AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS OF UNDERPERFORMING SCHOOLS IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

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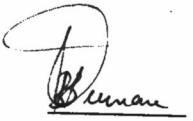
This piece of work is dedicated to my parents, and in particular to my late father whose support and love for education was remarkable.

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DECLARATION

I, **Basetsaneng Betsy Tumane**, hereby declare that the dissertation for the Degree of Master of Business Administartion (MBA), with the North West University is submitted. This work has not previously been submitted by myself, for any degree at this University, or any other University. I declare that it is my own work and that all the materials contained in this research have been acknowledged



SIGNATURE

ABSTRACT

AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS OF UNDERPERFORMING SCHOOLS IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

The purpose of this study was to empirically assess the role played by school management teams (SMTs) of under-performing secondary schools in the Central Region in their efforts to improve. The evaluation criteria applied were those for effective schools and school leadership derived from the literature study.

The survey method was employed to gather the data. A pre-tested 43 item questionnaire was used to evaluate SMTs on 7 effectiveness criteria. The subjects of the study were 80 SMT members and 66 educators from 29 randomly selected trapped schools out of the 45 in the region.

The empirical investigation conducted found that SMTs are not effective on most of the crucial effectiveness criteria such as strategic leadership and curriculum leadership. Significantly wide differences of opinion on their effectiveness between the two groups of respondents were observed. SMTs rated themselves as mostly effective, while educators on the other hand rated SMTs as generally ineffective.

Lastly, on the question of what can be done to assist underperforming schools become more effective, the investigation makes two main recommendations. First, intensive induction programmes for newly-appointed SMTs as well as on-going capacity- building programmes for experienced ones should be implemented. Second, adequate resources coupled with sustained departmental support should be provided.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APO	Area Project Office
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DIP	District Improvement Project
DoE	Department of Education
EAZ	Education Action Zones
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
EMIS	Education Information Management System
EMD	Education Management Development
ESM	Effective Schools Movement
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
ICSS	Institutional Curriculum Support Services
IQEA	Improving Quality Education for All
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
JET	Joint Education Trust
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
MIIS	Matric Improvement Implementation Strategy
NSLA	National Strategy for Learner Attainment
NWED	North West Education Department
PAM	Personnel Administration Measures
QLP	Quality Learning Project
SASA	South African Schools Ac
SDP	School Development Plans
SDT	School Development Teams
SER	School Effectiveness Research
SESI	School Effectiveness and School Improvement
SFCC	Schools Facing Challenging Contexts
SMT	School Management Team
TQM	Total Quality Management
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

CHAPTER ONE

1. ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

The question of school effectiveness, which has become one of the important themes of world education, is a very serious problem facing the South African government. Various research findings on school effectiveness in South Africa suggest that the majority of School Management Teams are not adequately equipped to manage schools (Education for All, 2000; Whole School Evaluation: 2002). Most of them are found to be unable to give guidance to educators who in turn are expected to deliver quality education.

The National Department of Education (DoE) is committed to ensuring that schools function efficiently and effectively to realise their educational and social goals. Various policies, such as Whole School Evaluation (WSE), have been put in place to obtain information about the functionality of schools in pursuit of that goal. Programmes such as school effectiveness and improvement together with intervention strategies like the National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA), designed to monitor and evaluate the quality of learner achievement in schools have been implemented (DoE: Tirisano:2000). Proper and successful implementation of these policies and programmes can only be achieved through effective school management teams.

Grade 12 results in the Central Region of the North West Department of Education have shown a progressive decline over the years. Several high schools in the region became classified as underperforming or 'dysfunctional'. The yardstick or criterion used nationally for this classification is a matric (grade 12) pass rate of below 50%. Their number increased from twenty (20) in 2003 to forty-five (45) in 2004.

National and provincial monitors visited these schools several times to try and establish what the root cause of their underperformance is. However, their findings remain inconclusive and sometimes contradictory. In addition, departmental initiatives such as the District Improvement Project (DIP), Underperforming Schools Intervention Project as well as the Quality Learning Project (QLP) were implemented in some of these schools. Positive improvements in some of these schools were registered. However, the majority could not sustain the improvements and continued to under-perform, while others slipped into the 'dysfunctional zone' after a year or two. Clearly, this situation causes great concern to all education stakeholders in the region.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The problem being investigated in this study is the effectiveness of School Management Teams (SMTs) of dysfunctional schools in the Central Region of the North West Department of Education. An investigation of the problem was triggered by an increase in the number of schools in the dysfunctional category over the past three years. The following are the criteria to be used in measuring the effectiveness of SMTs:

- Strategic leadership
- Financial planning
- Decision making and accountability
- Administration of resources and records
- Curriculum leadership
- Communication
- Human resource development

It is envisaged that the findings of this investigation will inform strategic interventions regarding dysfunctional schools and contribute to enhancing management capacity in other schools. For instance, the data collected may be

used to inform targeted interventions to be recommended to different stakeholders such as Education Management Development (EMD) or Institutional Curriculum Support Services (ICSS) so that school effectiveness in the region can be enhanced. The findings might enable the regional management to assist under-performing schools by fine-tuning improvement strategies. That way ineffective schools would improve and already effective ones would either remain so or become more effective.

In South Africa, school effectiveness is defined almost exclusively in terms of learner achievement in Grade 12 as measured by the school pass rate. The Gauteng Provincial Department of Education's Education Action Zones (EAZ), the Department of Education's (DoE) National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA) and the North West Department of Education's Matric Improvement Intervention Strategy (MIIS) for underperforming schools are clear examples of that bias.

1.3 Research questions

The following are some of the key research questions that this study seeks to provide answers to in relation to the role played by SMTs of dysfunctional schools in improvement efforts:

- Do SMTs in the Central Region exercise strong leadership by providing strategic direction to their schools?
- Do these SMTs have high expectations for their learners' academic achievements, and do they maintain efficient administrative systems?
- Do they use financial planning for the benefit of the learners?
- Do they follow democratic decision-making procedures and have a strong sense of accountability?
- Do they effectively administer resources and records?
- Do they exercise strong and effective curriculum leadership?
- Do they communicate effectively with all school stakeholders?

- Do they prioritise human resource development?

1.4 Aims of the study

The aims of the study are:

- to determine from the literature the scope of school effectiveness, effective school managers and school improvement
- to determine empirically criteria which can promote and develop functional SMTs so that effectiveness and improvement in the region's underperforming schools can be achieved
- to establish empirically whether SMTs of underperforming schools in the Central Region implement effectiveness-enhancing measures such as financial, strategic and development planning, curriculum leadership, communication and human resource development. These are laid out in the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM) of the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998) and constitute the focal point of the region's matric intervention strategy.

1.5 Method of research

1.5.1 Literature Study

An extensive review of the school effectiveness and school improvement literature was done. A number of primary and secondary sources were consulted with a view to gaining deep insight into the main issues surrounding school effectiveness and school improvement. The following broad themes emerged from the study:

-effective schooling

-characteristics of effective school leaders and managers

-school improvement

1.5.2. Empirical Investigation

1.5.2.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed. The main aim was to gather information from members of the SMT and educators of underperforming schools about their views and opinions on the effectiveness of SMTs in their own schools.

1.5.2.2 Population

A random sample of twenty-nine high schools from the forty-five underperforming high schools (N=45) in the region were selected. This was done on the basis that resources and other practical constraints would not make it possible to study the entire population. All of the five Area Project Offices were represented in the sample.

1.6 Data Analysis

A computer-aided statistical analysis was used with the help of statistical consultants from North West University. The computation of frequencies, percentages, means and t-test was done.

1.7 Definition of concepts

School effectiveness refers to the performance of the organisational unit called the school whose output or performance is measured in terms of the average achievement of the pupils in skills, knowledge, values and attitudes at the end of the period of formal schooling.

School improvement

It is concerned mostly with the practical application of findings from school effectiveness studies. Factors which are found to be more important in making a school effective are focused on. This is especially the case with schools which are found to be dysfunctional or face challenging circumstances (Teddle, 2004).

Effective school leadership

It is the kind of leadership which gives strategic direction to the institution, prioritises staff development, communicates well with stakeholders and ensures that teaching and learning remains the main focus of school activities. These activities are planned for, organised and controlled using clear and efficient administrative as well as management systems (Van der Westhuizen, 1991).

Matric

It refers to grade 12, the highest and exit grade in the Further Education and Training (FET) band before the Higher Education and Training (HET) band. It was formerly called standard ten.

Region

It is a geographically defined educational management area consisting of a number of Area Project Offices (APOs). These in turn are made up of clusters, formerly called circuits. The North West Department of Education is divided into five regions each under the supervision of the executive regional manager. Regions co-ordinate and manage all curriculum support activities.

Underperforming or Dysfunctional schools

These are terms used within the Department of Education to describe secondary schools with overall grade 12 pass rates of below 50%. The two terms are used interchangeably in this study.

1.8 Chapter headings

1: Orientation
2: Nature and scope of school effectiveness
3: Research Methodology
4: Data Analysis and interpretation
5: Summary, recommendations and conclusion

1.9 Summary

A brief orientation to the study is provided in this introductory chapter. An outline of the problem to be investigated is given, together with the aims and research questions guiding the study. The main focus of the study is to empirically evaluate the effectiveness of school management teams (SMTs) of underperforming schools in the implementation of improvement plans.

CHAPTER TWO

2. NATURE AND SCOPE OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the research literature on school effectiveness and school improvement. It first starts by tracing the origins of school effectiveness research; followed by a definition of the key terms used, namely, school effectiveness, school management teams and school improvement. A discussion of the term school effectiveness as used in the study then completes the first part.

The second part of the chapter examines organisational theoretical models underpinning the literature on school effectiveness. This is then followed by an exploration of the literature on research findings on school effectiveness and school improvement in developing and developed countries. Finally, the question of school improvement and leadership will be explored in detail, especially in so far as it informs this study.

The chapter concludes by reviewing key leadership and school effectiveness criteria in the literature which form the basis of the next chapter on research methodology.

2.2 School effectiveness research

2.2.1 The Effective Schools Movement (ESM)

In developed countries, notably the United Kingdom, the findings of school effectiveness studies became codified into what became known as the effective

schools movement (ESM). It largely influenced public education policy with its main contention that schools can influence student outcomes independently of local or socio-economic contexts (Reynolds, 1997). However, this view has been sharply contested by other researchers.

Over the twenty or so years of its growth, 'school effectiveness' research has focused on how to measure with increasing sophistication the effects, and the effectiveness of schools. 'School effectiveness' is now very well developed as a quasi-scientific body of research – that is, one which attempts to build up a coherent knowledge base through the replication of rigorously-designed sequential studies. These are quantitative and methodologically complex; they typically require the application of statistical techniques such as multilevel modelling to large datasets acquired through longitudinal data collection (Riddel, 1991).

School effectiveness research arose to challenge the conventional wisdom of the 1970's which stated that education cannot compensate for society. The seminal Coleman report made the startling finding that social and economic factors account more for learner achievement than processes inside schools (Fuller and Clarke, 1994; Teu, 1997; Scheerens, 2000). It spawned a range of large-scale studies that became known as school effectiveness research (SER).

Interest in school effectiveness and improvement has been fuelled by the central place that educational quality and sometimes equity issues have assumed in the policy concerns of most developed and many developing countries, including South Africa. Naturally, schools that do not perform as expected tend to find themselves under immense pressure politically, socially and economically from a wide range of stakeholders including parents, business people, and political activists. Concern over the quality of education provided by schools in developing countries has assumed even greater importance given its centrality in the

international community's development agenda as captured in programmes such as Education for All (Unesco,1999) and Millennium Development Goals (Haddad, 1990).

The following are the four major strands of SER identified in the literature which address issues of school effectiveness:

- research which considers how schools affect the equality of educational outcomes
- research which emerged in response to the suggestion that resources and other material inputs were not very significant in explaining school outputs
- The research which attempted to establish that schools as well as the family or social background made a difference to the educational achievements of learners passing through them.
- Research which considered issues of instructional effectiveness and thus focussed on the work of individual teachers or to activities at the classroom level (Townsend, 1994; Scheerens, 2000).

From the aforementioned areas of research, it can be seen that the concept of effectiveness is central to the management of schools and school systems. These different strands or 'schools of thought' on school effectiveness demonstrate to a certain extent how complex the concept is, and also how interrelated it is to other concepts such as school management, school improvement and school quality (Townsend, 1994).

It is important to mention that school effectiveness research has not so far demonstrated how ineffective schools can become more effective. It is not at all obvious that the correlates of ineffectiveness are simply the converse of effectiveness correlates. As a result, more research is needed on the means by

which ineffective schools are enabled to become better (Reynolds, 1996; Stoll and Myers, 1998).

Research tradition in educational effectiveness differs according to the emphasis placed on the various antecedent conditions. In the developed countries, studies tend to focus primarily on the following: equality of opportunities in education and the significance of the school in this context; economic studies on education production functions; evaluation of compensatory programmes; studies of unusually effective schools; studies on the effectiveness of teachers, classes and instructional procedures. These five areas of school effectiveness research have a common denominator, which is their fundamental design which associates outputs outcomes of schooling with inputs (Fuller and Clarke, 1994).

Effective schools research today, then, is not limited to the question of whether or not schools can influence on student outcomes since it is very evident that they do. It has entered a new phase which is the research on school improvement and educational reform, in response to the public perception that today's schools are no longer adequate for a changing society. The focus now in both developed and developing countries is how can effective schools research help already effective schools remain effective or become more so, and non-effective schools to become effective (Murphy, 2004).

Factors which emerge from this large body of research and on which the majority of researchers are agreed are achievement-oriented school policy, educational leadership, consensus and co-operation among staff members. Most of the instructional and teacher effectiveness studies highlight the importance of instructional leadership in respect of variables such as time on task, time covered or opportunity to learn, frequent monitoring of learners' progress and feedback (Purkey and Smith, 1983).

Policy-makers and practitioners tend to think, naturally enough, of 'school effectiveness and improvement' as a single body of knowledge. In reality, however, school effectiveness and school improvement have developed historically as separate disciplines based on different approaches to gathering evidence, and therefore with different knowledge bases to offer (Lazotte,2000). School improvement grew as a logical response to evidence of ineffectiveness in some schools.

The leading exponents in school effectiveness and school improvement are now developing theories and frameworks to enable more integrated activities. This has yielded a body of research known as school effectiveness and school improvement (SESI) research. It is essentially aimed at determining how less effective schools can be made better. As Levine (1999) observes, professionals working in the field of course draw on both disciplines.

2.3 Definition of key terms

2.3.1 Definitions of the term 'school effectiveness'

A number of definitions have been proposed on school effectiveness, but none of them has found universal acceptance (Teu, 1997; Scheerens, 2000; Murphy, 2004). Owing to the non-existence of a universally accepted definition of an 'effective school', some definitions of this concept are outlined below, but it needs to be noted that they vary depending on the orientation or theory of those examining the issue.

According to Teu (1997), an effective school is one which adjusts itself to provide the necessary educational programme to obtain the desired goals and adopt new methods and strategies for success. Scheerens (2000), on the other hand, says that school effectiveness refers to the performance of the organisational unit called the school whose performance can be expressed as the output. The

output is measured in terms of the average achievement of the pupils at the end of the period of formal schooling.

Mortimore (1991) defines an effective school as one in which pupils' progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake. This implies that an effective school adds extra value to its student outcomes in comparison with other schools serving similar intakes. He further adds that: a school can be effective even if its intake is highly disadvantaged, progress cannot be guaranteed for every pupil in an effective school and lastly, effectiveness is not the same as efficiency or simple value for money.

By contrast, an ineffective school is the one in which students outcomes make less progress than expected given their characteristics at intake (Rea and Weiner, 1997). Partly, both definitions presume that the characteristics of learners at intake are measurable and known, and that learners' outcomes at exit stage are either mainly or solely attributable to the school's input during the intervening years.

Muisj et al. (2004) proceeds from the premise that school effectiveness should be defined primarily from a school management point of view. He argues that '...organisational effectiveness is the degree to which an organisation, on the basis of competent management,... in the more or less complex environment in which it operates, manages to control internal organisational and environmental conditions, in order to provide, by means of its own characteristic transformation process, the outputs expected by external constituencies'.

Purkey and Smith (1983) define effective schools as those in which all students master basic skills, seek academic excellence and demonstrate achievement through systematic testing; the schools with instructional leaders who develop a clear school mission, systematically monitor student progress, protect

instructional time from interruptions, and maintain high standards for teachers and students (in Teu,1997: 13). In this regard, it is important to note the key role school management plays in ensuring that a school becomes effective.

Levine (1999) cautions that given so many definitions and ways to measure school effectiveness, and that different methods produce conflicting results, it is best to be cautious regarding conclusions drawn from school effectiveness

For the purpose of this research, school effectiveness is defined as the degree to which school management ensures quality learner attainment through giving strategic leadership, financial planning, good decision-making and accountability, giving curriculum leadership and ensuring good communication and staff development.

