

**The roles of middle managers in schools:  
A study conducted in the Itsoseng Circuit**

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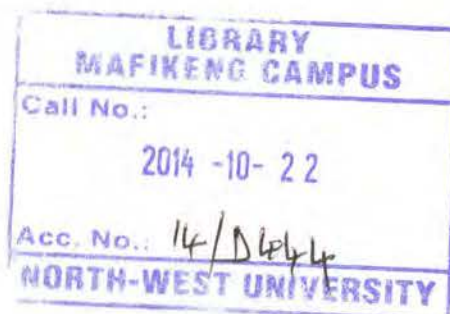
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## **DECLARATION**

I, Keautlwile Emily Maboe, declare that the mini-dissertation for the M.Ed. Educational Management at the North-West University: Mahikeng Campus hereby submitted, has not previously been submitted by me at this or any other university, that it is my own design and execution and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

K.E. Maboe ..... Date: .....

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## LETTER OF LANGUAGE EDITOR

### LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the language editing of this dissertation by Ms E Maboe was done by Prof L A Greyvenstein.

Prof L A Greyvenstein was a member of the South African Translators' Institute, membership number: 1001691. She completed her primary, secondary and tertiary education, including a doctoral thesis, in English. She has done the English language editing of many proposals, dissertations, theses and scientific articles.



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## **ABSTRACT**

The quality of teaching and learning is the first priority of the Department of Education and Training. Middle managers are responsible for quality of teaching and learning. For them to monitor teaching and learning effectively and efficiently, they should be able to manage specific tasks such as planning, leading and evaluating successfully.

Middle managers need to assist the teachers in imparting the knowledge they have to the learners. This will happen only if middle managers are knowledgeable and have skills in management and administrative roles. They are expected to give support to teachers and learners. Instead middle managers do not understand the departmental policies and Acts. They should be well equipped for them to perform their duties with confidence.

A literature study and empirical research was undertaken and the roles of middle managers were explored. A number of their duties were also explored. Qualitative in-depth interviews formed the basis of the empirical research. Finally a content analysis was used to categorise and evaluate data.

The findings revealed that middle managers are experiencing many challenges in their roles. These challenges contribute to a large extent to their personal effectiveness. They should be given relevant support. The Department of Education and Training should take an upper hand in training and inducting middle managers and teachers for them to excel in their roles.

Recommendations in this study showed the need to train middle managers in their roles. An induction programme for newly appointed SMTs is viewed as ideal. Workshops are recommended for both middle managers and teachers. The study finally identified areas where further study should be done.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>LETTER OF LANGUAGE EDITOR</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>GENERAL ORIENTATION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	2
1.3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	3
1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT	5
1.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES	6
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.7 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH	7
1.7.1 Research Design and methodology	7
1.7.2 Data Collection Techniques	7
1.7.3 Population and sampling	8
1.7.4 Data analysis	8
1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY	9
1.9 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS	9
1.10 ETHICAL ISSUES	10
1.11 CHAPTER DIVISION	10
1.12 SUMMARY	11
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION	12
2.2 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS	12
2.2.1 Middle managers	13
2.2.2 Development	13

2.2.3	Training	14
2.2.4	Management	14
2.2.5	Roles	15
2.3	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	15
2.4	THE FUNCTIONING AND IMPORTANCE OF MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	17
2.5	CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SCHOOLS	20
2.6	THE ROLES OF MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SCHOOLS	22
2.6.1	Roles related to teaching and learning	23
2.6.2	Administrative roles	26
2.7	SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER	30
	<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>32</b>
	<b>EMPIRICAL RESEARCH</b>	<b>32</b>
3.1	INTRODUCTION	32
3.2	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	32
3.3	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	33
3.4	POPULATION OF THE STUDY	34
3.5	SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES	34
3.6	DATA COLLETION METHODS	36
3.6.1	Interviews	36
3.6.2	Observations	37
3.6.3	Document analysis	39
3.7	METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS	40
3.7.1	Transcribing and saving data	40
3.7.2	Summarising data	40
3.7.3	Organising data	41
3.7.4	Coding	41
3.8	TRUSTWORTHINESS	42
3.8.1	Verifying raw material and validating findings	42
3.8.2	Reliability of the study	43
3.9	ETHICAL ISSUES	43

3.10	SUMMARY	45
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>		<b>46</b>
<b>DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS</b>		<b>46</b>
4.1.	INTRODUCTION	46
4.2	INTERPRETATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA	46
4.3	DATA ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS	48
4.4	THEMES EMANATING FROM THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION	48
4.4.1	Theme 1: The functioning and importance of middle managers in school leadership	48
4.4.2	Theme 2: The challenges experienced by middle managers in schools	51
4.5	ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATIONS	54
4.5.1	The functions and importance of middle managers in school leadership	55
4.5.2	Challenges experienced by middle managers in schools	56
4.5.3	The roles of middle managers in schools	57
4.6	ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN DOCUMENTS	58
4.6.1	ELRC Documents	58
4.6.2	Subject Policies	59
4.6.3	Monitoring Policy	59
4.6.4	Year Plan	59
4.7	SUMMARY	59
<b>SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		<b>61</b>
5.1	INTRODUCTION	61
5.2	SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	61
5.3	FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATIONS	62
5.3.1	Findings on research Aim 1: What are the functions and importance of middle managers in school leadership	62
5.3.2	Findings from research Aim 2: What are the challenges experienced by middle managers in schools	64
5.3.3	Findings from research Aim 3: What are the roles of middle managers in schools	66
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS	68
5.5	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	70

5.6	SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	70
	REFERENCES	71
	APPENDIX A	79
	RESEARCH SCHEDULE FOR MIDDLE MANAGERS	79
	APPENDIX B	81
	PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS ITSOSENG IN SCHOOLS	81
	APPENDIX C	82
	INFORMED CONSENT FORM	82

## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL ORIENTATION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is cause for a great deal of concern that schools in South Africa generally do not perform up to expected management standards. The so-called collapse of the culture of teaching and learning is a perennial outcry. McLennan and Thurlow (2003:5), refer to the absence of a 'culture of teaching and learning' in South African schools: "The virtual collapse of the culture of teaching and learning in many urban and rural schools has eroded the confidence of education managers. They have little idea of what would be required to restore the culture." It is imperative that school managers that is, school principals, deputy principals and heads of departments should be well prepared and skilled for their enormous management tasks. Giving a prominent place to leadership for learning within the middle managers' training and development programmes would make a valuable contribution to the restoration of an appropriate culture of teaching and learning and to the development of schools as learning organisations (Thurlow, 2003:5). This situation calls for a management development approach that amongst others will ensure that there is development of middle managers at school level.

Effective management is a central element for successful education. A key aspect of successful management is understood as securing of quality educational activities in schools. In order to achieve success in education, effective management structures must be in place and the management roles of officials need to be clearly defined. Principals have to work effectively and manage efficiently to secure quality activities in schools. This is, however, not where quality management stops. A committed middle management (deputy-principals and heads of departments) is necessary to assist in the process to secure quality activities in schools. It involves the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring good planning and promoting better teaching in order to secure and sustain high quality standards, both in management and in the implementation of functional educational work. Efforts to secure quality management are thus not only the responsibility of the principal, but also of middle managers. There is a need for middle managers to carry out their roles efficiently (Blandford, 2004:20).

In order to introduce these issues in a systematical way the following will be discussed:

- Rationale for the study
- Background and context, and
- Problem statement

## **1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

The new policy framework possesses a challenge for leadership and management in schools. Since 1994 the idea of what it means to be a school leader has changed. The National Department of Education has created new policies and new laws to redefine the roles of leading, managing and governing schools Department of Education, (DoE, 2003:Sec 4-30). The new system Department of Education has necessitated a new organisational structure for the implementation of these educational policies. Each level in the school's organisational hierarchy plays an important role in facilitating the achievement of its vision, mission and objectives. There has been devolution of education administration from the National Education Department to the Provincial Education Departments, and the enactment of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 South African Schools Act (SASA), the introduction of Curriculum 2005 as well as the Culture of Learning, Teaching and Services (COLTS) campaign (Department of Education, 1998:11).

A landmark change relates to the change in educational management at school level from the past individualistic, autocratic and top down practices to a school-based, participatory and consultative management system (Department of Education, 1996:28). The changes aforementioned have major implications for the way middle managers at schools operate and can succeed if they are part of and are allowed to build on a firm foundation of skilled leadership and management. The present middle managers are not always trained or equipped with apposite management skills and knowledge to manage in a democratic and participative manner. One of the reasons for this situation could be that middle managers are not trained sufficiently to enable them to cope with their managerial duties. In fact, the pattern for promotion to management positions in the past and to a large extent currently; was always a steady progression through the ranks (Van der Westhuizen, 1995:3; Legotlo, 1994:3; McMahon & Bolam, 1990:5). It seems as if School Management Teams are also not adequately prepared and may not even be equipped to change from long internalised management practices to the new management systems of democratic participation. This

means that middle managers could be going through the motions of their tasks only with little or no improvement or development in their management performance. This could lead to gross dissatisfaction on the job, evident in conflicts over involvement in decision-making where educators assert they have a right to participate in decision-making on management issues that affect them (cf. Reeves, 1994). A further implication could be that most educators at schools, including middle managers operate with limited guidance and support, and that the majority of schools have staff development programmes in place. Finally, it is possible that the quality of education in public schools started deteriorating because middle managers do not understand their roles properly.

### **1.3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The South African democratic government was ushered in with numerous changes and challenges in 1994 (Wessie, 2004:1). The imperatives of the new democratic order had to be embraced by all citizens. Without doubt the education sector, perhaps even more than any other sector, was hard hit with continuous pressure to advance the democratization process in the country. Various attempts were made to broaden the basis of decision making in schools and to change the culture of management of the school itself (De Bruyn, 2007:18). Tranter (2006:97) states that in the past, teachers were led by a head-teacher but as the job became more complicated jobs of heads of subjects and deputy head teachers that can be called middle managers were developed. The introduction of promotion posts such as deputy heads and phase co-ordinators are comparatively recent and underline the complexity of leadership and management roles. In the later part of the 1990's, policy-makers began to realise that a new breed of leader was required at middle management level in schools in order to cope with the increasing burden of responsibilities. School Management Teams (SMTs) and School Governing Bodies (SGBs) were introduced and the principal is supposed to share the work with these bodies (SASA, 1996:11). In South Africa middle managers are deputy principals, heads of departments and senior teachers.

Earley (2007:149) states that management at senior or middle management level is about getting things done by working with and through other people and it is likely to consist of a combination of activities such as planning, organising, resourcing, controlling, evaluating and leading. Bennett (1999:18) said: "Leaders need assistants who can transmit the vision on through the organisation, articulate it in practical terms, and work with their colleagues to turn it into reality". This is a key role for that group commonly referred to as "middle

managers". So while leaders will make decisions and decide on policies they will have much less influence on how things actually work in practice. The responsibility of the SMT in particular is to control and manage the school, which is predominantly composed of middle managers (Makaudi, 2008:2). Rutherford (2000:7) said in this regard that activities that define middle managers include managing the work of a team or colleagues. This means that heads of department control the teacher's profiles, lesson plans and the learner's written work at the end of each term.

There is also a significant body of research done in South Africa supporting the view that effective leadership and management are essential to develop good schools, (Christie, 2001:30; Department of Education, 1996; Roberts & Roach, 2006:148). It is crucial that staff in schools learn to work together, and that leadership is distributed throughout the school (Lingard, Hayes & Christie, 2003:47). According to Southworth (2002:74), it is also imperative that schools provide relevant and meaningful professional development at the middle management level. The main aim of developing middle managers is to define expertise in a key role such as a subject leader and to help teachers at different points in the profession to plan and monitor their development, training and performance effectively and to set clear and relevant targets for improving their effectiveness.

From an international perspective it was also found that the majority of professions were organised in a hierarchy of seniority, with an associated ladder of promotion (Tranter, 2006:97). Bureaucratisation and professionalization of the leading professions led to the notion of a career as a systematic preparation and training followed by regular progress to a senior position in an established and respected occupation, particularly at the middle level.

A great deal of work in managing the teaching and learning process is being done at middle management level in schools. The literature on school leadership often overlooks the critical role that middle managers play in leading teams of teachers to ensure that curricula are developed, delivered and assessed, programmes are evaluated and teachers are appraised (Fitzgerald, 2004:1). More importantly, management development often occurs at the senior management level, and middle managers remain the forgotten tier in schools (Fitzgerald, 2004:1). Wilkinson (2002:17) stated that middle leaders are central to the improvement of educational standards. They carry out a wide range of responsibilities critical to the effective operation of schools. As middle leader himself, Planter (2002:18) stresses that, "Middle Managers are important people. It is clear that you need a head who is a leader with clear

vision, but ultimately it's the people in the middle who implement the vision." According to Fitzgerald (2004:3), middle managers are responsible for curriculum planning and resource provision. Blandford (2004:20) asserts that managing structures and processes are the responsibility of the middle managers. Fitzgerald (2004:3) continues to say that the activities of middle managers are the evaluation of teachers work and learning progress. A middle manager is simultaneously a leader, a manager and administrator (Bush, 2007:17) who works with and through other people to achieve key tasks and activities (Everard, 2004:163).

#### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Blandford (2004:147) points out that it is clearly evident that middle managers' roles have become increasingly more complex, varied and demanding and accountability has also increased and this has resulted in issues relating to the role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload and role underload, being under-utilised in the roles of middle managers. He (Blandford, 2004:147) continues to state that middle managers fulfil the dual role of both teaching and managing. The roles of middle managers are, however, not always clearly defined and described (Adey, 2000:77). This has resulted in middle managers being unsure of exactly what their roles are. Fleming (2000:9) supports Blandford by saying that middle managers are also constantly faced with "role ambiguity and role conflict". According to Adey (2000:77), research findings indicate that middle managers are not receiving the relevant support and training they require to fulfil their roles. Recent research indicates that while there has been some improvement, there continues to be a lack of adequate and effective training for middle managers prior to them taking up their roles, including those aspiring to these positions (Brown, Boyle & Boyle, 2000:23). Brown, Boyle and Boyle (2000:23) also state that there is a need for middle managers to develop skills in monitoring and evaluation as well as clear guidelines about their roles as well as training in conducting staff appraisal and professional development for other staff.

According to Fitzgerald (2004:2), the role of middle managers in schools is not widely understood. As a consequence, the literature relating to the functions and roles of middle managers is insufficient. Fitzgerald further states that what is apparent is the dual role that middle managers play. They have both an administrative role within the school as well as a teaching responsibility. Fitzgerald (2004:3) further indicates that the roles of middle managers have become increasingly more complex, varied and demanding. Not only has the role become multifaceted, but the responsibility and accountability have also increased

(Turner, 2004:3). Fitzgerald (2004:2) states that one of the more critical challenges that middle managers face is teaching and managing a team.

