harness diversity in school management.

4.1.5 Position held in the school management team

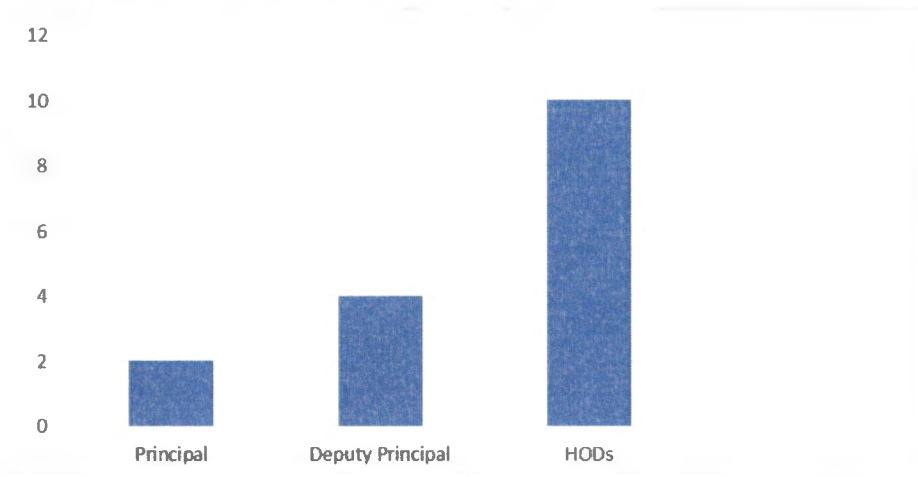


Figure 4.6: Position held in the school management team

12.75% of the participants were principals, while 25% were deputy principals. This group consisted of the top or executive management at school level. This is the peak of the decision-making hub. 62.5% of the participants were HODs. All the above constitutes the SMT of a school whose core duty is to PLOC in accordance with the systems theory to achieve set standards. The few members of the top school management relay a chain of orders to those below them to carry out school management activities.

4.1.6 Professional training of participants



Figure 4.7: Professional training of participants

50% of the participants indicated that they received formal training while 50% maintained they received informal training. Those who received informal training might have studied through correspondence institutions such as Taletso and ABET to achieve their professional qualifications while others studied part-time for their professional training. Thus, the above scenario indicates the need for strong integration through staff development to impart concepts of the systems theory into school management PLOC. Those who were formally trained were those who did their professional training through full time courses, including distance learning and online courses with renowned universities and colleges.

4.1.7 Nature of familiar school management styles

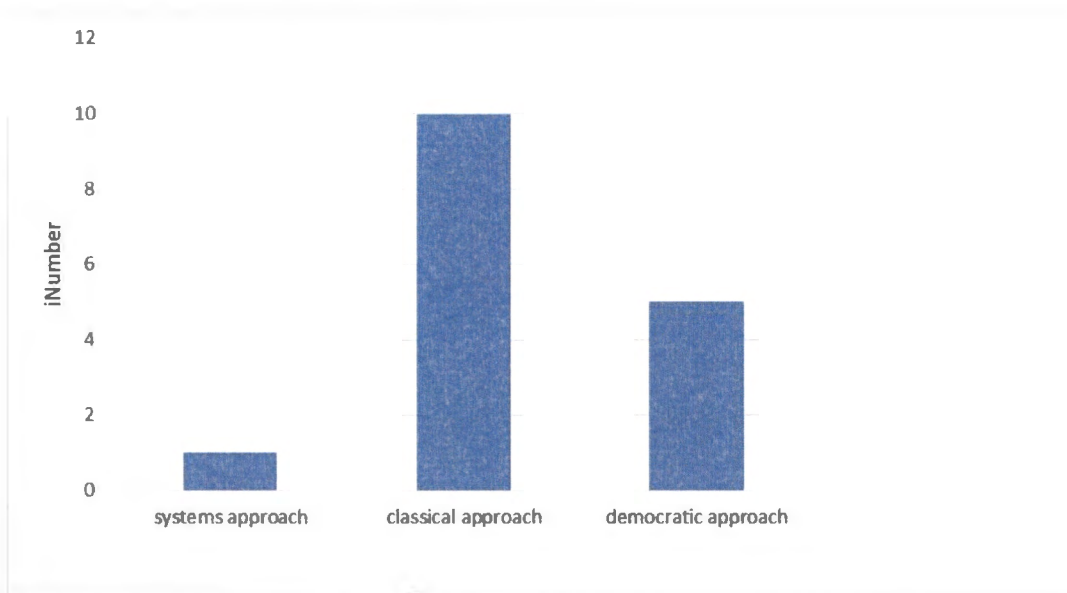


Figure 4.8: Nature of familiar school management styles

The results in the graph above show that 6.25% of participants were familiar with the systems approach to school management. This is a reflection that only a few participants in school management positions knew about the systems theory, confirming why this study advocates for the systems theory in school management. On the other hand, 62.5% of participants were familiar with classical approaches to school management, that is, the greatest percentage was familiar with classical approaches which may not match the attributes to school management as performed under the umbrella of the systems theory. Lastly, 31.25% of participants were

familiar with democratic approaches to school management. However, being familiar with certain educational approaches as identified by school management did not mean effectively using these approaches in school management practices.

4.2 School management as an input in accordance with the systems theory

The aim of this study was to understand if school managers implement PLOC as an input in school management in accordance with the systems theory. The questions asked in this study, sought to find out whether PLOC of educational activities by SMTs is considered as an input that should be refined in order to achieve desired outcomes. A total of 16 participants took part in the study and were assigned codes from A to P. This was done in order to cite some of the outstanding comments uttered by participants. All 16 participants were combined to form one group of interviewees.

4.2.1 Planning for curriculum implementation as input for school management

Planning for curriculum implementation as input for school management responses showed that nine out of the 16 participants concurred that planning for curriculum implementation was initially done by the Department of Education. Nine participants indicated that planning was automatic in one's head, and that no theories were necessary. However, SMTs would make a year plan that could lack autonomy and did not strictly follow up to match the different stages of the systems theory. This was done as a routine, not to a set educational theory or management style. This essentially means that school managers are not empowered to implement the curriculum, using their acquired professional expertise. If the systems theory was used in planning for the implementation of the curriculum, the breakdown of the curriculum would follow systematic plans that would follow all the stages of the systems theory. Seven out of 16 participants indicated that they could not use the systems theory since they had not undergone training with regard to its usage, thus an indication of the need for further training for SMTs. According to participant N, the rhetorical question *how the school expects me to implement what I was not taught! In short, I do not know the systems theory*, is an indication that the participant was not familiar with the theory in question and was, therefore, not willing to adopt an administrative strategy that she did not have any knowledge of. These statements show the frustrations of someone who may fail in implementing the systems theory due to lack of exposure to such experiences. Thus, institutions of professional training must design staff development courses that incorporate aspects of the systems theory to enhance school management.

4.2.2 Planning for teaching and learning

In another set of participants 12 out of the 16 participants indicated that they did not know much about the systems theory in planning for teaching and learning as input. Participant J maintained planning was planning, and that there was no need to plan according to a certain theory. Four out of the 16 participants indicated that planning consumed a lot of time for other activities hence, using the systems theory for planning was perceived as a burden. This is an indication that SMTs did not plan with the systems theory in mind. Furthermore, most school management practitioners are not familiar with the systems theory as reflected in the results in section B. Thus, planning anyhow without following the systems theory created challenges in achieving set standards. Consequently, follow-up and feedback could not be done effectively because there was no chronological order of PLOC.

4.2.3 Planning for assessment, monitoring and evaluation

The other 10 out of the 16 participants who agreed that planning for assessment, monitoring and evaluation was necessary for them to do indicated that *this must be done according to school tradition and there is no need to use the systems theory or any other theory*. This view suggests that participants could use any method to plan their assessment. However, the systems theory would assist in evaluation and feedback. In this group, participant H maintained *schools must assess and monitor and evaluate as they please*. The other four participants revealed they did not want the use of theories in their planning because it involved a lot of concepts. Participant P said *the work of management is too much to allow the use of theories*. This is an indication of the fact that school managers need a lot of training to understand the importance of theories of education, especially the systems theory, in order to effectively PLOC school management activities with a view to improving the effectiveness of schools and management practices. The other two participants were not present on the day of the interview.

4.2.4 Planning for human resources as an input in school management

Planning for human resources as an input in school management responses showed that, 13 out of the 16 participants indicated that planning for human resources rested in the hands of the Department of Education. Participant B retorted by saying *that is not my area of operation otherwise, my job would be put on the line. Only in cases where the school Governing Body (SGB) may appoint additional assistant teachers when it was identified that the school management may be involved in planning for the educators they want*. The other

three participants revealed that SMTs should be given the mandate to select their own human resources. Participant G said *this would mandate us to choose the right candidates for the relevant post*. In the eyes of the researcher, human resources chosen, interviewed and recruited by SMTs with the use of the systems theory would match the requirements of the input required to process the expected output in accordance with the systems theory.

4.2.5 Planning for LTSM as a school management input

Planning for LTSM as a school management input showed that 14 out of the 16 participants felt that it was not their duty to plan for LTSM. The Department of Education and parents were expected to supply LTSM as per request by SMTs. Participant M maintained *it is not my responsibility to bother about LTSM, I only deal with what I have*. The other participants expressed the need for improvising where LTSM was in short supply. Participant O said *I would rather provide what is available other than using a theory*. Thus, in the case where the Department of Education delayed in providing LTSM, activities of the school management team with regard to PLOC would be severely affected. Schools need to function in accordance with a systems theory that reflects a cyclic approach on harmonising all parts of the school as a holistic functional entity to achieve set standards. It also reflects an attitude of not willing to implement change. In this scenario, such participants need organised conferences where training and practical activities could be designed and done to clarify the importance of the systems theory in school management practices.

