



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
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THE PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN SCHOOLS: A
CRITICAL ANALYSIS

BY

HT TABE

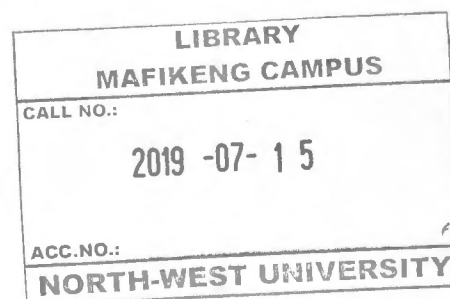
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DIPLOMA IN ARCHAEOLOGY, B.A IN HISTORY AND B.Ed. (Hons) EDUCATIONAL
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NOVEMBER, 2015





DECLARATION

I TABE HENNADES TABE hereby declare that this dissertation titled "THE PERCEPTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN SCHOOLS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS" is my original work and that all the sources I have used or cited have been adequately indicated and acknowledged by means of complete referencing.

HT TABE

DATE

DEDICATION

I hereby dedicate this work to my beloved *family* for providing unwavering encouragement, love and endurance as I pursued this personal desire.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for relentless guardianship and protection as well as inspiration throughout this study and even after the study, despite my expression of doubt at certain point in time.

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Special recognition equally go to all the Librarians who individually assisted me in using the North West University catalog search to discover books, newspapers and articles directly and indirectly related to this current study. This particularly include Mrs. Mather Van der Walt at the Potchefstroom campus library and Mrs. Elsie Legwale at the Mafikeng campus library of the North West University respectively.

To the professors and senior lecturers of the faculty under the umbrella of the office of the director of the school of education leadership development, I wish to say your immense contribution is not and will never be undermined. Through the series of research workshops organised during my years of study, the proposal presentation and the ethics colloquium I was individually boosted.

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the perception of stakeholders of accountability in selected schools of the Mafikeng area in the North West Province through a critical analysis. The main aim of the study was to illuminate the meaning of accountability from a school stakeholder's perspective. To achieve the objectives of the study, a qualitative paradigm was adopted which had a multiple case study. Data was collected from 15 purposively selected participants through an in-depth individual interview, participant observation and document analysis. Data analysis process on the other hand involved the transcription of the raw data followed by open-coding of data from the participants' actual response. The findings were then presented in the form of a narration with all the aspects of ethical consideration respected.

The findings from the study revealed that stakeholders have different concepts with similar meanings that is applied in dealing with issues of accountability in schools and also that the meaning of accountability is differently perceived. One common idea from the study is that for one to be held accountable he/she must be given certain responsibilities that should be applied. It logically followed that in terms of who to be held accountable in a school, for what and by whom, every stakeholder involved in the running of the school is capable of being held accountable. This is evident in the findings from the literature review and the empirical study which revealed that drastic measures like suspension and dismissal can be taken against stakeholders who failed to perform their responsibilities or task. However, findings from the empirical study disclose that dismissal is usually considered the last option in the management of schools while interest of the learners is most paramount.

Moreover, findings from the empirical study further revealed that no single section or individual of a school as an organisation can operate in isolation in the accountability of schools. At the school level a principal is generally the main accountable officer but not without collaboration from the subject HODs, SMTs and SGBs. The SGB for instance comprises selected stakeholders from all the sections of the school. This to a larger extent implies that every stakeholder including non-teaching staffs like parents can also be held accountable because they constitute a majority of the SGB.

This study is relevant in that it brings about exposure to the fact that accountability is not only a financial matter but extends to other issues of school management such as autonomy in the maintenance of school property, learner safety and performances as well as the recruitment of educators by school authorities like SGBs and SMTs. Hence, it brings about a significant contribution to the body of knowledge and practical operation of matters that deal with accountability such as financial control. Also, it brings about clarity of the idea that the management of a school is not the sole responsibility of the principal but the entire school governance. In connection to this, the study helps to ensure more clarity on the side of the Department of Education on accountability in the broader spectrum of management and administration. Finally, it further brings about clarity of SGBs in accountability particularly in the domain of policy making and implementation hence emphasising the importance of parents.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Advanced Certificate of Education
ANA	Annual National Assessment
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
BSDR	Bellevue School District Report
DA	Democratic Alliance
DOE	Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resource
LEAs	Local Education Authorities
LRC	Learner Representative Council
MEC	Member of Executive Council
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NCSL	National College for School Leaders
NNSFF	National Norms and Standard for School Funding
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headship
NSNP	National School Nutritional Program
NWPDOE	North West Provincial Department of Education
OBE	Out-Come Based Education

PDOE	Provincial Department of Education
PPM	Post Provisional Model
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SABC	South African Broad Casting
SASA	South African Schools Act
SBM	School Base Management
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America



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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the meaning of accountability from a school stakeholder's perspective. According to Bush and West-Burnham (1994:310) and Bush and Bell (2002:233), the concept of accountability has several different interpretations. At its most basic it means to hold someone to account or to have the obligation to deliver an account as well as being able to do so. Accountability is thus closely connected to responsibility, because those who have been given responsibility are equally asked to give an account for their performance (Farrell & Law, 1999a:6). Another description is that to be accountable is to be required to explain or justify ones action or behaviour. In effect this idea implies being responsible for outcomes and results, but it could also mean "accepting responsibility for adherence to a code of practice rather than an outcome" (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:310).

The concept of accountability has been portrayed as vital and pertinent in the field of Educational Management for many years (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:9; Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009:124; Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2012:40). As in Business, Politics and the Legal sector accountability can equally determine a possible success or failure of a school. From an educational perspective, accountability means being required to give an account of events or behaviour in a school or college to those who have a legitimate right to know (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:309). School stakeholders being the primary concern of this study are expected to act in a responsible manner because of the importance attached to the implementation of policies and management of change in schools (Harrison, Rouse, & De Villiers, 2012:249).

According to Figlio and Loeb (2011:384), in the educational sector the process of evaluating school performance on the basis of student performance measures is increasingly prevalent around the world. Affirming this view, Brent (2007:1) postulates that the drive to raise educational standards in many countries has, over the last decade, concentrated on more tightly focused curricular frameworks and testing regimes. This has resulted in improving standards as measured by test scores (Brent, 2007:1) rather than responsiveness through accountability. In this regard O'Sullivan and West-Burnham (2011:60) asserts that "school principals as leaders within school communities are pivotal actors in this drama, caught in the cross-wires of a competing if

not conflicting policy agenda empowered by autonomy where by responsibility and decision-making have been devolved to the level of the school”.

In the rest of this chapter the following sections are addressed: a background of the study reviewing how the act of accountability is practiced worldwide; motivation for the study derived from both the literature and a personal basis; followed by the problem statement and research questions; aim and objectives of the study where the purpose(s) are clearly stated; a literature review which provides answers to postulated research problems; data collection and analysis strategies that will be addressed as part of the research design and methodology; definition of some key concepts used in the study as well as issues of ethical consideration and trustworthiness.

1.2. BACKGROUND

One of the most common areas where accountability is highly applicable is in Politics. Seakamela (2011:24) explains that in countries where the parliamentary system prevails, there is the tendency towards ministerial accountability where ministers are individually accountable to parliament for their own actions and the ministries which they represent. Affirming this view, Ball *et al.* in Suspitsyna (2010:568) expounded that political accountability is that which involves direct contact with voters and responsiveness through elected officials. That it in fact encompasses answerability to both the government and the public. Just like in Politics and the Legal field, those charged with the responsibility of managing a school are equally expected to give an account or be answerable to the public or community where the school is based.

On the international educational scene, modern operations are impacted upon by globalisation, the spread of democratisation, explosion of new information technologies and numerous other factors that have a bearing on their functioning, practices and accountability (Delhi & Taylor, 2006:136). According to Suspitsyna (2010:567), for more than a decade, quality assurance and accountability have reigned over education policy agendas on a vast geographic territory from Europe to the Americas, to Asia and Australia and to New Zealand. Among the active champions of accountability, the United States (USA) has been at the forefront of producing policies and practices that are aimed at controlling and managing educational quality. Seakamela (2011:4) in fact stated that education accountability originates from the USA and is tied to value for money debates and the inputs/outputs considerations. He further pointed out that the lack of trust in the

ability of schools to meet the needs of society has led to more demands for accountability in education.

In the United Kingdom (here after referred to as UK) on the other hand, centralised reporting of school-wide examination scores has occurred for over two decades (Figlio & Loeb, 2011:384). Accountability gained credence in the UK since Callaghan's Seminal Ruskin speech in 1976 (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:309). Expressed in terms which now appear to be modest he asserted that teachers have a responsibility to explain and justify their decisions to a wider audience which includes parents, employers and central government who fund their activities. The notion of accountability has been given a new emphasis in England and Wales in particular by the shift to autonomous or quasi-autonomous institutions following the 1988 Education Reforms Act (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:308).

The dawn of democracy in South Africa heralded a new culture and approach to service delivery. Implicit in this new culture is the acknowledgement that public service must be re-engineered to meet the imperatives of an emerging developmental state. To this effect, accountability and responsiveness have become central organising principles for service delivery (Seakamela, 2011:2). At school level, School Management Teams (here after refer to as SMTs) and other stakeholders such as officials of the Department of Education are facing numerous challenges from both parents and learners as a result of the new democracy and many rights conferred on learners. This makes the implementation of organising principles and application of accountability in practice generally challenging.

The move from centrally based to School-Based Management (SBM) in education has been a concomitant development in the South African educational system over the past two decades (Bechuke, 2011:2). The Task Team Report on Education Management Development (DoE, 1996) and legislation such as the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) advocated the establishment of a democratic system of school governance in the form of School Governing Bodies (here after refer to as SGBs). This body comprises of stakeholders such as parents, principals, educators and non-members of staff who administer the management of schools (Mokoena, 2011:119). Notwithstanding, these changes face by schools, together with challenges such as high failure rate in learner academic performance; non-participation by parents in their

children's education, an externally imposed vision and inefficient time usage all have major implications for the accountability of different school stakeholders (Spaull, 2013:53).