2.3.2 Definition of the term 'School Management Team' (SMT)

The working definition of School Management Teams or SMTs adopted in the study is that used by Provinces and the National Department in South Africa that 'the SMT consists of the following members, namely, the principal, deputy principal (if appointed) and heads of departments (either appointed or acting)'(DoE, 1997). The SMT may also include additional members of staff or someone from outside the school whom they feel has specific skills, knowledge or experience which will aid with the management of the school. This explains the inclusion of senior teachers as part of the SMT in this study. The role of the SMT is to assist the principal with his or her management tasks and to share the management tasks more widely in the school. Their most important management functions amongst others include managing relationships, managing information, managing how decisions get made and building teams. In other words, they are expected to provide instructional leadership.

2.3.3 *Definition of the term 'school improvement'*

Harris and Hopkins (2000:221) define school improvement as '...building capacity from within ... so that school effectiveness research can be more systematically used to create internal contexts within which powerful learning and teaching can occur'. School improvement therefore may be regarded as the practical application of the findings of school effectiveness research.

2.4 Characteristics of effective schools

There are a number of characteristics that unusually effective schools share which review studies isolate (Levine, 1999; Scheerens, 2000; Fuller and Clarke, 1994). The following is a list of 14 effectiveness-enhancing factors common among the four SER strands mentioned earlier, despite wide divergence among them with respect to conceptualisation and operationalisation of school effectiveness:

1. Productive school climate and culture
    - (a) orderly environment
    - (b) staff commitment to achievement
    - (c) problem-solving orientation
    - (d) staff cohesion, collaboration, consensus, communication
    - (e) staff input into decision-making
    - (f) school-wide emphasis on recognising achievement
2. Focus on student acquisition of key skills
    - (a) maximising learning time
    - (b) emphasis on mastery of key skills
3. Monitoring of student progress
4. On –site staff development and outstanding leadership
    - (a) vigorously selecting and replacing teachers
    - (b) buffering mavericks

(c) frequent, personal monitoring of school activities

(d) spending lots of time and energy on school improvement activities

(e) supporting teachers

(f) acquiring resources

(g) providing superior instructional leadership

(h) making available, and using, instructional support staff

5. Keeping parents informed and involved

6. Effective instructional organisation and teaching

(a) grouping students successfully

(b) pacing instruction to suit learners

(c) providing enriched learning opportunities

(d) ensuring effective teaching practices

(e) emphasising higher order skills in assessing instruction

(f) coordinating curriculum and instruction

(g) making abundant, appropriate instructional materials easily available

(h) adapting classrooms

(i) using spare time for reading, language and mathematics

7. High expectations and requirements of students

8. Other characteristics

(a) student pride in achievement

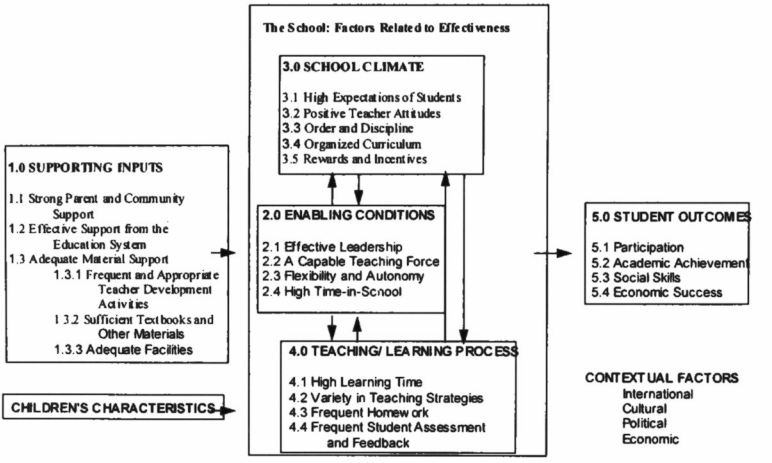
(b) sensitivity to multiple cultures in instruction

(c) personal development of students

(d) rigorous and equitable student promotion policies

Figure 2.1 illustrates interrelationships between these factors. Effective school leadership is listed as the most important of the enabling conditions.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework: factors affecting school effectiveness
Adapted from Reynolds,1993



2.5 Characteristics of effective school management teams

Educational leadership is mentioned repeatedly in the school effectiveness literature as a key factor in effective schools. Lashway (2003) identifies five roles for school leaders:

- Providing focused instructional leadership
- Leading change
- Developing collaborative leadership structure
- Providing the moral centre
- Responding to the challenges

Several other roles or criteria gleaned from research studies emerge which are used as the basis for determining whether school management teams are effective or not (Barath, 2005; Reeves et al1999; Davies, 2004; Teu, 1997). Using a synthesised set of criteria taken from some of these studies, an effective school management team is for purposes of this study defined as one which:

- *gives strategic leadership to the entire school*
- *protects instructional time from interruptions*
- *manages finances in line with school development plans*
- *takes decisions collaboratively and is prepared to be held accountable for them*
- *communicates well with staff, learners and other stakeholders*
- *Administers resources efficiently to the benefit of the whole school*
- *Provides good instructional leadership by maintaining high standards for teachers and learners*
- *Is committed to personal development and capacity-building of the whole staff*

A brief discussion of each one of these elements as they appear in the literature is provided below.

2.5.1 Gives strategic leadership to the entire school

One of the major findings of the effective schools research was the identification of instructional leadership as a significant aspect of effective schools (Barath, 2005; Reeves et al (1999). Effective school leaders have been found to be highly goal-oriented and to have a keen sense of goal clarity. They develop a school mission that provides an instructional focus for teachers throughout the school.

Research findings by Davies (2004) are that effective schools do so because in implementing strategy, they ensure alignment of organisational values and culture with individual ones; implement the strategy both sequentially and in parallel, and critically, and know when to implement strategic changes when external constraints and conditions force them. Davies (2004) goes on to delineate the following set of characteristics of strategically focused schools:

- building sustainability,
- developing set strategic measures to assess success,
- being restless and not complacent,
- being networked locally, regionally, nationally and internationally,
- using sophisticated multi-approach planning processes,
- building the strategic architecture of the school,
- being strategically opportunistic, deploying strategic timing and abandonment and
- developing and sustaining strategic leadership

Some researchers such as Davies (2004) see effectiveness as the function of strategic leadership, the logical outcome of which is a 'strategically focused school'. Again, these studies consider school leadership and management at various levels to be successful because they engage in strategic conversation with all stakeholders, mobilise them for strategic participation, build and sustain strategic motivation which then enables them to build capabilities (Davies, 2004:17). Further, such schools develop elaborate processes of articulating the

strategy through oral, written and structural modes. In the case of the latter, for instance, one school reported as follows:

> The separation of the 'Operational Management Team' from the 'Strategic Policy Team' has proved to be a great success. Too often Senior Management Teams become bogged down in operational matters with little or no time to discuss important strategic issues. The separation of the strategic and operational functions has resulted in a separation of the urgent from the important. No longer does the urgent drive out the important. The various groups provide a unique 'time horizon' management structure with: (i) Operational Management Team' focusing on the next 0-12 months, (ii) School Development Plan Team' focusing on the next 6-24 months and iii) Research and Development Plan Team' focusing on the next 2-5 years (Wise, 2003, in Davies,2004: 19)

Concerning the issue of the urgent driving out the important, Dimmock and Walker (2004) attribute this to a tendency on the part of schools to want to act strategically in the absence of an intentional design, a blueprint of how the school and its constituent parts should look like in the future. They contend that vision is not enough, and locate the source of failure in the tendency for schools to perceive strategy from a piecemeal, and incremental rather than holistic perspective. Further, they argue that prominent attention given to certain criteria and indicators such as student enrolment and finances as underpinning drivers of strategy are at the heart of the failure of strategic leadership in schools. In their view, school leaders must take into account other factors like the cultural context of their schools.

The South African National Department of Education stipulates that the most important function school managers and leaders have to perform, is managing change and diversity and helping others cope with the pace of change in a

rapidly transforming and globalising society. In this regard, it considers the most important management functions to be managing relationships, managing information, managing how decisions are made and most importantly, building teams (DoE: 2000)

In terms of the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM), strategic planning and transformation functions expected of principals, their deputies and heads of department are to conduct stakeholder analysis, review previous plans and conduct SWOT analysis. On the basis of the information collected, they are to determine goals, objectives, activities, time frames and performance indicators for the entire schools (Boshoff and Morkel, 1999)

2.5.2 Protects instructional time from interruptions

Van der Westhuizen (1991) point out that teachers know that certain times of the school year hold greater potential for crisis, disruption and reduced goal attainment. Effective leaders, according Teu (1997), will look for instructional time leaks that can be avoided by identifying areas in which high academic learning time is reduced. This can be done through staying on the task and topic, avoiding distracting discussions and protecting teaching time from unnecessary outside disruptions.

2.5.3 Manages finances in line with school development plans

Niemann (1991, in van der Westhuizen, 1991) differentiates between school business administration and school business management. He defines school business management as the execution by a person in a position of authority of those management actions connected with the financial aspects of schools, and having the sole purpose of achieving effective education. In his view, school business management has to do with people (learners, staff and the community)

and with objects (buildings, supplies, aids, equipment) and says that the financial management of the principal cannot be separated from other school activities and management actions since they are interactive. To that end SMTs have to ensure that the financial areas which correlate with various management tasks- the budget, financial accounting, financial reporting and cost analysis are in place.

The SMT has to use the budget as a planning instrument. It also has to use it to coordinate, control and evaluate financial matters in relation to the goals set out in the development plan. The management has to give guidance, and develop clear communication channels internally within the school and between the school and external stakeholders such as parents regarding the flow of financial information (Niemann, 1991).

In terms of the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM) of the South African Schools Act (SASA) 68 of 1996, SMT members are expected to manage finances in the best interest of the learners (Boshoff and Morkel, 1999). SMT members are in terms of SASA expected to understand the financial position of the school so that they are able to participate in managing its finances. This invariably entails setting up participatory structures such as the finance committee, the staff development team and some sub-committees such as, for example, a school maintenance team. Further, they need to keep ensure that financial records are kept in line with the set legal requirements developed by the department. Most importantly, however, is for members of the SMT to ensure that these financial records should then be used for problem-solving, planning and development purposes.

2.5.4 Takes decisions collaboratively and is prepared to be held accountable for them

Effective school leaders foster collaborative relationships within the schools. They have an ability to work with people, and are proactive. Hoy and Brown (1988) report that teachers prefer principals to be proactive and warn that 'principals who fear to take a stand, who hesitate to initiate structure lest they be accused of being authoritarian ...are likely to lose respect' (in Brajan, 2005).

The SMT has the formal responsibility and the authority laid out in the South African Schools Act to make decisions. The new educational context in South Africa emphasises transparency, responsibility and accountability. Leaders, and in particular SMTs, are expected to allow people who are involved in the school to take part in decision-making. In the past however, leaders were authoritarian and made decisions without consultation. Staff members and learners were not allowed to openly disagree with them. This resulted in members of the community not feeling that the school belonged to them and they also did not feel committed to the decisions that the leaders made. Within the new educational context, leaders negotiate with others and involve them in leading and managing the school. This motivates the school community and also make community members feel a sense of responsibility for the school.

2.5.5 Communicates well with staff, learners and other stakeholders

The communicating and listening skills of school leaders is the basis for their ability to articulate a vision, develop a shared vision and demonstrate that they value the human resources of their peers and subordinates. Barnard (1991) mentions that school-community relationships should be planned, organised controlled and evaluated on a continuous basis. The community structures include diverse groups such as parents, education departments, school governing body, neighbouring and feeder schools and sometimes the media.

The SMT has to ensure that information within the school flows downwards, upwards and horizontally. This means that information has to come from management itself to the rest of the staff, from the staff to the SMT itself and among educators themselves. Meetings constitute an important communication forum, and meetings of the following are important: general staff, subject, ad hoc committees, non-teaching staff and representative council of learners

Externally, a healthy relationship with the local newspapers should be maintained. Circulars written to parents should be written clearly and technical language avoided as far as possible. The communication strategy for the school should make provision for feedback in the form of tear-off slips on circulars, questionnaires, or even a suggestions box at the school gate (Barnard, 1991:441)

Lashway (2003) points to the importance for school leaders to listen to the voices of teachers, parents, and other stakeholders whose concerns are often drowned out by the 'experts'. A key point raised by others is the need for management to balance the life-world (beliefs, values and opinions of key players) with the systems-world (official systems and structures).

The communication functions and responsibilities of SMT members as outlined in SASA (PAM) are that multiple means of communication should be employed. This will ensure everyone is well informed and understands the bases for decisions and actions. SMTs are required to see to it that there is regular and open reporting back. In addition, they have to ensure that the school's language policy is democratic, and that it is receptive to concerns of members of the school while persuasively articulating school policies and the need for action (Boshoff and Morkel, 1999).

2.5.6 *Provides good instructional leadership by maintaining high standards for teachers and learners*

Instructional leadership is defined as being responsible for taking the lead for putting the school's curriculum into practice and improving it. Members of the SMT are therefore instructional leaders. They have to ensure at all times that there is a culture of teaching and learning in their school. Good instructional leadership is the path to good learning and teaching (DoE, 2000). Instructional leadership includes characteristics such as high expectations of students and teachers, an emphasis on instruction, provision of professional development, and use of data to evaluate students' progress. It is also considered to be a significant factor in facilitating, improving, and promoting the academic progress of students.

Lezotte's (1996) comprehensive review of a decade-and-a-half of research on instructional leadership found evidence that principals' impact on student learning came mainly through influencing contextual factors such as policy formation, goal development and teachers' practices.

Most of the studies conducted on the principal's role in school effectiveness have given little emphasis to the instructional leadership role of the principal but instead focussed on the various models construed as more consistent with school restructuring such as transformational leadership (Halpin, 2001). Given that in South Africa government places more emphasis on collective and participatory management, this study will seek to establish the instructional leadership of the SMT as a collective and not just that of the principal.

Effective school leaders place high value on student learning and believe in meeting the instructional needs of their students. Studies by Hunter (2003) identify certain values that guide educational leaders in respect of their instructional responsibilities. The first is that instructional programmes are the

highest priority of the system and decisions are assessed as to whether they enhance or threaten it. Others are that they encourage teachers to implement a broad curriculum, stay on task and encourage students to challenge themselves. Such leaders also happen to prioritise continual monitoring of learners' progress in line with the goals set by the school for itself in its improvement plan.

Smith et al (2003) argue that for schools to be effective, leaders have to set high but achievable and realistic standards for teachers in terms of effective classroom management, effective teaching techniques, good planning in the short-term, medium-term and long-term. In addition, teachers will also be expected to play other roles in extra curricular activities.

As managers of schools, principals and other SMT members have a critical role to play as instructional leaders. The main task of the SMT is to ensure that all educators understand curriculum policy and principles and implement these in their schools. The SMT is expected to do the following in providing instructional leadership in their schools:

- Oversee curriculum planning in the school
- Help to develop learning activities inside and outside the classroom
- Develop and manage assessment strategies
- Ensure that teaching and learning time is used effectively
- Ensure that classroom activities are learner-centred and learner-paced
- Develop and use team planning and teaching techniques
- Develop and manage learning resources
- Arrange staff development workshops

(DoE: 2000)

2.5.7 Is committed to personal development and capacity-building of the whole staff

Professional development is a whole-school activity, and everyone in a management role in a school has the responsibility of developing teachers for whom they are directly responsible (Dean, 1991). Management has to see to it that a coherent policy, structure and programme for professional development are in place; resources are allocated for professional development and that the impact of the programme is periodically evaluated. One of the senior managers should be appointed co-ordinator of professional development.

School managers have to help individuals 'grow' (DoE, 2000). To this end they are required to give teachers regular feedback on their performance. Staff development plans which in terms of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) have to utilise the 80 hours set aside for in-service training. They also have to effectively build individual and institutional capacity.

Staff development Teams (SDTs) have to be put in place to coordinate development programmes in line with the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS). In their research on school leaders' expectations of effective leaders in Denmark, England and Scotland, Reeves et al (1999) indicate that consistently the factor most respondents frequently mentioned was that an effective leader helps people to develop professionally and personally.

2.6 Conceptual framework: Theoretical models

Theories are always used either implicitly or explicitly to structure thoughts and ideas in any research endeavour. These theories are then used to build models which constitute a framework within which ideas are formulated, explained and arranged. School effectiveness research has over the years drawn its theoretical energy mostly from theories and models of organisational change. The rationale

was that schools are complex organisations like any other with their own internal cultures and processes. They are also influenced and changed by forces in the broader socio-political and economic environment like other organisations.

2.6.1 Organisational models of school effectiveness

Lezotte (2001) points out that organisational management theories provided significant additions to effective schools research policy. The concepts of decentralisation and empowerment, the importance of organisational culture, and the principles of total quality management systems (TQM) and continuous improvement have added important dimensions to our understanding of effective schools.

Theoretical views on organisational effectiveness posit that the effectiveness of organisations cannot be described in a straightforward manner. A pluralistic approach is therefore taken with regard to interpreting the concept. This implies that the interpretation chosen depends on the organisational theory and the specific interests of the group posing the question of effectiveness.