4.2.6 Planning for financial resources as an input for school management

The ten out of the 16 participants indicated that *financial resources are never enough and that at the end of each year, school funds are altogether exhausted to carry out school activities such as prize giving functions*. They had no knowledge of how to plan for financial resources using the systems theory. Participant E said *financial budgeting is a problem for me*. On the other hand, the other 6 participants revealed that their duties were too many to allow them to concentrate on what happens with funds of the school. Participant L indicated that *funds allocation is done by the accounts not me*. Thus, if the systems theory in school management was used many of the shortfalls in financial budgeting would have been known before financial shortages were experienced through forecasting and constant checks of the system. Moreover, it would promote accountability in terms of the usage of funds in school-by-school management.

4.3 Leadership as an input in school management

This category of questions sought to establish whether leadership was conducted as an input in school management activities with regard to PLOC in accordance with the systems theory. Conducting leading as an input, entails that the act of leading is considered as an input that should be processed so that desired outcomes could be attained. In other words, leadership is regarded as having influence or impact on the process involved in attaining the final outcomes of the school.

4.3.1 Leadership in curriculum implementation as an input in accordance with the systems theory

With respect to leadership in curriculum implementation as an input in accordance with the systems theory, 15 out of the 16 participants indicated that their leading strategies ranged from following what is stipulated in the Department of Education's Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). Participant K said *how can I deviate from what is stipulated by the Department to follow some theory*. Only one participant said the school tradition of leading curriculum implementation through close follow-up of the RNCS was important. This is an indication that there was no theory of education that they followed in leading the implementation of the curriculum. In a nutshell, this implies that those who do not read the RNCS and those who fail to attend workshops organised by the Department of Education, have their leadership in curriculum implementation compromised. The use of the systems theory in this scenario would assist and equip SMTs in matching the RNCS with leadership input strategies to accomplish a transformable process that would yield desired outcomes.

4.3.2 Leadership in teaching and learning as an input

This category of questions sought to identify leadership styles as an input in school management activities with regard to PLOC and in accordance with the systems theory. With regard to leading curriculum implementation as input in accordance with the systems theory, 13 out of the 16 participants said leading was by prescription from the tradition of the school. Participants A and C said *ordering and dictating instructions had to be followed and no feedback from lower management can be entertained*. The other three out of the 16 participants revealed they lead by example and not by the systems theory. Participant I said *experience is the best teacher*. Thus, empowerment of SMTs is required for them to administer schools from a systems theory perspective and to avoid mismatching PLOC procedures. This would help them to view all departments of the school as a whole rather

than aspire to achieve set goals through following traditions. It is apparent that a top-down approach is used in school management where instructions are provided by the Department of Education. If the systems theory could be used by school managers, they could upgrade their standards of management by involving all parts of the departments to achieve set goals.

4.3.3 Leadership as an input on assessment, monitoring and evaluation

The 12 out of the 16 participants revealed they perform the above activity using routines of the school and their own experience. Participant D said *no theory can surpass what you already know*. This view suggests that leadership is considered to be experience-based. It further implies that leadership of assessment, monitoring and evaluation of assessment is based on the specific contextual experiences of administrators. The other four out of the 16 participants went on to say *applying the systems theory would be difficult for us since we are not trained to use this model in our school management*. Thus, there is a need to schedule staff development courses for SMTs in order to improve the output of all sectors of the school through the use of the systems theory.

4.3.4 Leadership on human resources as an input in school management

In this section, the 10 out of 16 participants said they lead by example and not according to the systems theory since they are not familiar with all its concepts. Participant F said *there is no need to try to implement that which you have never learned*. This prompted the researcher to advocate for the study of the systems theory by SMTs in order to promote innovation and effectiveness in school management. 6 participants felt that more theories could be used in school management, however, not all theories yield the same results. As far as the systems theory is concerned, output is fully refined since feedback is consistent with each activity at every stage.

4.3.5 Leadership as an input in school management with regard to LTSM

This aspect describes leadership as an input in school management practice with regard to LTSM, 14 out of the 16 participants indicated that learner-teacher support materials were provided by the Department of Education, thus they maintained they did not need to use the systems theory, which, according to participants, is a complicated theory to apply. Participant M rhetorically asked *why should I use a theory when the Department of Education provides these things for us*. Also, two out of the 16 participants revealed they would rather use their incremental experience. Participants G and D said *learning theories is difficult*. This explains

why this study was conducted (to assist SMTs to implement the systems theory to re-direct the outcomes of the management of their schools in PLOC through the systems theory).

4.3.6 Leading as an input in school management with regard to financial resources

With regard to whether or not leading was regarded as an input in school management, 15 out of the 16 participants revealed that financial resources were managed by the principal and the financial officer in each of the schools. After the interview the participants expressed the general notion *that money matters is not for every Tom and Dick to handle; special personnel with skill are required*. It was emphasised that this financial resource is always in short supply due to lack of knowledge in handling funds. This was so because the systems theory is not currently used by school managers to PLOC hence, they cannot foresee these aspects that eventually affect output. Only one participant was vague in his response, an indication that leading was not considered as an input in school management with regard to financial resources.

4.4 Organising as an input in school management

School managers observe and plan for input after assessing the needs and gaps in the school system. This provides a background on how to measure the input that must be achieved. The organisation of financial and human resources and LTSM will be done for every department and other activities included in the cycle of organising by the school management team.

4.4.1 Organising for curriculum implementation as an input in school management

The findings with regard to organising for curriculum implementation as an input in school management revealed that 14 out of the 16 participants were of the opinion that their organisations were in the form of organograms that reflected the top-down approach to school management of curriculum implementation. Participants A, D and H said *they cannot use the systems theory because they did not study it*. This had nothing to do with the systems approach, an indication that school managers used their traditional strategies to get work done. Two participants maintained they could not apply the systems theory because they were not sure of how it could be used as an educational theory. The implications for this is that they did not use the systems theory to organise for curriculum implementation as an input. From these findings, it could be concluded that there is a need to equip SMTs with the systems theory in the management of all departments of the school. This is because currently, a top-down approach is used to organise curriculum implementation instead of considering it as an input in school management.

4.4.2 Organising as an input with regard to teaching and learning

Organising as an input with regard to teaching and learning showed that, 13 out of the 16 participants indicated that they had never tried to use the systems theory because they had little knowledge on its implementation. The other two participants maintained it was old-fashioned to include educational theories in the day-to-day organising as input in a school set-up. Participants K and L said *we need to use our own way of organising on teaching and learning*. This is an indication that they might have read about it but putting it into school management practices in organising for teaching and learning might pose a challenge to them. Hence, the need to give staff development to school managers using the systems theory for them to become competent in using it.

4.4.3 Organising for assessment, monitoring and evaluation as an input

The eight out of the 16 participants revealed that the above was done as a school requirement to check progress and not according to the systems theory. Participant C said *I have no knowledge of this theory*. The other five participants maintained they did not want to use theories in these activities. The last three had difficulty in responding to these questions. Participants N and O maintained they were confused and asked to be excused from answering this question. There is a lot to be learned by school managers if they include the systems theory in their organising for assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

4.4.4 Organising for human resources as an input in school management practices

Planning for teaching and learning as a transformational revealed that, 14 out of the 16 participants revealed that organising for human resources was important and that they did it but not necessarily in accordance with the systems theory, while 2 participants did not cooperate with the researcher. They excused themselves at the arrival of the researcher, hence the principal informed the researcher that such responses were common when searching for answers. In this scenario, participants seemed not to have a clear idea of how the systems theory could be of benefit to their school management activities of PLOC when using the theory.

4.4.5 Organising for LTSM as an input in school management

Organising for LTSM was examined in order to identify how the systems theory is incorporated in school management PLOC and the following responses were recorded: ten out of the 16 participants indicated that LTSM supplies were always in short supply.

Participant P said “*I have no knowledge to use the systems theory.*” The others in the same group expressed the same opinion. The other six participants indicated that parents must organise for LTSM. This means organising LTSM was not done in accordance with the systems theory, thus the reason why they were always in short supply (as no proper storage was available for them). If the SMT had some knowledge of the systems theory, LTSM was going to be treated as an interconnected part of the school needed to achieve set goals.

4.4.6 Organising for financial resources as an input in school management

Organising for financial resources as an input in school management revealed that, 13 out of the 16 participants revealed that financial resources were organised by the principal and the accounts office, excluding other members of the school management team, because they used the traditional method of the school that other members of the SMT must not be involved in money matters. The other three participants indicated that every year, there was a shortage of finances to fund the expenses of the school such as printer toners or cartridges for computers. This was caused by lack of the systems theory to put in place a framework that would allow for organising beforehand and giving feedback to keep the school functional and effective.

4.5 Controlling as an input in school management practices

Controlling as an input in school management practices, essentially means controlling all departments of the school to function for common goals as a system. School management takes on the daunting role of accountability in PLOC as far as resources, assessment, monitoring and evaluation is concerned. Taking stock of PLOC in school management is important if schools are to operate as a system.

4.5.1 Controlling as an input in curriculum implementation

The nine out of the 16 participants indicated that controlling of curriculum implementation was not done by the SMT but by the Department of Education as it provided the scope of the subject, pace-setters and work schedules to schools. Thus, they did not use the systems theory partly because they were not familiar with it. The other participants revealed they needed workshops in order to comprehend the use of the systems theory in controlling the implementation of the curriculum. Participant H said *it needs training first before using the theory to avoid mistakes*. This shows that most school managers need empowerment to PLOC using the systems theory.