1.3. MOTIVATION

In addition to ideas acquired from the preliminary literature review the researcher's view were shaped while studying towards a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Honours degree in Educational Management Laws and Systems at the University of North West during the 2013 academic year. The researcher was further motivated on a personal basis for conducting this study together with some initial observations during his visits to some schools and conversation with principals and teachers. During one such visit the researcher noticed that there was confusion in the understanding of the roles and responsibilities regarding accountability by different school stakeholders. Stakeholders seemed not to understand exactly when to perform a particular function and how. Also it was noticed that teachers did not know exactly where, to whom and how to raise concerns regarding their working conditions and learners' performances. They were obviously uncertain about reporting structures and the acceptance of responsibility.

It was also evident that there is no clear understanding of the duties and responsibilities of school management staff regarding the employment of educators in the area. The researcher was told by certain schools that the Department is responsible for employing educators not the school, during his visit to some of the schools. In a subsequent visit to the Department of Education, he was however informed that individual schools and not the Department employ educators. According to a Departmental official the Department is only responsible for *signing employment contracts* which is contrary to the findings of Bush and Middlewood (2013:147) who explains that after the screening at the initial stage of the selection process by the DOE, the remaining applicants are handed over to the SGBs for final selection by the schools.

Based on these experiences, one could argue that there is a conflicting view with regard to the appointment and selection process of educators in schools. An activity which Bush and Middlewood, (2013:145) describe as the highest and most paramount priority because it is the most important resource for an effective school. In this regard an article published in the Daily News, South Africa of April 10, 2008 cited by Keating (2008) indicated that "some School Governing Bodies do not have the skills to appoint educators, manage huge school budgets, nor even implement policies".

1.4. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this kind of a study, it is essential to define those problems that must be investigated. This is evident in McMillan and Schumacher (2010:64) when they write specifically about the formulation of a qualitative research problem. They elaborate that a research problem should not be too specific but represent “an open-ended idea or purpose that identifies, in a broad way, the central phenomenon that will be investigated”. Open ended questions were used during interviews with participants whereby they gave their feelings, beliefs and/or opinions in respect of the research topic. Because of the importance of a research problem in a study, Creswell (2007:102) emphasises that rather than calling it a “problem” it might be clearer if called the “need for the study”.

The introduction of School Based Management (SBM) and a related change such as the introduction of SGBs can be regarded as issues that have many sides to investigate. Such a challenge is the sharing of responsibility in schools to stakeholders such as heads of departments (HODs). It is however not limited to merely dividing responsibilities amongst management staff in a school, but it equally involves other stakeholders such as parents, departmental officials and even learners. In South Africa however Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:3) indicated that there is generally a lack of responsibility, dedication and commitment on the part of many educators and learners which has made it difficult to achieve the required skills and knowledge. This can be linked to Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008:261) postulation that the tendency to regard school principals as solely responsible for leadership and management of schools is gradually, if not already, replaced by the notion that leadership and management are the prerogative of many, if not all stakeholders in education. Therefore there is the need for all stakeholders to work together.

It thus seems that managerial hierarchies as well as the execution of a responsibility between different stakeholders and the state are core components of accountability that should be investigated (Farrell & Law, 1999b:296). Also the South African School Act (SASA, 1996) requires that a school keeps an accurate system of recording financial transactions (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2011:124). But this is rare because resources to facilitate this task are not used in many schools of the Mafikeng Area for reasons such as unavailability of computers, computer illiteracy, mismanagement and poor service delivery. Amongst other things the recruitment and

selection process of educators is one such issue to be examined herein. Bush and Middlewood (2014:147) maintain that the scope for leaders and managers at individual context level may be considerably constrained by the fact that staff are nominated or appointed to their organisation by educational authorities, thus leaving the principals with little or no say on whom to hire or fire. The degree to which stakeholders are required to render an account is indeed a central issue for investigation. In order to address the above mentioned aspects the main research problem can be formulated as follows;

- What are the perceptions of stakeholders of accountability of schools in the Mafikeng area of North West Province?

The study was further guided by the following specific research questions which according to Creswell (2007:19) can change in the middle of the study to reflect better the type of questions needed to understand the research problem.

- What is the stakeholders' understanding of the concept of accountability?
- How is the concept of accountability practised by stakeholders?
- What challenges do stakeholders experience in the practice of accountability?
- What strategies can be implemented to improve the accountability level?

1.5. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study is to illuminate the meaning of accountability from a school stakeholder's perspective

The objectives derived from the main aim of this study included the following:

- Clarify stakeholders' understanding of the concept of accountability in schools
- Determine the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the nature of accountability of school matters in the Mafikeng area
- Determine the challenges face by school stakeholders in the accountability of schools in the Mafikeng area
- Derive strategies to enhance ways to face the challenges of stakeholder's accountability of schools in the Mafikeng area.

1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative approach in which a descriptive survey of school stakeholders regarding their accountability role in the management of schools in the Mafikeng Area was done. This was partially motivated by Creswell and Clark's (2007:4) view on methodology in research as a "philosophical framework and fundamental assumption" because the framework one uses influences the procedures of research. It is for this reason that the section was divided into a literature study and an empirical investigation.

1.6.1. Literature Study

The literature study describes theoretical perspectives and previous research findings regarding the problem at hand (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:64). Its function is to "look again" at what others have done in areas that are similar, though not necessarily identical to one's own area of investigation. Marshall and Rossman (2011:77) explain that a literature survey shares with the reader the result of other studies that are closely related to the one being undertaken. That is, it relates a study to the larger, on-going dialogue in the literature, filling gaps and extending prior studies. These authors hold that throughout a literature study, researchers develop an argument by identifying the discourses that are useful and demonstrating how some studies are dated, limited or leave some questions unanswered. All theoretical and conceptual issues regarding educational accountability and other related matters were addressed thanks to a vast knowledge on the topic acquired through a literature study.

In this study, an intensive review of literature related to the topic was portrayed in the subsequent chapter in what Henning, Rensburg and Smith (2004:27) describe as the contextualisation of a study to argue the case and to identify a niche to be occupied by the current research. Both primary and secondary sources were thoroughly utilised. They comprised books relating to teaching, learning and management issues; professional journals in education; specialists' reports from the department of education; Masters and PhD theses from various universities in the country; newspapers and magazines on school related issues. The dialogue Search at the Mafikeng Campus of North-West University Library was conducted using key words like: accountability in schools, responsibilities of school stakeholders, educational management systems, frameworks for accountability and significance of stakeholder's accountability.

1.6.2. Empirical Investigation

In this section all the issues involved in planning and executing a research project were dealt with ranging from the research design to the strategy of inquiry as well as the analysis of data.

1.6.2.1. Research design

A research design refers to the plan of action that links the philosophical assumption to specific methods (Creswell & Clark, 2007:4). Mouton (2005:55) views a research design as a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct the research. This means that a research design encompasses all the steps and strategies that are taken into consideration before conducting a research project. Affirming these views though formulated slightly differently, Maree (2010:70) mentions that a “research design refers to a plan or strategy which moves from an underlying philosophical assumption to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and data analysis to be done”. Cohen *et al.* in Joubert and Serakwane (2009:135) takes it a step further, that a research design is governed by the notion of fitness of purpose, meaning that the research design and methodology were therefore determined by the purpose of the research.

For purpose of this study a qualitative design was used together with an interpretive case study approach. The researcher regarded a qualitative design as important for this study because descriptions are represented in words rather than numerically which is the case in a quantitative study. Qualitative research, according to Merriam (2009:12), is a piece of research which is interested in understanding the meaning of what people have constructed. That is how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Guest *et al.* 2013:3). Hence these practices transform the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos.

According to Maree (2010:75), a case study approach is a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon under study. Creswell (2009:13) maintains that case studies are strategies of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a programme, event, activity, process, of one or more individuals. The researcher used a multiple case study research approach for this study because he wished to obtain an in-depth description as well as lived experiences and interpretations on the perception of school stakeholder's in relation to accountability, from an educational management perspective.

1.6.2.2. Data Collection Strategies

Data collection involves the different techniques a researcher uses to gather information. According to Creswell (2009:178) data collection steps include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured and semi-structured observations, interviews, document and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information. In this study qualitative data were attained by means of interviews and participant observation that constituted field notes, document and visual material analysis.

Creswell (2009:221) explains that an interview is a question and answer method of collecting information in a one-on-one situation and an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. Data was collected in a face-to-face situation by interacting with selected respondents in their natural settings as supported by McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 315). Maree (2007:87) says that an interview is a two way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant. During the interviews participants were encouraged to be vocal and tell their story regarding accountability issues that they know about in detail. By doing the interviews in this way the researcher was able to break down the idea that he might be in a position of authority over participants. Henning *et al.* (2004:53) however warns that during interview sessions the researcher/interviewer must be careful to guide the process and not ask leading questions that might contaminate the data. Basically only one type of interview was utilised which is in-depth individual interview involving only the participant and the researcher.

In-depth individual interviews were used to elicit further information on the research problem. The researcher sought out opinions, feelings, attitude and beliefs from a number of stakeholders that included principals, SGB chairperson (parent), educators and officials of the Provincial Department of Education (PDOE) directly involved in school matters. Henning *et al.* (2004:52) affirms this assertion, stating that the main aim of this kind of interview is to bring to our attention what individuals think, feel and do. Also this type of interview aimed to discover what participants had to say about pertinent issues that were raised, giving their *subjective* reality in a “formatted” discussion which was guided and managed by the interviewer and later integrated into a research report. Group interview on the other hand was deliberately left out because it was

never easy to bring stakeholders from the different schools and offices together for a group interview.

Also, the researcher spent time with the participants at the various sites attending SMT and SGB meetings as well as discussing interview questions while trying to understand assumptions, values, beliefs and experience of education stakeholders in school management. Participant observation was particularly carried out during interviews because according to Rubin and Rubin (2012:26) it can help the researcher to flow and sort out him or herself during transcription. The researcher also attended SGBs and HODs monthly assessment meetings, in all of which he acted as a participant observer. Practically, while participating in these meetings, the researcher took a step back, stood aside of what was going on, watched it, remembered it, thought about it later (Rubin & Rubin 2012:26) as well as made notes about it. These notes that were constructed both during interviews and observations constituted the field notes for the study.