Several theories on organisational effectiveness underpin the literature on school effectiveness. Theoretical approaches to organisational effectiveness have revealed a range of models, each emphasising a different type of criteria for judging effectiveness, with the major categories being productivity, adaptability, involvement, continuity, and responsiveness to external stakeholders (Scheerens, 2000: 32)

Barath (2005) identifies the following four main organisational models which are used as a background for a wide range of definitions of effectiveness:

2.6.1.1 The Human Relations model

It puts the greatest emphasis on flexible operation and internal relationships. During the operation of the organisation, cohesion and morale are those tools which most ensure the result, which is the development of human resources. The model provides the members of the organisation with the possibility of individual development and good interpersonal relationships. In this model, the manager is a facilitator and a mentor. In the facilitator role, the manager fosters collective effort, builds cohesion and teamwork and manages interpersonal conflict. In this role the manager is process-oriented, his or her main task being the building of teamwork. As a mentor his or her main task is the development of individuals in a helpful way.

In terms of SER, the model postulates that effective schools are those where the emphasis is on the well-being of individuals, and where collegial relationships, consensus, motivation and human resource development are prioritised. Other effectiveness criteria in this model would be participation in decision making, professional interaction, performance feedback and resources.

2.6.1.2 The Open System model

The main tools are flexibility and willingness to act which help the organisation to meet its goals of obtaining resources, external support and expansion. The members of this organisation have a wide scope and a great freedom in organising their work, usually with an external support attached. But all these go with an uncertainty and the pressure of taking risks and responsibility. In this model the manager is an innovator and broker. As an innovator his or her main responsibility is to facilitate adaptation and change. As a broker he/she works mainly on the external acceptance of the organisation.

The model postulates that for a school to be effective it has to have good contacts with powerful outside bodies and comply with their demands. These can be school governing bodies, parents, or the local business community.

2.6.1.3 The Rational Goal model

The aim of this model is high productivity and economical operation, towards which it uses planning and goal-setting as tools. In this model individual goals are directed by organisational goals. High performance is required, which is requited with appreciation by the well co-ordinated management. The manager is a director and a producer in this system. As a director he/she clarifies expectations through processes such as planning and goal-setting. As a producer the manager is task-oriented and work focused. The model posits the view that, the problem with regard to the administration and structure of organisations such as schools, with many autonomous subunits is how to create a harmonious whole.

2.6.1.4 The Internal Process model

Stability and monitoring have a decisive role in this model. It is served mainly by the well organised information system and communication as tools. It provides clear task setting, strict rules and at the same time predictability and safety for the members of the organisation. In this case the manager has the role of monitor and co-ordinator. During the monitoring process the manager is expected to know what is going on in the unit, to see if people are complying with the rules and to see if the unit is meeting its quotas. As a co-ordinator, the manager maintains the structure and flow of the system. In terms of school effectiveness, the model regards the following as the effectiveness criterion: continuity in staffing and leadership, formalisation of positions, planning documents, disciplinary rules, management information systems, integrated curricula and attendance rates.

Given the diversity of views on effectiveness that exist within organisational theory, the challenge facing scholars on educational effectiveness is which standpoint to adopt. From the perspective of educational planning in developing countries, the most gainful position would be the one which considers productivity in terms of quantity and quality of school outputs as the ultimate criterion. Other criteria are seen either as preconditions or means. This position has been contested by other authors who view criteria as competing values or opt for a more dynamic interpretation in which the predominance of any single criterion would depend on the organisation's stage of development. This study will therefore adopt a more eclectic approach in assessing the effectiveness of SMTs.

According to Scheerens (1990), the fundamental design of the school effectiveness research focuses on making an association between the hypothetical effectiveness enhancing conditions and the measures of output, the latter which is usually calculated in terms of student achievement. The major task of the school effectiveness research is thus seen as being to reveal the impact of the relevant input characteristics on output as well as to break open the black box in order to show which throughput factors work and the impact of contextual conditions

2.6.2 Theories of school effectiveness

Hargreaves (2003) posits a theory of school effectiveness based on the concepts of intellectual and social capital leverage, which he then links with the traditional concept of institutional outputs. He defines leverage as the relation between teacher input and educational output, and argues that teachers in effective schools share and regularly apply high leverage strategies: they respond to demands for change by working smarter, not harder. Also, they sequence their implementation of strategy and plans over time so that the quality and quantity of their outcomes are unusually high in relation to the investment of energy.

This theory has particular relevance to the present study as the SMTs of trapped or dysfunctional schools will be assessed on whether and how well they give strategic direction in their schools.

2.7 Research findings on school effectiveness and school improvement

2.7.1 Research findings in developed countries

The bulk of research evidence on school effectiveness comes from American and British studies, although lately other developed countries such as Canada, Australia and a number of European countries led by the Netherlands have joined (Reynolds et al, 1996).

Most of the early school effectiveness research was carried out in the United States and United Kingdom. From this first generation of school effectiveness studies, the following five factors were seen as being important for generating effective schools, namely, strong educational leadership, high expectations of student achievement, an emphasis on basic skills, a safe and orderly climate and frequent evaluation of pupil progress (Reynolds et al, 1996).

According to King and Peart (1983), the second generation of school effectiveness research which was carried after the 1980's identified the following as characteristics of effective schools:

- purposeful leadership of the staff
- structured sessions
- involvement of teachers
- consistency among teachers
- work-centred environment
- positive climate
- parental involvement

- maximum communication between teachers and learners
- intellectually challenging teaching
- record-keeping

2.7.1.1 Research findings in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, the pioneering work of Reynolds in South Wales in 1976 and studies undertaken in London schools in 1979 by Rutter led to a change in the intellectual climate regarding the power of the school. It has been highlighted in their work that schools with similar intake and serving similar catchment areas achieved different outcomes.

Murphy (1992a) concludes from a comprehensive review of school effectiveness research that there are four key principles underlying it:

- All students can learn under appropriate conditions
- School effectiveness depends on the equitable distribution of learning outcomes across the whole learner population
- Effective schools take responsibility for students' learning outcomes, rather than blaming students and their environment
- The more consistent teaching and learning processes are within the school, the more effective it will be

Later research on school effectiveness by British academics that began in the 1980's has however shown mixed results. The research suggests that the same school can be effective in some areas and not in others. For instance, a school can perform well academically but not well socially. Similarly, a school may teach certain subjects more effectively than others. Earlier research on school effectiveness in Britain suggested that schools maintain a consistent level of effectiveness over time. It also found that schools were equally effective or ineffective with all types of students.

Recent research there suggests that school effectiveness is dynamic (Scheerens, 1999; 2000). Furthermore, they also suggests that some schools are more effective for particular types of students than for the others, for example, for boys more than girls, for different ethnic groups or for students of varying academic abilities.

In Britain, as education entered the centre stage politically, issues such as general standards, the achievement of comprehensive schools, the effects of particular teaching and learning styles and the relative educational outcomes of different groups were raised and the notion of the effective school became a centre of debate in the educational community (Mortimore et al, 1991).

In the United Kingdom, effective schools were more concerned with improvements shown by students in the school, and understanding the nature of the relationship between school process variables and the individual child's performance. This implies that an effective school could only be identified by going into the school itself (Townsend T, 1994).

Findings from the research on instructional effectiveness in British schools singled out three key factors in effective schools: effective learning time, structured teaching and opportunity to learn in the sense of close alignment between items taught and items tested.

School effectiveness research in the UK greatly influenced public policy. In 1997 the new Labour administration set up a powerful 'Standards and Effectiveness Unit' within the department for Education and Employment, headed by someone who had been involved prominently in school effectiveness research (Goldstein and Woodhouse, 2000).

2.7.1.2 Research findings in the United States

In the United States, an effective school is the one whose students perform well in a standardised test, which can be done by reviewing state- wide or national test scores (Townsend T,1994).

During the 1960's in the United States, descriptive studies were produced of schools that were considered to be effective. The main concern from these studies was why where there some schools which seemed to get good educational outcomes despite having students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The hope was that the identification of such schools could help researchers to ascertain their differences from more typical schools. From there, school reforms based on effective school practices could be introduced and ineffective schools transformed into effective ones (Lazotte, 2000).

Using as variety of measures to identify effective schools, the first few studies undertaken in the United States identified schools that were performing much better and much worse than average. Such schools were studied and the researchers identified what they considered to be the characteristics of effective schools. While all reviews assume that effective schools can be differentiated from ineffective schools, there is no consensus on just what the salient characteristics of effective schools are (Lazotte, 2000).

Some studies on school effectiveness seek to highlight the importance of effective management in school improvement. Such studies came in the wake of public concern in the United States and other developed countries about the quality of education children received which gave rise to accountability models that held school leaders accountable for facilitating effective teaching and learning environments in their schools. In this vein of research, Smith et al (2003) large-scale study in the United States of 284 principals from twelve states is instructive. It investigates their self-efficacy for instructional effectiveness and

management and the time spent on instructional effectiveness versus management. Their main findings where that the majority of effective principals actually spent a large proportion of their time on curriculum as opposed to management issues.

2.7.1.3 Research findings in Canada

The Canadian school effectiveness research by King and Peart (1999), which is built on the American and British school effectiveness research, identifies two elements that make a good school or an effective school namely school atmosphere (leadership, student –teacher relationships, extra-curricular activities) and achievement (student services, curricular program). King and Peart also argue that there is no formula or easy set of rules available for arriving at a good school. They assert that each school is unique and the programs and policies that recognise the individual needs of the school must be developed.

Successful school improvement projects such as those of Manitoba in Canada, which are applicable across a wide variety of settings and are adaptable to local concerns and interests, enumerated the following factors regarding school effectiveness and successful school improvement projects:

- They are not initiated from the top
- Includes everyone who has a stake in the project
- Use approaches appropriate to local interests and concerns
- Are not undertaken simply for political motives
- Are not threatening to students or staff
- Obtain a high level of commitment from everyone involved
- Consider relationships among individuals within the school rather than simply changing its physical aspects.
- Use external experts for advise but don't allow them to rule the project
- Include ongoing professional development for staff

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- Use external experts for advise but don't allow them to rule the project
- Include ongoing professional development for staff

- Are continually monitored

Major problems identified with regard to making schools effective are that even though the school personnel may be well informed about the characteristics of effective schools, implementation proved to be a challenge. To deal with this challenge effectively, Fullan (1999), who has written extensively on challenges of educational change, suggests that for the process to be successfully implemented, it will require the school to develop a growth plan and a strategic plan to encourage on-going school improvement.

However, Caldwell (2004) highlighted five factors of an effective school which seem to be the most influential among the number of lists produced. Again, as earlier highlighted, the issue of leadership on which this study will focus comes through as very important. The factors are as follows:

- strong leadership of the principal
- emphasis on mastery of basic skills
- a clean, orderly and secure school environment
- high teacher expectations of pupil performance
- frequent monitoring of students to assess their progress

A review of five research studies on effectiveness-enhancing studies by Scheerens (2000) reveals that the following factors are critical: educational leadership, school climate, curriculum quality, achievement and high expectations, consensus and cohesion among staff, classroom climate, parental involvement and evaluative potential. These studies are mainly of the input-output type.

Some lessons learnt from the implementation of the school improvement projects are that leadership is crucial to change. The central office plays an important role in change within schools, and support to individual schools is crucial for change

(Heneveld, 2000). The key strategy for change is staff development, and the change process must be able to integrate multiple innovations. Goals should be set first at the school level then at the classroom level.

2.7.2 *Research findings in developing countries*

Haddad (1990) points out that most studies of school effectiveness and improvement have been undertaken in developed countries, where the relative sophistication of material and economic infrastructure can be more or less taken for granted. To be useful beyond the countries where they are initiated, studies offering policy guidance need to be based on a sound understanding of how far prevailing conditions are the same or different elsewhere. For example, in some parts of rural Africa:

- there are few or no schools; buildings which do exist are poorly equipped
- teachers are not formally trained and there are few incentives to motivate them vocationally
- classes are either very large with more than hundred pupils or very small with less than ten pupils
- children are not fluent in the language of instruction

There are some difficulties to be faced in discussing research into school effectiveness in developing countries. First, the model of school effectiveness generated from the large number of studies in developed countries is limited in its transferability to developing countries (Scheerens, 1999):

- the model has the micro-level of individual schools as its focus, and thus ignores the important question of the extent to which the national system at a macro-level is functioning effectively

- the model has treated educational goals as largely given, in that it has tended to use pupils' scores on academic attainment tests as the chief outcome

Second, empirical research on school effectiveness in developing countries is itself relatively limited or somewhat out-of-date (Scheerens, 2000), and there are fewer robust and recent studies from which to draw conclusions. Three factors which seem to be consistently important across all research studies are:

- basic resource inputs, such as textbooks
- teacher quality, comprising teachers' education, knowledge, experience and proficiency
- instructional time and the demands made on students

(Fuller and Clarke, 1994; Scheerens, 1999)

Haddad (1990) notes that the main message for future research into school effectiveness in developing countries are that:

- the macro-level – i.e. national policy, resource allocation and implementation needs to be evaluated alongside the micro-level
- in-school factors, particularly school organization and leadership and instructional conditions/pedagogy, will no doubt assume greater importance as systems become more decentralized and between-school variability increases

School effectiveness research within developing countries increasingly recognises the deficiencies of the approach and systems adopted from the more industrialised countries that pioneered research in this field. More of the new studies are beginning to take into account the role of economic and cultural contexts of developing countries, the need for evaluative research (Scheerens,

2000) and the need for a research agenda that emphasises strong educational leadership and community partnerships (Fertig, 2000).

Material resource inputs, as the research studies confirm, make a huge difference in the functionality of schools. In South Africa, for example, the policies adopted for financing schools such as the Norms and Standards of School Funding (NSSF) have a strong bias towards transformational principles of equity and redress. Previously less resourced schools are given priority.

The problems in providing high-quality education noted by Lockheed and Levin (1993) are probably still as pressing for many countries now as they were eight or ten years ago:

> 'Schools in developing societies face problems of relatively low school participation in terms of enrollments of eligible age groups; low levels of school completion, even at primary level; and low levels of achievement... their lack of effectiveness is not a mystery, for resources sufficient to provide even the most rudimentary conditions for success are often lacking.'

Among some of the recommendations made in the World Bank study are the following:

- building central management and administrative capacity in order to strengthen the chances of sustaining improvements
- incorporating new approaches to increasing the involvement of communities in school management and resourcing. (Haddad,1990)

The recommendation regarding building management and administrative capacity is very important for purposes of this study.

In this regard Haddad further notes:

Most of those who have observed the school process in both developed and developing countries conclude that the most important factor governing how well do pupils do in school is school management. Several studies have identified headmaster education and experience as important variables that affect pupils' achievement. (ibid, 1990)

2.7.2.1 Research findings in Zimbabwe

In his extensive review of school effectiveness research in developing countries, Pennycuick (1993) refers to research in Zimbabwe. This longitudinal survey of secondary schools was undertaken by Riddel and Nyagura (1991) using multi-level analysis. Their findings were that student achievement is higher when schools have greater availability of textbooks, a large proportion of trained teachers and teachers who have taught at that school for a longer period of time.

2.7.2.2 Research findings in South Africa

School effectiveness research in South Africa puts into sharp focus concerns by some researchers about the universal validity and applicability of the effectiveness factors developed in the developed world (Reynolds, 1998). Research by Harber and Mutukrishna (2000) confirms the findings by some studies that in the developing countries, effectiveness is very much context-dependant. (Scheerens, 2000). This fact is confirmed in their study of 'effectiveness' in three different schools in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province- one predominantly white, the other predominantly Indian and the last one predominantly African. They found that all three were surprisingly, functionally effective within their contexts despite huge historical disparities in the provision of learning and other resources.

In their findings, they note that in South Africa, it is very difficult for most schools to say where effectiveness begins and ineffectiveness ends given the enormous variety of contexts, histories and combinations of problems. Significantly, their study concludes that while financial help and resource provision is not irrelevant, especially at the level of basics such as water, food and electricity, the most urgent priority is a management one. They for instance found that School C is no different materially from many of its neighbouring schools, but its management and ethos are markedly different from the ineffectual, and even dangerous mixture of laissez-faire apathy found in some schools (2000:432).

Other important contributions to the field of school effectiveness in South Africa by others such as Teu (1997) and Joint Education Trust (2001) highlight the important role of a strong and effective management team in enhancing school effectiveness.

In the South African Department of Education's five-year strategic plan for 2000 to 2004, the programme on School Effectiveness is singled out as one of the most important. The official school effectiveness model used by the DoE highlights the following processes as key in running an effective school:

- Partnerships with the community
- Infrastructure and school environment
- Staff appraisal and development
- Staff induction and orientation
- Staff organisation into groups, teams and learning networks
- Decision-making processes
- Financial controls, budgets and fundraising

- The timetable and school handbook
- Behaviour and codes of conduct
- Schemes of work
- Managing diversity
- Curriculum and assessment policies
- Teaching and learning

2.7.3 Findings on school improvement and effective school leadership

Most of the research studies in both developed and developing countries have not paid sufficient attention to the role of school managers and leaders in effective schools. As Harris (2004:4) points out:

Although the leadership field is replete with often largely descriptive studies of effective leadership, these studies have rarely tracked or explored, with sufficient rigour, the relationship between leadership and school improvement. It is interesting that ... there remains significant gaps in the knowledge base. We do not know, for example, exactly what forms of leadership result in school improvement, across different school contexts and in different types of schools... The correlational nature of the research evidence that does exist inevitably masks the exact patterning and nature of the relationship between leadership and enhanced student learning.