4.5.2 Controlling teaching and learning as an input

Controlling teaching and learning as an input revealed that, 15 out of the 16 participants revealed that they control these facets by using year plans and time tables but not the systems theory. One participant declined to participate. The implication of these results is that the school management team lacks controlling skills of teaching and learning. Thus, if SMTs could include the systems theory in controlling, strategies of PLOC would improve at all levels of school management.

4.5.3 Controlling assessment, monitoring and evaluation as an input

With regard to describing how school managers control assessment, monitoring and evaluation, The ten out of the 16 participants indicated that they had never used the systems theory before in controlling the above activities in their schools. Most of them indicated that they were not familiar with the systems theory. The other six participants maintained they did not study the systems theory as part of their courses at university. Hence, there was no way they could apply it in the management of their schools. Most school managers do not use the systems theory in the management of schools due to lack of training. Staff development courses could be scheduled to upgrade school management skills and expertise in this regard.

4.5.4 Controlling human resources as an input

With regard to describing controlling as an input in human resources, 14 out of the 16 participants said they control of this resource is done by appointment by the Education Department before the placement is done but not, by the systems theory. Usually, the Department of Education does the selections for all schools. The remaining 2 participants said controlling is done by choosing those who are more experienced. Thus, there is a need to practically empower the school management team with the constructs of the systems theory to create innovation and efficiency in school management PLOC for human resources.

4.5.5 Controlling LTSM as an input

Explaining controlling of LTSM as input according to the systems theory, nine participants maintained they control these materials by storing them until they are needed; no systems theory is implemented in doing this. The other seven participants said they control LTSM by routine allocation according to school rules, not necessarily using the systems theory. This means that all participants did not use the systems theory in their control strategies of LTSM. Thus, more knowledge on the systems theory can be studied through reading and providing

materials that explain the functioning of the systems theory. This view emerged from the fact that teachers and administrators are generally perceived as active researchers on their own, who should be able to adapt ideas and concepts from a wider consultation rather than getting limited to the advice of officials of the Department of Education.

4.5.6 Controlling financial resources as an input

Controlling financial resources as an input revealed that, 12 out of the 16 participants were not involved in the finances of the school, except the principal and the accountant. This was so because they had no knowledge of financial management in PLOC. The other four participants expressed ignorance as to how the school funds should be controlled. For instance, participant A said *I do not know anything about school budget and money*. The researcher believes using the systems theory in controlling funds would ensure systematic budgeting that minimises wasteful expenditure and ensures that schools would not run short of money before the end of year, as was the case in these schools. Hence, financial management courses according to the systems theory would be of benefit to SMTs.

4.6 School management functions as a transformational process in accordance with the system theory

The questions in this section sought to establish whether school management PLOC of school activities namely, curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation were a transformational process that brings about desired output or intended outcomes or pass rates in accordance with the systems theory. Transformational process is the conversion of input into the usefulness of school management activities with regard to PLOC in order to achieve set goals or intended outcomes, which is output in this case.

4.6.1 Planning for curriculum implementation as a transformational process

With regard to how school management uses planning as a transformational process to implement the curriculum, 15 out of the 16 participants revealed they use school routine to perform the above activities and the systems theory. In this group, participant B said *the systems theory is difficult to use because I do not know much about it*. One participant had no idea on how to plan using the systems theory. This is an indication that the school management team needs to be trained on the systems theory to tap innovation in school management with regard to PLOC.

4.6.2 Planning for teaching and learning as a transformational process

Regarding planning for teaching and learning as a transformational process, 12 out of the 16 participants indicated that their planning for teaching and learning was aligned to the Department of Education where they are provided with a lesson plan template. Participant J said *if I plan aligning to the Department of Education, then there is no need to use anything else to plan*. However, it must be said that there is diversity in education hence, the need to learn the systems theory. The other four participants expressed ignorance of the transformational process even after an explanation was given. The above responses showed that school managers were not using the systems theory in their planning for teaching and learning as a transformational process. Thus, workshops for SMTs would assist school managers in uplifting the standards in school management with regard to PLOC.

4.6.3. Planning for assessment, monitoring and evaluation as a transformational process

The ten out of the 16 participants were convinced that they could not use the systems theory because it was not part of their studies at institutions where they acquired their qualifications. The other six participants said they did not understand how to apply the concepts of the systems theory in planning for transformational processes because the school did not assist them with workshops or staff development. However, the above scenario revealed that the system theory was not used by SMTs. Thus, there is need to train school managers to empower them with skills and knowledge of administering and managing schools with regard to PLOC.

4.6.4. Planning for human resources as transformational process

With regard to planning for human resources as a transformational process, 14 out of the 16 participants indicated that planning for human resources was done per school requirement and no specific theory was used to perform such activity. The implication of this was that school management strategies lack a backing of the systems theory to increase the refinement of output or outcomes. In the same way, two participants were not sure of how to go about planning for human resources because they did not know how about the functioning of the systems theory.

4.6.5. Planning for LTSM as a transformational process

11 out of the 16 participants revealed that technological advancement could be linked to the systems theory, especially the use of computers and photocopy machines. However, they

went on to indicate that their planning in this regard was not necessarily on the systems theory. The other two participants had no idea of how to use the systems theory, implying that building up from this scenario, school managers could be trained to understand how the functioning of the transformational process with regard to the system theory in order to produce desirable output or outcomes.

4.6.6. Planning for financial resources as a transformational process

With respect to planning for financial resources as a transformational process, 15 out of the 16 participants revealed that financial resources were not managed by members of the SMT, except the accountant, and this was proof that the systems theory was not used by SMTs. One participant indicated that it was necessary to learn about this innovative theory that covers all departments of the school. This implies that school managers need to be educated on the systems theory in order to improve PLOC.

4.6.7. Leadership with regard to curriculum implementation as a transformational process in school management

Leadership as a transformational process could be used to implement the curriculum in schools. 14 out of the 16 participants indicated that they did not have enough knowledge about the systems theory, thus there was no way they could use it in leadership as a transformational process. Participant P said *I do not know the systems theory*. The other two participants had no idea of the systems theory because they attained informal training. Thus, this was a major concern and the need for school managers to undergo training on the systems theory in order to meet the diversity of the present educational demands and PLOC.

4.6.8. Leadership in teaching and learning as a transformational process

Ten out of the 16 participants indicated that their leadership styles were based on school routines not on the systems theory, since most of them were not aware of the theory. 6 participants indicated that they needed time to learn about the theory before its implementation. It could, therefore, be concluded that the systems theory would assist in giving direction on how follow-up on all departments of the interconnected parts of the school management could be enhanced, thereby creating unity of purpose to achieve desired results.

4.6.9. Leadership in assessment, monitoring, and evaluation as a transformational process

Leadership in assessment, monitoring, and evaluation as a transformational process, 15 out of the 16 participants maintained they could not implement the systems theory as a transformational process in assessment, monitoring and evaluation. These participants indicated that they used any strategy that came their way. One participant was absent during the interview. Thus, there is need to train school managers on the systems theory to improve school management PLOC using the theory.

4.6.10. Leadership with regard to human resources as a transformational process

With regard to human resources, 12 participants indicated that they used the school routine to perform this activity and did not use the systems theory. Four participants maintained they used allocations from the Department of Education and not theories, an indication that a theoretical approach to school management must be studied to improve school management, especially the systems theory.

4.6.11. Leadership with regard to LTSM as a transformational process

The question regarding leadership with regard to LTSM as a transformational process, ten out of the sixteen participants indicated that they depended on the Department of Education for the supply of LTSM and that was the reason why they did not use the systems theory to perform this activity. The other six participants maintained they had no knowledge of the systems theory and the transformational process. The scenario above is an indication that there is need for staff development with regard to school management in order to add knowledge on how to PLOC.

4.6.12. Leadership with regard to financial resources as a transformational process

All participants indicated that financial budgeting was for principals and the accounts officials, not members of the SMT, since they were not trained to deal with funds. They budget without any theoretical application and it is evident that the systems theory could assist in the logical arrangement of school management financial budget. Budgeting could be as an input, transformational process and output; managing funds in the different stages could improve financial resources in school management.

4.6.13 Organising of curriculum implementation as a transformational process in school management

Concerning organising for curriculum implementation as a transformational process in school management, 12 out of the 16 participants indicated that they were not familiar with the systems theory hence, they could use it in their school management PLOC. Four participants said they implement what is prescribed by the Department of Education. However, knowledge of systems theory in school management is needed in organising the curriculum for the good of all other departments and activities in the school, thus coordinating the whole school as one entity to achieve set goals.

4.6.14 Organising of teaching and learning as a transformational process

Regarding, organising for teaching and learning as a transformational process, 15 out of the 16 participants indicated that these plans are done by the Department of Education. Most of the planning is done by the Department of Education, an indication that there was no need to use the systems theory. 1 participant indicated that planning was done using local routines of the school, an indication that if the systems theory was used, PLOC for school activities would follow a constantly reviewed process where gaps and mistakes are easily identified and corrected.

4.6.15 Organising of assessment, monitoring and evaluation as a transformational process

Organising for assessment, monitoring and evaluation as a transformational process 13 out of the 16 participants revealed that assessment, monitoring and evaluation were done as a routine of the school not in accordance with the systems theory. This is an indication that there is a need for school management courses to be designed in accordance with the systems theory in order to upgrade PLOC in school management. Three participants maintained that, this was done by the Department of Education. Assessment, monitoring and evaluation need to be transformed through the adaptation and implementation of the systems theory that ensure that re-evaluation of PLOC takes at every stage.