Another strategy that the researcher utilised during this study was document analysis. According to Creswell (2009:187) a document enables a researcher to obtain the language and words of participants and can be accessed at a time convenient to the researcher as an unobtrusive source of information. As written evidence, it saves a researcher the time and expenses of transcribing. Since documents enrich what a researcher sees and hears by supporting, expanding and challenging perceptions, the following documents were analysed for purpose of this study; newspapers and magazines like the Mafikeng Mail containing reported cases of accountability problems, schools' monthly and annual reports, departmental monthly and annual reports as well as HODs, SGBs and SMTs reports from the respective sites.

1.6.2.3. Data Analysis and presentation of findings

According to Creswell (2009:183) data analysis in qualitative studies is that which involves making sense out of text and image data. It encompasses preparing the data for analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data and making an interpretation of the real meaning. The analysis for this study as indicated was based on the following steps: organisation of details about the case, categorising of data in terms of common themes, interpretation of single instances, identification of patterns and synthesis and generalisations into an overall portrait of the case (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:136). This process culminates in the expressing of categories into themes by means of open coding.

Open coding was utilised throughout the analysis process which according to White (2002:82) is “a process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data”. Sentences and paragraphs from the transcript interviews were sorted by means of underlining segments which eventually enabled the researcher to identify different themes and categories. These themes and categories were classified with respect to various research questions. Hence, the presentation of data which mostly took the form of a narration was supported by the use of adequate quotations from the participant’s original words. Wallace and Poulson (2003:56) point out that during the presentation of the research report, the researcher must endeavour to:

- Highlight what was particularly important or significant about the findings in relation to the central question
- Comment on any unexpected or unusual findings (depending on the extent to which the study was exploratory and open-ended)
- Return to discuss the substantive theoretical and methodological issues identified earlier and link key findings from your work with the literature review.

These outline factors boosted the research in that it enables the researcher to stay focused and on track in relation to the research question and literature.

1.6.2.4. Selection of Sites and Participants

The sites comprised premises of primary, middle and high schools in the Mafikeng Area office, offices of officials from the PDOE in Mafikeng as well as the place(s) of work and homes of SGB chairpersons (parents) and departmental officials that were interviewed. These places of work constituted part of the research site because parents in particular are not current staff of the school and come to schools only during SGBs meetings or upon invitation by the principal on behalf of the SMTs. The incentive behind the selection of sites and participants for this study was based on the researchers’ desire to examine how the concept of accountability works in practice at different levels and environment as far as the running of schools is concern.

The participants consisted of those individuals who had particular characteristics or experiences that contributed to a greater understanding of the phenomenon under study (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011: 84; Best & Kahn, 2003:1). Fifteen (15) participants were involve in this study and were chosen from three schools in the area as follows: firstly, principals or deputies from all three schools; secondly, SGB chairpersons (parents not working in the school) from the three

schools; thirdly, purposefully selected teachers based on their level of exposure and with the help of the principal and lastly, Education Department officials who are closely involved in school management ranging from financial to general administrative matters like employee wellness. The participants from the PDOE were purposefully selected with assistance from the office of the Superintendent General where permission was obtained to interview them.

Participants as indicated earlier were selected from a sample of three schools. Four participants (4) came from each of the schools in the area and the remaining three (3) officials were from the Department of Education directly involve in school matters. Each participating school was represented by a principal, a chairperson and two educators. Thus the total sample for the study was $4 \times 3 + 3 = 15$

Keeping these categories in mind, participants were chosen through a non-random selection method called purposive selection. This was based on the researcher's perception that their levels of self-restraint, experience, academic qualification and management abilities is amongst the best in the Area. This selection method was further motivated following some preliminary document analysis like school annual reports provided by the Department of Education upon request by the researcher. Purposive selection according to Hennink *et al.* (2011:85) is both deliberate and flexible as it involve the selection of people who have specific characteristics or experience of the topic and can provide detailed understanding of research issues. Also this selection was based on the fact that accountability is a very sensitive issue which requires inside knowledge of whoever has to give an account. Such insight knowledge can only be possessed by those officials who have handled these positions for a long period of time.

1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

A number of concepts that were consistently used in this research are explained to enable the researcher and other readers to have clarity about the subject matter. These further bring to limelight the importance of the role of conceptualisation in a study.

1.7.1. School stakeholders

Stakeholders can be viewed either narrowly and limited to those who are crucial to an organisation's survival or more widely to include all groups who impact on the achievement of an organisation's objectives (Harrison *et al.* 2012:249). In the public sector, there is a wide group of stakeholders to consider, including voters and voter representatives, taxpayers, the general

public, consumers of the goods and services produced by the public sector, policymakers, public servants, independent government advisors, and public sector agency managers (Harrison *et al.* 2012:249).

In the educational sector, a large group of stakeholders influences the creation of strategic objectives. These include students, parents, potential employers of students, taxpayers, the community (Harrison *et al.*, 2012:249). Stakeholders may be central or internal to the Education Department, such as officials in provincial or regional offices, principals and teachers, members of the community, members from the business and industrial sectors, education and training providers, children's service providers, children, students and their families. Hooze *et al.* (2012:10) explains that in education, parents and students are the primary stakeholders. Teachers and other educational and non-educational staff are internal stakeholders with a clear interest in the success of the school. Members of government and organisations formally operating on behalf of government (such as inspectorates or municipalities) operate as vertical stakeholders.

1.7.2. Accountability

The notion of accountability adopts different meanings, depending on the context and the issues at stake as well as the population. It is usually said that "to whom more is given, more is expected". In this regard Ndawi and Peasuh (2005:210) comparatively argue that businesses just like schools receive huge sums of money in the form of investment. In more practical terms they explain that in the Financial Budget of July 1997 to December 1998, Zimbabwe allocated Z\$112 billion to Primary and Secondary Education, and Z\$2.819 billion to Higher Education. Thus if 30% of the country's budget can go into education alone, it is naturally expected to see the investments yielding the expected fruits. To these authors therefore to account is to demonstrate success or acknowledge failure in a way that is publicly meaningful. Spaul (2013:53) is of the opinion that accountability means a state of being answerable for something to someone. That is, on the one hand, it is to account for one's outcomes or performance and to accept responsibility for those outcomes. It also implies that there are consequences for non-performance. On the other hand Van der Westhuizen (2004:173) says that accountability involves giving account to designated people about one's action concerning mandated duties.

However the process of accountability can only be complete when heads of organisations such as principals give an account or are answerable to their teachers and parents (community) as well as

to those who put them in power (state). In this respect, Naidu *et al.* (2012:40) say that the school has a specific duty allocated to it by the society such as to educate the young people in the society. In discharging this obligation the school is answerable for deeds and omissions to the community that it has indeed performed this task as expected. Therefore for the process of accountability to take place, one must first be in position of authority. From all these explanations, one will say to be accountable therefore is to be responsible, unambiguous over responsibilities and answerable for ones activities.

1.7.3 Educational Management

Bush and West-Burnham (1994:12 & 28) says that management means doing things and making things happen. To these authors, what is known as management to a British reader is known as administration to the American or Australian reader. In an attempt to explain the nomenclature involve in education management, Botha (2013:5) say that education management is the process of working with and through individuals, groups and resources whether they be learners, educators administrative staff, parents or other stakeholders to accomplish educational goals or outcomes. Bush (2008a:1) defines educational management as simply an executive function for carrying out agreed policy. In an argument he explains that management is different from educational leadership which has at its core the responsibility for policy formulation and organisational transformation where appropriate. Thus Educational management should be centrally concerned with the purpose or aims of education which provide a crucial sense of direction that should underpin the management of educational institutions. Bush and West-Burnham (1994:28) put forward the idea that one of the biggest challenges of managing is the misconception that management lies with a senior group of staff (status & power) when in fact it entails all members of the educational organisation ranging from senior staff to non-teaching staff and even learners.

In a statement made by Naidu *et al.* (2012:4) in line with the international trends, the leadership and management of schools has become much more than the administration of the school by an individual in an official position of authority. In confirmation of this postulation, a study conducted by Bush in 2004 in schools of the Gauteng area revealed that principals did not consider the delivery of teaching and learning as their core responsibility. Thus there is need to emphasise that all aspects of management and leadership exist for the purpose of enabling and

supporting teaching and learning. Education management can therefore be summarised as the act of controlling or supervising the entire process of learning in order to achieve positive results that are evident in the lives of the learners.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

An emergent design requires ethical principles to be considered throughout all phases of planning and data collection (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Most ethical issues in research fall into one of four categories namely; protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101; Punch, 2014:43). In this study the researcher ensured that participants were not exposed to any form of danger and their right to privacy was respected. He equally made sure that every literature document used in this study was reviewed through in-text referencing and list of references. The in-text citation method used was characterised by linking the names of authors and year of publication to every idea that was not originally the researchers. These were followed by a list of references that came at the end of the study.

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the office of the director for the School of Educational Leadership Development, Faculty of Education and Training Mafikeng campus of the North West University (see Appendix A). The letter was sent to the Area office and the office of the Superintendent General requesting permission to carry out research in schools and the DOE respectively. The above mention offices on behalf of the DOE granted the researcher permission to undertake the study only in the areas and schools involved (see Appendix B & C). At this point the letters were then forwarded to the principals of the three schools involved as well as the three officials from the DOE requesting their individual participation in the study at their various schools and offices (see appendix D, E & F).

Moreover because of the difficulty encountered in trying to contact and negotiate for interview schedule with departmental officials, the researcher decided to address letters to the three officials from the department seeking their attention. A sample of the letter is described as Appendix G. All these were done as part of the ethical process for the research. They were well informed of the purpose as well as the aims and objective of the research. Appointments were made in such a way that research activities did not interfere with teaching and learning in the

schools. The interview schedules were therefore slated mostly at break time or after school hours with educators and at lunch time with officials from the Department of Education.