As this study attempts to empirically 'fill the gap', identified by Harris, it is necessary to first explore how the question of school improvement is dealt with in the literature.

2.7.3.1 School improvement research

With its roots in practice rather than scientific research, the field of 'school improvement' continues to be characterised by a large range of qualitative studies which have not, on the whole, been intended to replicate each other but rather to explicate the highly context-specific nature of 'improvement'. Heneveld (2000) points out that these studies have contributed to:

- the conceptualisation of the management of change, plus an understanding of the role and function of 'change agents' in education (from the work of Fullan,1991)
- frameworks and models for understanding the actualities of improvement as a process at system, school and classroom levels
- insights into the different experiences, views and needs of the key players: principals/ senior teachers, teachers, pupils, parents
- in-depth descriptive analyses of in-school cultures and power
- a sharper focus on the classroom as the prime site of instruction and interaction

In general, however, school improvement research has not addressed the issue of how to compare the effectiveness of different initiatives for enhancing pupil performance (Fertig, 2004). What it has done, however, has been to highlight the critical role of the 'change agents' referred to above. SMTs are among some of the most important of these agents.

Although the two traditions of school effectiveness and school improvement are now working together to produce joint programs of research and development, it is clear that there is no single 'right' recipe for improving schools and teaching. As Harris and Hopkins (2000) point out:

'In many school systems there is despair at the signal failure of both "top-down" and "bottom-up" reforms to significantly enhance the learning of students... All the more recent studies of centralised policy initiatives confirm the established finding [that]"local implementation dominates outcomes"... Yet... a meta-analysis of school improvement strategies clearly supports the conclusion that most schools without some form of external support have no idea at all at how best to direct resources towards enhancing student achievement. So if neither "top-down" nor"bottom-up" works, what combination of "pressure and support" is required to support school improvement?... Simply it is ... about... building capacity from within. Effective schools throughout the world have created internal contexts within which powerful learning and teaching occurs – they are schools that have norms of continuous improvement.' (Harris and Hopkins, 2000)

Stoll (1999) makes several suggestions for building capacity in schools. He lists 3 aspects which are key to doing this from the outside:

- support continuing professional development
- help schools interpret and use data
- be critical friends, that is, provide both support and challenge

On this basis Harris (2000) suggests that future directions in school improvement programs should include the following:

- Using policy directives to foster school improvement: Although policy directives like target-setting, development planning and self-evaluation are not sufficient for sustained school improvement, such approaches are probably a necessary starting point for all schools.

- Re-focusing on the classroom: Many school improvement efforts have until recently neglected the primacy of instruction but – as was said earlier – school effectiveness research shows that factors at the classroom level (the 'proximal variables') account for the greater part of variation in student outcomes. Qualitative research also reveals differences in culture and ethos between different classrooms in the same school (Hargreaves, 1999), which we can assume have an impact on student learning. School improvement projects are therefore now focusing more directly on teaching, pedagogy and classroom management.
- Providing differentiated improvement strategies: Much school improvement practice assumes that all strategies are equally effective for all schools, irrespective of their current level of effectiveness, type or capacity for change or growth. But if schools differ from each other in their degree of effectiveness and are also internally differentially effective, for example, not as effective for some groups of pupils, or in some subjects, as others, then school improvement strategies surely need to be responsive to differences in school type and departmental culture.

Among the thirteen principles identified by Hopkins (1994) for building capacity from within, some of those important to this study are the following:

- challenge low expectations
- establish a positive organisational climate
- cultivate development-friendly norms
- become learning experts: model, promote and support professional learning
- work between and beyond schools
- broaden leadership
- promote collective responsibility

According to a World Bank study (Fertig, 2000); successful school improvement projects depend on:

- Diagnosing the nature of the problem accurately: what are the patterns of performance? what do they reveal about under-achievement?
- what are the obstacles that are making the school/schools ineffective?
- what are the main barriers to learning that are getting in the way of pupils' achievements?
- Implementing appropriate strategies sensitively and efficiently. 'Appropriate strategies' are those which build capacity for managing change at the institutional and classroom levels. This means creating confidence and ownership, as well as developing competence, amongst all the school's members and stakeholders. Parents and the community must be involved.
- Creating connections or synergy between different parts of the educational system, and with other programs and agencies

2.7.3.2 Role of leadership in school improvement

In most of the literature on school improvement, effective leadership is widely accepted as being a key constituent in achieving the principles above. (Harris, 2002:15) .In particular, schools facing challenging contexts or SFCC such as inner city schools in the US and the UK have been widely studied. In one such study, Harris (2002) found that principals adopt leadership approaches that match the particular stage of a school's development. In a failing school context, for example, immediate action is required and hence leadership approaches are often very directive and task focused. Research by Gray (2000) also demonstrates that authoritarian forms of leadership are most prevalent in schools in serious weakness, but once improvements begin to show, leadership is distributed throughout the school in a style of leadership similar to

transformational leadership in orientation and aspiration (Leithwood et al, 2000, in Harris, 2002: 17).

In a study on schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, Muisj et al (2004) pointed out the fact that leaders and teachers in those schools have to work harder to improve and stay effective, and are likely to suffer steep declines in learner achievement levels if a successful equilibrium is disturbed such as when succession problems occur following retirement of the head. The professional growth of school leaders is therefore very crucial and the consensus in the literature is that they must receive professional development that helps them understand and develop shared leadership skills

Expanding on the role of good educational management, van der Linde (2001) points out the need for a paradigm shift or change of mindset in the changing South African transformational landscape, and emphasises that in such an environment, the skills to manage spontaneous emotional climate of a group where organisations are in a state of flux are key. Educational leaders need to be proactive and courageous enough to change some established practices and procedures if they strongly believe they can facilitate improvement.

Other studies by Hayden (2000) found that success factors at the level of the department can be transferred to the whole school with a positive impact on teacher morale. In other words, even if there is only one effective academic department in the school, it can impact positively on the whole school.

Case studies by practitioners and researchers in the Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA) project point to the fact that there are particular kinds of leadership required in order to ' grapple with the complexities of organisational learning and the internal restructuring (Hopkins,1994). Leadership is required to fundamentally change the metabolism of the school in order to encourage the

various levels of learning required for sustained school improvement' (Jackson, 2000:62)

The kind of leadership that seems to be ideally suited for transforming and turning under-performing schools around is one which affirms the dispersed leadership model. This kind of leadership is opportunistic, flexible, responsive and context-specific. The lessons from the case studies are that leaders in underperforming institutions have to 'unlearn' old ways of doing things, especially some of the assumptions that led to historical customs, rituals and practices that are unhelpful, irrelevant, redundant or contextually incongruent. They have to learn new styles and repertoires of leadership (ibid, 2000:75)

The relationship between leadership and school improvement then, is, as Harris (2004) points out, a simple and complex one.

In his review of the book on school effectiveness research (SER) in East Africa, Teddlie (2003:242) points out the importance of 'balancing of centrally directed change and locally developed improvement'. What this means is that the success of school improvement efforts depend primarily on local, that is, in-school efforts. This is true of SMTs in the South African context where curriculum and institutional transformation is a popularly mandated government programme from national level, but where measures for school improvement are to be developed and driven locally.

Fullan (in Teddlie,2003:243) characterised the above principle as the '25/75 Rule' – the local school context plays a vital role in the successful implementation of educational reform, twenty five percent of successful implementation is the reform itself, while seventy five percent depends on local variations. In view of this, it may be safe to conclude that SMTs of underperforming schools are critically placed to formulate and implement change strategies that effectively and accurately respond to the contextual challenges of underperformance.

The above principle clearly manifests itself in the case of the Matric Improvement Intervention Strategy (MIIS) for the Central Region of the North West Department of Education (NWED). It emphasises the key role played by SMT members in turning around underperforming schools. Specifically it proposes to:

- hold meetings with SMTs of these schools to set targets and assist schools to develop school improvement plans
- monitor progress on the drafted school improvement plans and intervene where necessary
- workshop SMTs on the minimum promotion requirements to be satisfied to by the schools for good performance in Grade 12 (NWED: Central Region, 2005)

A comprehensive review of the research literature on school improvement for schools facing challenging circumstances by Potter, Reynolds and Chapman (2002) indicates that the general preconditions for successful improvement are:

- transformational leadership which offers the possibility of change,
- school-wide emphasis on teaching and learning,
- a commitment to staff development and training,
- the use of performance data to guide decisions, targets and tactics
- teamwork both within and between staff groups and with stakeholders and
- time and resources for reflection and research

A study commissioned by the World Bank (Haddad, 2000) notes that successful school improvement in the developing countries depends, among others, on the following:

- channelling resources into schools lacking basic necessities, from sound and safe buildings and sanitation to textbooks and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities

- using interventions, such as appointing replacement principals, to turn round, or else eventually closing, schools which fail to meet those standards or targets
- making schools more accountable to the local community by, for example, specifying parent and community representation on school governing boards
- linking school funding to performance

Some of these measures are noticeable in the North West Province department of education's intervention strategy for trapped schools.
Fertig (2004) notes that ineffective schools exhibit the following characteristics:

- unwillingness to accept evidence of failure
- the blaming of others-pupils, parents, the department; fear of change and of outsiders who embody it
- the presence of dysfunctional relationships, with cliques
- absence of longitudinal databases on pupils' progress
- governing bodies that are passive, lack knowledge and have factions
- valid improvement strategies are adopted but not followed through
- the presence of high noise levels and lots of non-work-related movement
- lost numbers and therefore have had to take other schools' excludees

The problems of such schools therefore may be mutually reinforcing, leading to a vicious circle of poor performance.

Hargreaves (2001) points out that effective school leaders always seek to mobilise intellectual capital, defined as the sum total of the school's knowledge and experience, strategically deploy the school's stakeholders to achieve their goals, and ensure that knowledge gets transferred between situations and people. He further goes on to define social capital as the trust between people, the networks in which people are embedded by strong ties, and the generation of

norms of reciprocity (mutual favours) and collaboration. In addition, high levels of social capital in a school strengthen its intellectual capital. Effective schools also engage in innovative professional practice. The leader of an effective school, therefore, is:

- committed to achieving high levels of intellectual and moral excellence in students as main institutional outcomes
- is able to achieve commitment to such outcomes in the school community
- knows how to mobilise the community 's intellectual and social capital and apply the principle of high leverage to those ends' (ibid, 2001:490)

In a study on the type of induction needed by newly-appointed school principals, Legotlo (1993) found that in addition to a comprehensive induction programme, they also need on-going mentoring by their more experienced peers. In the same vein, Pennycuick (1990) also makes two key recommendations for schools engaged in improvement efforts. First, she proposes that management training for school leaders in order to enhance administrative and strategic capacity should be instituted. Second, more decentralised management structures should be put in place to promote a collaborative decision-making culture.

2.8 Criticisms of school effectiveness research

Thomas and Bainbridge (2001) argue in what they see as the contamination of the effective schools movement. Among what they see as the five 'fallacies' of the movement is the fallacy that principals are instructional leaders. In their view, instructional effectiveness is the responsibility of teachers. They maintain that teachers are the heart and soul of any school system.

In a review of SER literature, Goldstein and Woodhouse (2000) point out that the following are some of the most common criticism levelled at SER:

- abuse by government, such as when prominent SER researchers are co-opted by governments to legitimise their policies

- oversimplification of the complex 'causalities' associated with schooling and sidetracking into focussing on 'league tables'
- poor research quality of some studies

Some researchers such as Griffith (2002) have expressed doubts about whether effectiveness and quality are empirically demonstrable attributes. The thrust of his main contention is '...to what extent do individual student test scores and ratings of the educational environment, when aggregated, reflect attributes of quality/effectiveness for classrooms, teachers, departments, schools and or school districts' (2002: 95) . In his view, this amounts to ecological or atomistic fallacy, as results obtained at one level (for example, from individual students) are assumed to occur at other levels (for example, among classes in schools).

Other critics such as Holmes (1998) are dismissive of SER due to what they perceive to be its support for 'the continuing disparagement of the obsession with basic skills; the philosophical rejection by many influential SER researchers of the clear finding that effective skill teaching depends on direct instruction with a clearly sequenced curriculum and the continuing aversion to any attempt to examine the actual effects on students of school improvement programmes' (in Scheerens, 2000:350).

Holmes further goes on to argue that 'it is much easier to find evidence of implementation than of improved student achievement'. In fact, Scheerens (2000) also quotes Hill (1998) as also having pronounced the death of the existing paradigm of empirical school effectiveness studies on the basis that it does not provide conclusive evidence of what constitutes and effective school.

However, while that may be the case in developed countries, the situation in developing countries is quite the opposite, with the majority of studies undertaken having clearly demonstrated that effective educational leadership is key in improving school performance (Fertig, 2000: 385). Furthermore, that high levels of school resources, including a low pupil-teacher ratio, more instructional

materials, a large library and well- trained teachers are important determinants of school effectiveness (Scheerens, 2000: 355)

2.9 SUMMARY

It is abundantly clear from the foregoing exploration of the literature on school effectiveness and school improvement that leadership plays an important role in building and sustaining improvement. It is also clear from a synopsis of the fourteen effectiveness-enhancing factors that there are two essential components of a good school, namely, school atmosphere, expressed in terms of leadership, student-teacher relationships and extra-curricular activities, and student achievement.

An extensive exploration of the many studies undertaken in both developed and developing countries indicates quite clearly that it is difficult and counterproductive to apply the research methodology from one context to another without modifying it. Another dimension that has emerged strongly from the literature review is the key role played by adequate resource provision and good educational leadership in school effectiveness and improvement.

Furthermore, the literature survey confirms, firstly, the dynamic and symbiotic relationship between effectiveness and improvement. Secondly, a comprehensive review of SER studies highlights some of the variables that determine how successfully management can make a school effective such as strategic leadership, development planning, commitment to personal development, team work, effective curriculum leadership and communication with stakeholders.

Finally, a discussion of the different organisational models and associated theories has shown that different research designs may emphasise different effectiveness criteria. It was indicated that for purposes of this study, no one

particular criterion or model will be preferred to others. Instead, the study will borrow elements that are pertinent to school leadership and improvement from all of them.

The next chapter looks at how the study is designed for purposes of operationalising key variables adopted in the definition of 'school effectiveness'.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology which was used to evaluate the effectiveness of school management teams in the underperforming schools of the Central Region. It further explains the rationale behind the methodology, the data collection and data analysis procedures. Steps taken in structuring and designing data instruments in this study were an attempt eventually validate the research findings.

3.2. Research tools

According to Bless & Higson-Smith (1995:65), research tools are a means by which different approaches to research are operationalised. Such tools include for example, questionnaires, interviews, observation and others. For the purpose of this study, the non personal method of collecting data was adopted through the use of self administered questionnaires. Such questionnaires were distributed to the sampled schools and collected after they had been filled out.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used as the primary instrument of data collection in this study. This is a set of questions with fixed wording and sequence of presentation as well as indications of how each question should be answered. Its essence as a research tool is that it is in the hands of the respondent and is completed by her/ him.

3.2.1.1 Factors affecting the effectiveness of a questionnaire

Legotlo (1998) and Borg and Gall (1989) point out the following as some of the factors that are essential for the effective use of a questionnaire as a research tool:

- the questionnaire has to be clear to the desired respondents;
- questions must be simple and straightforward. The type of responses expected and how they should be recorded must also be unambiguous;
- the questionnaire must reach the hands of the appropriate respondents;
- the researcher must motivate the respondents to complete and return the questionnaire, and
- effective administrative arrangements for the return of the questionnaires have to be made.

3.2.1.2 Advantages of a questionnaire

A number of authors have outlined the advantages of a questionnaire as a data collecting tool (Legotlo, 1998). These advantages have been summarized as follows:

- Questionnaires are familiar to most people. Nearly everyone has had some experience completing questionnaires and they generally do not make people apprehensive.
- Self administered questionnaires are easily standardised which makes measurement generally easy. This means that the researcher has to ask exactly the same questions of all subjects and has to impute the same intent to all respondents giving a particular response.
- Questionnaires are economical since a large coverage of the population can be realised with little time or costs. This is very true for studies involving large sample sizes and large geographic areas.

- Anonymity is assured and this encourages respondents to be honest in their answers
- Bias which may arise due to the personal characteristics of the interviewer is avoided since no interviews are used. There is uniform question presentation and the researcher's own opinions will not influence the respondent to answer questions in a certain manner.
- Questions which might require reflection or consultation will be dealt with more appropriately since the respondent has more time to answer and there is no interviewer waiting for a hasty response.
- Questionnaires are easy to analyse since data entry and tabulation can be easily done with many computer software packages.