4.6.16 Organising of human resources as a transformational process

With regard to human resources, 14 out of the 16 participants revealed that, such resources were allocated by the Department of Education, thus, if the Department delayed in its allocation, schools would be grounded as no meaningful activities will take place. The

participants said they did not know about the systems theory. Thus, the need to assist SMTs to learn the systems theory in their schools through workshops and staff development.

4.6.17 Organising financial resources as a transformational process

Organising financial resources as a transformational process showed that, 11 out of the 16 participants indicated that the accounts office was responsible for financials matters of the school. Five indicated that they were not concerned with money issues and that the systems theory was difficult to contemplate. It is, therefore, important for managers to learn about the systems theory in order to improve their managerial skills in schools. It is through self-advancement that school managers could PLOC effectively.

4.6.18 Organising LTSM as a transformational process

Ten out of the 16 participants indicated that organising LTSM was allocated by the school logistics committee, thus no need for the systems theory. The other six participants indicated that the Department of Education supplied LTSM to schools without using the systems theory. Staff development courses in the systems theory could improve school management in this regard.

4.7 School management as an output in accordance with the systems theory

This section focuses on school management as an output since the output of PLOC reflects school managers' effort and hard work in implementing the systems theory. All participants indicated that management was practised within the context of each school. The principal was tasked with all management responsibilities and these were distributed to Heads of Departments. This was the reporting system as advised also by Area Office Managers. In a nutshell, there were no discernible applications of recommendations of the systems theory in a manner for school management to be seen as an output.

4.7.1 Planning for curriculum implementation as an output in school management

Planning for curriculum implementation as an output in school management could play a role in the management of curriculum implementation. 13 out of the 16 participants indicated that they had no idea of how to use the systems theory in performing the above activities while the other three participants did not comprehend the different stages of the systems theory, an indication that little was studied or known about the systems theory by most member of the school management team. Staff development courses are recommended for school managers in order to comprehend and implement the systems theory in PLOC.

4.6.2 Planning for teaching and learning as an output in school management

Planning for teaching and learning as an output in school management revealed that, 15 out of the 16 participants indicated that they had no clue of how to plan for output from a systems theory perspective since they did not study it in their professional training. One participant was absent from school, and trying to follow-up on the participant was fruitless. The findings above reveal that there are challenges pertaining to how school managers could plan for output when the initial planning was not done in accordance with the systems theory. This implies that there is need to implement courses that could assist school managers in PLOC using the systems theory.

4.6.3 Planning for the management of assessment, monitoring and evaluation as an output in school management

With regard to planning for the management of assessment, monitoring and evaluation as an output in school management, 16 participants indicated that they did not know how to plan for output in accordance with the systems theory unless they had studied it at university. Participant E said *theories in general do not work, it is better to leave our schools without such things because a theory is not practical*. This is because the systems theory follows the order of its three stages where input is connected to the transformational process in as much as it is connected to the output, and none of the stages stands as silos. This is how the interdependence and the interconnections of a school are realised within a systems' theoretical perspective and why it is necessary for members of the SMT to PLOC using this theory.

4.6.4 Planning for human resources as an output in school management

All participants had no knowledge of this activity since output, according to the systems theory, is a product of all the three stages. Input is transformed into output through a systematic process of PLOC. School managers, in this instance, would need staff development on the systems theory before implementing output. This was the case because one could not understand output when input procedures were not comprehended.

4.7 Planning for LTSM as an output in school management

All participants agreed they were not able to plan for the systems theory because it was not part of their courses in training and they were unfamiliar with the tenets and practices of this



theory. Therefore, staff development courses could be scheduled for school managers to study the systems theory in order to upgrade PLOC in schools.

4.7.1 Planning for financial resources as an output

All participants revealed that they were not familiar with the systems theory and current practices and maintained the principal and the accountant were responsible for school funds. This essentially means there is need for staff development to train school managers on the systems theory to improve PLOC. Members of the SMT deal with funds as part of input in school management.

4.7.2 Leadership of curriculum implementation as an output

All participants indicated that they did not use the systems theory to perform this activity because most of them did not study it as part of their courses and had no interest in implementing it in their schools. This is an indication that majority of them have not tried to use this system in the school management PLOC, thus it was difficult to figure out how output could be understood as an output of a system of connected and inter-dependent parts.

4.7.3 Leadership of teaching and learning as an output of school management

Leadership of teaching and learning as an output of school management revealed that, 14 participants indicated that they were not familiar with the systems theory while could not answer the question. In other words, they did not cooperate. It could be concluded that majority of participants need staff development with regard to the systems theory for them to align their PLOC in accordance with the theory as this would give them direction on how to PLOC.

4.7.4 Leadership as an output of school management on assessment, monitoring and evaluation

All participants indicated that they had no idea of how to use the systems theory to lead in this area since they did not study it and, therefore, could not adapt it to their current leadership styles as an output. This was so because during the early stages of the interview, most participants demonstrated that they were not familiar with this theory. The concluding responses on output depict the need to introduce in-service training for school managers to improve PLOC using the systems theory.

4.7.5 Leadership in support services as an output of school management: Human resources

All 16 participants indicated that they did not know how to use the systems theory as an output; rather, they used their own routine methods to obtain outcomes. Hence, it is clear that training on the systems theory is needed to empower school managers to enhance PLOC. Such training could even be done online to make cost effective for school management and schools.

4.7.6 Leadership on LTSM as an output

With regard to LTSM, all 16 participants again expressed no knowledge of how to tackle leadership on LTSM as an output using the systems theory. Participant M expressed dislike in using theories to manage LTSM. Instead, they used their routine methods to see to it that some resemblance of leadership is evinced in this area. This explains why knowledge of the systems theory could assist school managers improve outcomes in their schools, especially in the recognition that none of the administrators are aware of the operationalisation of the systems theory.

4.7.7 Leadership on financial resources as an output

All 16 participants echoed the sentiments of one another that they did not use the systems theory to lead in the output of financial resources. They said the principal and the accountant were responsible for financial budgeting and no one else. Therefore, no specific style of management of funds was used. This is an indication that there is need to plan for courses that could assist school managers to budget and control financial resources using the systems theory.

4.7.8 Organising curriculum implementation as an output of school management

With regard to how organising as an output of school management could be used to manage curriculum implementation, 15 participants indicated that this activity was performed in accordance with school regulations and was not based on the systems theory. One participant was absent on the day of the appointment for the interview. In this scenario, school management works closely with the Department of Education to determine the output of curriculum implementation. However, training for school management is a necessity to ensure effective outcomes of the implementation of the curriculum.

4.7.9 Organising teaching and learning as an output of school management

With regard to how organising as an output of school management could be used in the management of teaching and learning, all 16 participants said they were not familiar with the systems theory hence, they could not use it to determine output in teaching and learning. Instead, they used their school routine and standards. This is an indication that there is need to provide staff development to school managers in accordance with the systems theory in order to improve their skills and knowledge on organising for teaching and learning outcomes.

4.8 Organising assessment, monitoring and evaluation as an output of school management

With regard to how organising as an output of school management could be used in assessment, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, all 16 participants revealed that the school management team was assisted by the Department of Education in managing the above. In a nutshell, they did not use the systems theory. However, developing school management by way of adapting the systems theory is still a necessity to improve the standard of organising PLOC.

4.8.1 Organising human resources as an output of school management

All participants indicated that human resources were organised by the Department of Education and then allocated to schools, an indication that school managers did not use the systems theory to perform this activity. Thus, training school managers to use the systems theory in PLOC would improve the standards of school management. It must be emphasised that it is important for SMTs to embark on continuous learning to give the best to PLOC.

4.8.2 Organising LTSM as an output of school management

With regard to organising for learner-teacher support materials, all 16 participants revealed they did not use the systems theory to perform the above activity. Participants indicated that the Department of Education assisted SMTs to perform this activity. This points to the direct need to train school managers on the systems theory because when these materials are supplied to schools, systematic storage is needed for accounting purposes before allocation is done.

4.8.3 Organising financial resources as an output of school management

All 16 participants revealed that organising of financial resources was done by the principal and the accounts office and no tenet or principle of the systems theory was used for this activity. This suggests that SMTs need to be trained in order to improve the administration of PLOC.

4.8.4 Controlling as an output of school management

This section deals with measurement and accountability of school management PLOC. The duty of the school management team is to account for PLOC and to make a follow-up on activities of the school and give feedback.

4.8.5 Controlling curriculum implementation as an output

With regard to how controlling as an output of school management could be used in the management of curriculum implementation, all 16 participants indicated that controlling of the above was done through school-based mechanisms as well as the Department of Education imperatives. There was no evidence that the systems theory was used in this activity. SMTs could benefit if staff development on the systems theory was carried out, hence they would be able to evaluate operations and put intervention measures in place.

4.8.6 Controlling teaching and learning as an output

With regard to how controlling as an output of school management could be used in the management of teaching and learning, all 16 participants revealed that they obtained instructions from the Department of Education to facilitate the above activities and there was again no evidence of the use of the systems theory in this regard. The logical conclusion is that the systems theory should be extended and made familiar to SMTs in order to improve PLOC.

4.8.7 Controlling assessment, monitoring and evaluation as an output of school management

All 16 participants indicated that they could not implement the systems theory because they did not study this specialisation as part of their professional course. They used the school routine and frequently got assisted by SMTs to perform this activity, an indication that SMTs still need staff development to educate them on the functioning of the systems theory in order to improve PLOC. Most SMTs PLOC but not in accordance to a specific theory hence, the need to use the systems theory because in this design, there is a logical follow-up of PLOC.