1.8.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the way in which the researcher is able to persuade the audience that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to (Maree, 2010:299). To achieve this, two main methods, namely member checking and credibility were followed. The researcher used the member checking strategy which according to Creswell (2009:191) involves taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to the participants and determining whether these participants feel that what they said have been reported accurately. Transcribed data was taken back to a sample of the participants for validation and was collected after a period of one week when confirmations were made.

Secondly, by credibility, the researcher ensured that there was an understanding and the control of bias, instead of generalisations (Maree, 2010:113). To achieve these values, two kinds of interviews were conducted which included focus-group interviews and individual interviews. Participants were updated on a regular basis through internet conversations on what had been extracted during document analysis. According to them and based on the role of research ethics such information was highly confidential and thus needed to be documented exactly the way they were. The researcher made sure that during such internet conversations the participants fully comprehended the nature and outcomes of the research by asking them to comment on draft reports. In this regard, Maree (2010:115) postulated that participants must be assured of anonymity and confidentiality by not mentioning their names and not forcing them to participate or continue participating against their will.

1.8.2 Gaining access

According to Creswell (2007:123) gaining access to sites involves several steps, most of which were applicable in this study. Following the approval of the proposal for the study by the Faculty Research Committee of the North West University and a subsequent letter of permission to carry out the research issued, all was set for data collection (see 1.8 paragraph two). These letters were presented to the gatekeepers of all selected schools and offices that were visited and access granted. Affirming these views, Creswell and Clark (2007:113) mention that because qualitative data collection involves spending time at sites which might be places not typically visited by the

public, researchers need to find a gatekeeper or any member of the organisation who will essentially “open up” the organisation.

1.9. CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

It can be argued that when applied to education, the notions of accountability can be very complex and at times controversial because education policies are implemented within complex contexts, characterised by inequalities and other factors (Seakamela, 2011:3). Notwithstanding this study remains a significant contributor to the existing knowledge of accountability in the following ways;

- It brings about exposure to the fact that accountability is not only a financial matter but extend to other issues of school management such as autonomy in maintenance of school property, learner safety and performances as well as the recruitment of educators.
- It brings about a significant contribution to the body of knowledge and practical operation of matters that deal with accountability such as financial control.
- It equally brings about clarity of the idea that the management of a school is not the sole responsibility of the principal.
- It helps to ensure clarity on the side of the Department of Education on accountability in the broad spectrum of management and administration.
- Finally, it brings about clarity of SGBs in accountability particularly in the domain of policy making and implementation.

1.10 PRELIMINARY STRUCTURES

The study consists of five main chapter partition as follows;

Chapter one: General orientation and overview

This chapter will deal with a background of the study, problem statement, aims and objectives of the study, research design and methods, literature review, data collection and analysis strategies as well as ethical considerations. This chapter will basically provide a road map which the entire research will follow.

Chapter two: Main accountability concerns in education

A detailed review of existing related literature on stakeholder's accountability will be examined. Both primary and secondary sources will be utilised. A theoretical and conceptual framework for school stakeholder accountability will also be established.

Chapter three: Research design and methodology

This chapter will explore the different designs that will be relevant to this study as well as relevant data collection techniques and procedures. This design will be qualitative consisting of a case study approach.

Chapter four: Interpretation and presentation of data from empirical findings

This chapter will deal with findings from the empirical research which will involve analysing and presentation of the data. The data will be acquired by means of different research techniques such as interviews and document analysis.

Chapter five: Rapport between findings, recommendations and conclusion

This chapter will be characterised by an overview of the main findings, constructive recommendations for future research and a conclusion. The recommendations in this chapter will be essential as it will enable future research to be done on this topic.

1.11 SUMMARY

In this chapter the following aspect were dealt with. A background of study from a world view tracing the origin of the concept and how it is differently applied by countries; a motivation of the study from a literature perspective to personally inspired motives; the problem of the study and sub-questions which define the limitations and delimitations of the study; a brief description of the research design and methods ranging from a literature review to an empirical investigation which further comprises data collection strategies and analysis; selection strategies of participants involve in the study; ethical considerations of a research and a preliminary structure of the entire study.

The subsequent chapter will give a detailed review of literature with regards to stakeholders and accountability issues that are directly or indirectly related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

ACCOUNTABILITY OF STAKEHOLDERS IN EDUCATION

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses various accountability concerns from a literature perspective in cognisance of the problem of the study. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011:77), a literature review is a thoughtful and insightful discussion of related literature built in a logical framework for the research and locates it within a tradition of enquiry and a context of related studies. In other words, it relates a study to the larger, on-going dialogue in the literature, filling gaps and extending prior studies (Henning *et al.* 2004:27; Wilson, 2009:370). Marshall and Rossman (2011:77) say that a literature review serves four main functions;

Firstly, it demonstrates the underlying assumptions behind the general research questions; secondly, it demonstrate that the researcher is knowledgeable about related research and the scholarly traditions that that surround and support the study; thirdly it shows that the researcher has identified some gaps in previous research and that the proposed study will fill a demonstrated need; and finally the review defines and redefines the research question by embedding them in large traditions of enquiry. To meet these terms the literature study was divided into a theoretical and conceptual framework which involved the nature and development of accountability in education, the responsibilities of stakeholders in schools regarding accountability, the challenges involving accountability in education and possible remedies were discussed. These discussions are linked to key concepts such as responsibility, answerability and obligation.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Wellington (2015:22), a theory may be a metaphor, a model or a framework for understanding or making sense of things that happen in education. He is also of the view that a theory in educational research is only worthy of the name if it helps us to explain phenomena and thereby aids our understanding of these. Botha (2013:11) say that a theory relates to “ideas and views” formulated by individuals regarding certain scientific areas like school management. To Bush and Bell (2002:16) there is no single all-embracing theory of educational management. Rather it comprises a series of perspectives rather than an all-embracing “scientific truth”. Various theories reflect very different ways of understanding and interpreting events and behaviours in schools and colleges. Similarly, Fleisch (2006:372) explains that a number of

theories have been developed to explain why pressure or accountability is an agent of change in schools with very poor performance. It seems therefore that pressure and threat of redeployment of stakeholders for poor performance and ultimately closure of schools might result in high stake accountability in schools. Bush (2003:26) noted that researchers must be aware of the confusion that exists in explaining educational management theories, because writers use different terms in explaining similar or the same phenomenon. In this regard Botha (2013:11) further clarifies that a model relates to the grouping or joining of a number of theories in a single model.

Many leadership and management theories or models attempt to isolate the characteristics of successful leaders with the belief that once these qualities are identified they could be adopted by a broader group of school leaders (Volante, 2012:12). Amongst the models or theories involved in educational management and leadership, the following seem most pertinent to this study because they offer valuable insights to the nature of management in education;

2.2.1. Instructional leadership theory

According to Bush and Middlewood (2013:15) instructional leadership emphasises the managing of teaching and learning as well as the behaviour of teachers in working with students, since these are the main activities of educational institutions. Volante (2012:13) elaborated that in most cases instructional leadership relates to those actions that a principal takes to promote student growth. This model differs from other theories in that it focuses on the direction of influence rather than its nature and sources. Those occupying leadership positions such as the principal engage themselves describing how things are to be done instead of maintaining the nature of principles base on their origin. Bush and Middlewood (2013:16) explain that school leaders may lack sufficient knowledge in teaching and learning to provide adequate instructional leadership. But the expectations from these principals to act as instructional leaders represent a major change from traditional practice in many schools.

The instructional leadership theory is relevant in this study of stakeholder's accountability for the reason that schools have a set of visions under which they operate, guided by the SGBs and SMTs, spearheaded by the principal. Thus it becomes the responsibility of the principal to ensure that specific tasks like ensuring a conducive educational environment for teaching and learning is attained. Also this theory is highly link to the study of accountability in that in a school environment where learners and educators take responsibility over their actions they become

more careful and cautious which results in a more improve teaching and learning strategies. Because leadership practice is often not easy to accomplish without faults, Van der Westhuizen (2013:299) and Bush and West-Burnham (1994:28) explains that for accountability to be achieved in a school, total quality management must be put into place. This is to say there must be a complete deviation of leadership from the old traditional management system where for example employees are blamed for errors, to a quality management where errors are accepted as part of the process and system. Van der Westhuizen (2013:183) thus holds that the goal of organisational change in a school should be to improve the quality of working life of the people involved in it and must be done with caution. Bush and Middlewood (2013:16) therefore say that instructional leadership theory is very significant because it targets the main purpose of educational organisation which is teaching and learning.

2.2.2. Managerial leadership theory

According to Caldwell (2002) in Bush (2008a:11) managers and leaders of self-managing schools must be able to develop and implement a cyclical process involving seven managerial functions as follows; goal setting, needs identification, priority setting, planning, budgeting, implementing and evaluating. With a critical look at these concepts it is evident that managerial leadership theory is an essential component of successful schools and that these elements must always form part of the management process through an internally motivated accountability process. The management of school finances for example is one of those aspects that relates closely to managerial leadership. School finances have to be controlled strictly in terms of prescribed rules and regulations. The importance of this kind of control can be illustrated by referring to a case where it was reported that funds had disappeared from a schools' bank accounts (Daily News, 2010:3). According to this report, money belonging to three different bank accounts of the school for various purposes like school fees and investment funds went missing. Thanks to the role of accountability through annual assessment of school funds which comes up at the middle of the year the loophole was discovered ad remedied (Daily news, 2010:3).

With this theory, it is assumed that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviours. Thus if the task is well performed, it follows that the work of others in the organisation will be facilitated (Bush, 2008b:11; Bush & Middlewood, 2013:17). In most

democratic countries in the world and South Africa in particular, the power and authority of a principal is as a result of their position, and not really linked to personal qualities. This theory focuses on managing existing activities successfully by implementing task-orientated principles for the sake of efficiency. The managerial leadership theory differs from the instructional leadership theory in that while the former focuses on the management of teaching and learning activities efficiently, the later focuses on the implementation of specific administrative actions. However both theories are relevant in this study because they emphasise the importance of a successful implementation of the principles of teaching and learning through adequate accountability.