3.2.1.3 Disadvantages of a questionnaire

Babbie (1983: 131) has identified the following as some of the disadvantages of using a questionnaire as a research tool:

- The response rate of self-administered questionnaires is very low as well as a response bias. This then affects the quality of the research and eventually undermine the representativeness of the sample.
- Another common disadvantage of questionnaires is the tendency of the respondents to skip over difficult or embarrassing questions thus spoiling the whole questionnaire.
- Questions may be misinterpreted, instructions may be misconstrued and open ended questions may produce only minimal results without probing by an interviewer.
- It is difficult to interpret the subjects' responses as well as checking whether they understand the questions.
- In general, survey research is usually weak on validity and strong on reliability. Thus, the standardisation that is required in constructing a

questionnaire often result in the fitting of round pegs into square holes. The standardised questionnaire items often represent the least common denominator in assessing people's attitudes, orientations, circumstances and experiences. Thus questionnaires might be minimally appropriate to many respondents and the researcher may miss what is most appropriate to many respondents (Bless & Higson-Smith; 1995).

3.2.2. Questionnaire construction

3.2.2.1. Development of questionnaire Items

There are very few specific sets of rules on questionnaire construction and as such the questionnaire remains a very complex instrument of data collection (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995:115). However, there are general guidelines on where to start and the kind of pitfalls to avoid. According to Oppenheim (1996), there are five categories of decisions one has to consider before constructing a questionnaire. These relate to the main method of data collection ; methods of approach to the respondents; how questions will be ordered and sequenced ; the order of questions within each question sequencing, the use of techniques such as funnelling or attitudinal opening and lastly the use of different types of questions such as two-way or free response questions.

According to Bless and Higson (1995) & Borg and Gall (1989), the following rules have to be applied when constructing a questionnaire;

- one should start by making a list of questions one wants the research to answer, and thereafter propose a possible answer for each.
- Thereafter, analyse what kind of data is needed to study those problems. The use of dummy tables could help to decide how such data will be utilised in the analysis of the problem (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995).
- The length of the questionnaire should be respondent-friendly.

- Particular attention should be paid to the wording of the questionnaire, for example, leading questions should be avoided.
- Biased items and terms, as well as negative questions should be avoided.
- Double barrelled items which require the subject two separate ideas with a single answer should be avoided.
- The questionnaire should be structured carefully, for example, the use of open –ended questions and structured questions should be carefully thought out beforehand
- Respondents must be competent to answer the questions

3.2.2.2. Format and content of questionnaire

The format of the questionnaire was in three (3) sections namely, Section A (questions 1-9), Section B (questions 10 -16) and Section C (questions 17-18).

The main objective of **Section A** was to obtain the profiles of the respondents as well as those of their institutions. The information was essential for understanding both the background of the respondents and their schools.

Section B 's main purpose was to elicit information from the respondents on the strategic and operational management issues such as strategic leadership, financial planning, decision making and accountability, administration of resources and records, curriculum leadership, communication and human resource development. Questions in this section were rated on a four-point Liekert scale from strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Section C consisted of open ended question which allowed respondents the freedom and fair chance to express their views about the topic under research, based on their personal experiences at institutional level. A space was provided to allow respondents to comment on challenges facing SMTs and aspects which might improve performance in their schools, and making them effective.

3.2.3. Questionnaire pre-testing

According to Coleman & Briggs (2002:167), all data collecting instruments have to be piloted. The main purpose of this is to test and revise the questionnaire before the major study is undertaken. Furthermore, carrying out a pilot also assists the researcher in deciding how the returns will be recorded and analysed when the real questionnaires are returned.

The questionnaire was pre-tested in two stages before it was distributed to the schools. Firstly, it was administered using personal interviews in order to get better feedback on problems such as ambiguous questions. Secondly, it was tested in the same way as it would be administered to the sampled population.

For pre-testing, a sample of (n=6) was used (3 SMT members and 3 educators). Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and to indicate whether they understood all the questions. They further had to comment on points that needed clarification. The data from the test was analysed in order to uncover any unanticipated shortcomings.

The pre-test results were used to effect amendments, to avoid irrelevance and invalidity, and to generally improve the quality of the questionnaire.

3.2.4. Final questionnaire

The final questionnaire was administered to 29 underperforming schools in the five Area Project Offices in the Central Region.

3.2.5. Covering letter

According to Coleman and Briggs (1995), a covering letter is an essential part of a survey. It is a tool which is employed to introduce the respondents to the questionnaire.

It is very common, especially with self administered questionnaires, to have low response rates which ultimately affect the quality of the research. In order to increase response rates, a covering letter was used to convince respondents about the relevance of the research and its educational utility. Respondents were also assured anonymity to help them to be honest in their responses.

The Area Project Managers of Zeerust, Greater Delareyville, Setlakgobi, Mafikeng and Lichtenburg received covering letters that explained the purpose of the study.

3.3. Administration procedures

Permission to access schools was first secured from the Executive Regional Manager of the Central Region and the Superintendent General of the North West Provincial Department of Education.

One hundred and seventy four (174) questionnaires were distributed to sampled schools via Area Project Offices and the same route was used to return the completed questionnaires to the researcher. Questionnaires were numbered and a record was kept to determine the responses received as well as the non-responses.

3.4. Follow-ups

The use of follow-ups or reminders is one of the most powerful tools for increasing response rates (Coleman and Briggs,1995). Follow ups were made through phone calls to the non-respondents to remind as well as encourage them to complete and return the questionnaires. Follow ups were also made by resending the questionnaire. This was costly since questionnaires had to be resent to all members of the sample, thanking those who may have already responded and encouraging those who have not yet done so.

3.5. Population and sampling

A list of underperforming schools in the Central Region was obtained from the Regional Office. A total of twenty nine (29) schools were randomly selected from five Area Project Offices, namely Setlakgobi, Zeerust, Mafikeng, Greater Delareyville and Lichtenburg as shown in Table 3.1. A total of 174 questionnaires were distributed to all the sampled schools at the rate of at least six questionnaires per school.

Table 3.1: Distribution of sample population

Area Project Office	**Number of sampled schools**
Greater Delareyville	4
Lichtenburg	3
Mafikeng	8
Setlakgobi	5
Zeerust	9
Total	**29**

3.6 Statistical techniques

The method which was deemed very suitable for this study was the computer aided statistical analysis (SPSS) for computing the descriptive data for each respondent. The SPSS programme includes analysis tools such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean scores, standard deviations, t-tests and chi-square tests.

3.7. Summary

A questionnaire was used as a main research tool for data collection due to its advantages as presented in this chapter. The University of the North West Statistics Department assisted in analysing the data.

CHAPTER 4

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the results of the empirical investigation conducted to determine the effectiveness of school management teams of underperforming high schools in the Central region. The empirical investigation took into account the perceptions of SMT members and other educators on the effectiveness of SMTs in their own schools. The qualitative and quantitative data collected through the investigation is analysed and interpreted.

4.2 Review of the subjects

Questionnaires were distributed to two categories of respondents, namely educators and SMT members. Out of the total number of one hundred and seventy four (174) questionnaires distributed, 146 (83, 9%) were returned and also usable.

4.3 Biographical data of respondents

Table 4.1 illustrates the biographical data and background information of the respondents. The information on both categories of respondents is provided to highlight the similarities and differences among these categories. The information focused on the location of the school, learner enrolment, pass rates, age, gender, academic qualifications, post level, teaching experience and management experience of the respondents.

Table 4.1: Biographical data of respondents

		SMT		EDUCATORS	
ITEM	**VARIABLE**	***f***	**%**	***f***	**%**
1. AGE					
	Below 30	2	3	4	6.1
	30 - 34	22	28	27	40.9
	35 - 39	33	41	26	39.4
	40 - 44	15	19	8	12.1
	45 - 49	4	5	1	1.5
	50 - 54	1	1	-	-
	55 and above	3	4	-	-
TOTAL		**80**	**100**	**66**	**100**
2. GENDER					
	Female	36	45	30	45
	Male	44	55	36	55
TOTAL		80	100	**66**	100
3. QUALIFICATION					
	Matric plus Diploma	17	21.25	43	65.2
	Bachelors	26	32.5	16	24.2
	Honours	30	37.5	3	4.5
	Masters	5	6.25	0	0.0
	Other	2	2.50	4	6.1
TOTAL		**80**	**100**	**66**	**100**
4. POST LEVEL					
	Principal	11	13.75	-	-
	Deputy Principal	5	6.25	-	-
	HOD	54	67.50	-	-
	Senior Teacher	10	12.5	-	-
	Educator	0	0	66	100
TOTAL		**80**	**100**	**66**	**100**
5.TEACHING EXPERIENCE					
	1 to 3	3	4	5	7.6
	4 to 6	1	1	11	16.7
	7 to 9	18	23	15	22.7
	10 and above	57	72	35	53.0
TOTAL		**79**	**100**	**66**	**100**
6. MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE					
	Less than 1	10	12.50	-	-
	1 to 3	4	5.00	-	-
	4 to 6	35	43.75	-	-
	7 to 9	7	8.75	-	-
	10 and above	24	30	-	-
TOTAL		**80**	**100**	-	-
7. LOCATION OF THE SCHOOL					
	Town	1	1	1	1.5
	Township	5	6	1	1.5
	Village	70	88	61	92.4
	Farm	4	5	3	4.5
TOTAL		**80**	**100**	**66**	**100**

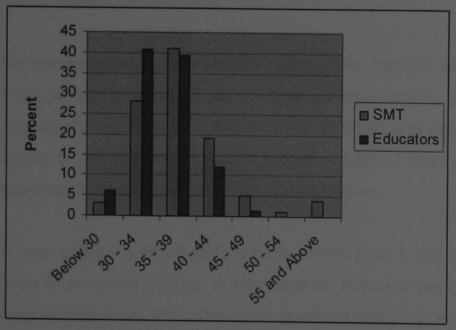
Key: *f=frequency*

4.3.1 Age of the respondents

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 show that this item consisted of five age groups. The table indicates that a large percentage of educators in underperforming schools are in the age groups 30-34 and 35-39. Out of a total of 66 educators, 27 (40.9%) fall in the age group 30-34 and 26 (39.4%) in the age group 35-39. Respondents whose age is below 30 constitute 6.1% of the sample at 4, while 8 (12.1%) fall in the 40-44 years category. Only 1 respondent (1.5%) is in the age category 45 and above. The majority of SMT members are also in the age groups 30-34 and 35-39. However, unlike in the case of educators, the age groups 50-54 and 55-59 are represented.

The results imply that majority of respondents are still far from retiring. They can still develop themselves and impact positively on school effectiveness.

Figure 4.1 Age of the respondents

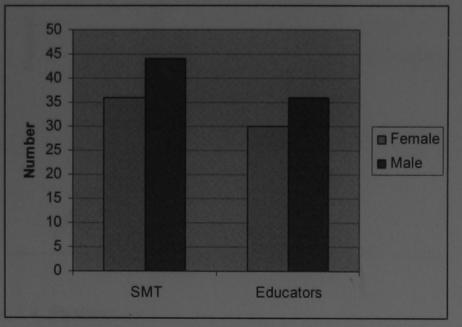


4.3.2. Gender of the respondents

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.2 show that in both groups, 45% of the respondents are male and 55% are female. The fact that male respondents outnumber female respondents indicates that there are probably more male SMT members in secondary underperforming schools than females. This bias will

however be addressed by the Employment Equity Act of 1998 to ensure that all historically marginalised groups are represented in management positions.

Figure 4. 2: Gender



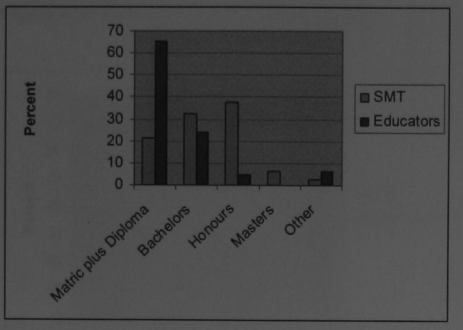
4.3.3. Highest Qualification

Respondents were requested to indicate their highest academic qualifications. The purpose was to find out whether underperforming schools in region have appointed educators who are properly qualified and capable of improving the quality of instruction and results in their schools. Figure 4.3 shows the highest qualifications of educators which are as follows:

A total of 65.2% of educators have matric plus a three-year diploma; 24.2% have a university degree; 4.5% have an honours degree; while 6.1% of the respondents have indicated other qualifications such as Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) and Further Diploma in Education (FDE). Table 4.1 and Figure 4.3 depicts that SMT members are more qualified than educators. Whilst the majority of educators are diplomates (62.5%), the majority of SMT members have Bachelors and Honours degrees (70%).

This shows that educators in trapped schools in the Central Region are all qualified and should be capable of improving learner performance in their schools.

Figure 4.3: Highest Qualification



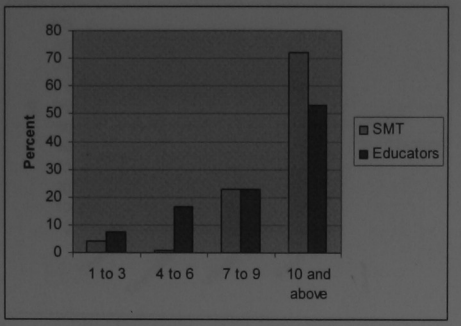
4.3.4. Position

Table 4.1 shows that out of the total 146 respondents, 66(45.2%) were educators, 10 were senior teachers, 54 were heads of departments, 5 were deputy principals and 11 were principals. The small percentage of principals does not necessarily imply that those schools do not have principals or deputy principals. However, there are schools which do not qualify for deputy principals in terms of their total learner enrolment.

4.3.5 Teaching experience

Table 4.1 and Figure 4.4 reveal that of the total educator respondents, 7.6% had 1-3 years teaching experience; 16.7% had between 4-6 years ; 22.7% between 7-9 years . The majority of educator respondents, 53%, had teaching experience of 10 years or more which also applies to SMT members, where the majority (72%), have teaching experience of 10 years or more. This bodes well for future improvement efforts in underperforming schools. More than half of the respondents are experienced educators who are also well placed to assist in improving learner performance. The literature consulted suggests a strong link between experience and learner achievement (cf. 2.7.2.1)

Figure 4. 4: Teaching Experience (in years)



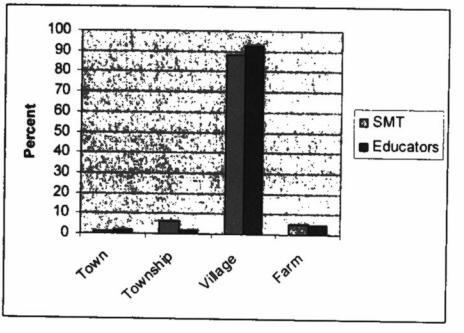
4.3.6. Management experience

Only SMT members had to respond to this question. Table 4.1 shows that a large number of SMTs (43.75%), have only 4-6 years management experience whilst those with management experience of 10 years or more constitute only 10% of the sampled population. This might explain why educators rated them low on criteria like strategic leadership.

4.3.7 Location of the school

Respondents had to indicate whether their schools were situated in an urban or rural area. As Table 4.1 and Figure 4.5 show that the location of most respondents' schools is predominantly rural. Of the total respondents, 94.5% indicated that their schools are located in rural areas (villages and farm schools). Only 4.5% of the respondents teach in urban-based underperforming schools. What this indicates is that the majority of underperforming schools in the Central Region are rural. Such schools are characterised by poor infrastructure and lack of basic resources, which in terms of SER findings correlate highly with ineffectiveness (cf. 2.2.1)

Figure 4.5: Location of the School



4.3.8 Learner enrolment

On this item, respondents were asked to provide statistics on learner enrolment for FET grades from 2002 to 2005. Only 13.75 % of the schools provided complete information. This could be attributed to schools not keeping accurate records. This is also supported by the literature consulted that, ineffective schools lack performance data (cf. 2.7.3.2).

From the information provided, as shown on Table 4.2, learner enrolment tends to be high in grades 10 and progressively declines in grades 11 and 12. The only deviation is in school A in 2004, where grade 11 learners outnumber grade 12 ones. This could probably be as a result of many repeaters in grade 11. Since the sampled schools share common characteristics (rural), a generalisation can be drawn from this pattern for the other schools. This calls for a provincial improvement strategy that will focus not only on grade 12, but on the entire schooling system.

Table 4.2: Learner enrolment

School	2002			2003			2004			2005		
	GR10	GR 11	GR 12	GR 10	GR 11	GR 12	GR 10	GR 11	GR 12	GR 10	GR 11	GR 12
A	83	84	87	107	91	69	156	76	94	180	75	39
B	158	112	73	254	115	75	349	129	108	196	225	125
C	283	227	98	271	167	156	265	186	81	337	180	90
D	33	39	-	47	28	29	22	28	22	18	10	11

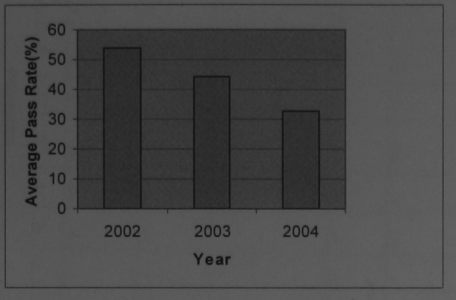
4.3.9 Pass rates

As in the case of enrolment, not all respondents provided information on pass rates. Information on pass rates for grade 12 was obtained from the EMIS section of the Provincial department (Appendix B).Complete grade 10 and 11 results were not readily available. Table 4.3 and Figure 4.6 show a decreasing trend in the performance of these underperforming schools

Table 4.3: Pass rates

Year	Average Pass % (underperforming schools only)
2002	53.83
2003	44.35
2004	32.66

Figure 4.6 Pass rates - Grade 12 (2002 –2004)



4.4 Strategic and operational management issues

The main aim of this study was to evaluate empirically the effectiveness of SMTs of dysfunctional schools. Respondents were asked to give their opinions on the SMTs role in improving school effectiveness, focussing on the following criteria.