Based on the above-mentioned exposition the main research problem is to investigate the roles of middle managers in schools as they pertain to the Itsoseng Circuit.

The research questions can be formulated as follows:

- What is the functioning and importance of middle managers in school leadership?
- What are the challenges experienced by middle managers in primary schools?
- What are the roles of middle managers in schools?

## **1.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The general aim of this research is to determine the role of middle managers in schools in Itsoseng Circuit. In order to adhere to the general aim of this research study, the following specific objectives are formulated:

- To determine the functioning and importance of middle managers in leadership.
- To determine the challenges experienced by middle managers in schools.
- To determine the roles of middle managers in schools.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings and recommendations could provide information to the Department of Education and insight into challenges that middle managers are facing concerning their roles. Different ways of upholding middle managers roles will be suggested from the research findings and literature review. The findings should also benefit the schools' heads of departments, deputy-principals and senior teachers in the Itsoseng Circuit. They will understand the legislative roles and their responsibilities better and how to deal with the challenges they face. It is on the basis of these expectations that the study is significant and justified.

## **1.7 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

### **1.7.1 Research Design and methodology**

Research design according to Nieuwenhuis (2010:70), is a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumption to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analyses to be done. It involves identifying the participants' beliefs and values that underlie the phenomena and understanding.

Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith (2007:36) state that research methodology refers to the coherent group of methods that complement one another. Johnson and Christensen (2004:29) support the statement above by defining research methodology as a systematic and purposeful framework for conducting research through scientific methods in order to yield data of a particular research question and expand knowledge in a particular field of study. This study was an undertaking from a complete qualitative research underpinning an understanding which according to Creswell, Ivankova and Plano Clark (2010:259), states that the researcher develops a complex, holistic picture, analyses of words, reports detailed views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting. The researcher preferred this method because it enabled her and the participants to discuss and describe the roles of middle managers in depth, with openness and in detail. The researcher employed a qualitative research design because she wanted to focus on person's lives, behaviour as well as organisational functioning.

### **1.7.2 Data Collection Techniques**

Bernard (2002:157) describes data collection as the steps that involve setting boundaries for the study, collecting information through observation, interviews, documents and visual materials and the protocol for recording the information. For the purpose of this study these data collection methods were used. The major tools of data collection will be observation, interviews and analysis of documents. The observation method will be used to gather information on how middle managers perform their roles in schools. The researcher visited the selected school to observe how middle managers perform their roles. On observation, in this study, the researcher focused on a participant as an observer. In this situation the researcher will not intervene in the dynamics of the situation and even try to alter it. Face-to-face interviews will also be used to meet middle managers and ask them the research

questions in order to gather the relevant information. The researcher will also scrutinize the documents that middle manager's use in schools and different departments to record their work. The researcher chose the interview method because it is a two way process whereby she will be able to have an individual discussion with the interviewers. The researcher used structured open-ended interviews to collect data because such interviews offer a versatile way of collecting data and allow the interviewer to probe with a view to ask for elaboration in cases of incomplete responses. Since documents enrich what a researcher sees and hears by supporting, expanding and challenging perceptions, in this study the following documents were analysed: the school policies, minute book, circulars, ELRC Document, Departmental policies, in-school monitoring and moderation tools.

### **1.7.3 Population and sampling**

Babbie (2001:173) defines the study population as an aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected. The population for this study is deputy principals and heads of department of all the primary schools in the Itsoseng Circuit. "There are 25 primary schools in Itsoseng Circuit which are all involved in this study."

The central focus is on the roles of middle managers in schools amongst deputy principals and heads of department of the 25 schools in Itsoseng Circuit. Qualitative research is generally based on non-probability and purposive sampling: this research focused on purposive sampling. The common characteristic that is used for purposive selection of participants is middle managers who have at least five years' experience in School Management Teams. This was verified prior to meeting them as participants. The intention of the purposive selection was to have participants who have rich insight information pertaining to the roles of middle managers.

### **1.7.4 Data analysis**

Data analysis (Niewenhuis, 2010:99) is an ongoing and interactive process, implying that data collection, process, analysis and reporting are intertwined and not merely a number of successive steps. The researcher used content analysis to analyse data and achieved the aims of this research. The researcher listened to the audio-tapes, read transcripts and studied fields notes in order to familiarise herself with the data. The researcher conducted open coding by marking or highlighting and coding sentences and phrases in the transcripts according to

analytical and theoretical ideas developed during the literature study (Willig, 2008:35). Focused coding was applied to develop a set of analytical categories to be used for grouping of topics that relate to each other to arrive at major themes (Creswell, 2003:192). The various major categories or key themes were used to develop an overall description of the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:468; Henning, 2004:104-109).

## **1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The findings of the study may be distorted because of the perceived special attention given to roles of middle managers in schools as an issue in selected schools. This will be influenced by time constraints, which in turn may influence the feedback from the respondents. The researcher focused only on five primary schools in Itsoseng Circuit thus the findings of the study can and may change if a larger number of schools are included in a similar investigation.

## **1.9 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Merriam in Maree, (2010:38) describes reliability as “results which are consistent with the data collected”. In qualitative research, the issue of quality can be addressed by dealing with issues of validity, practicality and effectiveness. It required the use of various strategies to enhance validity including obtaining the services of an external coder to verify the quality of the results (Maree, 2010:38). The researcher has to facilitate quality assurance which is data verification.

In qualitative research, validity and reliability are referred to as trustworthiness and can be obtained through attending to aspects such as the period of data collection, for example the researcher will collect data for three weeks, starting at two o'clock every day. The researcher will do the interviews in the selected school with participants face-to-face, where participants will be given time to express their opinions in answering the research questions, conducting research in natural settings, providing verbatim accounts of transcripts and recording interviews mechanically (Maree, 2010:80). Trustworthiness was achieved by ensuring the validity and the reliability of data through mechanical recorded data and participant reviews.

## **1.10 ETHICAL ISSUES**

Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2010:41-42) state that it is important to highlight the ethical considerations with regard to research. An essential ethical aspect is the issue of the confidentiality of the results and findings of the study and the protection of the participants' identities. This could also include obtaining permission to interview the participants. The prescribed research requested documents from the Lichtenburg Area Office of the North West Department of Education and Training were completed and submitted for approval to conduct research in purposefully selected schools. The requested documents were not in any way used as official instruction to persuade participants to be involved in the research.

It is also important for the researcher when conducting a research to note that she works with human beings and, therefore, needs to constitute behaviour that is acceptable in terms of protecting participants. The researcher had adhered to ethical measures during the research in order to ensure the safety and rights of participants. Participants completed the Informed Consent Forms, which declared that they participated willingly and have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without adverse consequences.

## **1.11 CHAPTER DIVISION**

This study is divided in the following chapters:

### **Chapter one**

This chapter covers an overview of the study. This includes the rationale for the study, background and context, problem statement, aim and objectives, methodology and design, significance, justification of the study and theoretical framework.

### **Chapter two**

This chapter covers the literature review related to the roles of middle managers in schools. The nature and significance of middle managers, the legislative roles and responsibilities of middle managers and challenges facing middle managers are also discussed.

### **Chapter three**

This chapter deals with the discussion of research design, methodology and recoding of raw data. It further explains the empirical study which comprises of sampling and selection.

#### Chapter four

In chapter four the research results are presented and analysed.

#### Chapter five

This chapter covers the conclusion of the study. Recommendations as well as summary of the study are provided.

### **1.12 SUMMARY**

Middle managers are faced with role conflict, curriculum challenges and leading and managing their departments. This chapter introduced the research study. The most important aspects discussed also include, statement of the research problem, research design, ethical issues, significance and justification of the study, limitations and division of the chapters.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter a review of the literature on the roles of middle managers in schools, is undertaken. One of the ideas with a literature review is to learn from other scholars on how they have theorised and conceptualised issues, what they found empirically, what instrumentation they used and to what effect (Mouton, 2005:87). Henning (2004:27) is of the opinion that a literature review is first and foremost used in the contextualisation of a study and to argue a case. It thus seems as if the first function or idea with a literature review is to look at what other scholars have done in areas that are similar but not necessarily identical to the study that is being undertaken. In this particular study the literature that was studied will be focused on the roles of middle managers in schools.

The researcher consulted a wide range of literature related to the topic and the research questions with the intention of obtaining relevant information. Primary and secondary sources such as books, research articles, newspaper articles and documents were also used as references.

In the rest of this chapter a definition of concepts is followed by a discussion of the

- Theoretical framework.
- The functioning and significance of middle managers in schools.
- The roles performed by middle managers in schools.
- Challenges faced by middle managers in schools.

#### **2.2 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

To ensure that this research is being conducted in accordance with the research purpose the following concepts will be defined:

- Middle managers
- Development
- Training

- Management
- Roles

The concepts are obviously defined with special reference to the topic.

### **2.2.1 Middle managers**

According to Fleming (2000:2), middle managers in schools are seen as those individuals who have additional responsibilities to those of the classroom teacher. Fleming says that middle managers in schools constitute the layer of management between the senior management team and those at the chalk face. Clarke (2007:12) confirms that middle managers are people who have the day-to-day responsibilities for managing departments or sections in the school, or for co-ordinating some form of activity or initiative or leading some form of staff team. Middle managers are at the middle of the hierarchy in the traditional bureaucratic structures (Blandford, 2006:73). In South Africa middle managers are heads of departments and deputy principals who are responsible for learning areas (subjects), moderation of teachers' work and controlling learners' books and their performance. They (middle managers) also undertake roles involving whole school co-ordination such as pastoral work. They play vital roles in planning for moving a school towards its goals, ensuring the smooth day-to-day operation of schools and monitoring the progress of other staff members.

### **2.2.2 Development**

Noe (2008:315) sees development as formal education, job experience, relationships and assessment of personal abilities that employees perform effectively in their current positions. According to Nowlan (2000:10) and Moroane (2000:25), development enables middle managers to give a clear sense of direction and purpose in order to achieve the school's vision and mission and inspire staff and learners alike. Development helps middle managers to anticipate problems, make judgements and decisions in order to adapt to changes and new ideas. It helps middle managers to solve problems, negotiate, delegate and consult and co-ordinate the efforts of others. Development enables middle managers to pursue policies that are to be implemented, monitored and reviewed efficiently and effectively in practice. Well-developed middle managers will understand the current educational and management issues

and identify their relevance to the school and are able to communicate effectively with staff at all levels as well as learners, parents, governing bodies and the school's wider community.

### **2.2.3 Training**

Noe (2008:4) refers to training as a planned effort by a company to facilitate "learning of job-related competencies". These competencies include knowledge, skills or behaviours that are critical for successful performance. Training is essential to ensure successful management of the school in order to have quality education. According to Beckman (2006:520), training could be seen as the assistance, or introductory or continuing training, provided to middle managers who intend to assist management teams. The broad aim of training should be to empower middle managers to perform their duties better so that quality education can be provided more effectively in schools. It is important for all key role players such as middle managers to be trained, in order to evoke an image of positive commitment and meaningful participation in the delivery of education. According to Wessie (2004:12), unmotivated managers will improve their own performance and will also be able to monitor the educator's success if they are trained. Training motivates middle managers to evaluate themselves positively in doing and completing their management and leadership tasks. They are also confident in what actions to take during crises since they have been provided with the skills and have practical knowledge of change management and leadership.

### **2.2.4 Management**

Management is defined by Wessie (2004:21) as a process that gives the necessary direction to an enterprise's resources so that its objectives can be achieved as effectively as possible in the environment. Cuban cited by Bush (2007:3) states that good management often exhibits leadership skills. Leovy (2003:23) defines management as planning, organising, leading and controlling of subordinates working activities, leading and influencing people to attain specific goals, achieving goals and through resources. Earley and Weindling (2004:5) discuss the terms "management" and "manager" in terms of a more structured role or approach of working within the confines of the rules, regulations, and boundaries provided in a school's situation. Seen in this way management is about getting systems to operate effectively in schools.

### **2.2.5 Roles**

From the Free Encyclopaedia, a role or a social role is a set of connected behaviours, rights and obligations as conceptualised by actors in a social situation. Wise and Bennett (2003:4) define a role as what an individual, or the 'role holder' understands about his/her jobs. Roles are determined by official job descriptions. The main role of middle managers is to see that learners are being taught and perform outstandingly in their learning areas or subjects. Blandford (2006:16) states that a role is a set of activities or tasks expected from an incumbent in a particular position or office and within a specific level in an organisational structure. Middle managers as such form the part of an organisational network that exists within a school's organisational structure. From this it can be deduced that a school has a specific hierarchy of positions on different levels, which in turn indicates management activities on various levels.

## **2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical design of this study is based on leadership and management in schools. Various authors like Matoti (2007:143), Sighn (2005:12), Manser (2005:25) and Mestry and Grobler (2004:30) have written extensively about leadership and management in educational institutions. Bush is one of the most prominent writers in the field of Educational Management and Leadership. He (Bush, 1986) published one of his first books and more recently wrote an article in which developments in his thinking are illustrated. In this article he discussed a wide range of theories or models (Bush, 2007:394-404). What is relevant in his exposition for the purpose of this study is that he is basically working within two extremes, namely a top-down approach on one hand and a bottom-up approach on the other hand. Dambe and Moorad (2008:576) also use this kind of approach. They distinguish in broad terms between power based and empowerment based perspectives. The power based perspective or paradigm is where "leaders are basically commanders who control everything that goes on in the organisation". The empowerment perspective is based on the participative decision-making tradition where it is believed that "power is an infinite commodity which means that involving other people in the decision-making process does not exhaust the power source, in fact, the leader gains more power by giving it away" (Dambe & Moorad, 2008:576).

In applying the information about the two perspectives more directly to this investigation it should be noted that the features of the models or theories are in practice closely linked to different leadership styles. From within the power based perspective, leadership is ascribed to the person at the apex of the hierarchy. The official leader is thought to have the major role in goal-setting, decision-making and policy formation. It is assumed that this individual sets the tone of the organisation and establishes the major official objectives (Bush, 2007:145).

In South Africa before 1994 the main purpose of the education system, which was characterised by hierarchical and authoritarian relations, was to restrict wider participation and to ensure political control by the top echelons of the Education Departments (African National Congress Education Department, 1994:20). The authoritarian nature, rigid bureaucracy and rule bound hierarchy of the various departments were often replicated at school level where most of the local power was vested in the school principals. The leadership style of school principals was rigid and domineering with close and constant control over teachers and school activities (Coleman, 2003:465). This situation militated against teachers such as middle managers in South African schools fulfilling their potential as leaders. During the Apartheid era most South African teachers with the inclusion of middle managers were in this way effectively prevented from fulfilling meaningful roles as leaders at school level.