2.2.3. Transformational leadership theory

Transformational leadership theory according to Bush (2008a:13) focuses on securing the commitment of teachers to the goals of the organisation's leaders. It is comprehensive in that it provides a normative approach to school leadership which focuses mainly on the different processes used by school leaders to influence outcomes rather than the direction or nature of those outcomes as in the case of instructional and managerial leadership theory respectively. To Naidu and Botha (2012:9219) transformational leadership is related to long term development and change. It produces higher level of efforts and satisfaction in followers which translates to greater productivity and quality outcome of the institution. This theory is applicable to this study in the sense that for principals and head of departments (HODs) for instance to achieve the vision of a school they must show total commitment to their jobs by accepting every form of change. Being committed to ones jobs also entails acting responsibly, getting motivated as well as adequate reporting on teaching and learning activities to both employer and community or their superiors.

Following a number of new laws and policies introduced in South Africa since 1994, there is an indication that the government is of the opinion that transformation will be achieved primarily through School-Base Education (Naidu *et al.*, 2012: XV). This is linked to the education related stipulation in the country's constitution (RSA, 1996) such as that pointing to the human right to basic education and similar stipulations in the South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996). Naidu *et al* (2012:4) hold that in the previous education system, school principals in South Africa were seen as facilitators of state agendas. In this regard, managing education during this era was

characterised by authoritarianism, hierarchical, non-consultative and non-participative activities. Moving away from this era to another regime of democracy, principals were placed in a dilemma because they now have to be accountable to both their employer and their community for effective delivery of education. Also Bush (2007:397) says that in South Africa, 'transformation' has a special meaning linked to the need to convert the previous stratified system into a new framework stressing equity and redress. To him it was a case of a new government having to take on restructuring and redefining a whole system, to achieve the aim of quality education for all.

This theory as noted above has attracted much attention in contemporary discussions. Bush and Middlewood (2013:20) warn that transformational leadership has the potential to become despotic because of its strong, brave and fascinating prospect. Hence there is a high risk of the leadership role becoming tyrannical where those at the helm of activities can dictate the pace at which teaching and learning will be done. Bush (2007:396) however supports the introduction of this theory because "transformational leaders succeed in gaining the commitment of followers to such a degree that higher levels of accomplishment become virtually a moral imperative". By moral imperative, it means that if accomplishing the vision or mission of a school requires performing authoritative functions then those at the helm of authority must not hesitate to do so. The implementation of such measures can enhance the process of establishing accountability in a school as an organisation if applied with care. Therefore a powerful capacity for transformational leadership is to a greater extent required for the achievement of accountability measures.

2.2.4 Participative and/or collegial leadership theory

As indicated earlier, the idea behind theories, models as well as concepts have been used differently by authors like Bush, Sergiovanni and Naidu *et al.* depending on particular issues to be addressed. In this regard, while Naidu *et al* (2012:77) talks about collegial theory, Bush and Middlewood (2013:21) talks of participative theory. According to Bush and Middlewood (2013:21), participation means the opportunity given to staff to engage in the process of decision making. In most contemporary educational systems the act of leadership role and decision making has been delegated to institutions. Unlike Bush and Middlewood (2013:21), Naidu *et al* (2012:77) in their collegial theory hold that it requires determining policies and making decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. The theory in fact states that power is

distributed or shared amongst some or all stakeholders in the organisation who are thought to have a mutual understanding about the objectives of the institution.

Sergiovanni in Bush (2008b:14) clarifies that participative leadership is very important because it helps in bonding staff together and in easing the pressure on school principals. This theory can be very instrumental in organisations like a school where a high level of accountability is required thus confirming the saying that “two heads are better than one”. Though accountability entails both responsibility and answerability to those who have the legal right to know, the participation of stakeholders like educators and learners must not be undermined because it can equally help to boost the productivity rate of the school. The ability of stakeholders to participate in decision making in schools varies from one country to another. Bush (2008a:14) points to the importance of a participative approach by demonstrating that deputy principals in Western Australia, for example, wish to participate in decision making although their desire to do so varied across different types of decision, meaning their ability to make decision is limited to specific areas.

In South Africa, the introduction of a new democracy brought about new educational laws where the old central reporting system was replaced by School Based Management (SASA, 1996). The SBM teams constitute a body of individuals known as the School Governing Body (SGB) and school management team (SMT) who manage the affairs of the school. These bodies which are partly made up of parents together coordinate and run the school on behalf of the community and the state. On this basis and in a dialogue hosted by the national education collaboration trust, chaired by the deputy minister, education stakeholders including SGBs concurred that working together on a common purpose will help to improve the state of education in schools (New Age, 2014:11). Bush (2008a:14) emphasised that this model is underpinned by three main assumptions as follows: participation will increase school effectiveness; participation is justified by democratic principles in the context of site-based management; leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder. Therefore the concept of accountability should be more practical in schools rather than mere theory because the DOE and particularly schools have their vision and mission that must be attained.

Over and above, these theories point to the fact that the practice of accountability in schools is very vital. It is also evident that the principal is at the centre of organisational change in a school

environment because if transformation, for instance, becomes a necessity for change he must set the example for other stakeholders to follow. However caution ought to be taken in the application for each of these theories. Bush (2007:396) advises that the ability to participate in decision making in a school, for instance, should involve all stakeholders, otherwise the principal might be “a vehicle for control over teachers”.

2.3 THE NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION

When the historical development of accountability in Education is reviewed it must be kept in mind that in general terms accountability has to do with a state of being answerable for something to someone (Spaull, 2013:53). Although the idea of accountability would denote different meanings depending on the context and the issues at stake, in practice ‘*being accountable*’ means performing certain functions to the satisfaction of a person or interest group whilst complying at the same time to standards set by a higher authority (Bush & West-Burnham 1994:309). In applying these core ideas to educational organisations it must be remembered that schools are by nature highly structured institutions with clear positions of hierarchy and of accountability. It is difficult to even think about schools that function without fixed procedures, firm guidelines and clear positions of accountability. In practice however a school system is linked to the reality that schools are complex organisations, peopled by complex individuals, often drawn from a range of cultures who are working towards the goal of achieving effective teaching and learning (Van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008:222).

Internationally, the United States (USA) has been at the helm of producing policies and practices that are aimed at controlling and managing educational quality. Seakamela (2011:4) affirm this assertion that accountability originates from the USA and is tied to value for money debates and the inputs/outputs considerations. Koyama (2014:280) says that in the USA accountability in education is two-fold. Firstly accountability in education has become nearly synonymous with testing in teaching and curricula. This was the result of the NCLB’s high-stakes standardised testing. Secondly, there is data-monitoring, which is inextricably linked to testing and is often used to justify the test results. The testing goes further than just monitoring. It leads to the generating, gathering, and reporting of data (including the test scores) in quantifiable ways that make them ready for comparison and scrutiny. Thus guides are compiled that determine resource allocation, reorganise and create institutional instruments and practices, promote new rituals of

verification, and prioritise particular knowledge in schooling. Principals negotiate their power “to exercise influence in the ways they best see fit” (Koyama, 2014:280).

Findings from Koyama’s study further proved that school stakeholders in the USA also spend much of their time producing, managing, interpreting, and analysing data to be included in student test score tallies, yearly school progress reports, learning environment surveys, quality review documents, and annual school report cards. Attendance records, class size, teacher performance, student test scores, parent surveys, and a variety of materials collected at individual schools and across the district are transformed into reports and form part of the big picture about accountability in schools (Koyama, 2014: 281).

In the UK centralised reporting of school-wide examination scores has occurred for over two decades (Figlio & Loeb, 2011:384). Accountability gained credence in the UK since Callaghan’s seminal Ruskin speech in 1976 (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:309). Teachers were given the responsibility to explain and justify their actions to a wider audience which included parents, employers and central government who fund their activities. The notion of accountability has further been given a new emphasis in England and Wales by the shift to autonomous or quasi-autonomous institutions following the 1988 Education Reforms Act (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994:308).

Until the 1970s head teachers traditionally led the schools in partnership with local education authorities (LEAs) and government in the UK (Robinson, 2012:13). They were powerful in leading professionals managing the development of curriculum, pedagogy and school organisation. They also often had teaching roles which was considered to be essential in terms of their credibility to parents and to other professionals (Robinson, 2012:14). Since the 1980s, education and the role of head teachers became framed within a changing political ideology. Robinson (2012:15) explains further that by this time, the autonomy that head teachers have enjoyed as professionals was to change based on the belief that schools had to be able to survive in an open market economy.

In many African countries, principals manage schools with numerous challenges ranging from poor buildings, little or no equipment, untrained teachers, lack of basic facilities such as water, power and sanitation and learners who are often hungry (Bush, 2008a:27). In Zambia for

instance, the educational system is said to be faced with a “wholesale systematic decay” (Bush, 2008a:27). This is supported by Seakamela (2011:4), who says that one of the main challenges that the Tanzanians are faced with in so far as accountability is concerned is the lack of parental participation in school governance. However efforts are being made to encourage a broad participation of parents in school governance and the making of national policies on education. Ndawi and Peasuh (2005:210) explained that developing countries in Africa look at education as a vehicle for national development and as such invest huge sums of money into the system. To these authors, between July 1997 and December 1998, close to 30% of Zimbabwe’s national budget went on education. Thus they naturally expect to see their investment bearing fruits.

Similarly, in South Africa, the dawn of democracy indicated a new culture and approach to service delivery. With the institution of democracy in 1994, the authority to run a school was shifted partially, if not completely, from the Department of Education to schools through the creation of SGBs and SMTs (RSA, 1996). Inherent in this new culture is the acknowledgement that education had to be re-engineered to meet the imperatives of an emerging developmental state. To this effect, accountability and responsiveness have become central organising principles for service delivery (Seakamela, 2011:2). At school level SGBs and SMTs are however still facing numerous challenges such as high failure rates, teacher absenteeism, low curriculum coverage and inefficient time use that have major implications for the accountability of different school stakeholders (Spaull, 2013:53). In addition the extension of parents’ as well as learners’ rights that was brought about by the new democracy made the implementation of organising principles and application of accountability in practice very challenging. Naidu *et al* (2012:44) in this regard say that all members of a school must be accountable to each other in the performance of duty. Hence a sound relationship must be a pre-requisite for enabling and empowering educators and administrators in performing their duties. In fact, trust and freedom from being victimised must come into play.