- Strategic leadership
- Financial planning
- Decision making and accountability
- Administration of resources and records
- Curriculum leadership
- Communication
- Human resource development

4.4.1 Strategic leadership

This component had 8 items. Information was sought from respondents regarding whether SMTs provide strategic leadership in their schools. Davies (2004) has emphasised the importance of strategic leadership and has also delineated characteristics of strategically focussed schools (cf. 2.5.1).

Table 4.4 Strategic leadership

	ITEM	SA		A		D		SD		SA		A		D		SD	
		SMT								EDUCATORS							
		f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
10.1	We manage staff professionally by applying democratic principles	21	26	54	68	5	6	-	-	7	11	43	65	12	18	4	6
10.2	We have mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of our strategy	6	7.5	63	78.75	9	11.25	2	2.5	5	7.6	40	60.6	11	16.7	10	15.2
10.3	Our school has a clear strategy to address fluctuating enrolments and to retain our best learners	3	3.75	43	53.75	28	35	6	7.5	-	-	24	36	31	47	11	17
10.4	We encourage teamwork within leadership structures	28	35	45	56.25	5	6.25	2	2.5	5	7.6	34	51.5	17	25.8	10	15.2
10.5	Our school's school development plan has an implementation time horizon of 3-5 years	5	6.25	52	65	11	13.75	12	15	4	6.1	30	45.5	18	27.3	14	21.2
10.6	There is a cordial relationship between management and other stakeholders	13	16.25	57	71.25	8	10	2	2.5	7	11	32	48	17	26	10	15
10.7	The number of person-days lost due to absenteeism and leave are few	6	7.5	50	62.5	15	18.75	9	11.25	4	6	29	44	24	36	9	14
10.8	We use multiple approaches to planning	9	11.25	42	52.5	26	32.5	3	3.75	5	8	39	59	14	21	8	12

Key: SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree SD=Strongly Disagree D= Disagree

Item 10.1 Manage staff professionally by applying democratic principles

Table 4.4 shows that 94 % of SMT members agree or strongly agree that they manage staff professionally by applying democratic principles. Only 71 % of educators agree that SMT members manage staff professionally. The results imply that staff is managed professionally and democratically.

Item 10.2 Mechanisms are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy

According to Table 4.4, 86.25 % of SMT members agree that they have mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of their strategy while only 68.2% of educators agree with the statement. The number of educators who disagree, even though they are not in the majority (31.9%), suggests that more attention is needed in evaluating and reviewing the effectiveness of the strategy.

Item 10.3 The school has a clear strategy to address fluctuating enrolments and to retain best learners

Table 4.4 shows that 57% of SMT members agree that they have a strategy to address fluctuating enrolments and to retain their best learners, while only 36% of the educators agree with the statement. Though there is a contrast of opinion on this item, SMTs have rated themselves low compared to the other items. A common trend in underperforming schools is the decline in learner enrolments (cf. 2.7.2). Parents enrol their children in schools which have a good reputation, even if learners have to travel to those schools. In turn, this often leads to educators being declared in addition, thus further eroding morale and commitment. This confirms the finding in SER literature that the problems of such schools tend to be self-reinforcing (cf.2.7.3.2)

Item 10.4 Teamwork is encouraged within leadership structures

On this item, as Table 4.4 depicts, 91.25% of the SMT members agree or strongly agree that they encourage teamwork within their structures while only 59.1% of the educators agree with the statement. According to the literature consulted, an effective school is characterised by staff cohesion and teamwork which SMTs need to seriously encourage. (cf.2.5.3)

Item 10.5 The school's development plan has an implementation time horizon of 3-5 years

Table 4.4 shows that 71.25% of the SMT members agree that they have school development plans. On the contrary, only 51.6% of educators agree that their schools have School Development Plans (SDPs) with an implementation time horizon of 3-5 years. SASA regulations dictate that schools should have SDPs. Even though most schools have them, they do not implement them.

Item 10.6 A cordial relationship exists between management and other stakeholders

On the question of whether a cordial relationship exists between school management and other stakeholders, 87.5% agree that such a relationship exists while only 59% of the educators agree with the statement. A significant number of educators (41%) disagree with this statement. SMTs therefore need to pay more attention to establishing and sustaining relationships with stakeholders who may impact on school improvement and effectiveness (cf.2.4).

Item 10.7 Number of person-days lost due to absenteeism and leave are few

According to Table 4.4, 70% of SMT members agree that the number of days lost due to absenteeism and leave are few. On the contrary, 50% of educators, which is a significant number, agree while the other half disagrees with the statement. The number is significant enough to suggest that SMT members do not effectively control leave and absenteeism, and instructional time is not effectively utilised (cf.2.5.2). This probably impacts negatively on learner attainment. Findings of the National monitoring team in the region on this aspect indicate that leave registers are not kept and attendance registers are not signed.

Item 10.8 Multiple approaches to planning are used

Table 4.4 shows that 63.75% of SMT members agree that they use multiple approaches to planning. On the other hand, 67 % of educators indeed agree that multiple approaches to planning are used in their schools.

4.4.2 Financial planning

Table 4.5 illustrates the respondents' views regarding financial planning in trapped schools. A brief discussion of Table 4.2 is given. Though planning is done in some instances, it should be noted that these schools are experiencing serious cash flow problems due to non payment of funds by learners, and exemption of some learners from paying school fees.

Table 4.5 Financial planning

	ITEM	SA		A		D		SD		SA		A		D		SD	
		SMT								EDUCATORS							
		f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
11.1	Financial plans are developed and updated with the participation of all stakeholders	7	8.75	47	58.75	16	20	10	12.5	5	7.6	34	51.5	17	25.8	10	15.2
11.2	Financial planning is in line with the goals of the school	6	7.5	48	60	18	22.5	8	10	2	3	38	57.6	17	25.8	9	13.6
11.3	All projects are implemented in line with the school development plan	5	6.25	47	58.75	22	27.5	6	7.5	5	8	30	45	26	39	5	8
11.4	All projects and interventions are closely monitored	4	5	46	57.5	23	28.75	7	8.75	1	2	28	42	32	48	5	18

Key: SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree SD=Strongly Disagree D= Disagree

Item 11.1 Financial plans are developed and updated with the participation of stakeholders

According to Table 4.5, 67.5% of SMT members agree that all stakeholders participate in matters related to developing and updating financial plans. On the other hand, 59.1 % of the educators agree with the statement.

Item 11.2 Financial planning is in line with the goals of the school

Table 4.5 shows that 67.5% of the SMT members agree or strongly agree that financial planning is done taking into consideration the goals of the school while 60.6% of the educators agree with the statement.

Item 11.3 All projects are implemented in line with the school development plan

On the question of whether projects are implemented in line with the school development plan, 65% of SMT members agree with this statement. On the other hand, only 53% of educators agree with the statement. A significant number of educators, 47%, feel that not all projects are implemented in line with the school development plan. This practice clearly creates inconsistencies and reflects lack of strategic direction (cf.2.5.3).

Item 11.4 All projects and interventions are closely monitored

Table 4.5 shows that only 62.5% of the SMT members agree that all projects and interventions are regularly and closely monitored. The majority of educators (56%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. The same sentiment is shared by SMT members, though to a lesser extent (37.5%), which is a significant number to suggest that SMT members need to be capacitated in this area. This will ensure proper implementation of projects and intervention strategies, including their monitoring and support.

Table 4.6 Decision making and accountability

	ITEM	SA		A		D		SD		SA		A		D		SD	
		SMT								EDUCATORS							
		f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
12.1	Whenever possible and appropriate decisions are arrived at by consensus	13	16.25	52	65	14	17.50	1	1.25	1	2	39	59	18	27	8	12
12.2	Decisions are based on sound logic and made in good time	10	12.50	49	61.25	15	18.75	6	7.50	3	5	23	35	32	48	8	12
12.3	We are always prepared to be held accountable for the decision making process	9	11.25	51	63.75	17	21.25	3	3.75	3	4.5	29	43.9	25	37.9	9	13.6
12.4	Staff recognise that their opinions are valued and taken into account	10	12.50	49	61.25	19	23.75	2	2.50	4	6.1	23	34.8	26	39.4	13	19.7
12.5	We use performance data to guide decisions	10	12.50	50	62.50	14	17.50	6	7.50	2	3	33	50	24	36.4	7	10.6

Key: SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree SD=Strongly Disagree D= Disagree

4.4.3 Decision making and accountability

Table 4.5 illustrates the respondents' views with regard to management's decision-making and accountability role. Most educators disagreed that SMTs are managing this function effectively whilst SMTs agreed that they are executing this responsibility effectively.

Item 12.1 Decisions are arrived at by consensus

Responses on this item, as shown by Table 4.6, indicate that 61% of the educators agree that whenever possible and appropriate, decisions are arrived at by consensus. This contrasts with members of the SMT, 81.25% of whom agree while only 18.75% disagree. This might be interpreted to mean that educators feel their concerns are not addressed. (cf. 2.5.4)

Item 12.2 Decisions are based on sound logic and made on time

More than half (60%) of the educator respondents, as illustrated on Table 4.6, disagreed and strongly disagreed that SMT decisions are made timeously and logically while 40% agreed with the statement. By contrast, 73.75% of the SMT respondents agreed while 26.25 disagreed.

Item 12.3 SMT is prepared to be held accountable for the decision-making process

Of the total respondents, 48.4% of educator respondents agreed and strongly agreed that SMT's are always prepared to be held accountable for the decisions taken, whilst 51.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed. This contrasts sharply with 75% of SMT's who agreed and 25% who disagreed. Among the most important functions of the SMT is to manage how decisions are made (cf.2.5.4; 2.3.1)

Item 12.4 Staff recognise that their opinions are valued and taken into account

Table 4.6 shows that 40.9% of educators agree and strongly agree that their opinions are valued and taken into account. 59% of them disagree and strongly disagree. In the case of SMTs, however, 73.75% of them agreed while 26.25% disagreed. This means that more than half of the educators in underperforming schools feel that SMTs do not value and recognise their opinions whilst taking decisions. It should be noted, however, that even in a democracy, which has transparency and consultation as its key elements, management sometimes has the prerogative to take certain decisions.

Item 12.5 Performance data is used to guide decisions

On this item, 75% of the SMT members agreed with the statement while 25% disagreed. On the other hand 53% of the educators agree that performance data is used to guide the decision-making process while 47% of them disagree and strongly disagree. It was earlier indicated that only 13% of the schools provided data on pass rates, so this corroborates that finding. Data forms the basis of improvement action plans which means underperforming schools in the region are likely to remain so (cf.2.7.2.3).

4.4.4 Administration of resources and records

One of the major roles of the SMT is to ensure that resources (e.g. human, physical, financial, LTSM) as well as records (e.g. educator portfolios, learner portfolios, results, admission records and so on) are properly administered. The purpose of this section is to find out if that is taking place in the underperforming schools of the Central Region.

Item 13.1 Clear instructions and sound guidelines enable staff to do what is expected of them

According to Table 4.6, 86.25% of SMT members agreed and 13.75% disagreed with the statement that SMTs give out clear instructions and guidelines to enable staff to carry out their responsibilities according to the school's expectations. Less than half of the educator respondents, 39.4%, agreed with the statement while the majority, 60.6%, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Item 13.2 Control and monitoring systems are in place

Again, as depicted by Table 4.7, the majority of SMT respondents, 83.75%, agree and only 16.25% disagree with the statement that SMTs have put in place control and monitoring systems. Among the educator respondents, 47% agree and 53% disagree with the statement. The sharp contrast between the two groups is predictive. It is expected of SMTs to monitor and control, hence their response, whilst educators on the other hand are dissatisfied. Departmental reports (NSLA, MIIS) indicate the lack of monitoring and control systems as being prevalent in underperforming schools.

Item 13.3 Record-keeping is comprehensive and up to date

According to Table 4.7, a total of 82.50% SMT members agree and 17.5% disagree with the statement that school records are comprehensive and up to date. Among educators, 36% agree while the majority, (64%) of the respondents disagree with the statement. This corroborates reports of departmental officials (APO managers, curriculum specialists) about their findings whilst visiting schools which reveal that school records are not up to date.

Table 4.7: Administration of resources and records

	ITEM	SA		A		D		SD		SA		A		D		SD	
		SMT								EDUCATORS							
		f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
13.1	Clear instructions and sound guidelines enable staff to do what is expected of them	12	15	57	71.25	8	10	3	3.75	1	1.5	25	37.9	38	57.6	2	3
13.2	Control and monitoring systems are in place	16	20	51	63.75	9	11.25	4	5	3	5	28	42	32	48	3	5
13.3	Record keeping is comprehensive and up to date	11	13.75	55	68.75	12	15	2	25	2	3	22	33	36	55	6	9
13.4	Management constantly evaluates the use of resources	8	10	54	67.5	16	20	2	2.5	2	3	23	34.8	36	54.5	5	7.6

Key: SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree SD=Strongly Disagree D= Disagree

Item 13.4 Management constantly evaluates the use of resources

According to Table 4.6, 77.5% of SMTs agree and 22.5% disagree with the statement that SMTs regularly evaluate the use of resources. This differs with educator respondents of whom only 37.8% agree whilst more than half (62.2%) disagree with the statement. The majority of schools report that the reasons for their underperformance is unavailability of resources such as LTSM. Reports, however, reveal that most of these schools were supplied with LTSM but do not have proper retrieval systems in place (NSLA,2005). The situation is further compounded by the fact that in most communities, parents have almost completely abdicated the responsibility for their children's education to teachers.

4.4.5 Curriculum leadership

Effective curriculum leadership means SMT members are involved in curriculum planning, and know what goes on in the classrooms including assessment, teaching strategies and monitoring of learner progress.

Item 14.1 SMT ensure that educators plan and have high expectations for learners

Table 4.8 shows that 93.75% of SMT members agreed and only 6.25% disagreed that SMTs ensure that educators plan their work and also have high expectations of learners. Only 48.5 of educators agreed, while the majority, 51.5% disagreed with this statement. The contrast in responses suggests that attention needs to be paid to this aspect as it impacts on learner progress (cf.2.5.6). MIIS reports also mention lack of planning in schools as a serious problem.

Item 14.2 SMT ensure that planning for the curriculum is well structured and effective

According to Table 4.8, a total of 80% of SMT members agreed and 20% disagreed with the statement that SMTs ensure that curriculum planning is well structured and effective. However, only 56.1% of educators agreed while 43.9% disagreed.

Item 14.3 Management has developed systems to ensure that assessments are used to aid planning

Among SMT respondents, 87.50% agree and 12.50% disagree with the statement that SMTs have developed systems to ensure that assessments are used to aid planning. However, only 39.4% of educators agreed with this statement while the majority, 61.6%, disagreed. The educators' response corroborates with the finding on the NSLA monitoring report that there are no school based assessment policies.

Item 14.4 Management ensures that the curriculum is supported by appropriate resources

Table 4.8 shows that 78.75% of SMT respondents agree with the statement that SMTs ensure that the curriculum is supported by appropriate resources and 21.25% disagreed. This contrasts sharply with educators of whom 54.6% agree and 45.4% disagreed. The minimal tuition fees paid by parents do not allow schools to meet all their resource needs. Furthermore, the money which such schools qualify for in terms of the Norms and Standards of School Funding (NSSF) is not always received on time. In addition, schools are often incorrectly classified (placed in the wrong categories or quintiles) in terms of their poverty profiles. They then do not receive the proper amount of money they qualify for.

Item 14.5 SMT consider effective teaching and learning as the core business of the school

According to Table 4.8, 76.25% of the SMT members agree that SMTs consider effective teaching and learning as the core business of the school and 23.75% disagreed. On the other hand, 50% of the educators agreed while the remaining half, 50%, disagreed with the statement.

Item 14.6 SMT has a plan in place to improve learner performance

Concerning the statement that schools have plans in place to improve learner achievement, 85% of SMT respondents agreed and 15% disagreed. This differs with 60.6% of the educators who agree and 39.4% who disagree. The MIIS reports from APOs indicate that these plans are in place and schools are implementing them.