The empowerment based perspective leadership is practiced from within a participative framework. A leader is expected to be able to adapt to strategies which acknowledge issues that may emerge from different parts of the organisation and be resolved in a complex interactive process (Bush, 2007:64). From a theoretical point of view the empowerment practices are seen as “an emergent property of a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise” (Gronn, 2000:324). It requires the “re-distribution of power” (Gronn, 2000:324) and “the capacity to relinquish, so that the talent, creative powers of teachers can be released”. For Spillane (2006:26) the distributed leadership perspective foregrounds leadership practice which is “constructed in the interaction between leaders, followers and their situations”. Shared decision-making within this distributed practice requires a school context and culture which is supportive, collaborative and collegial and which opens up a safe space for life-long learning and continuing professional development. This necessitates a range of leaders, whether senior teachers or middle managers who are

emotionally intelligent, purposeful, and courageous and are willing to take considered risks in the quest for school improvement. Coleman (2003:245) also emphasises that leadership can and should be shared throughout an organisation. Elaborating further, Coleman (2003:465) states that the allocation of tasks can simultaneously reflect management delegation, a division of responsibilities between individuals and sharing of mutual responsibility that creates the distribution of leadership. This distribution of leadership incorporates the view that different kinds of leadership expertise are dispersed across the field. Middle management is such a position that illustrates that leadership practice is widely disbursed over leaders, followers and situations (Coleman, 2003:245).

If the power-based model is applied to educational situations, principals are acknowledged as individuals who set the tone in schools and establish the major objectives. They are expected to play key roles in policy-making and adoption of innovations (Bush, 2007:43). Principals are supposed to have their own values, interest and policy-objectives which they have to advance at meetings of committees and informal settings (Bush, 2007:87). When the empowerment based model, on the other hand, is applied to education, both the official position of principals as well as the bureaucratic and authoritative execution of their leadership functions, present practical problems. The principal is now seen as a key participant in the process of motivation, communication, bargaining and negotiation and not anymore as the one and only head. What is more important for this study is that the importance of other leaders and managers such as heads of departments, deputy principals and subjects heads are being recognised officially when this perspective is applied. These middle managers are seen as staff that have crucial roles to play in schools and who have been appointed in key posts such as that of heads of departments and deputy principals to demonstrate the critical importance of these positions.

#### **2.4 THE FUNCTIONING AND IMPORTANCE OF MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

In South Africa like in most countries, schools exist for a particular purpose, that is, to teach learners. Educational management and leadership within a school context centres on creating a culture of life-long learning and teaching through effective value-driven education, (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003:147). This could be achieved through the experts' guidance and leadership of the members of the SMT including middle managers within the areas of human,

financial and physical resources. To be able to manage these areas successfully specific tasks such as planning, leading and evaluating have to be performed.

Management and leadership in schools are obviously not confined to principals, but should be devolved to other members of the staff such as deputy principals, heads of department and senior teachers (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003:89). The School Management Team (SMT) consisting of the principal, the deputy principal, heads of departments and senior teachers have important leadership and management functions to perform either as members of the SMT or as individuals performing specific leadership tasks. The heads of departments, for example, are members of the SMT, but they are also expected to provide expert professional guidance in a particular learning area. As educators, middle managers are expected to perform the seven roles that are stipulated in Norms and Standard for Educators, (DoE, 2000:44). It is important to emphasise that management and leadership of a learning area is a critical role of the middle manager. Day (2000:113) states that the school principal, however, should steer the ship in the right direction by directing school activities as well as motivating and inspiring the middle managers. A middle manager is then the person, who rewards performance, solicits people's views, motivates colleagues, empowers people and values creativity. Middle managers have to consult with members of the staff, instead of imposing their viewpoints and should also be visionaries (Day, 2000:114). It is important that middle managers leadership practise be unleashed and engaged in the interest of the school as organisation. It is the responsibility of middle managers to facilitate this process by creating the requisite organisational conditions and climate and by providing the required support in order to unleash "the kinetic and potential energy of leadership" (Day, 2000:115).

It is vital for middle managers to be able to lead and manage their departments. These functions can only be performed efficiently and effectively if middle managers are trained and developed properly. They will only understand their positions clearly when given the relevant ongoing professional development they need to support them in this role. What is required is a professional development framework that includes a major re-definition of the role, expectations and performance of middle managers (Harris, Busher & Wise, 2001:43). Only when middle managers are well developed will they be able to manage and develop staff members in their departments.

It is further important that a middle manager must be operating from within a structure in which to delegate functional and operational decisions to locations closest to task

performance. The structures include a variety of committees, for example, subject and class committees. Schools are usually organised in a flat pyramid structure with very few layers between the principal, committees, departments, staff and community (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003:89). While all these structures are functional, the middle managers make final decisions on a number of issues, for example, discipline, stationery, textbooks and learning aids material purchases, and distribution of material in classes. Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:65) postulated that efficient middle managers provide opportunities to motivate educators towards improving learning outcomes and learning excellence, to have clarity of focus in one's role, responsibilities and accountability and to challenge the process. Middle managers also inspire shared vision, enable others to act, model the way and encourage the heart, reinvent relationships and establish leadership around the school's purpose.

As a manager and leader a middle manager is responsible for training, activating and motivating all the people who work with him/her so that the objectives of the school should be achieved (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003:65). The example s/he sets will to an important degree determine what value system will exist within the school. For school to be true learning organisations middle managers should be engaged in challenging and interesting academic work and educators should also be collaboratively involved in learning about the most effective distribution of work and technologies (Coleman, 2003:245). In this world of knowledge-based schools, middle managers perform their functions by enhancing the quality of thinking of those within the organisation rather than by issuing edicts or directives. In order to do that they will have to create learning opportunities which enable the departmental committees and staff to become leaders capable of anticipating and leading productive change (Coleman, 2003:249).

Middle management is also closely linked to the idea of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is not meant to displace the crucial role of the middle manager. Middle managers are closely associated with innovation and change through their capacity to motivate people to do more than what is normally expected of them and to transcend their expected performance. They take an organisation through major change. Middle managers are closely involved in making important changes in a school's mission, structure and human resource management through distributing leadership. Through distributive leadership they are enabled and empowered to achieve extraordinary things to their own and to the school's benefit. According to Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley and Beresford (2006:83), middle

managers need to be involved in decision-making and policy formation. Successive research studies have shown that successful implementation of distributed leadership implies and emphasises the importance of middle management positions in schools.

## **2.5 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SCHOOLS**

Many education systems are implementing radical reforms in order to adapt to a changing world (Fleisch, 2002:120). A current international trend in education reform is the devolution of decision-making powers from central level to school level. This reform initiative system rests on the assumption that participation of middle managers can enhance the implementation of the desired transformation (Lumby, 2003:104).

Increased middle managers' participation also includes the possibility of engendering increased enthusiasm, interest, commitment and effectiveness of middle managers. Significant changes in schools can only be attained through shared decision-making that allows middle managers to address educational problems directly. Processes of shared decision-making and suitable structures are related to a move towards institutional anatomy, the so-called school-based management of schools (Department of Education, 1996:29). It includes the devolution of authority and responsibility to middle managers (Mosoge & Van der Westhuizen, 1998:83). All this implies that middle managers have to execute their functions in an ever changing environment. It is not only their official roles that are becoming more complex but expectations and demands are also increasing constantly.

According to (Gunter, 2001:108), the complexity of the middle management position goes beyond that of just performing a role or following a job description to understanding of the location and exercise of power and authority. Middle managers are in a unique position. On the one hand they are being kept accountable and have to work in accordance with a clear job description and on the other hand they have to accept responsibility for performance management of other educators (Barber, 1993:25). It is through performance management and staff appraisal that they have to link school development and individual staff development. Gunter (2001:108) points out those middle managers have to focus on both the implementation of structures and systems and on teacher development. At the same time it is one of their main challenges to be concerned with child welfare and as Gunter (2001:108) calls it, *the pedagogy of the school*.

Another challenge that middle managers face concerns their key roles of managers as “leadership of a subjects” and as “managers of people” (Fitzgerald, 2004:72). According to Day *et al.* (2006:83), middle managers need to be involved in decision-making and policy formation but they also have to display a clear subject area leadership focus (Professional Standards, 1999:23). Middle managers form part of an organisational network that exists in an educational organisational structure and must be able to function effectively and efficiently at these different levels. Reitzug (2002:3) notes that networks are a crew of personnel, from across different schools that interact regularly to discuss and share practices around a particular focus. For example, Reitzug (2002:3) found that networks were effective in assisting middle managers to get educators more actively involved in teaching, while Lieberman and Grolnick (1996:8) state that networks have a number of positive effects on middle managers professional development.

According to Jackson and Straude (2001:15), one of the main concerns that middle managers face is that it is not realised that one of the key issues in the success of a school lies in the development of middle managers competencies, such as knowledge, skills and behaviour. These attributes contribute to a large extent to their personal effectiveness. Reitzug (2002:5) is of the opinion that these competencies should include communication, planning and administration, teamwork, strategic actions, global awareness and self-management. Then only one can say that due attention has been given to professional development of middle managers. Recent research indicates that while there has been some improvement, there continues to be a lack of adequate and effective training for middle managers prior to them taking up their roles, including those aspiring to those positions (Adey, 2000:25; Brown, Boyle & Boyle, 2000:50). Furthermore, the fact has been identified that the number of positions in middle management is increasing in number as well as complexity, yet middle managers are still being appointed to these positions in many education systems without the relevant support and training.

In South Africa, the complexity of the roles of middle managers has increased at an alarming rate in the last decade. This is mainly due to systems changes such as the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) and Whole School Evaluation (WSE), Development Appraisal (DA), Performance Measure (PM), all of which fall within one Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), which has been introduced. In fact these changes were necessitated by the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of

1996) which provided the basis for curriculum transformation and development in South Africa (Department of Education, 2003:1). This is compounded by the fact that the Schools Act (RSA, 1996) in particular introduced School Based Management with all its complications and implications for its members in school.

## **2.6 THE ROLES OF MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SCHOOLS**

As extension of the definition of *management* and *roles* in Chapter One paragraphs 2.2.4 and 2.2.5 it can be stated that before attempting to make a distinction the different roles of middle managers in schools it must be pointed out that a precise job definition or description will always be full of difficulties and dilemmas. The roles of middle managers in schools are diverse and challenging and difficult to comprehend in terms of exact definitions. They operate in an area where innovation and change and the capacity to motivate people can be seen as basic requirements. They have to take organisations through major changes and make important changes in the organisation's mission, structure and human resource management. By applying distributive leadership they have to enable and empower teachers to achieve extraordinary things on behalf of the school. A middle manager should also have an understanding of his or her role as detailed in the job description (Blandford, 2006:15). In this regard the job description is a mechanism for on-going dialogue about accounting and it "acts as a keystone for all aspects of performance management" (Chetty, 2007:15).

It is general knowledge that some middle managers themselves regard their role expectations as unclear and uncertain (Fleming, 2000:430). Middle managers are teaching; take care of departmental budget and teaching resources. They also appraise and develop educators, hold meetings, advices and guide educators and learners. They are responsible for curriculum, school-wide decision-making and they are actively involved in professional associations. They are responsible for learners discipline and welfare activities within their departments and extra-curricular activities. They are also to take care of administration, which is record keeping and assessment of learners. However, middle managers may also perform other tasks, as well as contend with the changing nature of their roles. Adey's (2000:258) study also revealed that middle managers require clearer guidelines about their role as well. Middle managers are performing many roles, therefore, that is why they regard their role as unclear and uncertain. They work at the interface between teaching and managing. Traditionally the main role of middle managers was regarded as being responsible "to see that learners are being taught and perform outstandingly in their learning areas or subjects" (Blandford,

2004:16). They were required to engage in class teaching, to be responsible for the effective functioning of the department and to organise relevant extra-curricular activities so as to ensure that the subject, learning area or phase and the education of learners were promoted in a proper manner to produce quality results. More recently their roles have been regarded as predominantly undertaking administrative tasks “expressed as organising the subject teaching so that the right staff are in the right place with the right equipment to teach the prescribed scheme of work” (Glover, Gleeson, Gough & Johnson, 1998:281). In line with viewpoints in the foregoing discussion the roles of middle managers can be discussed as

- Roles related to teaching and learning and
- Administrative roles

### **2.6.1 Roles related to teaching and learning**

Managing staff in departments is a crucial role that middle managers perform. This is an important element of the teaching and learning process and can be seen as the driving force behind any school and the key to improve the quality of the learning process (Fitzgerald, 2004:72). Ofsted (1995:45) indicates that only by accepting and implementing the process of quality assurance as a key part of their duties and responsibilities can middle managers monitor and evaluate the work of staff in departments effectively. In general, however, it seems as if middle managers are still reluctant to monitor quality of teaching and learning systematically.

Middle managers have to ensure that the education of learners is promoted in a proper manner and in accordance with approved policies. Thus, the task of being a middle manager is demanding, requiring energy, drive and many personal qualities such as commitment, dedication, resilience and skills. If the school is a locus for improvement, middle managers have the key role in designing, developing, monitoring and evaluating these improvements. Middle managers should possess skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to manage their departments effectively and efficiently (Day, 2000:75). The following aspects can be highlighted as part of middle manager’s role in teaching and learning.

- **In-school monitoring**

Monitoring is seen as checks on teacher’s competence and the quality of learning and teaching. According to Bennett (2003:3), middle managers play a crucial role in developing

and maintaining the nature and quality of pupil's learning experience, but the ways in which they do this is strongly influenced by the circumstances in which they work. They show great resistance to the idea of monitoring the quality of their colleagues' work, especially in observing colleagues when teaching (Nxumalo, 2009:23). To have someone observing your work is sometimes seen as a challenge to professional norms of quality and privacy. It seems as if middle managers who have been successful in monitoring classroom activities introduced their monitoring as a collaborative learning activity for the entire department rather than as a control function (Bennett, 2003:3). Middle managers' authorities come from their competence as teachers and their subject knowledge rather than from their official positions. They sometimes doubt their own abilities and level of subject knowledge which makes it even more difficult for them to monitor colleagues' work (De Bruyn, 2009:23).

- **The implementation of new curricula**

The role of middle managers in implementing curricula is to work with teachers whilst simultaneously managing the curriculum. The process of leadership and management is linked to middle managers' roles of implementing the new curriculum. The curriculum cannot merely be dealt with within the four walls of the classroom.