4.8.8 Controlling human resources as an output

With regard to human resources, all 16 participants indicated that they did not know how to use the systems theory to perform the above activity since they were not familiar with its procedures and tenets. Furthermore, recruitment and appointment of human resources was done by the Department of Education, hence to determine how to control output was difficult for the current administrators in schools. Hence, school managers need training on the systems theory to empower them to PLOC effectively.

4.8.9 Controlling LTSM as an output

With regard to controlling learner-teacher support materials, all 16 participants indicated that they did not use the systems theory to perform the above activity; instead, they did it per school directives and routine derived from the school policy. For example, participant K said *the systems theory is a complicated thing and difficult to understand... after all, schools aim for output*. The conclusion is that staff development based on the systems theory could assist SMTs to improve PLOC. It should be noted that school managers are there to make a difference in the schools they manage in terms of outcomes.

4.8.10 Controlling financial resources as output

With regard to financial resources, all 16 participants revealed that they did not use the systems theory for this resource; instead, the principal and the accounts office budgeted the school funds using the school policy and regulations. Participant E concluded by saying *studying theories is a bother, it is good that the Department of Education helps us to do this. I find no reason for studying a theory with the great experience I have in school management*. By extension, and based on this glaring finding, training school managers on the systems theory would assist in empowering them to PLOC effectively, without accepting the norms as they are and continuing with the flow.

4.9 Summary of chapter

This chapter has presented all the interview questions and provided some responses that linked to the research questions set out in Chapter One. The systems theory was evidently not used in most PLOC by school managers. The findings point to the need for staff development for school managers on the systems theory or any other courses to improve PLOC in every department of the school to coordinate the whole school as one unit that aspires to achieve set standards. Participants responded to interview questions that ranged from input,

transformational process and output on PLOC in school management. Some interesting responses were highlighted and commented on. The next chapter is the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5 Introduction

The main aim of this study was to investigate the role of the systems theory in school management in the North West Province. This final chapter draws conclusions and recommendation on the role of the system theory in school management based on the findings from the case study that was conducted. The recommendations and suggestions seeks to identify possible significant ways that the systems theory could play a role in school management with a view of enhancing the attainment desired outcomes in schools. Further recommendations for researchers on this facet of the role of the systems theory in school management are also given.

The conclusions and recommendations in this study are based on the findings, interpretations and analysis of the data collected to answer the research questions raised in this study. The recommendations are thus, drawn from conclusions derived from the findings on the role of the systems theory in school management that is, whether school management use PLOC as input, transformation process and output in accordance with the foundational principles of systems theory.

Conclusions and recommendations in this chapter are structured as follows: Section 5.1 deals with the demographic characteristics of members of the SMT, together with their experience in management and teaching, as well their qualifications. It depicts gender, age and position held in school management. Section 5.2 covers management styles, which the current SMTs are familiar with. Section 5.3 examines PLOC as input on curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation. Management of financial and human resources, and LTSM are part of the activities presented in this section. Section 5.4 focuses on PLOC as a transformational process in curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation as well as monitoring for human resources, financial resources and LTSM. Section 5.4 examines PLOC as an output in the following school activities: teaching and learning, curriculum implementation, assessment, monitoring and evaluation as well as management of human and financial resources and LTSM. Section 5.6 provides recommendations on PLOC as an input, a transformational process and an

output in school management, while section 5.7 outlines limitations of the study and in section 5.8 a chapter summary is provided.

5.1 Demographic characteristics, SMT experience and school management styles

Most members of the SMTs who participated in the study submitted that they received professional teacher training. With regard to gender, males outnumbered female school managers, suggesting that gender equity needs to be more equitably pursued in appointing school managers to key positions. Based on the findings presented in chapter 4, it is concluded that most SMTs do not use systems theory to PLOC. With regard to management styles, it was evident that there were very few administrators who were familiar with the systems theory. This implies that the theoretical framework had little effect in terms of its usage to inform both practices and decisions relating to the day-to-day functioning of schools that participated in the study in the North West Province. This finding sharply contrasts with the literature on the systems theory, where researchers aver that the theoretical framework could substantially benefit SMTs.

The biographical details and qualifications showed that participants in school management had different types of qualifications. Most of them indicated that they were not familiar with the systems theory. In fact, majority indicated that they did not study it as part of their courses. Consequently, they could not implement it in their PLOC because they lacked the know-how, including the framework subsumed by the systems theory. Thus, whereas it can be argued that in order for a successful attainment of organisational goals, there should be unity of direction, the research participants in this study showed otherwise. Shaik (2011) and McNamara (2011) suggest that in the diversity experienced in schools as a workplace, factors such as age, gender and level of education have all to be carefully considered and factored into the school management PLOC. To this end, emphasis on staff development is key to improving skills of PLOC in school management since participants showed no intimacy with the theoretical foundations embedded in the systems theory and how these could be applied to distinct school situations.

5.1.1 Management styles commonly used by school management teams

Very few participants indicated that they were familiar with the systems theory. Instead, what emerged was that administrators were familiar with 'traditions of the school' and also the circulars and memos that directed them on how to conduct their day-to-day duties. It is

concluded that members of the SMT might find it difficult to use the systems theory because most of them are only familiar with traditional management theories. Should there be a shift in practices, the logical route appears to lie in intensive intervention to give staff development to school managers in the adoption of PLOC outlines of the systems theory to improve all forms of output in the school.

5.2.1 School management PLOC as an input

The aim of questions in this section was to find out whether school management PLOC for school activities (curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation as well as management of resources) were regarded as an input for a transformational process that brings about desired output or intended outcomes in view of the system theory. The section uncovered the extent to which school managers implement PLOC as an input, a transformational process and output in school management. Most participants revealed that they did not use the systems theory to PLOC at all the stages of the theory. Instead, they used plans designed for them by the Department of Education. Some participants maintained they use school-based routines for planning, an indication that school managers need workshops to train them on how to use the systems theory in PLOC. Bush (1986), for instance, states that systems management theories emphasise the unity and interconnectedness of the school and focus on the interaction between its components, yet the findings suggest otherwise, as the principal administrators and their teams had not deployed such strategies because they were not familiar with the theory. It is, therefore, concluded that school managers overlook the interdependent relationship between different educational and school activities. It is recommended that school managers consider PLOC for school activities, namely curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation as well as management of resources as inputs with the view of enhancing the overall performance of the school as a whole.

It was discovered that most school managers were not familiar with the systems theory partly because they had not studied and partly because of their age and experience. Many participants felt they could use their experience while others thought it was a waste of time to learn theories. There was a recurring disdain for theory-as-theory among majority of participants and they would rather work with the practicalities of school governance. Under such circumstances, it is desirable for SMTs to rigorously involve themselves in massive staff development in the systems theory to upgrade their site-specific administrative standards, yet

the dismissive tone remains an indictment of the systems theory. For instance, online courses that are identified as mandatory to SMTs could assist with the fundamentals of extending the horizons of experience and varieties of administrative strategies for school management.

5.3 Planning as an input in school management

In terms of planning as an input of school management, it was discovered that most school managers did not use the systems theory. It was clear that most school managers were not familiar with the systems theory, partly because they had not studied and partly because of their age and experience (see 4.5.7; 4.7.8 and 4.9.2). Some felt they could use their contextual and situational experiences while others thought it was a waste of time to learn theories. Since majority of participants indicated that they did not study the systems theory during their professional training, there is need to revisit curriculum training for school administrators for them to be exposed to strategies of running schools as embedded ecological systems. These findings contradict the views of Katz & Kahn (2001) who suggest that viewing management as a system could assist management in identifying inputs that should be processed in order to achieve desired outcomes.

It is, therefore, recommended that professional training institutions need to consider including management theories as part of their courses, especially the systems theory, to curb lack of knowledge by school management officials. This recommendation is guided by the views of Bristol (2015) who holds the conviction that sustainable school transformation, educational reform and human development occur in the practices of leading, managing, professional learning and teaching. This view suggests that schools are likely to be sustainable if SMTs could manage each school as an entire system using a systems theory perspective. It can, thus, be further suggested that school managers need workshops to be trained on how to use the systems theory in PLOC. It is recommended that school managers should be provided with training on aspects of the systems theory and to equip them with a holistic understanding of how different aspects of the school are interrelated and interdependent.

5.4 Leadership as an input of school management

Participants indicated that they did not use the systems theory because they were not familiar with it and that they used top-down means of school management, whereby the Department of Education designed everything that SMTs should use. This observation contradicts what

Fullan (2001) suggests about school managers, that they need empowerment through staff development courses for them to PLOC with autonomy in order to adjust to the unique and context-specific problems that may arise at school level. This view still emphasises the need for school management training as is the case in the systems theory. Continued learning by members of the school management team is bound to improve PLOC and the standard of school management. These problems may not necessarily need the involvement of the Department of Education. According to the Department of Education (2011), leading and managing the school in accordance with the systems theory involves all curriculum implementation activities and resource distribution, for members of the SMT to ensure that the school is progressing to achieve set goals. It is, therefore, concluded that different leadership styles be used in school management other than the systems theory. This is because if leadership is considered as an input, SMTs could use leadership as a resource that should be processed in order to achieve desired outcomes.

5.4.1 Organising as an input in school management

Participants in this section revealed that organisation of the mentioned school management activities was purely done per school tradition because very few members of the school management knew about the systems theory. With regard to financial resources, in particular, participants did not know how to manage this resource. It is concluded that curriculum implementation, assessment, monitoring, teaching and learning as well as managing of resources are not organised as an input in the systems theory. Thus, training SMTs to use the systems theory to PLOC would improve management in schools. This could be done through inviting specialists in education theories to demonstrate how to implement the systems theory for maximum benefit from the financial resources of the school PLOC responsibilities.