Table 4.8 Curriculum leadership

	ITEM	SA		A		D		SD		SA		A		D		SD	
		SMT								EDUCATORS							
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
14.1	We ensure that educators plan and have high expectations for learners	14	17.5	61	76.25	4	5	1	1.25	4	6.1	28	42.4	31	47.0	3	4.5
14.2	Management sees to it that planning for the curriculum is well structured and effective	6	7.5	58	72.5	15	18.75	1	1.25	6	9.1	31	47	26	39.4	3	4.5
14.3	Management has developed systems to ensure that assessments are used to aid planning	14	17.5	56	70	9	11.25	1	1.25	-	-	26	39.4	37	56.1	3	4.5
14.4	Management ensures that the curriculum is supported by appropriate resources	8	10	55	68.75	16	20	1	1.25	5	7.6	31	47	27	40.9	3	4.5
14.5	The SMT is seen to consider effective teaching and learning as the core business of the school	17	21.25	44	55	9	11.25	10	12.5	1	1.5	32	48.5	29	43.9	4	6.1
14.6	We have a plan in place to improve learner achievement	25	31.25	43	53.75	5	6.25	7	8.75	8	12.1	32	48.5	20	30.3	6	9.1

Key: SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree SD=Strongly Disagree D= Disagree

4.4.6 Communication

Table 4.9 illustrates the respondents' perceptions as to whether SMTs communicate with their stakeholders or not. A brief discussion of Table 4.9 is given below

Item 15.1 Communication with all stakeholders takes place through meetings and written correspondence

It can be seen from Table 4.9 that only 85% of SMT respondents agree that communication with stakeholders takes place at their schools and 15% disagree. The opposite situation occurs with educators with 42.4% of them agreeing with the statement while the majority, 57.6% disagreed. Effective communication is important for articulating the vision of the school (cf.2.5.5). The contrast in opinion between SMTs and educators on this aspect implies that serious attention needs to be given to it.

Item 15.2 School regularly promotes its activities through the media and other channels

Table 4.9 indicates that only 43.75% of SMT agree that their SMTs market their schools through the media and other channels while 46.25% disagreed. Among educators, 40.9% of them agree with the statement while the majority, 59.1% disagreed. Effective communication is a key indication of effective school management (cf.2.5.5).

Item 15.3 The school maintains active links with other schools and community organisations

According to Table 4.9, 65% of SMT members agree that their school maintain active links with other schools and community organisations and 35% disagree. Among educators on the hand, 48.5% of them agree and 51.5% disagree with the statement.

Table 4.9: Communication

	ITEM	SA		A		D		SD		SA		A		D		SD	
		SMT								EDUCATORS							
		f	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%	*f*	%
15.1	Communication with all stakeholders takes place through meetings and written correspondence such as circulars and newsletters	29	36.25	39	48.75	10	12.5	2	2.5	5	7.6	23	34.8	33	50	5	7.6
15.2	The school regularly promotes its activities through the media and other channels	1	1.25	34	42.50	33	41.25	12	15	5	7.6	22	33.3	27	40.9	12	18.2
15.3	The school maintains active links with other schools and community organisations	4	5	48	60	22	27.5	6	7.5	-	-	32	48.5	26	39.4	8	12.1

Key: SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree SD=Strongly Disagree D= Disagree

4.4.7 Human resource development

As noted in the literature review, (cf.2.5.7) accountability for the design and implementation of meaningful professional development programmes for educators in the school rests with the SMT. This is often done with a view to ensuring that educators keep pace with new developments in their field, and perfect their classroom practice skills so that they can teach learners more effectively.

Item 16.1 SMT ensures that staff training and mentoring programmes are developed, implemented and evaluated

It can be seen from Table 4.10 that 71.25% of SMT respondents agree that SMTs ensure that staff training and mentoring programmes are developed, implemented and evaluated and 28.75% of them disagree. This contrasts with educators of whom half (50%) agree and the other half (50%) disagree with the statement.

Item 16.2 Management motivates and builds educator commitment through rewards and encouragement

Less than half (48.75%) of SMT respondents agree that SMTs motivate educators and boost their morale through rewards and encouragement, while more than half (51,25%) disagree. Almost the same response from educators can be observed with 40.9% of them agreeing and 59.1% disagreeing with the statement. This is one important factor affecting school effectiveness as shown in the literature (cf.2.4). Motivation and recognition of excellence are a common culture in best performing schools, which can be copied by underperforming schools.

Item 16.3 Educators are fully utilised and developed

The majority of SMT respondents, (58.75%) agree with the statement that educators in their schools are fully utilised and developed and 41.25% disagree. Among educators, only 36.3% feel that they are fully utilised and developed while the majority , 63.4% disagree and strongly disagree with the statement. This reinforces educators' views on a

related item (cf.12.4). The literature consulted emphasise the responsibility of the SMT in developing educators (cf.2.5.7)

Item 16.4 Succession planning is done transparently and collaboratively

The majority of SMT respondents (62.50%) agree that succession planning at their institutions is done transparently and collaboratively while 37.50% disagree. This differs from the pattern observed among educators, of whom only 31.8% agree and the majority (68.2%) disagree with the statement. Some of these schools have suffered steep declines in learner attainment following the resignation or retirement of an SMT member. This calls for shared leadership and succession planning (cf.2.7.3.2)

Table 4.10: Human resource development

	ITEM	SA		A		D		SD		SA		A		D		SD	
		SMT								EDUCATORS							
		F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
16.1	We ensure that staff training and mentoring programmes are developed, implemented and evaluated	4	5	53	66.25	19	23.73	4	5	-	-	33	50	30	45.5	3	4.5
16.2	We motivate and build educators' commitment through rewards and encouragement	7	8.75	32	40	34	42.5	7	8.75	3	4.5	24	36.4	29	43.9	10	15.2
16.3	Educators operating at various levels are fully utilised and developed	4	5	43	53.75	29	36.25	4	5	1	1.5	23	34.8	35	53	7	10.6
16.4	Succession planning is done transparently and collaboratively	8	10	42	52.5	27	33.75	3	3.75	-	-	21	31.8	37	56.1	8	12.1

Key: SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree SD=Strongly Disagree D= Disagree

4.5 and 4.6 (Open-ended: Refer to Appendix A)

Items 4.5 and 4.6 were included for the purpose of highlighting any other issues pertinent to the study which might not have been captured in the questionnaire items. 72.5% of SMT members responded to these questions while on the other hand 57.6% of the educators did so.

4.5 Respondents views on challenges facing SMTs of trapped schools

On this open ended item, respondents suggested the following as challenges SMTs have to deal with. Variables listed by both categories of respondents, as shown in Table 4.11 are that resources, policy implementation, parental involvement, absenteeism, learner discipline, incompetent and uncooperative educators as well as record keeping, are amongst some of the key challenges facing SMTs. While SMTs rank the 3 most important variables as resources, parental involvement and policy implementation, educators perceive resources, discipline and policy implementation as the key challenges facing SMTs.

The literature consulted suggests that provision of resources is not irrelevant, more especially basic resources such as water, electricity, ablution facilities and so forth. What remains an important priority is the management thereof (cf.2.7.2). Policy implementation also comes across as a main challenge highly ranked by both groups.

Table 4.11: Challenges facing SMTs and aspects to be addressed

17	Challenges facing SMTs	SMT			EDUCATORS		
	VARIABLE	*f*	%	R	*f*	%	R
1	Resources	26	44.8	1	34	89	1
2	Lack of parent involvement	20	34.5	2	7	18.42	5
3	Incompetent and uncooperative staff	10	17.24	5	4	10.5	6
4	Absenteeism	12	20.68	4	9	23.68	4
5	Policy implementation	18	31.03	3	12	31.5	3
6	Discipline	6	10.34	6	13	34.2	2
18	Aspects to be addressed	SMT			EDUCATORS		
	VARIABLE	*f*	%	R	*f*	%	R
1	Departmental support	16	31	1	10	26.3	2
2	Planning	6	10.3	7	6	15.78	5
3	Monitoring and control	8	13.79	6	11	28.9	1
4	Involvement of stakeholders	12	20.6	4	3	7.89	6
5	Induction	14	24.13	2	8	21.0	4
6	Teamwork	13	22.4	3	8	21.0	4
7.	Educator and learner morale	9	15.5	5	9	23.68	3

Key: R= Rank order

4.6 Respondents views on aspects that need to be addressed to assist SMTs manage schools effectively

Table 4.11 indicates that monitoring and control, planning, educator and learner morale, teamwork, involvement of stakeholders and departmental support were most frequently mentioned as factors to be addressed to improve the effectiveness of the management of trapped schools. Whilst SMTs ranked the 3 most important areas to be addressed as departmental support, induction and teamwork, educators on the other hand ranked monitoring and control, departmental support and educator and learner morale the highest.

The results of the analysis support the findings by Legotlo (1993) that in order for the effectiveness of SMTs, in particular newly-appointed principals to be enhanced, induction and on-going management development programmes are needed.

4.7 Mean scores and standard deviations.

Table 4.12 and Table 4.13 show the mean scores and standard deviations for strategic and operational management issues related to the SMTs role in managing the trapped schools. An attempt was made to get a picture of the first ten highly rated items, as illustrated by Table 4.13, on which both educators and SMTs agreed. From the results, it can be seen that SMT members have ranked teamwork very high ($\overline{X}$=3.23), which implies that they strongly feel that they encourage teamwork among themselves and their subordinates. The lowest mean score of 2.3 was assigned to marketing the school (item 14.2).

On the contrary, as shown in Table 4.13, educators ranked professionalism of SMT members in relation to applying democratic principles the highest ($\overline{X}$ = 2.78). On the other hand, the lowest mean score of 2.15 was given for the SMT's role in providing a clear strategy to address fluctuating enrolments. This calls for management to urgently focus on this item since it is considered to be one of the underpinning drivers of strategy (cf. 2.5.1:2.7.2)

Table 4.12 Mean scores and standard deviations (SMTs)

ITEM NO	ITEM	MEAN	SD
10.4	We encourage teamwork within leadership structures	3.23	0.73
10.1	We manage staff professionally by applying democratic principles	3.2	0.54
15.1	Communication with all stakeholders takes place through meetings and written correspondence such as circulars and newsletters	3.18	0.79
14.1	We ensure that educators plan and have high expectations for learners	3.09	0.58
14.3	Management has developed systems to ensure that assessments are used to aid planning	3.03	0.64
14.6	We have a plan in place to improve learner achievement	3	1.06
10.6	There is a cordial relationship between management and other stakeholders	3	0.66
13.2	Control and monitoring systems are in place	2.99	0.68
13.1	Clear instructions and sound guidelines enable staff to do what is expected of them	2.96	0.68
12.1	Whenever possible and appropriate decisions are arrived at by consensus	2.95	0.67

Key: SD=Standard Deviation

Table 4.13 Mean scores and standard deviations (Educators)

ITEM NO	ITEM	MEAN	SD
10.1	We manage staff professionally by applying democratic principles	2.78	0.8
14.2	Management sees to it that planning for the curriculum is well structured and effective	2.59	0.76
14.6	We have a plan in place to improve learner performance	2.59	0.93
14.4	Management ensures that the curriculum is supported by appropriate resources	2.56	0.75
10.8	We use multiple approaches in planning	2.56	0.95
10.2	We have mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of our strategy	2.56	0.95
11.3	All projects are implemented in line with the school development plan	2.52	0.79
11.1	Financial plans are developed and updated with the participation of all stakeholders	2.48	0.92
11.2	Financial planning is in line with the goals of the school	2.47	0.85
10.4	We encourage teamwork within leadership structures	2.47	0.95

Key: SD=Standard Deviation

4.8 Interpretation of the differences in responses between SMTs and educators

The t-test is used to determine if there is a statistical significant difference between the performance of randomly selected subjects (Legotlo: 1998). In this study, the t-test was computed to determine the level of statistical significant difference between the views of respondents on the role of SMTs of underperforming schools in promoting school effectiveness.

It was assumed that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of educators and SMTs on (1) Strategic leadership (2) Decision-making and accountability

4.8.1 Differences in responses between management and educators

It was assumed that there is no statistical significant difference between the views of the educators on the strategic leadership role of the SMT. Table 4.14 shows that there are significant differences between the SMT and educators on 5 out of the eight items in this section. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4.14 Differences in responses between management and educators

	EDUCATORS		SMT			
VARIABLE	$\bar{X}$	**SD**	$\bar{X}$	**SD**	**p-Value**	**t-Statistic**
10. Strategic leadership						
10.1 We manage staff professionally by applying democratic principles	2.78	0.8	3.2	0.54	0.0002	3.84
10.2 We have mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of our strategy	2.56	0.95	2.91	0.53	0.0054	2.83
10.3 Our school has a clear strategy to address fluctuating enrolments and to retain our best learners	2.15	0.81	2.53	0.73	0.0039	2.93
10.4 We encourage teamwork within leadership structures	2.47	0.95	3.23	0.73	0.0000	5.44
10.5 There is a cordial relationship between management and other stakeholders	2.51	0.95	3	0.66	0.0004	3.64
12. Decision making and accountability						
12.1 Whenever possible and appropriate decisions are arrived at by consensus	2.45	0.84	2.95	0.67	0.0001	3.94
12.2 Decisions are based on sound logic and made in good time	2.26	0.88	2.73	0.93	0.0023	3.10
12.3 We are always prepared to be held accountable for the decision making process	2.36	0.85	2.8	0.75	0.0013	3.28
12.4 Staff recognise that their opinions are valued and taken into account	2.24	0.91	2.81	0.75	0.0000	4.15
12.5 We use performance data to guide decisions	2.42	0.80	2.78	0.83	0.0108	2.58

Key: $\bar{X}$=Mean

Items in which there are no statistical significant differences between the views of educators and SMT are:

- **Item 10.5- the school development plan has an implementation time horizon of 3-5 years**
- **Item 10.7 – the number of person-days lost due to absenteeism and leave are few**
- **Item 10.8 - We use multiple approaches to planning**

The findings on Table 4.14 suggest that while SMTs strongly feel that they provide strategic leadership, and are accountable for whatever decisions are taken at school, educators on the other hand have rated these items low.

4.8.2 Differences in responses between males and females (SMTs)

The chi-square is a data analysis procedure which assist the researcher to address questions about relations between two nominal variables. In this study, a chi-square test of independence was computed to find out if there are statistical significant differences between the perceptions of male and female respondents.

It was assumed that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female SMT respondents on item 16.2, motivating and building educator commitment through reward and punishment. Table 4.15 shows the difference in responses between male and female SMT respondents.

Table 4.15 Differences in responses between males and females (SMTs)

16.2	We motivate and build educators' commitment through rewards and encouragement					
Gender	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**	**%**
Female	3	15	16	2	36	45
Male	1	14	27	2	44	55
Total	**4**	**29**	**43**	**4**	**80**	**100**

Chi square = 7,009 degrees of freedom=3 significance level= 10%

The results of the chi-square test show that there is a significant difference of perceptions between male and female SMT members. It implies that most male SMTs, (29/44 =65.9%), tend to agree and strongly agree that SMTs motivate and build educator commitment while only (18/36=50%) of the female respondents seem to agree and strongly agree. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

4.8.3 Differences in responses between males and females (Educators)

The chi-square test was also computed for educator respondents to find out if opinions are gender dependant. It was assumed that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female respondents on project implementation (item 11.3). The differences in responses between male and female educator respondents on this item are depicted in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16 Differences in responses between males and females (Educators)

11.3	All projects are implemented in line with the school development plan					
Gender	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**	**%**
Female	0	16	11	3	30	45.5
Male	5	10	19	2	36	54.5
Total	**5**	**26**	**30**	**5**	**66**	**100**

Chi square =8,241 degrees of freedom =3 significance level=5%

The results show that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female educators. It implies that most male educators (19/36=52.8%), tend to agree and strongly agree that all projects are implemented in line with the school development plan, whereas female educators (16/30= 53.35) tend to disagree. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected.

4.9 Summary

This chapter analysed and interpreted data collected from the questionnaires. The empirical investigation was intended to evaluate the effectiveness of SMTs of underperforming schools in the Central Region. The results of that analysis reveal that the two groups of respondents differed widely on their assessment of the effectiveness of SMTs on almost all the criteria. SMTs evaluated themselves as mostly effective whereas educators rated SMTs as being generally ineffective.

The analysis further revealed that educator ratings had a slightly higher degree of variability with higher standard deviations on most items than SMTs. Both groups regard provision of resources and policy implementation as critical for enhancing

SMT effectiveness. Again, both groups identify on-going management development and induction as key to enhancing SMT effectiveness

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the study is presented. The main findings of the empirical investigation are outlined as well as recommendations for improving the effectiveness of SMTs in underperforming schools and the rest of other schools in the system. Areas for possible future research on SMTs emanating from the analysis and interpretation of data are also highlighted.

5.2 Summary

Chapter 1 outlined the aims and format of the study including the statement of the problem. An orientation on the unit of analysis was given. Characteristics required of effective school management teams so that they can successfully implement improvement strategies in their schools were also presented.

In Chapter 2, an exploration of the broad nature and scope of school effectiveness and school improvement as intertwined aspects was done. It emerged from the study of both strands of literature that effective leaders are a key factor of effective schools. The literature survey also confirmed, firstly, the dynamic and symbiotic relationship between effectiveness and improvement. Secondly, a comprehensive review of SER studies highlighted some of the variables that determine how successfully management can make a school effective such as strategic leadership, development planning, commitment to personal development, team work, effective curriculum leadership and communication with stakeholders (cf. 2.4).

Chapter 3 outlined the method of study and described the research tools used in collecting data. Chapter 4 presented data, and discussed the results of the

statistical analyses done. Significantly divergent views on most effectiveness criteria between the two groups of respondents were found. SMTs rated themselves as mostly effective, while educators on the other hand rated SMTs as generally ineffective. However, some issues of consensus between the two groups were found. Both groups had close ratings on the need for resources and policy implementation.