One of a middle manager's roles in this dispensation is to manage the current changes that are taking place in the education system. McLennan (2003:104) affirms that the National Department of Education took the initiative to restructure South African education to be in line with the Constitution. This, she argues, will help to expedite curriculum transformation to accommodate all races. She (McLennan, 2003:120) purports that the challenges facing middle managers are to strike harmony between the vision for transformation and the day-to-day realities for change to take effect on the education system. According to Fleisch (2002:120), the biggest obstacle of this new curriculum and its implementation process was translating what was a highly abstract set of ideas into state policy and institutional practise. In this regard middle managers have a key role to play. McLennan (2003:120) goes on to highlight three main reservations and concerns expressed by individuals and organisations about the new curriculum. Firstly there is too little capacity, secondly there is too little money and lastly there is too much jargon. Capacity, according to Fleisch (2002:120), is essentially understood as a criticism of the lack of provincial training and the general poor training middle managers received. Poor training can be seen in the sense that the duration of time given was insufficient for middle managers to understand it. Davey (2006:81) further

enunciates that training was poor since planning of time frames which affected the success of the process was not properly done. This is critical for middle managers as they themselves have to oversee the further appropriate implementation of the curriculum. Thus it poses a double challenge for middle managers as they are not fully capacitated with the nitty-gritty of the curriculum and cannot, therefore, supervise and transfer new learning to their subordinates.

- **Induction**

Villani (2002:43) defines induction as a comprehensive, coherent and sustained professional development process. It is organised by schools and other organisations to train, support and retain staff. It guides teachers into a life-long learning programme. Dean (2002:261) indicates that induction should ensure that people new to positions in schools must always be given the necessary support and guidance. When induction programmes are embedded in school cultures, professional learning as part of a middle manager's daily work promotes continuous improvement in teaching and learning. When induction programmes are well designed, it is an indicator that middle managers have a deep commitment to quality teaching and the professional learning that feeds it (Dean, 2002:75). Effective induction ensures that anyone new to a role or new to the school feels supported and confident, ready to join an effective team, and willing to contribute to their own and school development (Blandford, 2006:261).

When middle managers conduct induction programmes in the school, they enable new teachers to carry out their duties in effective ways, while at the same time providing a proper base or foundation for their further development.

- **Mentoring**

According to Thrupp (2003:256), mentoring facilitates transfer of knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs and values between experienced and less experienced practitioners. Villani (2002:24) adds that through mentoring, emotional support and encouragement, cultural norms and cognitive coaching can be uncalculated.

The essence of the mentoring relationship in education is that the middle manager takes a direct and personal interest in the education and the development of the younger or less experienced teachers. The middle manager is entrusted with tutoring, educating and guiding

educators who are typically new or new to a given post. Those being mentored depend upon their mentors to help them, protect them, show them the way and develop their skills and insight more fully (Portner, 2005:193). Mentoring provides an obvious and needed opportunity for teacher leadership and is an opportunity for middle managers to see their profession from a different perspective. During this process, middle managers and the school experiences growth. Middle managers gain more than they give in terms of their own practice and deep-felt satisfaction is achieved (Dean, 2002:193).

- **Coaching**

Robertson (2007:4) defines coaching as a special, sometimes reciprocal, relationship between (at least) two people who work together to set professional goals and achieve them. The term depicts a learning relationship, where participants are open to new learning. Coaching is used as a method for improving instruction and teaching strategies, experimenting with new approaches and techniques, problem solving, and building collegial relationship.

Middle managers and teachers engage together as professionals equally committed to facilitating each other's developmental and well-being (both cognitive and affective), and gain a greater understanding of professionalism and the work of professionals. By conducting coaching middle managers help new appointees to a better understanding of work issues and improvement of their capabilities. Middle managers have primary ownership of the coaching process and are directly involved in extrinsic feedback. Robertson (2007:5) also alludes that the term depicts a learning relationship, where middle managers are open to new learning strategies. Megginson (2005:4) explains that coaching relates to the performance improvement in a specific skill area of middle managers. Apart from helping others to understand their work issues better, middle managers' own capabilities are also improved in the process.

### **2.6.2 Administrative roles**

Apart from their responsibilities with regard to teaching and learning middle managers have the responsibility to ensure effective administration throughout the school. They have to set up systems, policies, procedures and time-tables to enhance efficiency (Clarke, 2007:3). Middle managers manage aspects of physical facilities, finances and human resources to ensure that a conducive environment is created for quality teaching and learning.

In South Africa the roles of middle managers in public schools is officially outlined in the Educators Employment Act, 76 of 1996 and confirmed by the Department of Education (DoE, 2003:Sec 1-7) as well as the North West Department of Education (NWDE, 2007:19-21). In the so called “core duties and responsibilities” reference is also made of non-teaching administrative duties as well as coordination, planning and control (NWDE, 2007:19). The DoE (2003:2-16) refers to the task of acting as representatives of the school by dealing with different stakeholders like parents, educators, non-teaching staff and learners at the level of the school and community. In addition Blandford (1997:17) reminds us that middle managers have an indirect influence on policies regarding quality management and other important school matters. The following specific administrative roles can be mentioned:

- **Conducting meetings**

The main purpose of meetings is for staff to come together, to have discussions and to take decisions. During meetings participants have to demonstrate appreciation and understanding for others and be able to contribute towards the promotion of co-operation and team spirit. According to Nxumalo (2009:27), meetings also serve as in-service training. Fleming and Amesburg (2001:89) are of the opinion that meetings are essential to the effective operation of any school or team but that far too many meetings are unproductive or even dysfunctional.

According to Krige (2007:27), one of the main values of meetings is situated in activities involved in the preparation and the actual implementation thereof. In preparing for meetings middle managers, have to draw up an agenda in consultation with the principal (Krige, 2007:27). Middle managers should plan meetings well and make them worthwhile. In order to achieve the goals and objectives of the school, middle managers should organise the following types of meetings:

*Learning Area meetings.*

The purpose of this kind of meeting is that educators teaching in the same learning area can learn from each other and so that middle managers can provide mutual support (Menoe, 2007:28).

*Phase meetings.*

These meetings are held once a month in order to discuss problems that educators come across in their classes. They are also important because educators are able to discuss any problems they are faced with in their classes, such as discipline, absenteeism, learner performance and strategies that can be applied to solve the above problems (Menoe, 2007:28).

#### *Parents meetings.*

Nxumalo (2009:50) states that the execution of parents' meetings involves listening skills, leading of discussions, communicating ideas, empathy, conducting meetings with people from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds and assessing differing viewpoints. Parents' meetings benefit both middle managers and parents as they discuss the learner performance. Middle managers are able to meet parents face-to-face and discuss learners' written work, their general behaviour, assessment, tests and examinations.

- **Human-resource management**

The dramatic changes in South Africa's educational landscape since 1994 have produced major challenges for school leaders and managers, notably in respect of human resource management. Bush and Heystek's (2006:25) survey of middle managers shows that this aspect was perceived as a major training need. Thurlow (2003:15) shows that "school managers are expected to assume greater responsibility, under difficult circumstances, for the management of all those who work in the schools". In a school situation human resource management deals with empowering people by developing appropriate competencies, recognising competence and training and support techniques. Empowering people will need capacity building that will focus on three aspects of people development, viz, objective empowerment, subjective empowerment and competence (Department of Education, 1996:46).

Middle managers occupy a unique position in the field of human resource management. It is not limited to following a job description but entails an understanding of the location of the exercise of power (Dean, 2002:108) within the school. They operate in a structure within which functions such as planning, delegation, organisation and control can be accommodated easily (Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998). They provide professional leadership, guide, supervise and offer professional advice on the work and performance of all staff members. They also ensure that the work loads of teachers are equally distributed (Dean,

2002:4). They advise the principal regarding the division of work among the staff. Last but not least they should participate in the agreed educator appraisal process in order to review the professional practice regularly with the aim of improving teaching and learning and management.

From a human resource perspective middle managers should focus on the learning opportunities provided in an organisational setting. They are co-responsible for the development of staff-training programmes, school-based development and school-focused community interventions. They have to ensure that all evaluation of forms conducted in the school are properly and efficiently managed. They also assist educators, particularly new and inexperienced ones in developing and achieving educational objectives in accordance with needs of the school.

- **Communication**

The Oxford English Dictionary (1998) defines communication as “the imparting, conveying, or exchange of ideas, knowledge, information (whether by speech, writing or signs)”. Middle managers should utilise every opportunity to inspire educators to strive towards the vision (Kann, 2000:15). A prerequisite for alignment around the organisation’s vision is that the vision should be communicated to followers. The communication should be done in such a way that educators are inspired by the vision and willingly align with the vision. Middle managers need to co-operate with members of the staff and the school in maintaining the efficient and smooth running of the school (Hoogervorst, Van der Flier & Koopman, 2004:299). They should liaise with the relevant structures regarding school curricula and curriculum development. In order for middle managers to run the school in a vision-driven way, the vision needs to be communicated in an inspirational way to all stakeholders so that it infuses all school activities (Kann, 2000:10). It is much easier and more credible to communicate a vision that has been developed collaboratively with all the stakeholders (Blandford, 2006:46). Middle managers need to meet parents and other stakeholders in vision development. They should also co-operate with colleagues in order to foster a positive administrative climate within the department and the school. Middle managers should also collaborate with educators of other schools in developing the department and conducting extra-curricular activities. They also need to participate in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute and update professional standards in the school.

Communication is a task that cannot be done in a haphazard and uncoordinated way if successful realisation of the vision is the objective. There are many possible ways of communicating but the most important is that the desired effect is attained, which is that alignment around the vision of the school is built up and the required focus on attaining the school vision is brought about around effective communication. If the vision of the school is communicated successfully, the middle managers will attain the alignment (Blandford, 2006:47). The priority areas can be facilitated and teams can be created for implementation purposes (Neuman & Neuman, 2006:253).

- **Delegation**

Delegation means giving middle managers responsibility to make decisions regarding all aspects of the school development. Delegation of responsibilities and strategies is for ensuring accountability and is clearly evident in the best managed and effective schools.

Murdock and Scutt (1997:38) mentioned that delegation can also be seen as an excellent way of skill development. Murdock and Scutt point out that those middle managers in successful organisations delegate tasks and responsibilities. The expansion of the principal's role in self-managed school (Cardno, 2004:299) has resulted in tasks being delegated to other senior managers and middle managers. Kemp and Nathan (1989:165) define management as achieving objectives through others. This implies that delegation is a skill that middle managers are supposed to have. Delegation is beneficial to both people, who are delegating and who are delegated. The principal delegates the work to the middle managers and middle managers may delegate it to their subordinates (Blandford, 2006:49). According to Xaba (1991:91), delegation develops middle managers skills for assigning responsibilities and assisting in achieving of objectives, communication and interpersonal relationship. Middle managers should also delegate school activities like: planning of tasks, time management, guiding, control and organising to educators. Delegation also enhances participatory and democratic management and builds team work.

## **2.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

The chapter has explained the functioning and importance of middle managers in school leadership. The chapter highlighted the challenges experienced by middle managers in schools. There are challenges that middle managers experience in curriculum management

and also in administration and management and they have been outlined. A number of middle managers roles are given. The roles related to teaching and learning, in-school monitoring, the implementation of new curricula and administrative roles are also given in this chapter. The next chapter will present the research design and methods to be used in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on a review of related literature on the nature and significance of middle management in schools, responsibilities of middle managers in schools and the challenges facing middle managers. This chapter will focus on the research design, research approach, and research methods employed in the study. The recording of data, ethical consideration, trustworthiness, observation, interviews and document analysis will also be highlighted. The research methodology will be outlined with reference to the research questions, problem and aim of the study. The chapter will end with a summary.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

According to Niewenhuis (2010:70), research design is a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumption to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used in the study, and the data analysis to be done. Selecting a research design for this study was based on getting the best possible data from respondents on the topic. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:30) contend that research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:78) state that research design is governed by the notion of fitness of purpose. This means that research design is determined by the purpose of the research. According to Mouton (2005:55), research design is tailored to address different kinds of questions. When one attempts to classify different kinds of studies, it is not surprising that it is done according to the kind of questions that have to be answered. In this study the world view of the participants was explored in their natural setting with the view of understanding the role of middle managers in schools.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:133) state that to answer research questions, the research cannot skim across the surface, the researcher must dig deep to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon she is studying. In qualitative research, researchers do indeed dig deep. They collect numerous forms of data and examine them from various angles to construct a rich and

meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation. That is why research questions such as the following are asked:

- What are the functions and importance of middle managers in school leadership?
- What are challenges experienced by middle manager in schools?
- What are the roles of middle managers?

This study focuses on a qualitative research design to carry out the empirical investigation.

### **3.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Research is conducted by making use of a particular approach or paradigm. A research paradigm is an all-inclusive system of interconnected practice and philosophy that defines the nature of the investigation along the three elements of ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Terre Blanch, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006:6). The two broad main conceptual frameworks of research paradigms are qualitative and quantitative research paradigm (Punch, 2009:114). The researcher regarded the qualitative approach as important to this study as most of the descriptions and interpretations are portrayed in words rather than numbers (Punch, 2009:3). The focus of attention is on the perceptions and experience of deputy principals and heads of departments in performing their roles in schools. According to Niewenhuis (2010:78), qualitative research is naturalistic. Thus, the researcher did not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest. The research was carried out in real-life situations in the selected schools and not in an experimental situation.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:395) define qualitative research as an interactive inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their environment. Creswell (2002:37) states that a qualitative approach involves the collection of data in a natural setting that should be sensitive to the people and places under study, and a data analysis that is inductive as well as establishing patterns or themes. Deputy principals and heads of departments were interviewed and data collected were recorded.

This study was also descriptive; in so far as it involved collecting data to answer questions concerning the status of the subject of the study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:397), a descriptive research study is aimed at describing and explaining the patterns related to the phenomenon by scrutinizing the events, beliefs, attitude and policies that impact on the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher visited the selected schools and

scrutinised all the documents that middle managers used and also observed them when they performed their roles. Notes were taken in order to be analysed.

Since this study is concerned with the way deputy principals and heads of department perform their roles in the school, the qualitative research method was employed to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of deputy principals and heads of departments perception towards the challenges they are facing and what can be done to improve existing problems.

### **3.4 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

As mentioned in paragraph 1.7.3 the population can be defined as any group of individuals who have one or more characteristics in common that of interest to the researcher. De Vos *et al.* (2002:198) indicate that the selection of a population of a study refers to taking any portion of a general population as representative of that population. Therefore, everybody in the general population cannot be part of a study, but the views of the selected portion of a population can be generalised to the general population. Kruger and Tiwani (2010:70) contend that selection process is used to determine who and what the researcher is going to study. The first step in designing is to choose the population that will participate in the study.