5.4.2 Controlling as an input in school management

Most participants indicated that the Department of Education controls all sectors of management through circulars and memoranda, leaving the school management team to play second fiddle, hence there was no need to use any theory since all the control functions were done for them. It is concluded that though there was evidence of school teamwork, there was no familiarity with the systems theory as an interconnected framework where members consult and read about the systems theory in order to share practical experiences and implement the tenets in PLOC at school level.

PLOC as a transformational process in school management

The questions in this section focused on establishing whether PLOC of school activities (curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation) were enacted as transformational processes in view of the systems theory. A greater number of participants revealed they use Department of Education hand-outs to sustain their PLOC since it was difficult for them to use the systems theory considering the fact that majority of them had not studied it as a course. This knowledge gap cannot be treated in any other way except, again, by suggesting that the solution to this apparently lies in scheduling part-time studies and staff development programmes to assist SMTs in PLOC.

5.5.1 Planning as a transformational process in school management

Participants revealed they use school routines and not the systems theory to plan their work activities because theories derived from the model proposed in this study were difficult to comprehend and implement. Regarding the use of planning as a transformational process in school management, the finding from the study led to the conclusion that SMTs are not familiar with and confident to implement the systems theory. Therefore, it is important to introduce training facilities for SMTs, be it formal or informal. It is recommended that SMTs could form groups where they find a resource person to conduct in-service training for them on the systems theory on an annual basis, preferably before the start of the administrative year. In-service training on the role of the systems theory in school management could focus on explaining how different educational activities of the school should be considered as input, process and output. In other words, it could explain to SMTs, the interrelationships of educational activities and the need for SMTs to PLOC for different activities using a systems approach.

5.5.2 Leadership as a transformational process in school management

On this theme, it emerged that participants did not use the systems theory because they depended on Department of Education hand-outs in all aspects of school management. These findings are concerning because Barile and Polese (2010) proffer recommendations that SMTs need staff development and empowerment of the self and others. This view suggests that SMTs should be empowered enough to have the autonomy to lead the management of their schools instead of being overly dependent on the Department of Education. Based on the findings of this study it is concluded that training leadership as a transformational process in school management is required in order to ensure that SMTs have the influence to manage

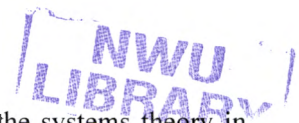
educational activities effectively. In addition, it could also be concluded that a typical dependency syndrome on the department blueprints always keeps schools stuck if the Department of Education is delayed in ensuring supplies to school management. Thus, the school management team needs to make efforts to organise community of study groups and practice in partnership with other schools to find ways of improving PLOC in school management. Such SMT groups could explore the role of leadership as an input that should be transformed and adapted to using leadership as a resource to empower others to achieve desire outcomes.

5.5.3 Organising as a transformational process in school management

Participants expressed mixed feelings on organising as a transformational process. Some participants indicated that using the systems theory consumed a lot of time instead of exerting energies in other duties. Such comments showed lack of empowerment in school management because training makes one do more without complaining. The conclusion one draws from this is that organising is seen as a part of the duties of the principal and those in administration. Since organising is seen in isolation from the rest of the interconnected parts, there is little of it that gets incorporated into the transformational processes of school management. Obviously, the first port of call is to see the connections in the administrative functions, and such a perception would then likely lead to transformation as envisaged from the systems theory framework.

5.5.4 Controlling as a transformational process

Most participants displayed some degree of not knowing how to use the systems theory in school management, citing diversity in the types of qualifications acquired. It should be clear from such a submission that controlling is seen in isolation from other components of the systems theory. As long as this component is not appreciated within the entirety of other components, there is likely to be a mismatch between the framework and actual practices in the school as a system. This justifies why staff seminars, held by the principals themselves, could shift perceptions and enhance school management practices. Smallwood *et al.* (2008) suggest that SMTs should consider controlling as part of transforming school activities towards the improvement of standards. It is through control of all the school activities that PLOC could improve administrative and instructional standards.



5.5 School management function as an output process

The transformational process is the processing or converting input into useful products that will bring about output. Questions in this section investigated whether SMTs PLOC of school activities, namely curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation as well as management of resources, was seen as an output derived from inputs that would have been designed to foster transformational processes.

5.6. Planning as an output in school management

Participants indicated that they used the school traditional routines and not the systems theory because it was easy for them to use their own experiences rather than using an alien systems theory. Katz & Kahn (2001), in the literature review, endorse a concerted familiarisation and training for school management as important facets of the systems theory, but the findings in this study are indicative of the opposite. Hence, schools could organise their own in-school training by sharing knowledge of the systems theory through research and practical activities using the systems theory. There was clear evidence in the findings in Chapter Four that administrators use other modalities, except the systems theory. Planning then, it would appear, is a serious undertaking in schools that cannot be efficiently performed without an informed theoretical foundation. Research efforts could be directed at establishing the theoretical anchors of the current administrative staff so that these could be further interrogated and framed within a theoretical lens.

5.6.1 Leadership as an output in school management

Most participants indicated that they did not use the system theory because leadership was essentially done for them by the Department of Education. There were indications from participants that Annual Teaching Plans (ATP) and assessment tasks were essentially predetermined for the administrative year. Laszlo and Kripner (2007), nevertheless, highlight the interconnectedness of the systems that operate in schools, and this contradicts the findings established in this aspect of the study. These views from the literature suggest that there is a need for SMTs to consider leadership as an outcome in school management. It could, therefore, be concluded that there is little, if any, room to apply 'alien' theories when practical mandates had already been defined and outlined. In a nutshell, SMTs could not implement any other output because they did not use the systems theory since it operates as a system; once one part is not functional, then the whole operation is affected.

5.6.3 Organising as an output in school management

Participants indicated a keen interest in knowing more about the systems theory since they were largely unable to use it to PLOC school management. While there was this palpable interest in the theory, it also emerged that practical realities dictated otherwise, and, therefore, administrators resorted to what worked, either from previous experience or from directives issued by the Department of Education in PLOC. Hence, it is concluded that SMTs should find ways of bridging the gaps in organising for output, for instance, through reading books on the systems theory by SMTs, to update their administrative and strategic knowledge.

5.6.4 Controlling as an output in school management

Most participant's revealed ignorance of output derived from the systems theory without the knowledge of the theory itself. According to Barile & Polese (2010), quality assurance and accountability to ensure monitoring and evaluation are done to the extent that follow-up and feedback are effected within the set timeframe. It could be concluded that the systems theory could be used to provide feedback regarding the extent to which a planned goal has been achieved. Given that control is an important aspect of school management, it is recommended that SMTs should use the systems theory as it enables functions to be continuously checked and self-renewed.

5.7 Recommendations

Recommendations on using PLOC as an input in school management

It is recommended that inputs in school management should be collectively facilitated by schools, the Department of Education and other stakeholders. The input could be deployed to inform further training and organised group management skills-sharing conferences. Under these circumstances, it is important to consider PLOC as an input in school management, an indication that school management decisions in planning for different educational activities such as curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, human resources, LTSM, and financial resources should be based on the understanding that these different facets are resources that should be injected into the school system, and their conversion or transformation could culminate in desired outcomes. Leading involves the ability to influence, guide and motivate so that desired outcomes could be attained. It is recommended that leading should be considered as an input in school management since this could assist managers to continually evaluate their leadership skills

and styles with the understanding that leadership has influence on the overall outcomes that will be achieved by the school. Members of the SMT should understand that leadership is a major determinant of the overall output that schools have to achieve as well as the process that will be taken in order to achieve desired goals.

Organising on the other hand, involves structuring, designing and laying out the school activities such as curriculum implementation, human and financial resources as either input, transformational process or output to achieve desired output. Hence, SMTs should consider organising as an input, or a transformational process, or output by considering the structuring characteristics of school activities. Controlling entails aspects of monitoring, supervising and putting measures in place to follow-up on PLOC as an input, or as a transformational process, or as an output. It further implies that should SMTs to reflect on and to improve on PLOC as they implement the systems theory in their management in all school activities such as curriculum implementation, teaching and learning.

Recommendations on using PLOC as a transformational process in school management

It is recommended that it is very important to PLOC as a transformational process that SMTs should consider. This is because viewing PLOC as a transformational process would ensure that every school activity is checked from the input stage to the transformational process and, consequently, this would promote effectiveness and efficiency in school activities. PLOC transforms school activities to suit what is targeted by SMTs as output using the input. School management as input, output and as a transformational process were problematic concepts as confirmed by the findings in this study. The current leadership in the two schools showed they were not familiar with them and, as suggested in the findings, one remedy is on-going training and facilitation. This is not the only alternative as school managers could also critically re-look at their own practices to establish the strengths and weaknesses therein. From this reflection on their own practices, it is recommended that SMTs should formulate strategic interventions which they could communicate with department officials in order to enhance management practices. It was a humbling experience to observe that ‘theories’ of institutional administration could be so obscure in terms of implementation in the day-to-day running of schools in the Mafikeng area.

Recommendations on using PLOC as an output in school management

The recommendations are that PLOC is key to school management because once output is achieved and re-evaluation is done, feedback is established that would give rise to a continuous process of refining output through the systems theory. Output is expected on curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, evaluation and analysis and management of resources to promote continuity and further development in these activities. This is done to maintain continuous refinement of PLOC on such activities using the systems theory.