The study therefore made a number of important findings with regard to the effectiveness of school management teams in underperforming schools of the Central Region.

5.3 Research findings

5.3.1 Findings on Aim 1

With regard to the first aim, namely, to determine from the literature the scope of school effectiveness, effective school management and school improvement, the following findings were made:

- there are 14 factors which have been found to enhance effectiveness in schools. Schools that embark on improvement efforts need to focus on some of them (cf.2.3)
- there are two essential components of a good school, namely, school atmosphere, expressed in terms of leadership, student-teacher relationships and extra-curricular activities, and student achievement.(cf. 2.6)
- context plays an important role in the application and evaluation of effectiveness criteria. What works in the developed world will not automatically work in the developing countries.(2.6)

5.3.2 *Findings on Aim 2*

The findings on aim 2, namely, to determine empirically criteria which can promote and develop functional SMTs so that effectiveness and improvement in the region's underperforming schools can be achieved, the following findings were made:

- variables that determine how successfully management can make a school effective such as strategic leadership, development planning, commitment to personal development, team work, effective curriculum leadership and communication with stakeholders are crucial (cf. 2.4)

- successful school improvement efforts are those that start with building capacity from within, especially leadership capacity (cf.2.7.3.1).

5.3.3 *Findings on Aim 3*

With regard to aim 3, namely, to establish empirically whether SMTs of underperforming schools in the Central Region implement effectiveness-enhancing measures such as financial, strategic and development planning, curriculum leadership, communication and human resource development, the study made the following findings:

- SMTs of underperforming schools do not provide effective strategic leadership in their schools. In particular they were found to lack a strategy that addresses fluctuating learner enrolments and ineffectively control leave days and absenteeism (cf. 4.4.1)
- They are ineffective in terms of decision-making and accountability. In particular the use of performance data to guide decisions and valuing the opinions of educators were found to be weak areas (cf. 4.4.3)
- Their control and administration of records is ineffective, with monitoring and control systems in particular the weakest area (cf. 4.4.4)
- Their curriculum leadership is ineffective. The areas of planning and monitoring was found the be the most ineffective.(cf. 4.4.5)

- SMTs of underperforming schools do not communicate effectively. Both groups of respondents singled out poor marketing of school activities as the area of concern (cf.4.4.6)
- The SMTs were also found to be ineffective in their human resource development tasks. In particular building of educator commitment and motivation as well as full utilisation of educators emerged as areas of concern. Educators highlight morale and learner discipline as serious challenges.

Two interesting trends emerged from the data analysis. The first relates to the number of women in the SMT sub-sample. The fact that all underperforming schools are dominated by male managers could be further explored in future research. The other concerns the small number of people in management over the age of 50. This is also an avenue which future research could pursue.

5.3.4 Recommendations

Recommendation 1

On-going capacity-building and induction programmes for school management teams should be implemented as a matter of priority.

Motivation

Most of the schools under perform probably because school managers are not properly guided on their core responsibilities. Induction programmes would greatly assist newly-appointed managers to develop appropriate strategies and design efficient management systems and procedures. Similarly, experienced school managers would benefit a lot from on-going development courses to enable them to stay abreast of developments.

Recommendation 2

Schools should be provided with the necessary resources to enhance quality teaching and learning.

Motivation

The literature study highlighted the critical role that resource inputs make in improving the effectiveness of schools. However, not only underperforming schools should be targeted as is the case with the present matric intervention strategy. It has been seen in the past that previously trapped schools slip back into the 'dysfunctional zone' after some time once material support is withdrawn.

Recommendation 3

The provincial improvement plan should integrate all other improvement plans that are taking place in the province.

Motivation

This is essential as SMTs have to implement all departmental policies. An integrated approach to improvement will ensure that areas of management ineffectiveness highlighted by the study are addressed holistically.

Recommendation 4

Incentives to retain experienced school managers should be looked into.

Motivation

It is a common trend in the region for the results of a school to drop once a good manager leaves. Clearly this loss of 'institutional culture memory' contributes to the decline as new managers take time to adjust. Proposals that will emanate from the survey currently being undertaken by the human resource development directorate of the DoE to provide incentives to educators of scarce subjects could also be extended to SMTs. Upgrading their posts might help reverse the trend of results declining once a experienced managers leave.

Recommendation 5

A two-pronged system-wide intervention strategy that focuses on both the GET and FET bands should be developed for the province

Motivation

An improvement plan that focuses only on the exit grade 12 is short-sighted. Sometimes the problem of poor learner attainment in matric that SMTs have to grapple with is a spill-over effect of lack of proper intervention in the GET band.

5.3.5 Conclusion

The need for schools to offer quality education to previously marginalised and disadvantaged communities is greater today. For the poor learners, schooling represents their only hope of escaping a life of material deprivation. This study has revealed that school management teams in underperforming schools of the Central Region are generally ineffective on a number of key effectiveness criteria. These include giving strategic direction to the institutions, communication, decision-making and accountability and human resource management .

It has also been found that educators in these underperforming schools rank low educator morale and learner discipline as the biggest challenges. It is important therefore that SMTs capacity to manage should be developed so they could be in a position deal with these and other challenges, That way their institutions can be made more effective.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

CARD NO : [ ]

RESEARCH ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS OF UNDERPERFORMING SCHOOLS IN THE CENTRAL REGION

The purpose of this research is to

- Find empirical evidence relating to the role SMTs of trapped schools play in strategic and operational management of their institutions
- Establish empirically their role in instructional leadership
- Use the data obtained to fine-tune intervention strategies designed for such schools

The questions

You are requested to answer as genuinely as you can. There is no right or wrong answer. Your opinion is highly valued

Responses

Please do not write your name. Your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and no direct references will be made to you or your school.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

PROFILE OF SMT MEMBER

1. Age of the educator

1.1	Below 30	1
1.2	30-34	2
1.3	35 -39	3
1.4	40- 44	4
1.5	45- 49	5
1.6	50-54	6
1.7	55 and above	7

2. Gender

2.1	Female	1
2.2	Male	2

Highest qualification

3.1	Matric plus Diploma	1
3.2	Bachelors Degree	2
3.3	Honours Degree	3
3.4	Masters Degree	4
3.5	Other (specify)	5

4. Current Post Level

4.1	Principal	1
4.2	Deputy Principal	2
4.3	Head of department	3
4.4	Senior teacher	4
4.5	Educator	5

5. For how long have you been teaching?

5.1	1 to 3 years	1
5.2	4 to 6 years	2
5.3	7 to 9 years	3
5.4	10 years and above	4

6. For how long have you been involved in the Senior Management team at school?

6.1	Less than 1 year	1
6.2	1 to 3 years	2
6.3	4 to 6 years	3
6.4	7 to 9 years	4
6.5	10 years and above	5

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

7. Location of school

7.1	Town	1
7.2	Township	2

7.3	Village	3
7.4	Farm	4

8. Learner enrolment in:

		2002	2003	2004	2005	
8.1	Grade 10					1
8.2	Grade 11					2
8.3	Grade 12					3

9 Pass rates

		2002	**2003**	**2004**	
9.1	Grade 10				**1**
9.2	Grade 11				**2**
9.3	Grade 12				**3**

SECTION B: DESCRIPTIVE DATA

QUESTIONS

Answer the following set of questions by making an X on the appropriate block which applies to the situation in your school

1= Strongly Disagree (SD)
2=Disagree (D)
3=Agree (A)
4=Strongly Agree (SA)

STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES

	ITEM	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
10	**Strategic Leadership**				
10.1	We manage staff professionally by applying democratic principles	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
10.2	We have mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of our strategy	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
10.3	Our school has a clear strategy to address fluctuating enrolments and to retain our best learners	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**

10.4	We encourage teamwork within leadership structures	4	3	2	1
10.5	Our school's school development plan has an implementation time horizon of 3-5 years	4	3	2	1
10.6	There is a cordial relationship between management and other stakeholders	4	3	2	1
10.7	The number of person-days lost due to absenteeism and leave are few	4	3	2	1
10.8	We use multiple approaches to planning	4	3	2	1
11	**Financial Planning**				
11.1	Financial plans are developed and updated with the participation of all stakeholders	4	3	2	1
11.2	Financial planning is in line with the goals of the school	4	3	2	1
11.3	All projects are implemented in line with the school development plan	4	3	2	1
11.4	All projects and interventions are closely monitored	4	3	2	1
12	**Decision making and accountability**				
12.1	Whenever possible and appropriate decisions are arrived at by consensus	4	3	2	1
12.2	Decisions are based on sound logic and made in good time	4	3	2	1
12.3	We are always prepared to be held accountable for the decision making process	4	3	2	1
12.4	Staff recognise that their opinions are valued and taken into account	4	3	2	1
12.5	We use performance data to guide decisions	4	3	2	1
13	**Administration of resources and records**				
13.1	Clear instructions and sound guidelines enable staff to do what is expected of them	4	3	2	1
13.2	Control and monitoring systems are in place	4	3	2	1
13.3	Record keeping is comprehensive and up to date	4	3	2	1
13.4	Management constantly evaluates the use of resources	4	3	2	1
14	**Curriculum Leadership**				
14.1	We ensure that educators plan and have high expectations for learners	4	3	2	1
14.2	Management sees to it that planning for the curriculum is well structured and effective	4	3	2	1
14.3	Management has developed systems to ensure that assessments are used to aid planning	4	3	2	1
14.4	Management ensures that the curriculum is supported by appropriate resources	4	3	2	1

14.5	The SMT is seen to consider effective teaching and learning as the core business of the school	4	3	2	1
14.6	We have a plan in place to improve learner achievement	4	3	2	1
15	**Communication**				
15.1	Communication with all stakeholders takes place through meetings and written correspondence such as circulars and newsletters	4	3	2	1
15.2	The school regularly promotes its activities through the media and other channels	4	3	2	1
15.3	The school maintains active links with other schools and community organisations	4	3	2	1
16	**Human Resource Development**				
16.1	We ensure that staff training and mentoring programmes are developed, implemented and evaluated	4	3	2	1
16.2	We motivate and build educators' commitment through rewards and encouragement	4	3	2	1
16.3	Educators operating at various levels are fully utilised and developed	4	3	2	1
16.4	Succession planning is done transparently and collaboratively	4	3	2	1

SECTION C

17. What are the challenges faced by SMTs of underperforming schools?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

18. Which areas need to be addressed in order to assist SMTs to manage schools effectively so that learner performance can improve?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX B

CENTRAL REGION

GRADE 12 (2002 - 2004)

SETLAKGOBI

SCHOOL	PASS % 2002	PASS% 2003	PASS % 2004
A	56,5	40,00	32,29
B	39,53	64,29	30,77
C	35,92	66,07	30,3
D	53,06	65,18	27,36
E	49,2	40,00	23,16

LICHTENBURG

SCHOOL	PASS % 2002	PASS% 2003	PASS % 2004
F	57,1	58,14	39,02
G	45,3	55,21	32,84
H	35,90	51,72	42,5

GREATER DELAREYVILLE

SCHOOL	PASS % 2002	PASS% 2003	PASS % 2004
I	28,9	22,00	37,23
J	68,1	42,00	32,65
K	33,00	15,48	32,29
L	New School	0,00	16,47

ZEERUST

SCHOOL	PASS % 2002	PASS% 2003	PASS % 2004
	35,90	51,72	42,5
M	79,22	44,14	35,92
N	52,08	34,29	35,71
O	47,22	37,50	35,48
P	New School	New School	35,09
Q	52,3	33,33	30,77
R	83,33	75,00	25
S	72,73	40,74	24
T	51,85	40,63	22,22
U	75	26,67	18,18

MAFIKENG

SCHOOL	PASS % 2002	PASS% 2003	PASS % 2004
V	52,04	67,95	42,97
W	55,88	60,00	42,61
X	58,6	34,00	41,73
Y	67,57	64,71	41,51
Z	48,08	29,41	40,3
AA	50,34	51,02	35,54
AB	50,77	37,93	33,33
AC	New School	New School	30

Appendix C : Means and Standard Deviations

		EDUCATORS		SMT	
		MEAN	SD	MEAN	SD
10	**Strategic Leadership**				
10.1	We manage staff professionally by applying democratic principles	2.78	0.8	3.2	0.54
10.2	We have mechanisms in place to evaluate the effectiveness of our strategy	2.56	0.95	2.91	0.53
10.3	Our school has a clear strategy to address fluctuating enrolments and to retain our best learners	2.15	0.81	2.53	0.73
10.4	We encourage teamwork within leadership structures	2.47	0.95	3.23	0.73
10.5	Our school's school development plan has an implementation time horizon of 3-5 years	2.29	1.03	2.56	0.97
10.6	There is a cordial relationship between management and other stakeholders	2.51	0.95	3	0.66
10.7	The number of person-days lost due to absenteeism and leave are few	2.4	0.87	2.63	0.88
10.8	We use multiple approaches to planning	2.56	0.95	2.7	0.75
11	**Financial Planning**				
11.1	Financial plans are developed and updated with the participation of all stakeholders	2.48	0.92	2.61	0.88
11.2	Financial planning is in line with the goals of the school	2.47	0.85	2.63	0.83
11.3	All projects are implemented in line with the school development plan	2.52	0.79	2.61	0.79
11.4	**All projects and interventions are closely monitored**	2.36	0.69	2.56	0.79
12	**Decision making and accountability**				

12.1	Whenever possible and appropriate decisions are arrived at by consensus	2.45	0.84	2.95	0.67
12.2	Decisions are based on sound logic and made in good time	2.26	0.88	2.73	0.93
12.3	We are always prepared to be held accountable for the decision making process	2.36	0.85	2.8	0.75
12.4	Staff recognise that their opinions are valued and taken into account	2.24	0.91	2.81	0.75
12.5	**We use performance data to guide decisions**	2.42	0.80	2.78	0.83
13	**Administration of resources and records**				
13.1	Clear instructions and sound guidelines enable staff to do what is expected of them	2.42	0.62	2.96	0.68
13.2	Control and monitoring systems are in place	2.44	0.75	2.99	0.68
13.3	Record keeping is comprehensive and up to date	2.24	0.82	2.91	0.72
13.4	**Management constantly evaluates the use of resources**	2.29	0.78	2.84	0.66
14	**Curriculum Leadership**				
14.1	We ensure that educators plan and have high expectations for learners	2.48	0.73	3.09	0.58
14.2	Management sees to it that planning for the curriculum is well structured and effective	2.59	0.76	2.85	0.6
14.3	Management has developed systems to ensure that assessments are used to aid planning	2.32	0.66	3.03	0.64
14.4	Management ensures that the curriculum is supported by appropriate resources	2.56	0.75	2.86	0.63
14.5	The SMT is seen to consider effective teaching and learning as the core business of the school	2.42	0.72	2.74	1.16
14.6	**We have a plan in place to improve learner achievement**	2.59	0.93	3	1.06

15	**Communication**				
15.1	Communication with all stakeholders takes place through meetings and written correspondence such as circulars and newsletters	2.41	0.78	3.18	0.79
15.2	The school regularly promotes its activities through the media and other channels	2.29	0.89	2.3	0.74
15.3	**The school maintains active links with other schools and community organisations**	2.33	0.77	2.61	0.74
16	**Human Resource Development**				
16.1	We ensure that staff training and mentoring programmes are developed, implemented and evaluated	2.44	0.64	2.69	0.72
16.2	We motivate and build educators' commitment through rewards and encouragement	2.29	0.82	2.49	0.78
16.3	Educators operating at various levels are fully utilised and developed	2.26	0.71	2.59	0.67
16.4	**Succession planning is done transparently and collaboratively**	2.17	0.71	2.69	0.7

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

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14 July 2005

Regional Executive Manager
Central Region
Department of Education
Private X10
Mmabatho
2735

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Please note that Mrs B B Tumane (10157409) is a registered student at the North West University, Mafikeng Campus pursuing the MBA programme. This programme provides vocational education and training in a range of business and management skills to managers from all sectors including; public, private, parastatal, and non-governmental organizations. The programme contributes to raising levels of managerial and administrative capacity in these sectors. It offers flexible core curriculum which integrates business, government and non-government issues as a single programme of study. It also fosters a common inter-disciplinary outlook among students in the first year.

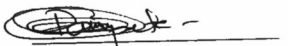
The curriculum exposes students to an analytical and contextual understanding of management issues. This is done through combination of formal course work and other activities which will encourage and develop a problem solving approach which can be relevant for all disciplines in all sectors.

Every one must complete a dissertation of 10 000 – 15 000 words in a topic to be determined on advice from supervisor and, where appropriate after discussion with the student's employer. The dissertation must entail an analysis of a real business or public management related problem. It must be submitted for assessment not later than six months after completion of delivery of the programme of taught courses to which the student was registered.

We would be grateful if you could provide Mrs Tumane with the permission and necessary support to enable her to conduct research in partial fulfillment of the MBA as stipulated above. Her research topic is: **The role of school management teams in improving school effectiveness in the Central Region.**

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 018 389 2258.

Yours Sincerely,



P T Mpete
Programme Manager