The population for this study is deputy principals and heads of departments of all primary schools within the Itsoseng Circuit. There are twenty-five primary schools in the Itsoseng Circuit and only five schools will be involved in this study. Central focus is on the roles of middle managers in schools of the twenty-five schools in Itsoseng Circuit. The majority of deputy principals and heads of departments in this area live in areas such as Itsoseng and Lichtenburg.

### **3.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

According to Kruger and Tiwani (2010:70), a sample comprises of elements with most features, representative of the typical attributes of the population. Sampling is defined by Zikmund (2000:338) as a process of using a small number of items or parts of a large population to make conclusion about the whole population.

The reason for sampling in this study is feasibility, that is, time, money and effort can be concentrated to produce better quality research and get more in-depth information. According to Moles and Huberman (as cited in Punch, 2001:54), "all empirical research

involves sampling as one cannot study everyone, everywhere, doing everything". For qualitative research, sampling is generally based on non-probability and purposive sampling rather than on probability and random sampling approaches. There are twenty-five primary schools in the Itsoseng Circuit and only five schools will be involved in this study. The main aim was to interview only a few deputy principals and heads of departments who are closely involved in the issues of management. This was because there were deputy principals and heads of department who knew, in-depth, what their roles were and the implication of such roles for leadership and management of the school, and they were regarded as the ones who would be able to give rich information.

Since this research is of qualitative orientation, focus is on one sampling technique (purposive sampling). According to Niewenhuis (2010:79), purposive sampling means that the participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that makes them the holders of data needed for the study. Niewenhuis (2010:79) further states that purposive sampling decisions are not only restricted to the selection of the participants but also involves the settings, incidents, events and activities to be included for data collection. Purposeful sampling, as a dominant strategy in the qualitative approach, has been adopted for this particular study. The schools sampled are easily accessible and also the middle managers are experienced. The general characteristic that requires the participants to be purposefully selected in this study is that the selected deputy principals and heads of departments to the study have experienced challenges in their roles and related management. The participants who are deputy principals and heads of departments have at least five years' experience in which they had experienced management problems and are also members of the School Management Teams of their schools (see Appendix A).

In this study, the researcher purposefully selected five primary schools. One deputy principal and one head of department was selected from each of the selected schools. The selected deputy principals and heads of departments will be interviewed. Thus the total sample population is ten participants. Two from each school took part in the study. The defining characteristic for selecting the participating primary schools were schools that are in the Itsoseng area of work. These schools were selected for convenience purposes. The researcher is the deputy principal of one of the primary schools. The other schools are neighbouring schools that are easily accessible.

### **3.6 DATA COLLETION METHODS**

Data collection involves the different techniques the researcher uses to gather information in research writing. With qualitative approach, a variety of data collection methods may be employed such as interviews producing narrative data, document analysis, reflective journals and field notes, participant and non-participant observation (Creswell, 1998:12). These are approaches to obtaining data in qualitative study: Firstly the deputy principals and HODs were observed as they worked, secondly, information was requested verbally, and thirdly read or looked for traces of other evidence to verify whatever was investigated (Wilson & Fox, 2009:76). In this study the following data collection methods were used namely:

- Interviews
- Observation
- Document analysis

#### **3.6.1 Interviews**

Niewenhuis (2010:86) defines an interview as a two way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to collect data and to learn about the idea, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participants. The aim of qualitative interviews is to see the world through the eyes of participants. Briggs and Coleman (2007:208) share a similar definition and view an interview as a preferred tactic to explore people's views and report findings in their own words as reasonable as possible. Thomas (2009:162) states that interview questions can take the form of open and closed-ended questions. Open ended questions allow respondents to reply in whatever way they wish. Terre Blanch and Durrheim (2006:127) maintain that interviewing gives the researcher the opportunity to get to know the participants quite intimately as one will know how they think and feel. The purpose of interviews is to find out what is on someone else's mind. Participants were asked open-ended questions with the objective of not suggesting responses, but to access the perspective of the person being interviewed. Interviews are conducted to find out from people those things that cannot be directly observed like feelings, thoughts and intentions.

In collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews, the researcher also particularly recorded direct words of the interviews. The tape recorder was used to record all the interviews. The participants were informed that the tape recorder will be used during the

interviews and asked whether they are comfortable. All the participants welcomed the request and were requested to sign the informed consent form. Direct quotations are a basic source of raw data in qualitative inquiry, revealing respondents' depth of emotion, the way they have organised their words, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences and their basic perceptions. According to De Vos *et al.* (2002:292), qualitative interviews attempt to understand the world from the participant's point of view and to unfold the meaning.

In-depth individual interviews in this study involved asking open-ended questions, listening to and recording answers, and following up answers with additional relevant questions (Bless & Smith, 2000:1). The researcher used English for communication because the interviewing are professionals. In this kind of interviewing, the researcher limited her contribution to absolute research questions as a starting point to gain an in-depth understanding of participant's experience and opinions on the nature and significance of middle managers, the legislative roles and responsibilities of middle managers and the challenges facing them. From the central research questions, follow up questions were pursued and probing was used to gain insight in the study. When respondents deviated from the topic, the interviewer tactfully steered them back. The researcher used English for communication because the interviewing are professionals.

Five sets of in-depth individual interviews were conducted with the deputy principals and heads of departments from each of the five selected schools within the Itsoseng Circuit, that is, two sets of individual interviews per school (one for deputy principal and one for heads of departments). In all, ten individual in-depth interviews were conducted in this study. Each participant was interviewed between 20-25 minutes and the interview took place after school at the selected school.

### **3.6.2 Observations**

Niewenhuis (2010:83) states that observation is the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them. Observation as a data collection technique is different from interviews in the sense that the observation techniques rely on the researcher seeing, and hearing things and recording, rather than relying on the subject's responses to the questions and their statements. According to Cohen *et al.* (2007:396), observation offers a researcher

the opportunity to gather live data from naturally occurring situations. The researcher did not seek to manipulate the situations or subjects, did not pose questions to the subjects, nor deliberately create new provocations. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:40-41), the researcher does not collect data to answer specific hypothesis, rather the explanations are inductively derived from the fields notes.

According to De Vos *et al.* (2002:280), participant observation refers to a qualitative research procedure that studies the natural and everyday set-up in a particular community or situation. It further enables the researcher to obtain the participant's perception of events and processes expressed in the participant's actions as feelings, thought and beliefs. The researcher observed five deputy principals and five heads of departments for two weeks while they performed their roles. The issues that were observed included how middle managers performed their roles related to teaching and learning, how the educators taught in the classroom and control the learners' books during the teaching time, their administrative roles, which are the recording sheets of learners' tasks marks, the learners class registers and how they control in-school monitoring, what problems they encounter when implementing new curricula. There were newly appointed educators during the observations, the middle managers inducted, mentored and coached them. The researcher also observed the procedure of conducting meetings with educators and parents.

The type of observation used for this study is the observation as a participant model which Maree (2010:85) describes as the researcher getting into a situation but focusing mainly on his/her role as an observer in the situation. The researcher only observed five deputy principals and five heads of departments to understand the values, beliefs and experience in managing their roles. The researcher remained uninvolved and did not influence the dynamics of the setting. After observation, the researcher presented a thorough description of what actually transpired without criticizing judgements and reflecting on the process.

Both the researcher and the participants were aware of the fact that a field work relationship existed between them. To allow the flow of activities in a natural setting, the researcher tried to gain the trust of the participants. Throughout the observation period in this study, the researcher remained on site for a direct, eyewitness account on the actions and settings before the school started until the end of the day. As mentioned in previous paragraphs, the study targets five primary schools in the Itsoseng Circuit and the researcher observed the roles that middle managers performed in each of the selected schools.

### 3.6.3 Document analysis

According to Thomas (2009:170), gathering data from documents represents an entirely different proposition from gathering data from people. Niewenhuis (2010:83) contends that when a researcher uses documents as a data gathering technique, s/he should focus on all types of written communication that may shed light on the phenomenon that the researcher is investigating. Written data may include published and unpublished documents, reports, memoranda, agendas, administrative documents, letters and reports, or any documents that are connected to the investigation. In selecting the documents to be analysed in this study, the researcher, aligned to the ideas of Niewenhuis (2010:82), suggests that in selecting documents for research, the research must verify the following:

- What kind of document is s/he dealing with?
- What is the publication date?
- What was the purpose or intent of the document?

The researcher visited the selected schools to analyse documents such as, SMT, subjects and staff minute's books which were held from January to March 2013. The school policies like monitoring, uniform, written work and examination policies documents were analysed. The subjects meetings, workshops and accountability sessions' circulars were also analysed. The Grade 6 learner's books such as classwork, monthly tests and Annual National Assessment books for Mathematics were also analysed to check if middle managers do their work as indicated in the monitoring policy. The researcher visited the school for two weeks. The researcher was analysing different documents in order for her to be able to finish analysing all the above mentioned documents. For the purpose of this research, the researcher had to analyse the School Management Teams' (SMT) policies of selected schools, their allocated management roles and school policies. These documents were analysed to enable the researcher to correlate the findings in the policies with those of the interviews and observation.

According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smith (2004:98), many novice researchers are inclined to use documents only for their content value. Data from the documents are also the main analytical tool in the research process. Documents of a private nature, such as used dairies need to be treated with the utmost care and with the full ethical implication in mind. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:451), artefacts are used as manifestations

that describe peoples' experience, and knowledge in the form of personal documents such as letters and objects. There is a need to find out if the ways in which middle managers perceive and manage their roles in the school are according to the policies of the school. Analysis of administrative policies, subject policies, monitoring policies for deputy principals and heads of departments and school policies will provide the measuring rod to evaluate the extent to which middle managers are conversant with their roles.

### **3.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Niewenhuis (2010:99), data analysis techniques are an on-going and interactive process. This implies that the collection, processing and reporting of data are intertwined. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:467) contend that data analysis implies the integration of operations of organising, analysing and interpreting data. Once the data from interviews and observation have been collected, the next stage involves the analysis of data. Obviously the researcher had to work through the data to arrive at conclusions. All the field notes, interview transcripts and documents must be available and completed. In this study, analysis data was be managed by breaking down data into four key stages:

- Transcribing
- Summarising data
- Coding
- Organising data

#### **3.7.1 Transcribing and saving data**

Niewenhuis (2010:104) states that all data collected by electronic or digital means must be transcribed. Audio tapes were transcribed verbatim. This was done by the researcher and was include some non-verbal cues in the transcript. Once data were typed and sorted, the researcher made a copy of all of it and saved data in a separate file.

#### **3.7.2 Summarising data**

According to Ary *et al.* (2006:499), the research examined all entries with the same code and then merged these categories into patterns by finding links among them. The researcher

investigated the roles of middle managers in schools; she coded the data into categories of research questions as follows:

- What are the functioning and importance of middle managers in school leadership?
- What are the challenges experienced by middle managers in schools?
- What are the roles of middle managers in schools?

### **3.7.3 Organising data**

Organising data is a large process of cutting and sorting. According to Niewenhuis (2010:104), field notes, recording of interviews and observations tend to be lengthy and require intensive examination, understanding and reading. In order to keep a clean mind and not become overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the data, researchers need to approach data analysis in a highly organised manner. In this study, the researcher decided to familiarise herself with the collected data by rereading the field notes of the observation and interview notes and transcripts, continuously reviewing the documents that were required for analysis, and listening repeatedly to audiotapes.

### **3.7.4 Coding**

According to Niewenhuis (2010:105), coding is the processes of carefully reading through transcribed data and dividing it into meaningful analytical units. Coding is, therefore, defined as marking the segments of data with symbols or descriptive words. It simply means that whenever a researcher finds a meaningful segment of text in a transcript, the researcher must assign a code to signify that particular segment. For example, a coded interview was as follows: narrative from interview with deputy principal (DP), head of department (HD) and by researcher (R).

Coding was utilised for the purpose of data organisation. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:466) describe coding as the translation of question responses and responded information to specific categories for the purpose of analysis. After coding all data, the researcher placed all units which have the same coding together. Struwig and Stead (2004:169) state that codes should be interpreted within a certain context and in relationship to other codes. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:466) contend that coding is the process of dividing data into parts by classification system.

### **3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness refers to the way in which the enquirer is able to persuade the audience that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to (Maree, 2010:299). This aspect is of utmost importance in qualitative research. The researcher needs to follow recognised procedures to ensure the trustworthiness of the data analysis. Inviting individuals to participate in research means that the researcher must protect participants from harm and violation of privacy, whilst at the same time maintaining the integrity of the research and its ethical standards. The researcher pertaining to this study made sure that the participants fully comprehended the nature and outcomes of the research and they were assured of anonymity and confidentiality (see Appendix E). According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2006:143), researchers usually assign a number to a participant's data instead of participant's name to ensure that the data remain anonymous. To ensure all these, the names of participants were not mentioned and participants were not forced to participate. The following symbols were used to instead of numbers: Deputy Principal (DP), Head of Department (HD) and Researcher (R).

#### **3.8.1 Verifying raw material and validating findings**

Maree (2010:299) describes internal validity as the accurate presentation of a particular event described by the researcher. According to Niewenhuis (2010:113), at the completion of interviewing or other data collection strategies, the researcher could submit a transcript or field notes to the participant to correct errors or facts. During subsequent interviews with participants, the researcher may ask them to verify the data gathered in earlier interviews as to verify whether interpretation of what they have shared is correct.

In this study, findings were taken back to the deputy principals and heads of departments of the participating schools for them to verify if what was captured was actually what they said. The same applies in the case of using observation as criteria for collecting data; the researcher used the member checking strategy. Maree (2010:86) refers to member checking as a situation where the researcher verifies his/her understanding of what has been observed with those observed. All the respondents confirmed that the data was captured accurately.

### 3.8.2 Reliability of the study

Reliability in qualitative research is regarded as a fit between what the researcher records as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched, which is the degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of the coverage of the investigation process. It refers to what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched. The researcher triangulated all data collected during the research process, including the results of the interviews and field notes in order to search for common themes to provide reliable findings. The researcher strived to eliminate any bias that might be brought to the study by constantly reflecting on the research process.

Neuman (2003:184) adds to his definition of reliability the issue of dependability. Dependability of data was established by capturing all interviews on a tape recorder and transcribing into written form. During the transcription exercise, the researcher decided to eliminate only those parts of the respondent's stories that were not commensurate with the research topic or had no significance to the research. Attempts were, however, made to reproduce the interview scripts as accurately as possible. Following the transcription, the researcher listened again to the tapes while reading the transcript. Furthermore, the interviews were unbiased and the researcher took care not to ask leading questions or to be over-impressionistic in observations.