5.8 Recommendations for further research

A qualitative approach was used to analyse the role of the systems theory with regard to school management. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that future studies could use the mixed methods. Mixed methods could measure and establish the role of the systems theory and this could further be validated with the qualitative findings established here. It is also clear that the focus on the systems theory could have been a limiting factor. There were significant management styles evident in the schools studied but clearly, they were not familiar with this specific theoretical orientation and discerning how this connected to their everyday practices. Consequently, a focus on the management styles that schools use could yield more insightful findings, where these then could be compared and contrasted with other theoretical frameworks, including the systems approach highlighted in this study. Overall, it is recommended that future studies could focus on some of the following aspects:

- The relationship between the systems theory in school management and learner performance;
- The general management of financial resources of schools and fund raising using the systems theory;
- Implementing the systems theory on human resources training and development in order to build a stronger base of SMTs and educators;
- Using the systems theory to assess the general performance of educators in teaching and learning to make sure that effective teaching is taking place; and
- The systems theory could be implemented in integrating all departments of the school such as school management. Accounts, academic and non-academic departments ought to operate as a system.

5.9 Summary of chapter

This chapter has presented the nuances in the research findings, offered recommendations and suggested areas for further research. In this chapter, the conclusions derived from this study revealed that school managers are not familiar with the implementation of the systems theory as established by the findings. At the heart of this study, was a quest for the systems theory to be implemented in school management and practices from a systems theory perspective. One of the key assumptions was that SMTs in the selected schools in the North West Province employed some of the tents of the systems theory, but the findings suggest that there is little balance, if any, between theory and school management demands of the schools investigated. Clearly, there are context-specific school management styles that thrive on the diversity and complexity of schools without so much dependency on the systems theory, which was dismissed as alien. Therefore, further research ought to revisit the intersections between theory, policy and practice in order to establish their efficacy in school management, leadership and professional identities in the North West Province, South Africa. Overall, it is recommended that SMTs should consider school management as a function of PLOC as an input, a transformational process and an output in accordance to the systems theory.

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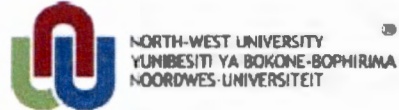
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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Certificate of Language Editing

Faculty of Humanities	 NWU [®] <small>NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST-UNIVERSITEIT OORLUST-UNIVERSITEIT</small> Department of English
17 May 2018	
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING	
<p>I, Paul Nepapleh Nkomo, confirm and certify that I have read through and edited the dissertation: "The role of the systems theory in school management in the North West Province: A case study" by Viola Hove, student number: 23351659, submitted to the Faculty of Education, in fulfilment of requirements for the Degree of Master in Education Management, Training and Development (Med), at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus.</p>	
<p>Viola Hove was supervised by Dr Martha Matasha of the North-West University.</p>	
<p>I hold a PhD in English Language and I am qualified to edit academic work of such nature for cohesion and coherence.</p>	
<p>The views and research procedures detailed and expressed in the dissertation remain those of the researcher/s.</p>	
<p>Yours sincerely</p>	
<p> Paul Nepapleh Nkomo (PhD; MA; PGCE; BA Hons) Tel: 018 389 2895 Cell 073 970 7514</p>	
MAFIKENG CAMPUS Private Bag XCD46 Mmabatho South Africa 2735 Tel (018) 380-2805	

Appendix B: Ethical Clearance



Private Bag X0001, Potchefstroom,
South Africa, 2520

Tel: (018) 290-4900
Facs: (018) 290-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee
Tel: +27 18 290 4840
Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by the Human Resource Research Ethics Committee (HRREC) on 03/08/2017, the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title:	The role of systems theory in the school management in the North West province: A case study																	
Project Leader/Supervisor:	Prof C van Wyk																	
Student:	V Hove																	
Ethics number:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>6</td><td>6</td><td>0</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>7</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>9</td> </tr> </table>			N	W	U	-	0	0	6	6	0	-	1	7	-	A	9
N	W	U	-	0	0	6	6	0	-	1	7	-	A	9				
Application Type:	Single Study																	
Commencement date:	2017-08-03	Expiry date:	2020-08-03															
Risk:	NA																	

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the HRREC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the HRREC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC via HRREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
- Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the HRREC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC via HRREC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC and HRREC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the HRREC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- HRREC can be contacted for further information via Estie.Emtloch@nwu.ac.za or 018 289 2873.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC or HRREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof LA Du Plessis
Digitally signed by
Prof LA Du Plessis
Date: 2017.09.01
13:07:48 +02'00'

Prof Linda du Plessis
Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)

Appendix C: Permission to conduct research



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
MAFIKENG CAMPUS

Private Bag X2046, Mmabatho

South Africa, 2735

Tel: 018 389-2111

Fax: 018 392-5775

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

12 July 2017

The Principal/District Official

Mr Tholo

Batswana High School

P Bag x2076

Mmabatho

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This is to confirm that **Mrs Viola Hove (Student No: 23351659)** is a Master's student registered at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus. The title of the dissertation is: **The role of systems theory in school management in schools in North West Province: A Case Study.**

Permission is hereby requested to enter Batswana High school, Kebalepele High school in Ngaka Modiri Molema District in Rekopantswe Area Office to collect data from the schools through interviews and observation on management on how systems management theory is enacted in schools.

Collection of data will occur outside school contact time so as not to interfere with teaching and assessment processes or office duties. The dates and times of the data collection are to be agreed upon by the principal and all other participants.

Participants will participate voluntarily in the data collection. The identity of the participants and the school and district will be kept confidential and anonymous. The information collected therefore cannot and will not be used to evaluate the District/school in terms of its performance in comparison with others, because the information collected will not be about academic results or teachers' teaching performance in specific schools.

Should you enquire more information about the project, kindly contact the supervisor for this project: Professor Christo van Wyk, Dr Martha Matashu and Professor Connie Zulu (018 389 2200).

Herewith permission is kindly requested to perform this research in your school Batswana High School and Kebalepele High School in Rekopantswe Area Office Ngaka Modiri Molema District). It would be appreciated if you would kindly grant written permission to this student. Any assistance given to the student to perform the research will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Professor N. Diko (Director)

School for Education Leadership Development

North-West University (Mafikeng Campus)

Mmabatho

018 389 2889

Appendix D: Permission from the Rekopantswe Area Office



Education and Sport Development

Department of Education and Sport Development
Departement van Onderwys en Sport Ontwikkeling
Lefapha la Thuto le Tšhabololo ya Metsamako
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Corner Thelesho Tswana and
Modiri Molema Road
Montshioa

Tel.: (018) 384-1412

Tel.: (018) 384-1426

Tel.: (018) 392-6204

E-mail: emammeng@nwpg.gov.za

Office of the Area Manager: Rekopantswe Area Office
NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT

Enq: B.A. Itumeleng
Date: 04 April 2017
To: The Principal
From: The Circuit Manager
Montshioa – Stadt Circuit
Rekopantswe Area Office
Subject: Permission to conduct research – Mrs Viola
Hove (Student No 23351659)

Permission is hereby given to the above mentioned student to conduct research in your school.

Please assist the bearer in any way possible to successfully conduct her research.

The research must be scheduled in such a way that learning and teaching is not compromised.

Hope you find this in order

Yours Faithfully

Boitumelo Itumeleng

Circuit manager - Montshioa - Stadt

Appendix E: Motivation for level of risk

To the Research Committee

REF : RISK LEVEL OF ETHICAL APPLICATION

Qualification: Masters Student In Educational Training And Development

proposal title: The role of systems theory in school management in the North West Province:
A case study

LOW RISK

The research involves school management teams (SMT) These include the principal, the deputy principal and heads of departments of various subject areas in the school. The above are competent to provide informed consent. They will participate voluntarily and will be informed about the purpose of the study and the duration.

The researcher will use interview guide questions to collect the required data confidentiality will be observed and that participants will not be exposed to risks that may harm them. The names of schools and individuals will remain anonymous the interview guide question will be straight forward to allow for honest responses. Transparency and honesty will be excised during the interview

Signature v hove

Student Name : Viola Hove

Student Number : 2335165

Appendix F: Informed consent form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, _____, voluntarily agree to assist the researcher by taking part in the interview questions. I undertake to act professionally regarding confidentiality and anonymity. I understand that my role is to participate in the research and observe confidentiality. I also confirm that I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and my role as a participant. The use of the data for this research has been clearly explained to me. I also understand that other researchers can get access to this data as long as confidentiality is observed and that it be used for further research.

I also understand that this research is supposed to add value to the body of knowledge in the management styles in schools. I understand also I can withdraw from participating in this research without giving any reason and that I will not be penalised for that. I understand that it is not binding to participate in assisting the researcher.

Appendix G: Interview Questionnaire

Kindly read and sign the informed consent attached to this questions before responding to the questions. The informed consent seeks to establish whether you are willing to participate in the interview. The questions seek to assess how the functions of school management namely; planning, leading, organising and coordinating (PLOC) are implemented as an INPUT, TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESS and OUTPUT in the management of educational activities in schools. The function of School management teams is concerned with planning, leading, organising and leading school educational activities namely; curriculum implementation, teaching and leading, assessment, monitoring and evaluation as well as the overall management of resources.

Interview Questionnaire

SECTION A

1) Biographical

Please fill in the biographic details and the answers as candidly as possible. Tick where appropriate.

Gender

Male

Female

Age

Below 30

31-40

41-50

51-60

Teaching experience in years

1-5 years



6-10

11-15

16-20

21-25 years

Management

1-5 years

6-10

11-15

16-20

Qualifications

HDC, ACE

Others

& PGCE

B.Ed.

Masters

PhD

Position in school management

Principal

Deputy principal

HOD

Formal training in school management

YES

NO

If yes, describe the nature of school management training that you received.

SECTION B

2 NATURE OF MANAGEMENT STYLE APPLIED IN SCHOOL

2.1.1) Which of the following management styles are you familiar with?