2.4. DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

According to Naidu *et al* (2012:XV) a number of laws and policies introduced in South Africa since 1994 indicate that the government is of the conviction that transformation will be achieved primarily through school based management. To these authors, this is linked to education related stipulations in the country’s constitution (RSA, 1996) such as those pointing to the human right

to basic education and similar stipulations in the South African School Act (SASA, 1996). Accountability being a compound concept as well as the backbone of a successful educational system, variety of devices such as bureaucratic capacity, historical factors and cultural characteristics can be used to hold individuals and institutions accountable (Naidu *et al*, 2012:41).

2.4.1. Political dimension

From a political perspective Ahrens (2002:25) explains that accountability has to do with holding politicians and officials responsible for their actions and also for ensuring that government policies are implemented. Ahrens (2002:26) argues that politicians and public servants must also ensure that government services are not held to ransom by narrow individual or stakeholder interests. Mestry and Bisschoff, (2009:8) say that political accountability can be seen as the relationship between the state and its citizens, formalised in a set of rules governing behaviours and enforcing norms. They share the idea that for school financial matters, for instance, to be understood, a cursory glance at the relationship between politics and education is necessary. This is because as much as education cannot be separated from economics so is the situation with politics. Seakamela (2011:16) is of the opinion that political accountability uses processes of democratic control to influence and control the use of authority by elected officials. Hence it forces politicians and bureaucrats to be responsible and answerable to ensure that government policies are properly interpreted and implemented and that government services reach the intended target group. Failure on the part of responsible parties to deliver those services as expected would warrant an explanation and possibly a reprimand.

Also, Tembo (2012:3) pointed out that political accountability is seen as the accountability of the government, civil servants and politicians to the public and to legislative bodies such as a congress or a parliament. Generally speaking, voters do not have any direct way of holding elected representatives to account during the term for which they have been elected. Additionally, some officials and legislators may be appointed rather than elected. A constitution or statute can empower a legislative body to hold their own members that is either the government or government bodies, to account. This can be through holding an internal or independent inquiry. Inquiries are usually held in response to an allegation of misconduct or corruption. The powers, procedures and sanctions vary from country to country. In relation to

educational accountability, Naidu *et al* (2012:76) hold that there exists a hierarchical structure of an organisation that emphasises a vertical relationship between staff. In such a structure, educators are answerable to HODs who in turn are answerable to deputy principals and principals respectively in their various tasks. This process ends at the office of the minister who presents his reports to the parliament, meaning that stakeholders at school levels are not directly answerable to the community in which the school is found.

2.4.2 Legal dimension

According to Curtin and Nollkaemper (2006:3), the context of a democratic state and key accountability relationships are those between citizens and holders of public services. It further extends to the ranks of office holders between elected politicians and bureaucrats. Such accountability relationships are familiar terrains for lawyers because when the citizens elect politicians into office they are expected to report back to them either as representatives or officeholders. When these fail to occur they can be charged with non-responsibility which is where the lawyer comes in on behalf of the people or communities.

Contrarily, Westhuizen (2013:376) say that unlike in the legal sector, the education management sector ought to have more caring and supportive functions. Further emphasis is made by DoE (1996) in a comment which goes thus “a whole new way of doing business: education management must be more supportive than directive”. Curtin and Nollkaemper (2006:3) further explain that from an international law perspective the dominant form of accountability has traditionally been the mechanism of (state) responsibility and (state) liability characterised by a claim of injured parties against a wrong-doing state (or organisation) with a view of sustaining reparation for the injury caused by wrongful act.

Curtin and Nollkaemper (2006:10) put together a number of ideas which to them are relevant as far as legal accountability is concerned. They include the following;

- That legal accountability involves understanding of the different actors taking part in the process of accountability and,
- The need to focus on the persons or constitution to which account must be rendered.

Legal accountability therefore involves holding an actor to account for acts that conflict with international obligation and the procedure of justification and possible consequences as governed by law.

2.4.3 Educational dimension

According to Seakamela (2011:4) the persistent call for more accountability in the public sector in general has placed education systems, particularly those in developing countries, under intense public scrutiny because effective schooling is an imperative for a democratic society. Thus expectations for greater accountability might lead to increased monitoring and evaluation of the schooling system through the development of indicator systems. According to Business Day (2012:4), attempts to address such problems have rather been characterised by the lack of accountability and blame shifting, while the system remains badly in need of professional management and support from all interested stakeholders. Caldwell (2002) in Seakamela (2011:104) further explains that governments in many countries responded to accountability pressures by taking the lead in setting goals, establishing priorities and building frameworks for accountability while at the same time shifting authority and responsibility for key functions to school level. In South Africa, it is the responsibility of the SGBS and SMTs to manage the affairs of the school on behalf of the department of education.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries hereafter referred to as OECD (2010:46) reveal that the shift in public and government thinking from mere control over the resources and content of education towards a focus on outcomes has, in many countries, resulted in the development of standards to measure the quality of educational institutions. Countries' approaches to standard-setting range from defining broad educational goals to formulating concise performance expectations in well-defined subject areas. Setting these standards has, in turn, often led to the establishment of accountability systems. Based on the findings by this organ, organisation assessments of student performance over the last decade have become common in many OECD countries, and the results are often widely reported and used to inform both specialised and public debate. However, the rationale for assessments and the nature of the instruments used vary greatly within and across countries. OECD countries like Germany for example, use different forms of external assessments, external evaluations or inspections, as well as individual schools' self-evaluations.

The ability of schools to develop the curriculum and improve teaching and learning to achieve school objectives no doubt depends on the availability of resources (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009:7). The main objective of SMTs and SGBs is therefore their capacity to share the limited finances between human and physical resources at schools aimed at achieving effective educational goals which often necessitate the need for decentralisation. Hooge *et al.* (2012:5) indicate that decentralisation does not only mean more local governmental control of education but also more control of education by local non-governmental actors like state-dependent private schools and/or school governing boards. Decentralisation assumes that the officials, governors, managers and professionals who are closest to local operations know best what should be done and should be given incentives to take initiatives and control and to exercise discretionary power. In non-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, for example, about 15% of students are enrolled in schools that are privately managed (i.e. by non-governmental organisations such as a church, trade union, business or other private institution). This however varies widely in OECD countries like the Netherlands, Ireland and Chile, where more than 50% of students are enrolled in privately managed schools (OECD, 2010:43) possibly due to their effective and efficient management policies.

The issue of *accountability* is central to a democratic system of government. In a democratic state like South Africa, 'it is only by the consent of the people that authority to govern can be delegated and that consent is given on one condition, that all those who then act on our behalf will hold themselves accountable for their stewardship' (Farrel & Law, 1999b:294). Therefore *accountability* operates when those who have been given responsibilities present an account of their performance. In this current research the researcher tried to situate the role of accountability in the lives of school stakeholders excluding students. The Herald (2011:5) reveals that a certain educator who also doubles as the HOD for the English language department was given the responsibility of processing transactions between the school and the bank. Fortunately or unfortunately she downloaded pornographic materials and saved them in the laptop that was handed to her to facilitate her work. Upon presenting the laptop back to the DOE the porn videos were found instead of the expected report. The DOE expressed their disappointment by instantly suspending her while an investigation was launched. This stakeholder, once found guilty, will face the consequences because particularly responsibilities were conferred on her.

2.5 ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION

Determining what each job in a school a stakeholder performs is a key managerial decision. Volante (2012:12) alludes that because of the complex range of situations that confront stakeholders and leaders in particular, there is no ideal list of skills or traits that can define the role of school administrators comprehensively. One should rather focus on identifying certain approaches as more or less relevant for addressing the challenges of school leadership positions. The roles played by stakeholders in education can be evident in the following domain;

2.5.1 Learner discipline and safety

On the one hand, when discipline is instilled, it develops a sense of personal responsibility that leads to instilling a sense of order in learners' daily lives. Once learners have taken personal responsibility, they seek to ensure that other learners do likewise; instilled discipline thus works contagiously towards a law abiding citizenry (De Waal, 2011:174). On the other hand, Servamus (2013:10) say that a safe school is a school that is free of danger and where there is an absence of possible harm; a place in which non-educators, educators and all learners can work, teach and learn without fear of ridicule, intimidation or violence. In both the United States and the United Kingdom, learners are expected to be involved in school matters like discipline though with very limited powers as compared to other stakeholders. They are restricted to very basic policy concerns such as decisions about waste recycling (Wallace, Ranson & Tomlinson in Mabasa & Thebane, 2002:112). Though with limited functions, it is often believe that when stubborn learners are given position of responsibility as class captains or member of the representative council of learners, they become responsible.

In South Africa it is stipulated that when a learner commits a serious misconduct which involves offences not in accordance with school norms such as possession of drugs, theft, rape or assault, the misconduct should be investigated by the police and referred to the law court if need be (SASA, 1996a). Oosthuizen (2006:79) is of the opinion that in such a scenario, the principal and the SGB should have a meeting with a senior public prosecutor and probation officer to inform them that the school intends to refer the matter to court thereby entering into a partnership with them regarding the rehabilitation of such a learner. Note must however be taken of the fact that in a school environment some authority is delegated to school leaders to deal with specific forms of learner misconduct. Failure to rehabilitate such learners at the school level might then result in forwarding the matter to senior officials of the law because keeping such a learner alongside

others might put them at risk. To Oosthuizen (2006:79), such procedures can enable stakeholders involved to give a complete account of their decisions because thorough investigations were made with the appropriate persons involved.