### 3.9 ETHICAL ISSUES

In research, ethics are usually referred to as "the moral principles, guiding conduct, which are held by a group or even a profession" (Wellington, 2000:54). In planning and executing research, ethical aspects such as access, consent and participants protection are fundamental (Punch, 2009:56). Since a researcher cannot demand access and participant consent, the researcher must rely on assistance and permission (Punch, 2009:56). Careful consideration should be given to the procedures involved in gaining access to the research sites. The researcher must acknowledge that is very rare for the research to be conducted without the co-operation of a number of people (Day *et al.*, 2006:77). The key to gaining adequate co-operation and approved access is through good planning and good planning is derived from a well-designed and carefully thought-out research plan (Day *et al.*, 2006:77).

The following ethical considerations that should be taken into account during a qualitative study are based on research done by Wellington (2000:54-57), Punch (2006:56-57) and Henning (2004:73). For the purpose of this study, consent included:

- Confidentiality and anonymity: This is essential at every stage of the research process to avoid putting the participant in any form of danger. The participant was given the consent form to sign it to reassure him/her that the information s/he gives is confidential (see Appendix C).
- Use volunteers: The researcher may not exercise power over participants or force participants to participate in the research. Participants have the right to withdraw from research at any time. The researcher must not place the participants in any form of danger or force them to participate to anything they are unwillingly to do (see Appendix C).
- Honesty/Deception: The researcher must be honest with the participants about exactly what the research process entails. The researcher must also advise the participants to be honest so that the data collected will be valid and trustworthy. This is important as to avoid any form of deception by the researcher or participants which could negatively affect the participant, research process and findings (see Appendix C).

In this study, the participants have given consent in the form of a letter that promises them that any information given will be strictly confidential and no identification of a specific school or name of deputy principal and head of department will be given when the report is completed. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:421) state that informed consent is regarded as a dialogue and procedure in which individuals choose whether to participate after being informed of the purpose of the study and facts that would influence their decisions. The information obtained in this study will be used to prepare a research report. Any information obtained from participants in connection with the study, will be confidential, in fact the names of the participants will not appear on any of the data forms. The participation is voluntary, participant is free to withdraw his/her consent and discontinue participation at any time.

Permission to undertake the study has been obtained from the Area Office Manager, the Circuit Manager, and the principals of the schools that are participating in the study (see Appendix D).

### **3.10 SUMMARY**

This chapter provided a description of the research design and methodology employed by the researcher. The research study used an empirical, qualitative and exploratory design and methodology; this involves using compatible and complementary research methods in the form of a literature review, observation, interviews and document analysis. These elements made it possible for the researcher to interact with the participants in their natural environment in order to gather rich data pertaining to the purpose of the study.

Empirical research formed the core of this research. The research design acknowledges the relation of trust between the researcher and the participants. Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to. The design also took careful account of dimensions of trustworthiness and validity to ensure the quality of the data and findings.

The next chapter presents the data collected using the methods and processes discussed in this chapter. The findings were analysed and interpreted in a critical manner in responding to the research questions.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to set out the findings of the study. An investigation was done to explore how middle managers can be assisted in implementing their roles in schools effectively. To achieve the objective, the individual in-depth interviews were conducted with selected schools and deputy principals and heads of departments. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed.

A total number of 10 participants were interviewed. Participants were selected from twenty five schools in the Itsoseng Circuit of the Department of Education and Training in the Area Office of Lichtenburg. A drawn schedule of interviews was easily followed with the exception of few postponements necessitated by prior urgent commitments; all appointments with interviewees were honoured.

#### **4.2 INTERPRETATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA**

Interpretation means relating one's results and findings to existing theoretical frameworks or models and showing whether these are supported or falsified by the new interpretation. It also means taking into account rival explanations or interpretations of one's data and showing what levels of support the data provide for the preferred interpretation (Mouton, 2005:109). Jacelon and O'Dell (2005:219) note that the successful interpretation of the data depends on the researchers' ability to creatively identify the findings.

Interpretation of data in this study was informed by middle managers' experience and theoretical views on the roles of middle managers, in the functions and importance of middle managers in schools leadership, the challenges they experience and their roles in schools.

Tables 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 below summarise the most important information about the participants and the schedule of interviews.

**Table 4.2.1: Information on participants**

Code given to participants		Age				
A1	M	54	HOD	BEd Hons	30 years	School A
A 2	M	42	Deputy Principal	ACE	19 years	School A
A 3	M	45	HOD	ACE	20 years	School B
A 4	F	45	Deputy Principal	BED Hons	20 years	School B
A 5	F	39	HOD	ACE	18 years	School C
A 6	F	40	Deputy Principal	ACE	16 years	School C
A 7	F	54	HOD	ACE	33 years	School D
A 8	F	49	Deputy Principal	ACE	23 years	School D
A 9	M	54	HOD	HED	28 years	School E
A 10	M	45	Deputy Principal	BA	14 years	School E

**Table 4.2.1: Information on participants**

Code given to participants	Gender	Age	Position of management	Highest Qualifications	Experience in middle management	Research site
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**Table 4.2.2: Interview schedule**

Participant	Date of interview	Time	Position of management
A1	27.05.2013	14h00	HOD
A2	27.05.2013	14h30	Deputy Principal
A3	27.05.2013	17h35	HOD
A4	28.05.2013	14h00	Deputy Principal
A5	28.05.2013	14h30	HOD
A6	28.05.2013	15h00	Deputy Principal
A7	29.05.2013	14h00	HOD
A8	29.05.2013	14h30	Deputy Principal
A9	30.05.2013	14h00	HOD
A10	30.05.2013	14h30	Deputy Principal

#### 4.3 DATA ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

Content analysis was used in this research to organise and evaluate data systematically. Content analysis is a process of classifying words into categories to indicate their theoretical importance (Burns & Grove, 2005:731). Words of the text were categorised by way of using coding. Coding is the process of categorising and classifying words that appear now and then in the data (Burns & Grove, 2005:548). The information provided by table 4.2.1 was used to analyse and interpret data.

#### 4.4 THEMES EMANATING FROM THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

It should be indicated that these categories or themes are directly in line with research questions.

##### 4.4.1 Theme 1: The functioning and importance of middle managers in school leadership

The purpose of this theme is to explain the functions and importance of middle managers in school leadership. This theme is divided into sub-themes from paragraphs 4.4.1.1 to 4.4.1.3. Both the deputy principals and HODs were interviewed.

##### 4.4.1.1 The importance of middle managers in school leadership

The heads of departments and deputy principals were asked to elaborate on the functions and importance of middle managers in school leadership. The theme is based on the general knowledge of middle managers on leadership in schools. Participant A1 in school A has this to say: *A school is also an organisation; it needs the middle managers to manage the human resources and the general running of the school. To ensure that everything runs smoothly, the school functions properly and to make sure that the aim, vision and mission are accomplished.* Participants from school A-E indicated that the functions and importance of middle managers is to see to the smooth running of the school. They indicated that the middle managers control the work of the teachers and give them support. The participants also indicated that the middle managers manage the human resource and ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place and the protection of teaching time. They also indicated that they see to it that the school finances and curriculum are checked. They also assist the principal in management and administration of the school.

The responses distinguished HODs and deputy principals as a structure are faced with huge leadership responsibilities. Participant A3 from school B said: *Middle managers are there to control, monitor and moderate teacher's work. To ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place.* They are better placed to promote the smooth running of the school. They work closely with teachers, learners, parents and all the other government departments like, social development, health department and home affairs. They are the liaison officers of the departments. It is important to have middle managers in school leadership because if they were not there everybody would do as he/she likes. Everybody would have been the manager and nobody would control the work of the teachers and advise the principal. The principal would have much work on his/her hands and this could cause him/her stress. The middle managers assist the principal in order for him/her to be able to run the school efficiently and effectively.

#### **4.4.1.2 The roles of middle managers with regard to teaching and learning**

The importance of HODs and deputy principals in managing teaching and learning also surfaced during the interviews. Responses notably included the following: Participant A5 from school C remarked: *Most important aspect of the middle managers is to support teachers. Find the gaps that they may be in teaching and learning experienced and to monitor as well as moderate the work that they do.* All the participants from school A-E indicated that their roles are to ensure that teaching and learning should take place.

Participant A4 from school B said: *To provide the teachers with the support with anything that they would need for the curricular, the policy implementation, monitoring of their work is the main function of the middle manager.* Their co-duties are to monitor curriculum, and support the teachers and HODs in implementing the policies. All the participants from school A-E indicated that they participate in the planning of the curriculum and time-tabling. They also indicated that they guide the teachers in different subjects as they are subject specialists. They also monitor the effective delivery of the curriculum. They indicated that they also assist where there are curriculum gaps and conduct moderation assessment tasks. They are also class teachers and subject teachers.

Middle managers are the curriculum specialists and it is important for them to make sure that they visit teachers in the classroom to see if learners are being taught and educators do their work according to the work schedule. They also make sure that learners are assessed according to the plan or policies of the school (cf. 2.4).

#### **4.4.1.3 The value of in-school monitoring as an important curriculum management strategy for schools**

The respondents were requested to state their point of views on the value of in-school monitoring as an important curriculum management strategy. In response to this question, participant A10 from school E remarked: *The value of in-school monitoring is to ensure that teachers are teaching, whether teachers are administering formal tasks and also whether learners are given feedback and that learners get what they deserve based on covering the topics and also for improving the results of learners.* All the participants from school A-E indicated that they see to it that teachers are doing the work in line with the specification of the policy of the curriculum. They monitor syllabus completion by checking continuously progress made in the schedules. They also quality assure progress made in the work schedules. They also assure work given to learners. This is done through school control activities. What is important is to check the number of informal and formal tasks. They ensure that feedback is given to both learners and parents. Participant A5 said: *The middle managers ensure that departmental policies are implemented and curriculum is monitored.* Participants from school A-E indicated that the in-school monitoring is very important and they use it to measure their performance and learners. They use it to improve. Middle managers are aware that in-school monitoring is one of their roles they have to perform for them to control the work of their departments effectively.

#### **4.4.2 Theme 2: The challenges experienced by middle managers in schools**

This theme is divided into sub-themes from paragraphs 4.4.2.1 to 4.4.2.2.

Both deputy principals and HODs were interviewed.

##### **4.4.2.1 The curriculum management challenges experienced by middle managers**

The aim of this theme is to discuss different challenges mentioned by the respondents relating to their curriculum management responsibilities. Staffing and administrative factors are also linked with the challenges discussed in this theme. The discussions of these factors will demonstrate how they affect the middle managers in the executions of their duties.

Participant A4 from school B had this to say: *One of the challenges is the changing of curricula, the material that is being supplied late by the department. Most of the PSF that are being arranged at the circuit level, they are to preach policy not to preach the content, they are not helping the teachers teach the subject, how to do what, that is the challenge.* All the participants indicated that the changing of curricula affects their performance because they learn the methods of teaching every curriculum that is introduced. They were still learning the RCN and the assessments. In response to this question, participant A5 from school C remarked: *We should realise that CAPS has been implemented this year, 2013. The way the assessment has been changed has made a serious impact on learner assessment.* The middle managers were still in the process of learning the assessment strategies of the previous curricula for them to be able to assist the teachers they supervise while the new one is introduced, and this gives them a challenge. The participants also spoke about the curriculum workshops. The workshops they attended only concentrated on the policy not on teaching the new curricula. Such workshops are intended to capacitate teachers to perform their duties effectively. Participant A3 from school B has this to say: *Curriculum challenges are based on the quality of workshops the middle managers receive. The duration of the workshop is too short and is not done in detail.* The participants assert that workshops called by the Department of Education are rather too short. They did not train teachers on content. Middle managers are still faced with a challenge of training the teachers as they are not also well trained.

##### **4.4.2.2 The management and administrative challenges encountered by middle managers**

Participant A10 School E said: *There is lack of administrative assistance in schools. Lacking some administrative skills as middle managers to assist the principal is a challenge. There are no workshops based on the using of computers. As middle managers we do not have the knowledge of some administrative records.* Participant A10 from school E complained about a lack of support staff for administrative functions. It is expected that every school is supposed to have an administrative assistance to attend to all administrative functions. Some of the schools are without such officials. Middle managers are compelled to leave their classes and their work from time to time to attend to the visitors. In this way learning and teaching time is compromised.

Participant A8 from school D had this to say with regard to this question: *Shortage of teachers (human resources) is a challenge. Most of the teachers do not have experience for the subject based on the changing of the curriculum.* It is also been determined that there is a serious shortage of teachers. The training of teachers is not done in line with the curriculum needs of all the schools. The new curriculum has come along with many new subjects which demand specialisation of some kind. Teachers end up teaching the subjects they are not qualified to teach. This is the same with the middle managers; they end up controlling and moderating subjects they are not qualified for.

The in-depth interviews revealed also a list of challenges which are listed by the responses below:

- Late submission of files by teachers for control;
- Teachers failing to complete topics in their work schedules on time;
- The late coming of teachers and learners at school;
- Lack of parental involvement;
- Teachers absenteeism, and
- Shortage of Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) and other resources such as photocopiers, computers etc.



#### **4.4.3 Theme 3: The roles of middle managers in school**

The third theme of this research study is based on the roles of middle managers in schools.

This theme is divided into sub-themes from paragraphs 4.4.3.1 to 4.4.3.3.

Both HODs and deputy principals were interviewed.

#### **4.4.3.1 The legislated administrative roles of middle managers**

In this regard participant A1 from school A has this to say: *As a middle manager y co-duties are basically teaching. Secondly, monitoring educators work, managing the curriculum, and meaning I have to ensure that each teacher is allocated teaching subjects s/he is qualified for. I have to manage resources like LTSM. I also have to support educators in terms of professional support. I have to support them all the time and have answers to all questions as a specialist in that field.* Participants from schools A-E indicated that they monitor and control the work of the teachers and give them support. They also manage the curriculum and teachers are allocated teaching subjects. In this regard participant A7 from school D said: *One of my role as a middle manager is to ensure that school time-tables are drawn up and all the school registers are controlled and monitored.* All participants from schools A-E indicated that they are responsible for drawing up school time-tables and control all the registers such as, summary, admission, class and time registers. They manage resources such as, LTSM and textbooks. The middle managers are responsible for developing plans which are year plans, quarterly and class visits plans. Middle managers make sure that there is a link between the teachers, learners and the principal.