2.1.2) Systems approach

2.1.3) Classical approach

2.1.4). Democratic approach

SECTION C : SCHOOL MANAGEMENT FUNCTION AS INPUT

3.1.) Planning as input in school management practices

3.1.1) Describe how you plan for curriculum implementation.

3.1.2) Explain how you plan for teaching and learning.

3.1.3) Relate how you plan for assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

3.1.4) Discuss how you plan for the following resources:

3.1.4.1) Human resources;

3.1.4.2) Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

3.1.4.3) Financial resources.

3.2) Leadership as an input of school management practices

3.2.1) Describe how you lead curriculum implementation.

3.2.2) Describe how you lead teaching and learning.

3.2.3) Explain how you lead assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

3.2.4) Describe how you lead in the use of the following:

3.2.4.1) Human resources;

3.2.4.2) Learner- teacher support materials(LTSM); and

3.2.4.3) Financial resources.

3.3) Organising as an input in school management practices

3.3.1) State how you organise curriculum implementation.

3.3.2) Explain how you organise teaching and learning.

3.3.3) Describe how you organise assessment, evaluation and monitoring.

3.3.4) Describe how you organise the management of the following resources:

3.3.4.1) Human resources;

3.3.4.2) Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

3.3.4.3) Financial resources.

3.4) Controlling as an input in school management practices

3.4.1) State the how you control the implementation of school curriculum.

3.4.2) Explain how you control the management of teaching and learning.

3.4.3) Describe how you control assessment, evaluation and monitoring.

3.4.4) Describe the role of controlling in the management of the following resources:

3.4.4.1) Human resources;

3.4.4.2 Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

3.4.4.3) Financial resources.

SECTION D: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT FUNCTION AS A TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESS

4.1) Planning as a transformation process in school management practices

4.1.1) Describe how you use planning as a transformation process to implement curriculum implementation.

4.1.2) Explain how you use planning in the management of teaching and learning.

4.1.3) Describe how you use planning as a transformation process in assessment, evaluation and monitoring.

4.1.4) Describe how you use planning as transformation process to manage to the following resources:

4.1.4.1) Human resources;

4.1.4.2) Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

4.1.4.3) Financial resources.

4.2) Leadership as a transformation process in school management practices

4.2.1) Explain how leadership as a transformational process can be used to support curriculum implementation.

4.2.2) Explain how leadership as a transformational process can play a role in the management of teaching and learning.

4.2.3) Describe how leadership as a transformational process could be used to the management of assessment, monitoring and evaluation to support effective teaching and learning.

4.2.4) Explain how leadership as a transformational process could be used to managed the following resources:

4.1.4) Human resources;

4.2.4.1) Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

4.2.4.2) Financial resources.

4.3) Organising as a transformational process in school management practices

4.3.1) Explain how organising as a transformational process could be used to manage curriculum implementation.

4.3.2) Explain how organising as a transformational process could play a role in in the management of teaching and learning in effective teaching and learning.

4.3.3) Mention how organising as a transformational process could be used to manage

assessment, monitoring and evaluation support effective teaching and learning.

4.3.4) Describe how organising as a transformational process could be used to manage the following resources to support effective teaching and learning:

4.3.4.1) Human resources;

4.3.4.2) Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

4.3.4.3) Financial resources.

4.4 Controlling as a transformational process in school management practices

4.4.1) State how controlling as a transformational process could be used to manage curriculum implementation and support effective teaching and learning.

4.4.2) Explain how controlling as a transformational process could be used in the management of teaching and learning.

4.4.3) Describe how controlling as a transformational process could be used to manage, assessment, monitoring and evaluation support effective teaching and learning.

4.4.4) Explain how controlling as a transformational process could be used to manage the following resources to support effective teaching and learning:

4.4.4.1) Human resources;

4.4.4.2) Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

4.4.4.3) Financial resources.

SECTION E: SCHOOL MANAGAMENT AS AN OUTPUT

5.1) Planning as an output in school management

5.1.1) Describe how planning as output in the school management could play a role in the management of the curriculum implementation.

5.1.2) Explain how planning as output in the school management could be used in the management of teaching and learning.

5.1.3) Explain how planning as output in the school management could play a role in the management of assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

5.1.4) Describe how planning as output in the school management could be used in the management of the following resources and how this has an influence on the learners' performance:

5.1.4.1) Human resources;

5.1.4.2) Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

5.1.4.3) Financial resources.

5.2) Leadership as an output of school management

5.2.1) Describe how leadership as an output of the school management could be used to manage curriculum implementation.

5.2.2) Explain how leadership as an output of the school management could be used to manage teaching and learning and influence learner performance.

5.2.3) Discuss how leadership as an output of the school management plays a role in managing assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

5.2.4) Explain how leadership as an output of the school management could be used to manage the following resources:

5.2.4.1) Human resources;

5.2.4.2) Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

5.2.4.3) Financial resources.

5.3 Organising an output of school management

5.3.1) Explain how organising as an output of school management could be used in the management of curriculum implementation.

5.3. 2 Explain how organising as an output of school management is used in the management of teaching and learning.

5.3.3) Describe how organising as an output of the school management could be used in the organising of assessment, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning

5.3.4) Explain how organising as an output of school management

could play a role in the management of the following resources:

5.3.4.1) Human resources;

5.3.4.2) Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

5.3.4.3) Financial resources.

5.4 Controlling as an output of school management

5.4.1) Describe how controlling as an output of the school management could be used in the management of curriculum implementation.

5.4.2) Explain how controlling as an output of school management could be used in the management of teaching and learning.

5.4.3) Explain how controlling as an output of school management could be used in the management of assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

5.4.4) Discuss how controlling as an output of the school management could be used in the management of the following resources:

5.4.4.1) Human resources;

5.4.4.2) Learner- teacher support materials (LTSM); and

5.4.4.3) Financial resources.

Observations during interviews on each questions recorded simulatenously with the responses.

Appendix H: Interview question guide and observation list

INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE AND OBSERVATION LIST

Name : **Viola Hove**

Student Number : **23351659**

This interview question guide is structured in such a way that the questions follow the order of the stages of the systems theory to find out how school management teams performed in light of the systems theory. The questions seek to assess how the functions of school management team namely; planning, leading, organising and controlling (PLOC) is implemented as an INPUT, TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESS and OUTPUT in the management of educational activities in schools. The function of School management is concerned with planning, leading, organising and controlling school educational activities namely; curriculum implementation, teaching and leading, assessment, monitoring and evaluation as well as the overall management of resources. The interview questions guide and observation list thus, guide the researcher to understand how the questions that will be contained in the questionnaire that will be administered will find answers to the research questions raised in the study.

QUESTIONS AND MOTIVATION

OBSERVATIONS

REFLECTIONS

SECTION A: BIBLIOGRAPHY & SCHOOL MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

Question1 : The questions in this section depicts formal training, experience, qualifications of School management teams (SMTs) so as to establish the characteristics of participants in terms of their experience and qualification in school management.

NWU
LIBRARY

SECTION B

Question 2: This question seeks to find out the management styles or theories the school managers are familiar with.

SECTION C: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT FUNCTION AS INPUT

In this section, the questions focus on exploring whether school management teams PLOC as an input in the school management of educational activities according to the systems theory.

Question 3.1:

The question seeks to find out whether planning of educational activities by school management teams is considered as an input that should be processed in order to achieve the desired outcomes in accordance with the systems theory.

Question 3.2 :

This category of questions seeks to check on leadership as an input of school management in as far as the management of educational activities is concerned according to the systems theory.

Question 3.3

In this section, the questions deal with organising as an input in school management practices to find out how school managers organise educational activities in accordance with the systems theory. This is to find out the importance of organising as an input by SMTs

Question 3.4

Here the questions are on controlling as an input in school management practices. These questions seek to find out how school managers control various school educational activities in their schools according to the systems theory perspective.

SECTION D: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT FUNCTION AS A TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESS

The questions in this section seek to investigate how PLOC of school activities namely curriculum implementation, teaching and learning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation as transformational process that bring about desired output or intended outcomes or pass rate in view of the systems theory. This section will find out whether SMT manage school activities as a process that leads to desired learner performance.

Question 4.1

The questions in this section target to find out if planning is conducted as a transformational process that bring about desired output or intended outcomes in view of systems theory.

Question 4.2

These questions explore whether leadership by school management is conducted as a transformational process that bring about desired output or intended outcomes according to systems theory.

Question 4.3

These questions are designed to investigate whether organising is conducted as a transformational process of managing school educational activities by the school management. This is done to assess how their SMTs organise school activities to help in producing desired results and output according with the systems theory.

Question 4.4

The questions in this section seek to find out whether controlling is conducted as a transformational process in school management of educational activities. This will help to establish whether SMTs control school activities, their roles and duties of management in accordance with the systems theory perspective.

SECTION E: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AS AN OUTPUT

These questions are designed to find out whether school management has influence on learner performance as an output of the management of education activities. This is done to establish how the school management PLOC activities to contribute to the learner performance as an output of the educational activities.

Question 5.1

These questions investigate how school management carry out their planning activities to ensure that learner performance is realised as an output of the management of educational activities in accordance with the systems theory.

Question 5.2

These questions seek to find out whether leadership by the school management is expected to influence learner performance as an output of the management of educational activities in accordance with the systems theory.

Question 5.3

These questions explore how organising by the school management is considered to have influence on learner performance as an output of the management of educational activities in accordance with the systems theory.

Question 5.4

These questions investigate how controlling by the school management is considered to have influence on learner performance as an output of the management of educational activities in accordance with the systems theory.