According to Naidu *et al* (2012:25), the greatest obligation placed on stakeholders in South Africa is to protect the children in their care from foreseeable dangers, irrespective of whether those dangers arise from the careless acts or intentional transgression of others. Thus although the overarching responsibility of educators at school level is to educate, their first imperative must be that of not doing harm to the children under their care. Following the dawn of a new era in democracy in South Africa, the educational system was transformed in totality. According to De Waal (2011:175), quoting from section 24 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996a) “every learner has the fundamental right to an environment not harmful to one’s well-being, and must be educated under safe conditions”. To him, several authors take it one step further, pointing out that orderly and dedicated teaching conditions are indispensable facets of successful schools (Rossouw, 2003:415; Steyn *et al.*, 2003:11; Oosthuizen, 2004:2; Yell & Rozalski, 2008:7).

Significantly, Dlamini’s declaration in De Waal, (2007:229) that teaching involves the right to run schools, fuels the controversy that surrounds managing learner discipline as a factor that influences security at public schools. De Waal (2011:175) in his argument concludes that the weakness in South African public schools is not about learner discipline but that the level of learner discipline that is seen to be instilled is unacceptably low. All these processes mentioned above are relevant in a study of accountability because it is the responsibility of all school stakeholders to ensure that learning environment is safe and convenient for all learners. Failure to perform this task might result in sanctions like warning, redeployment or suspension of the stakeholder involved.

2.5.2. School finances

Another important aspect of schools management where a high accountability is required from stakeholders by the state and community in particular is the area of finance. Koross, Ngware, and Sang (2009:61) say that the involvement of parents as stakeholders in management of schools usually has a positive influence on financial management outcomes. They clarify that since finance matters are critical in school management outcomes, it is important for educational

stakeholders to increase their parental role as it can go a long way to strengthen and improve school financial accountability. Affirming this view, Koross *et al.* (2009:63) expounded that the turbulent environment with which educational institutions have been faced, are enough evidence that a certain degree of stakeholder involvement in school financial matters are required. However, Mestry and Bisschoff (2009:8) allude that the manner in which the state is involved in financing education varies from country to country and has been determined for most countries by political and religious considerations.

The Department of Education (DOE, 2006) in accordance with the SASA (Act 84 of 1996) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 108 of 1996) imposes important responsibilities on the state with respect to public schools. Amongst these responsibilities conferred on the state is that which requires state funding of public schools derived from the constitutional guarantee of equality and recognition of the right of redress. In fact the Act provides that "The State must fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of past inequalities in educational provision" (RSA, 1996, Section 34). According to SASA (1996), all public SGBs are obliged to support their schools financially as best they can. The Act provides that a governing body must - "take all reasonable measures within its powers to supplement the resources provided by the State in order to improve the quality of education provided by the school to all learners at the school" (RSA 1996, Section 36). This means that managing a school takes more than money.

Business Day (2013:4) reports that the national budget allocated by the state for free basic education in South Africa is almost R17.6 billion but yet most schools are still faced with the problem of staff shortages, mismanagement and the absence of libraries. In the same manner, Naidu *et al* (2012:163) clarifies that there have been remarkable advances made in access, funding and equity in the South African schooling system since 1994. These advances have further resulted in an improved enrolment rate, increased funding per learner and the school system is far more equitable. However, because the financial resources have become scarce and unavailable due to mismanagement and growing population, the SGB as a stakeholder has been given full responsibility by SASA (1996) for managing the finances of the school, establish a

school fund, preparing an annual budget for the school, collecting and administering school fees, keeping financial records, appointing an auditor as well as supplementing school resources.

2.5.3. Learner performance

Amongst other things learner performance outcome is also a significant issue that needs to be addressed when the issue of stakeholder's accountability is mentioned. According to Smith and Ngoma-Maema (2003:345) the quest for the provision of quality education to learners is basic to transformation movements in an education system. Volante (2012:53) explains that the assessment of student performance is changing largely because students face a world that demands new knowledge and abilities. He holds that to help students improve in their studies requires changes in both assessment method at the school and classroom level as well as new approaches to instruction and high-stakes assessment. These changes according to Naidu *et al.* (2012: XV) are not having the desired effect as there is still a very poor academic performance at a large number of schools in South Africa.

Van der Westhuizen (2013:183) says that change in an organisation like a school is an unavoidable feature in human experience which is very relevant in a school environment. Expounding from an educational management perspective he explains that school principals are exposed to new controls and regulations, growth, increasing competition, technological developments and changes in the work force. In the middle of these changing circumstances, stakeholders still have that responsibility to ensure that learner performance is improved. The DoE as a stakeholder organises yearly workshops in which educators are trained on how to apply different strategies in teaching and learning in order to achieve quality education. In this respect, the Star newspaper (2010:9) reports that following a poor performance in the matric result of 2010, the Minister of Basic Education came up with a variety of plans to boost the result in the upcoming years. Amongst them was more exposure for learners and more parental involvement.

2.5.4. Maintenance of School property

Section 21(1a) of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996) includes the maintenance of school facilities among other functions of School Governing Bodies (SGBs). As such, at the time of allocation of schools finances from the Provincial Department of Education a fraction is directed for the maintenance of school facilities. The Bellevue School District report (hereafter referred to as BSDR, 2012) as well as Nhlopo (2009:2) illuminates that school

facilities among other things include buildings, playgrounds, equipment and furniture that must not be abused by users. This body (BSDR) also indicated clearly that students or non-students who abuse school property may be disciplined and required to pay for the damage incurred. This tie up with an earlier clarification on accountability by Van Der Westhuizen (2004:173) that it involves giving account to designated people about one's actions concerning mandated duties. Note must be taken that failure to deliver results in penalties ranging from suspension, serving of a warning letter to termination of contract. In this regard the BSD in Washington (2012) explains that in case of any defaulters, the superintendent will establish procedures for the investigation and reporting of damage or loss. Later, a strategy for the collection of damages will be initiated which may include withholding a students' transcript or diploma until compensation is made for cases that involve students. Such decisions usually might seem harsh but very useful because not only stakeholders who are placed in control of these properties should be held accountable of how they are used. Similarly, learners who are the main consumers of these resources should equally be held to account.

School facilities do not only get destroyed by users and/consumers but also suffer depreciation. For this reason there is always the need for a maintenance committee which is part of the SGB body. According to Nhlapo (2009:14) a school maintenance programme is an organisational activity carried out by the school community in order to prolong the life expectancy of school buildings, its furniture and equipment. He further clarifies that school facilities if well maintained and managed, provide suitable environments that translate into quality education; if well maintained and utilised, can contribute substantial efficiency gains like revenue for the school. This may deepen national and sector values of school-community relationships and community ownership of schools.

According to section 21(1a) of SASA (84 of 1996), in Rossauw and Oosthuizen (2012:51-52) if school facilities suffer massive depreciation, the SGB may apply to the head of department in writing to maintain and improve the schools property, buildings and grounds occupied by the school, including school hostels. In this regard Nhlapo (2009:8) explains that buildings and equipment in them were never meant to last forever, thus the only way to reduce cost is to maintain frequently and introduce more energy efficient technology and materials when possible to save on operating costs. Because accountability is an essential requirement for a democratic

country like South Africa, maximisation of resources and answerability to the state by SGBs on how resources are used becomes a basic necessity.

2.5.5. Educators recruitment and selection

According to Bush and Middlewood (2013:145) there is the assumption that people are the most important resources in an effective school or college. Thus it is unquestionable having the best possible staff in place is highly desirable or the best priority for a school. A cross-section study on the recruitment of educators as indicated by Bush and Bell (2013:147) shows that for most countries such as UK, Canada, Australia, and even New Zealand, educators are appointed by leaders and governors. In others like Greece and Cyprus, Bush and Bell holds that all qualified teachers are allocated to a particular area of the country. Nevertheless, for other cases like Germany a mixed system is practice where decisions to employ can be taken both at the state or federal government level. Volante (2012:26), looking at a case study in English school leadership system explains that the importance of leadership in education has led to a significant investment in the recruitment, training and development of educational leaders. With a well-defined structure under which educators are hired, those directly involved will not have to wait for external instructions to fulfil that task. Thus in times of reporting only those directly involved will be requested to give an account for whoever is selected and why.

In South Africa, Naidu *et al.* (2012:96) sketches the picture that the selection of staff is in the hands of SGBs, but indicated that at some point in time they may not be directly involved in recruitment considering that all adverts for post are published in provincial gazettes. Thurlow in Bush and Middlewood (2013:147) say that the recruitment process is carried out “centrally” through the provincial education departments. The provincial DOE is informed of existing vacancies while the employing department advertise and does the screening process based on the norms and standards of the job. Bush and Middlewood (2013:147) however stated clearly that the SGBs are responsible for the final selections. From both views mentioned above one might argue that there is no clear description of exactly who is involved in the recruitment of educators in schools in South Africa. That is at some point in time the school might directly recruit educators while in another instance the DOE takes the responsibility. The risk involved with such a scenario is that in time of accountability to the community and the government at large, stakeholders might deny taking the responsibility.

The recruitment of educators as a responsibility for school stakeholders like members of the SGB in this study might seem incomplete if the employment process of principals and SMTs and who spearhead the schools are not mention. The reason behind this is that these educators constitute the core of school stakeholders. From a South African perspective, principals and SMTs are appointed to their positions on the basis of their professional expertise and broad knowledge of the educational field (Naidu *et al*, 2012:44). In fact their role is to facilitate work rather than dictate what the educators must accomplish. Nevertheless, Smith and Ngoma-Maema (2003:535) add that senior managers need to lead from the front by being visible and accessible for constant advice to educators. That is they should not hesitate to disclose their own work to educators in a way that encourages them to realise the value of transparency.