#### **4.4.3.2 The induction of newly appointed educators/HODs**

In regard to this question participant A1 from school A had this to say: *It is very important to take someone on board when they arrive so that they are on par with what is transpiring at school. As a middle manager my main focus is inducting or orientating newly appointed educators on management. To make sure that I give them support in the learning area or subjects that they are appointed to teach. I also need to induct them on their level, for example, managing the classrooms, managing their attendance registers, everything that is in the hands of the teachers, I have to induct them not only on the subject deliverance.* All participants from schools A-E indicated that they are also responsible for induction of educators. They orientate teachers and show them all the tools that are being used in the school. They say the main reasons for inducting teachers are to acclimatise them with the new environment. Participant A5 from school C said: *Most of the teachers are new from the colleges and universities they acclimatised so well because of the induction process we have done.* All the indicated also that teachers who are new from the colleges or universities

should be given induction for them to be able to manage their classrooms, attendance registers and be informed with routines of the school. Participant A4 from school B remarked: *Every institution has its own culture, the newly appointed teachers and HODs must know the culture of the school. Every institution has its own vision and mission which newly appointed teachers and HODs must know, so it is important to induct newly appointed teachers and HODs.* They should know the culture, vision and mission of the school. In this way they will be able to perform their duties effectively. They are also introduced to their new jobs and the curriculum. They also indicated that they induct teachers because policies are changing from time to time.

#### **4.4.3.3 The importance and strategies followed in calling staff meetings**

The participant A4 from school B in this regard remarked: *Strategy is to write a circular, make sure that every teacher at school signs the circular to say that there is a meeting. The importance of the meeting is to discuss the problems that middle manager are faces with. To discuss how one can improve the curriculum at school. We cannot run any institution without having meetings. It helps to solve problems if there are any problems.* Participants from schools A-E indicated that it is important that middle managers call meetings. They indicated that meetings are called to discuss or update the teachers with important issues of the school like learner performance, information from the Department of Education and Training and the problems or developments in the school. There is a procedure that should be followed in calling meetings which is informing teachers by a circular seven days before. Information that should be included in the circular is the agenda, time, date and venue of the meeting. Meetings inviting parents, teachers, subjects and middle managers should be called once a month. Every institution is compelled to hold meetings to indicate it is functional.

## **4.5 ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATIONS**

The researcher visited the research sites (the five primary schools) several times to observe the actual sites. The functions and importance of middle managers in school leadership, the challenges experienced by middle managers in schools and the roles of middle managers in schools were observed. The following observations were noted from the visits.

#### **4.5.1 The functions and importance of middle managers in school leadership**

Data from this study indicate that the research site's HODs and deputy principals performed as follows:

Middle managers have their plans in place. The plans included the class visits, monitoring of learners books and teachers' lesson plans. The time-table for control of learner's books, assembly, toilets and the surroundings were also observed. The plans also include the submission of lesson plans, tasks that should be written and the control dates. The homework time tables are also followed.

All circulars with important information are circulated to educators. The HOD responsible for circulars distributed them to educators in time. Important information from the Department of Education and Training which is urgent is circulated to the educators by the deputy principal through an instruction book. Protocol is being observed as the information is from the principal to the deputy principal, HODs and to the educators. Each department has files for each subject and are kept in a safe place. The files are also well arranged and visible in the wooden cabinets.

During the observations I attended assembly. One of the middle managers shared the scriptural reading with educators and learners. The middle managers took a lead in motivating educators and learners. I was also fortunate to observe the parents meeting which was held during my presence. The middle managers addressed the parents and pleaded with them to help their children with school work at home. Educators were also given a platform to address the learner's performance and the school results.

During the observations I realised that the school environment was clean and neat. The middle managers have made a roster for cleaning after school. Educators and learners were allocated duties. They adhered to the duty roster. Everybody was committed to his/her work and the middle managers as one of their roles made sure that the point mentioned above is taken care of.

Middle managers followed the correct protocol to communicate the information. For example, there was a circular inviting educators to a meeting with the Circuit Office. The principal received the circular and passed it to the deputy principal, HOD and to the teachers. The message was passed timeously to the educators for them to prepare them timeously. One

of the schools I observed held briefing meetings every Tuesday and Thursday in the morning at 07h30. The staff members were given important information and discussed the programme of the day. Before the information is given to the educators it is given to the middle managers first. It shows that the middle managers communicate the information to the teachers as this is one of their duties.

The time-tables for all the grades and individual educators were available. During the observation middle managers had a problem of educators attending their periods. Some educators were late for classes especially the first and a period after break. The learners also were late after break because of the distance they walk. Educators did not attend the whole period meaning that when they were supposed to teach learners for thirty minutes they will only teach twenty minutes and the deputy principals and heads of departments had to report to the principal. The time wasted had to be recovered and the recovery plan was drawn up in order to cover the time lost.

Middle managers were doing in-school monitoring. Educators submitted the learner's books to the middle managers to check if educators are giving learners work and they controlled them. They were also busy with educator's files. The problem they encountered is that other educators did not submit their files to be monitored. The written work that learners were given was insufficient. The work was not according to the policy of the school. Educators were called one by one to the office to explain the reasons that made them to be behind the schedule. Some educators did not follow the work schedule and the programme of assessment. In-school monitoring is good because the educator measures his/her and the learner's progress. Middle managers are also able to assist the educator to catch up.

Some educators were absent during the observations. The middle managers were having a problem because they were forced to attend the classes of educators who were absent. Learners where educators were absent moved up and down outside classrooms. This also had an impact on the educator's and learner's progress.

#### **4.5.2 Challenges experienced by middle managers in schools**

By the end of the year the syllabus for every grade should be completed. During the observation I realised that the rate at which the educators and middle managers were moving, they will be unable to enforce syllabus completion, but not at all the schools observed. The

reason is that in other schools the rate of absenteeism is high. The other reason is that the middle managers, most of the time, attend workshops and are not teaching. They also attend School Management Team (SMT) meetings more often because of some urgent matters.

Quality results and effective assessment programmes are important for learners and educators. The deputy principals and heads of departments in other schools that I visited do not analyse the results of educators and learners on a quarterly basis. Educator's performance is analysed per subject and per grade. Deputy Principals and HODs do not strive to achieve excellence in their departments. Learners are also not encouraged to work hard. Parents meetings are not held. I attended one of the parents meeting in one of the schools; the attendance was poor. These are some of the factors that make learners not to perform well and cause problems to the management of the school.

According to my observation learners and educators' absenteeism is a challenge to the deputy principals and heads of departments. They tried to use different strategies to solve this problem but all in vain. The absent educators were requested to hand in the recovery plan; they did submit it but was a problem to stick to it.

Some middle managers did not understand their roles. They were unable to resolve problems in their departments. They refer most of the problems they are supposed to solve to the principal. If the educator fails to submit the documents requested in time there are disciplinary measures that should be taken. Not every problem should be referred to the principal. Educators and learners arrived late at school but the middle managers do not discipline them. The principal will be the one who sees to it that educators and learners are called to order. In some schools learners will move up and down and they will not discipline them. The principal ended up calling a meeting to address all the problems the middle managers are encountering in their departments.

#### **4.5.3 The roles of middle managers in schools**

Some middle managers were not aware that they are supposed to do administrative work, like analysing the results for each term. The work is done by the Administrative Assistance (AA). Curriculum matters such as supplying new educators with policy documents of different learning areas was done by the principal but not the middle managers because it is one of their roles. The master files of all the learning areas must be kept by middle managers in

their offices as they are curriculum specialists, but these documents were in the principal's office.

In another school visited the middle managers did not understand their roles concerning meetings because parents meetings are called by the principal instead of the middle managers to discuss the learners' problem. The Grade 3 and 6 parent's meetings are also called by the principal to discuss the Annual National Assessment (ANA) examination. Phase meetings with educators were also not held. Middle managers expect the principal to call such meetings. It is clear that some middle managers do not understand their roles.

Induction of newly appointed teachers and middle managers is important because some of them do not understand their roles. The principal also inducted and mentored the new educators and new heads of departments. What was observed is that middle managers needed information from the teachers. Some teachers, who are experienced, performed their duties far better than the middle managers.

#### **4.6 ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN DOCUMENTS**

Document analysis according to Briggs and Coleman (2007:281), as indicated in Chapter Three (cf. 3.6.3) is a form of qualitative research that requires the researcher to locate, collect, interpret and analyse data and draw conclusions that either describe, interpret, or explain what has occurred from written documents.

In this study, the research scrutinised and analysed the Educators Labour Relation Council (ELRC) document on the roles of middle managers in schools, subject policies, Learner Attainment Improvement Plan (LAIP), monitoring policies, the year plan and subject policies in an attempt to respond to the research questions raised.

##### **4.6.1 ELRC Documents**

The participating schools have copies of ELRC documents which explain the roles of the heads of departments and the deputy principals (see Appendix F).

#### **4.6.2 Subject Policies**

The subject policies indicate the number of informal and formal tasks to be written in a week and a term and the numbers of meetings to be held in a month by the examination committee. They also highlight the number of phase meetings to be conducted in a term. The policies also include the number of parents meetings especially Grade 3 and 6. The subject policies also highlight that middle managers should moderate the formal and examination papers before they are written. The disciplinary measures that are taken when learners have not written some of papers are also indicated. The promotion and progression requirements are clearly explained. The amount of homework to be given to learners per week is also indicated.

#### **4.6.3 Monitoring Policy**

The participating schools have the monitoring policy whereby the deputy principal and heads of departments monitor the work of the educators. The policy states the number of learner's books to be controlled. The policy indicates when the educators are expected to submit their lesson preparations, work schedules, and programme of assessment and the time frames, and the class visits programmes and time frames. The developmental workshops are also indicated in the policy.

#### **4.6.4 Year Plan**

All the activities that are going to happen for the whole year are included in the year plan. The dates when these activities are going to be implemented are indicated. The progress on activities is indicated on this plan. The heads of departments and deputy principals draw their plans from the school year plan.

### **4.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter analysed the presentation and discussions of data collected through empirical research methods. The chapter has been able to respond to the problem statement formulated in Chapter One. These problems have been investigated and also the aims have been met. The researcher presented and discussed the data in sub-topics related to the categories derived from the research questions through an open coding analysis. The findings discussed emerged from the analysis of written documents, observational and interview data. The next

chapter will provide synthesized findings and recommendations in relation to the findings and conclusion to the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aims of this chapter are three fold. The chapter will present the summary, the findings and finally the recommendations. The findings of the study are based on the research aims in Chapter One of this study. The chapter will further provide recommendations for further research. Finally the chapter will close with a summary.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

Chapter one presented the rationale of the study. The problem statement related to the problems of the roles of middle managers in schools were explained (cf. 1.4). It was pointed out that middle managers' roles have become more complex, varied and demanding and accountability has also increased. Middle managers roles are not always clearly defined and described. It was pointed out also that middle managers are not receiving the relevant support and training required to fulfil their roles. These challenges highlighted that there is a need for middle managers to be effectively trained for them to assist teachers to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. The chapter presented the framework of the entire study which included research questions, aims of the study, research methodology and design and the chapters of the study.

Chapter two was the literature study. The roles of middle managers in schools were discussed thoroughly. The presentation on the concepts relating closely to the topic was given (cf. 2.4). The challenges experienced by middle managers were also presented (cf. 2.5). The roles of middle managers in school were also indicated and extensively discussed (cf. 2.6). Finally the chapter gave the summary.

In Chapter Three, the research design and methodology were given in details (cf. 3.2). The methodology used was presented and discussed (cf. 3.3). The population of the study was discussed (cf. 3.4). The role played by trustworthiness and validity in qualitative research and achievement thereof was mentioned (cf. 3.8). The chosen method of data collection was in-depth interviews with HODs and deputy principals, observation of the roles that middle managers perform and finally the analysis of documents which confirm the roles of middle

managers in schools (cf. 3.6). The collected data were analysed through open coding (cf. 3.7).

Chapter Four presented the data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the research results. In-depth interviews were conducted with selected schools. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The useful techniques in analysing interviews are provided in this chapter. Both the categories and themes are accounted for in this chapter.

The next section presents the findings of the study.

### **5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATIONS**

The discussions will indicate how findings relate with the research aims' in Chapter one (cf. 3.2).

#### **5.3.1 Findings on research Aim 1: What are the functions and importance of middle managers in school leadership**

*The findings on the importance of middle managers in school leadership are as follows:*

- Findings from the research study indicated that participants understood the concept “the functions and importance of middle managers in schools” (cf. 2.4). The participants indicated that they were aware of their co-duties and the roles they played in middle management (cf. 2.2). The response centred on the way the middle managers run the school and control the work of the teachers. The participants indicate that in running the school the aim, vision and mission of the schools are of importance and should be implemented (cf. 2.2). They understand that middle managers monitor, control and moderate the work of the teachers and HODs (cf. 2.6.1). For the school to run properly middle managers make sure that all the resources are available especially human resources. Teaching and learning is important, therefore, middle managers should make a point that learners are being taught (cf. 2.6.1). Teaching time should be protected and the curriculum should be followed, for the school to produce good results (cf. 2.6.1). Policies are drawn by the Department of Education and Training; middle managers should interpret them, draw the school policies from them and implement them. They use work schedules and programmes of assessment to see whether they correlate with lesson plans. The

participants have the following documents that they use to refer to whenever they have a problem: ELRC documents, subject policies, year plan and monitoring policies, which make their work easy when they control the teachers and HODs work (cf. 4.6.1). Every teacher is supplied with the above documents. The administrative and managerial work is essential and middle managers are also expected to do this work as one of their roles. They have to develop school time-tables; class visits plans, monitoring tools for both control and moderation (cf. 4.6.2). Plans for assembly, toilets and surroundings should be available whenever they are needed. The middle managers are a structure that makes the school run smoothly, so, it is important to have them in schools.

*The following were the findings on the roles of middle managers with regard to teaching and learning:*

- Participants in this study know their co-responsibilities. They are involved in developing teachers and HODs by monitoring their work (cf. 4.6.5). Teaching and learning are their first priorities because they adhere to the departmental policies and the implementation thereof (cf. 4.6.2). They are expected to become class teachers if there is a shortage of class teachers. They are supposed to support teachers in all their duties (cf. 2.6). Participants are aware that they are subject specialists; they need to guide teachers where possible. They assist the principal in terms of curriculum planning, finances and other related duties in his absence (cf. 2.6). They draw the time-tables for all the grades and teachers because they cannot teach without time-tables. Subject policies are used to indicate the number of formal and informal tasks to be written (cf. 4.6.2). Grade 3 and 6 meetings should be held every term in order to discuss the learners work and what measures should be taken in case they are absent from school when tasks are written (cf. 2.6.2). The monitoring policy is also available to control the teachers' and HODs' work, it also includes submission of lesson plans, work schedules, class visits and developmental programmes (cf. 4.6.2). The year plan includes all the activities that will happen every day (cf. 4.6.4). As teaching and learning is an important issue in the Department of Education and Training, the middle managers are required to monitor the learner's books, syllabus coverage and administrative issues of curriculum (cf. 2.5.1).

*The findings on the value of in-school monitoring as an important curriculum management strategy for schools are:*

- In-school monitoring according to the participants is an important issue because it monitors and moderates the formal tasks, examination papers and memorandums or rubrics (cf. 2.6.1). Learners are supposed to be given feedback from what they have written. They make sure that all topics in the syllabus are covered and correspond with the work schedule. Delivery and implementation of the curriculum is taken care of (cf. 2.6.1). Participants understand this concept because they make sure that teachers and HODs do not fall behind with syllabus and that the right curriculum is delivered. Findings from the interviews and observations indicated that the participants are conversant with their roles (cf. 3.6.1). Teachers and HODs submitted the learner's books, files and lesson plans for control. Some teachers and learners absent themselves from school and this is a challenge to the middle managers (cf. 4.5.2). Participants give themselves time to meet the teachers and HODs to discuss their problems and solve them where possible. Teachers and HODs are supported for quality teaching and learning to take place. Participants gauge themselves by conducting in-school monitoring and correct their mistakes (cf. 2.6).

It can, therefore, be concluded that participants are conversant with the value of in-school monitoring because the findings from the document analysis indicated that subject and monitoring policies are drawn from the ELRC documents and the Department of Education and Training policies.

### **5.3.2 Findings from research Aim 2: What are the challenges experienced by middle managers in schools**

*The findings on the curriculum management challenges experienced by middle managers are as follows:*

- Shortage of human resources (teachers) is a very serious problem and learners are left unattended in the classes. Most of the teachers lack experience in the subjects that they teach, and this is caused by insufficient training and knowledge of the subject (cf. 1.4). The changing of curriculum affects also the learner's assessment (cf. 2.5). Curriculum Assessment Programme Statements (CAPS) has been implemented this

year (2013) for the intermediate phase. This is a challenge because the assessments programmes changes (cf. 2.5). The methods also change and it gives the participants a challenge to assist the teachers and HODs as they are also not conversant with the new curriculum, and it has an impact on learner's performance (cf. 2.5.1). The workshops that are being attended by middle managers are too short and are not of quality, they do not address the problems that they encounter with subject content, and do not help teachers who do not have the knowledge of the subjects (cf. 4.4.2.1).

The late supply of textbooks by the Department of Education and Training makes it difficult for the participants to supply each learner with a textbook because of the shortage (cf. 4.3.2). PSF meetings are communicated late by the subject advisers. Participants are compelled to attend the PSFs and this affects their classes. The participants are expected to attend all the PSFs meetings of the subjects they head. The learner's performance is affected by this (cf. 4.5.2).

The teachers and learners absent themselves from school sometimes with no valid reasons. Teachers and learners fall behind with the syllabus. A learner misses the subject content of that day and is it impossible to teach one learner who was absent, so this will affect the learner performance and the school results. For teachers it will be a problem to complete the syllabus and they are forced to have a recovery plan which they do not adhere to (cf. 4.5.2).

Some participants did not specialise in the subjects they are heading and they are unable to assist teachers when they experience problems. Participants are encountering problems as they have much of work to do because they are expected to monitor and moderate the teacher's work. This gives them a challenge as they cannot perform their co-duty of teaching and it disadvantages them in curriculum delivery (cf. 4.5.2).

*The following are the findings on the management and administrative challenges ncountered by HODs and deputy principals:*

Participants in this study concerning management and administrative challenges are that some participants befriend their subordinates and it becomes difficult for the middle managers to handle the problems they are experiencing (cf. 4.5.2). Some participants, in some schools where there is no deputy principal, indicated that they

cannot perform their duties effectively because they are doing the deputy principal's work. Teachers and learners arrive late at school and this is a challenge. The participants do not know how to solve this problem as it continues even if it is addressed. Teachers are not observing teaching time, they arrive at their classes late in the morning and after break. Parents are not involved in their children's work and do not attend meetings.

Some schools do not have an Administrative Assistant and the participants indicated that they do all the administrative work (cf. 4.4.2.2). The middle managers are drafting different policies, for example, subjects, induction, and monitoring policies. The photocopying machines and computers are a challenge as schools cannot afford to purchase them because the section 21 allocation is too little (cf. 4.4.2.1). Some participants are not conversant with their roles as middle managers and they are unable to assist the principal with his/her other functions especially in finances (cf. 4.3.2).

It can be concluded that the participants have serious challenges of curriculum management and management and administration. They are unable to perform their duties effectively and efficiently because of these challenges. Learners and teachers cannot be assisted accordingly.

### **5.3.3 Findings from research Aim 3: What are the roles of middle managers in schools**

*The findings on the legislated administrative roles of middle managers are as follows:*

- Participants indicated that they assist the principal in organisational matters of the school. They order the LTSM for teachers and make sure they are available in time (cf. 4.4.3.1). They also take care of staff developmental programmes. They make sure that IQMS is monitored in schools (cf. 2.5). They assist in the absence of the principal by making sure that the surroundings are kept clean and the school runs smoothly. They are responsible for teaching and learning, allocating teachers to their subjects and the welfare of learners. They induct the teachers and support them (cf. 4.4.3.2). Participants are liaison officers because their co-duty is to liaise with different departments. Every teacher and HOD should be supplied with the school policies, draw the school plans, draw up the school time-table, control the class registers and all the registers found in the school, for example, summary registers,

admission registers and time registers. They liaise with all the stakeholders; for example, learners, parents, teachers, HODs, deputy principals, principals and community (cf. 4.3.3).

*The following are the findings on the induction of newly appointed teachers and HODs:*

- It is important that teachers and HODs be inducted in schools. The departmental policies change from time to time, so teachers and HODs should be abreast with all the changes. Teachers from the colleges of education and universities should familiarise themselves with the new environment, policies, vision and mission of the school and also the culture of the school (cf. 4.4.3.2). Newly appointed teachers and HODs are to be introduced to their new posts and job description (cf. 2.6.1). They must also be shown their offices and given documents that they are expected to use. The curriculum also changes and they should know all the changes that have been made.

*The findings on the importance and strategies when calling meetings are as follows:*

- Meetings are of importance in every institution (cf. 2.6.2). There is no organisation that can run without meetings. Meetings are called to update the staff with the running of the school, the changes from the Department of Education and Training, important information that is needed urgently, and the problems that are encountered in the school discuss the learner's progress and curriculum management problems that are encountered by middle managers and staff (cf. 4.4.3.3). Teachers or middle managers give feedback from the meetings that they attended at the Department of Education and Training or PSFs. The middle managers and the teachers discuss the year plan and make amendments where necessary and all the activities that will transpire the whole year are included. The middle managers meeting is held before the staff meeting for drawing of the agenda (cf. 4.3.3). There is a procedure that is being followed to call the meetings, firstly, the notice should be written in a circular or instruction book, secondly the agenda, time of the meeting, date and the venue should be indicated. The notice should be given to the staff members seven days before. There are different meetings that should be called and must appear in the year plan of the school, for example, parents, teachers, subjects, emergency and middle managers (cf. 2.6).

It can be concluded that participants are conversant with their roles because they know that meetings are to be held in order to improve the school's performance.

#### 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the researcher intends to provide recommendations to assist the Itsoseng Circuit schools to implement positive and effective middle managers roles.

- As has been established, the current Department of Education and Training requires middle managers to teach as teaching is one of the core duties and responsibilities of their job. The middle managers monitor, moderate and control the work of the teachers. They also plan for class visits, time-tables, assembly roster, toilets and surroundings. The middle managers work is too much; their work should be revisited by the Department of Education and Training. Their work should be reduced for them to be effective, to produce quality results and for quality teaching and learning to take place.
- Subject policies and programmes of assessment should be implemented by middle managers. Some middle managers are not adequately conversant with the contents of these documents. Teachers need to be thoroughly trained for them to be able to implement them effectively.
- Middle managers attend workshops and PSFs to be equipped with the subject content. Most of the workshops or PFSs do not address the problems that they experience. The officials from Advisory Unit at the Area Office should make sure that middle managers are thoroughly workshopped. Workshops should be conducted for at least a week. Matters relating to curriculum and assessment must be dealt with thoroughly.
- Middle managers should be trained to understand their roles in order that they implement them correctly. In this regard, the Department should refrain from offering workshops with limited opportunities for continual support. Training strategies that include long term courses offered by accredited service providers may be implemented as a viable alternative.
- Middle managers should be encouraged to convey the attitude that all learners can achieve academically and behave properly as expected. In this regard, schools should obviously be provided with adequate resources and appropriate programmes to ensure that expectations are met. It should be understood that meeting such

expectations is a responsibility of all stakeholders including the teachers, learners, the school and the community.

- Learners whose parents are closely involved in their education are more likely to experience school success and less likely to become involved in antisocial activities. Middle managers should, therefore, make parents feel welcome at school, address the barriers to their meaningful and active participation, keep them positively engaged in their support and address parents' concerns about their children.
- The induction programmes of newly appointed teachers and HODs should be incorporated in the school policies. Induction programmes are essential to new employees about their condition of service. The imparting of the subject matter to children represents the core business of teaching and learning. The new employees must be reminded of the school policies and the implementation thereof.
- The Department of Education and Training should conduct training workshops for all middle managers on their roles. Capacity training will be good to check whether all the middle managers are still abreast with their roles. Such training will help all middle managers with the interpretation and the application of their roles. Statutes are also amended from time to time. Therefore, annual capacity training will provide the middle managers with new changes.
- All middle managers are to conduct in-school monitoring in compliance with the school. All teachers must be encouraged to promote teaching and learning in their classrooms. A monitoring tool for compliance must determine whether teachers are up to scratch on issues related to teaching and learning. The tool must emphasise whether teaching and learning emphasise the performance of learners.
- The Department of Education and Training must supply schools with textbooks timeously. The textbooks should equal the number of learners. This will help the middle managers to curb the shortages. Teaching and learning will take place effectively. Parents will be able to assist their children at home.
- The middle managers head more than five subjects in primary schools. This has a negative impact on the middle manager's work. They cannot perform their duties or roles effectively. The Department of Education and Training should apply the same system as in high schools. Middle managers should head two to three subjects at most. This will assist middle managers to do management and administrative roles efficiently and they will be able also to assist the principal.

- The middle managers should be capacitated in the implementation of CAPS. They must familiarise themselves with the changes for them to be able to assist teachers.
- Teachers and learners arrive late at school. There should be actions taken against the late coming. Schools should have policies where they address this kind of behaviour. Parents must also be taken on board in the drawing up of the policy.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study has raised several implications for further research. The following recommendations for further research are proposed:

- Research should be conducted to evaluate the workload of middle managers especially in primary schools.
- Research may be undertaken to train middle managers on the departmental policies, especially on CAPS and how to implement it.
- There is a need to conduct research to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programmes used by the Department of Education on the roles of middle managers.

## **5.6 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The chapter has presented the synopsis of the entire study. The summary of all the chapters of this study were presented. The findings and recommendations of the study were also provided. The chapter also gave an account of recommendations for further study.

It is crucial for education management to deal with the roles of middle managers in schools. A stable, satisfactory and peaceful environment conducive to effective teaching and learning cannot be achieved unless the middle managers roles are understood. Such control is well within the power of the middle managers and the Department of Education and Training.

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## APPENDIX A

### RESEARCH SCHEDULE FOR MIDDLE MANAGERS

These are the main questions that the researcher used. The following aspects are used to emphasise and explain the questions. The questionnaire consists of three sections:

#### PART ONE

Number	Gender (F/M)	Age	Qualifications	Experience	Participants
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

#### PART TWO

Number	Date of interview	Time	Position occupied by interviewee	SMT
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

#### PART THREE

Schedule for individual in-depth- interviews for Deputy Principals and HODs.

1. What are the functions and importance of middle managers in school leadership?
  - The importance of middle managers in schools.
  - The roles of deputy principals/heads of department with regard to teaching and learning.
  - The value of in-school monitoring as an important curriculum management strategy for schools.
2. What are the challenges experienced by middle managers in schools?
  - The curriculum management challenges experienced by middle managers.
  - The management and administrative challenges encountered by middle managers.

3. What are the roles of middle managers in schools?
- The legislated administrative roles of middle managers.
  - The induction of newly appointed teachers.
  - The importance and strategies followed in calling staff meetings.

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS ITSOSENG IN SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 122  
ITSOSENG  
2744  
23 April 2013

The Circuit Manager  
Itsoseng Circuit  
Department of Education and Training  
Private Bag X12005  
ITSOSENG  
2744

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS IN SCHOOLS

I, K.E. Maboe, MEd student in Educational Management at the North West University-Mafikeng Campus in the North West Province (South Africa) request permission to conduct research interviews in your circuit. The research topic is "THE ROLES OF MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SCHOOLS IN THE ITSOSENG CIRCUIT". The interviews will be conducted after 14hrs in the sampled schools to respect teaching time.

I hope that my request will be considered.

Thanks in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

.....  
Name: K.E. Maboe  
Student number: 12704504

.....  
SUPERVISOR  
Prof C. van Wyk

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH TOPIC: THE ROLES OF MIDDLE MANAGERS IN ITSOSENG CIRCUIT

Dear participant

I am inviting you to participate in a research project aimed at the nature and significance of middle management, the legislative roles and responsibilities of middle managers, the challenges faced by middle management and the legislative roles, responsibilities and challenges facing middle managers in the Itsoseng Circuit. The research seeks to establish whether the middle managers, (Deputy-Principals and Heads of department) perform their roles according to the policy in place.

Your participation in this research project is voluntary and confidential. You will not be asked to reveal any information that will allow your identity to be established, unless you are willing to be contacted for individual follow-up interviews. Should you declare yourself willing to participate in an individual interview, confidentiality will be guaranteed. You may decide to withdraw at any stage should you wish not to continue with an interview.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent – that is, that you participate in this project willingly and that you understand that you may withdraw from the research project at any time. Participation in this phase of the project does not obligate you to participate in follow-up individual interviews; however, should you decide to participate in follow-up interviews your participation is still voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Under no circumstances will the identity of interview participants be made known to any parties or organisations that may be involved in the research process and/ or which have the some form of power over the participants.

Participant's signature ..... Date.....

Researcher's signature..... Date .....

Yours Sincerely

K.E. Maboe

Your Role in the research process

I propose to conduct about one interview session with you as a participant, and these will be recorded on audio tape. The interview will last for 30-45 minutes. I hope to carry the interviews over a period of up to a month.

The interviews will look at your legislative roles, responsibilities and challenges facing middle managers in the Itsoseng Circuit. The interviews will be recorded on audio tape to avoid leaving out any important information and to avoid disrupting the interview process. If you consent to the use of the tape recorded, please sign below.

Participant's signature: ..... Date: .....