2.6. PROCESSES OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION

Seakamela (2011:20) point out that accountability mechanisms vary widely from one country to another and that many aspects such as bureaucratic capacity, private sector operations, historical factors and cultural characteristics all play a role in defining and shaping mechanism instruments. Farrel and Law (1999b:295) who referred to these mechanisms as models or forms, identified the following four; Professional accountability, hierarchical accountability, market accountability and public accountability. Naidu *et al*. (2012:40) further indicated that it is necessary to distinguish between different forms of accountability for the purpose of assessing the extent to which they impact on educational reforms. For purposes of this study the following forms of accountability were addressed;

2.6.1 Professional accountability

According to Naidu *et al*. (2012:41) professional accountability is based on the premise that professionalism demands a high sense of responsibility, commitment, and competence in setting targets. Farrel and Law (1999b:295) feel that “the question about professionals is not whether certain results have been achieved, but whether professional standards of integrity and practice have been adhered to”. Professional educators are expected to be client oriented and to put the interest of the learners as the main objective. As members of a profession, school managers need to ensure that professional standards are set and adhered to by the professionals themselves instead of being enforced by professional agencies. In addition Robinson (2012:28) explained that there are different forms of professional accountability to which teachers ought to respond. These include accountability to parents, to colleagues and to themselves as professionals.

Robinson (2012:28) further raised a significant opinion about professional accountability when she said that some scholars and practitioners may think otherwise, but many still believe that inspections contribute a great deal in raising school standards. She added that by the dawn of 2000 in UK professional accountability was no longer a realistic argument; hence the rhetoric of government began to change as there was the need for self-evaluation and shorter inspections known as “light touch” for schools (Robinson, 2012:29). Schools are accountable to professionals and LEA officials for the educational process. Affirming this view Farrel and Law, (1999b: 295) is of the opinion that the educational process is so complex that only professionals can hold other professionals to account. Hence, emphasis is placed on “sideways” accountability which is ensured in the UK through teacher and school self-evaluation and inspections by local authority and central government advisers and inspectors.

From a South African perspective Naidu *et al* (2012:47) say that the implementation of quality assurance and accountability needs to be set against the background of the past (apartheid) policies and practices. According to these authors, the period was characterised by individual inspectors and panel of inspectors from different regions enforcing compliance to rules and regulation by means of coercive forces and policies. Such a regime was certainly also characterised by fear because of the punishment and malicious treatment that staffs or officials get from top ranking officials. Naidu *et al* (2012:47) thus conclude that in a professional accountability system, stakeholders as professionals should be supportive and developmental towards each other instead of placing some professionals like educators under surveillance. Summarily it is evident that the main idea behind professional accountability is that it is a mechanism for general internal self-evaluation, rather than being accountable to external stakeholders such as departmental officials who place other stakeholders under pressure and fear. This means junior professionals in the DoE like teachers and HODs should rather be rewarded substantially through promotions and increased salaries instead of sanctions like redeployment.

2.6.2 Bureaucratic/Hierarchical accountability

Farrel and Law (1999b:296) explain that the hierarchical model involves ‘upwards’ accountability. This is exercised through managerial hierarchy and stresses the contractual relationship with the state. The chain of accountability as identified by Farrel and Law in the UK and Wales operates from teachers, head teachers, governors to appropriate LEA officers. The

LEA adviser is, in turn, accountable to senior advisers and the mechanism continues through the Chief Education Officer to the Education Committee and the full council. Note must however be taken that this trend of accountability varies from one country to another depending on the political structure.

Bureaucratic or hierarchical accountability in the educational system according to Naidu *et al.* (2012:21) involves placing somebody at the head of the system and below him or her are numerous categories of subordinate employees each of whom reports to an official. These authors citing from Davis explains that the management and administration of educational systems is constituted in two spheres namely national and provincial. Though powers originate from the national sphere the powers of national and provincial departments are interdependent and interrelated. Seakamela (2011:16) draws a useful distinction between what they call Bureaucratic and Hierarchical accountability. That is, employees are held accountable upwards through the hierarchy for adhering to the rules, while operational accountability focuses on making state employees more directly accountable to end-users, citizens or communities.

2.6.3 Traditional/cultural accountability

According to Naidu *et al.* (2012:41) this type of accountability involves all the mechanisms that are in place in schools, even if they are unexpressed, badly-coordinated or altogether different from what policy makers want. One can argue that such mechanisms are the required norms and standards of a school, where people become responsible not because the law requires them to do so but because it is a matter of what the tradition demands. To these authors the disposition of principals and management teams by external authorities can cause schools to develop their own ethos and culture of doing things. Under such circumstances educators in a school may strive to develop a common vision, value learner achievement, set high expectations and monitor their learners and their own work on a regular basis (Naidu *et al.* 2012:41).

Contrarily to the traditional way of managing or running schools, the Diamond Field (2011:8) newspaper explains a scenario raised by the Democratic Alliance (DA) the main opposition party in South Africa. According to the DA, a principal whose school had been performing well for over 13 years was suspended for more than 30 days without any charge sheet. In addition, a tour for learners that was sponsored by parents was cancelled because the principal wasn't there. Hence the parents were to be reimbursed. In reaction to this, the DOE explained that the decision

taken by the department was in the interest of all stakeholders, including the learners, for maladministration of financial resources that were supposed to improve the learning conditions and quality of education at school. From this situation it is evident that stakeholders can neither be absolutely autonomous nor entirely dependent on any of these forms of accountability. Though so much power has been conferred on schools through SMTs by the DOE in the management of schools, they still have the duty to report back to the department.

Naidu *et al* (2012:41) explains that bureaucratic accountability for instance which is practiced in America has a devastating effect with a large number of educators and principals facing dismissals and redeployment. This leads Leading to untold harm to learners through the closing of schools, while the rest of the educators go in fear of being re-deployed. In South Africa however, several attempts have been made to close down schools due to poor performance in matric results and possible dismissal of principals involved in these schools. Fortunate or unfortunately such decisions have never been implemented because of some historical differences (Daily Sun, 2007:1).

2.7 CHALLENGES INVOLVING ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION

As much as the implementation of accountability principles remains relevant in a democratic society and school management in particular, there are certain challenges that must be clarified. These include non-participation by parents in their children's education, answerability by teachers for student learning outcomes, lack of adequate training for stakeholders and external imposition of school vision

2.7.1 Non-participation by parents in their children's education

Kramlich (2012:109), postulated that the higher the level of parental involvement in their children's education, the greater their academic achievements. To him if a team is made up of only teaching staff, the parents may feel as though their input is not valued. In such a case, they may withdraw entirely from the process. As first line educators, parental input in education should be highly valued since they are truly the expert-educators of their children. Parents are known to have indicated that for them to be successfully included in education at school level communication, collaboration, and cooperation are critical aspects (Kramlich, 2012:110). To promote communication, collaboration, cooperation as well as answerability, parents should be

an integral part of the regularly scheduled team meetings. Time should equally be allocated to address parental concerns and to elevate accountability in the process.

Xaba (2006:15) advocates the promotion of the best interest of the child as the critical cornerstone of educational delivery of South Africa. In the SASA (RSA, 1996a) it is stated that SGBs are required to develop mission statements for schools and the best way to achieve this is by engaging in school development planning. However in a study conducted by Bechuke, (2011:50-55) in three schools of the Mafikeng Project Area Office, it was revealed that parents who legally constitute a majority of the SGBs do not attend meetings. In his study, it was revealed that a number of reasons contribute to parent's non-participation in SGB meetings such as illiteracy, lack of experience, shame participation and lack of dedicated time. These factors greatly hamper decision making and accountability in schools. As a result, burning issues that require instant decision making comes to a halt, until all members are present. But in situations where there is shared responsibility, tasks can be shared amongst stakeholders, meaning no form of delay will be entertained.

According to Heystek (2011:461), participating in education democracy is jeopardized by the level of participation of the parents in actual governing activities. He holds that the legislation of South Africa might create the impression that parents must do the actual work in SGBs because they are the majority and provide the chair of the governing body. But this is practically the case mostly in schools where parents are wealthy and more educated. In the case of poverty striking schools decision making and policies is strictly in the hands of the principals/managers due to the incompetency of parents, making the process of accountability questionable. Thus Van der Berg (2008:145) acknowledges that given South Africa's divided past, it is imperative to improve educational outcomes to overcome labour market inequalities. That historically white and Indian school still outperform black and coloured schools in examinations and interclass correspondence coefficients still reflect far greater school difference than for other countries.

2.7.2 Level of competency by educators

Another great problem that affects the level of accountability by stakeholders in education is the level of competency by educators in dealing with learner misconduct problems. Apart from constantly assessing learners by means of assignments and test scores, educators should equally endeavour to report and deal with certain weaknesses they encounter with learners to their

parents and care takers. In this regard, Moloi (2007:472) explain that there is a general acceptance that teacher reliability and punctuality are problems that contribute to a weak culture of teaching and learning. Such problems can impact negatively on the level of accountability in an institution as well as on learner attitudes and discipline. However Jansen, Peacock and Rawson in Moloi (2007:472) looking at aspects of teacher competence and professionalism asserted that there are few sources that directly address the issue of teachers reliability or consider management strategies for dealing with these problems.

In Leithwood and Beatty (2008:25) evidence from a study conducted by Weiss (2001) in the U.S department of education suggests that working conditions may have different effects on teachers as stakeholders. Leithwood and Beatty (2008) further suggest that beginner teachers in particular, have fewer resources to fall back on, if they find themselves in less than ideal circumstances, as they often do. Under such circumstances the educator(s) will need extra cooperation and moral support from other staff and colleagues to boost their individual ability. Feiler (2010:144) is of the opinion that stakeholders can actually support each other to boost their capability for instance parents can overtly celebrate teachers work through thank you letters, occasional articles in local newspapers that explain teachers special programmes or approach and an appreciative note to the superintendent about a teacher.

In South Africa, there is however the lack of responsibility, dedication and commitment on the part of many educators and learners (Van der Horst & McDonald, 2003:3). One of the reasons according to these authors is that the attitudes and values of many adult South Africans of this decade were formed in the apartheid era characterised by lots of division. Learners during this period for instance were never taught to appreciate the different aspirations and perspectives of people from whom they were distanced. For such momentum to be built, stakeholders will have to take full responsibility for careful planning and management of learners' learning environment. To Van der Horst & McDonald (2003:4) another reason why stakeholders might be incompetent is because they did not receive adequate educational and training opportunities during the previous era.

2.7.3 Lack of adequate training for stakeholders

According to Xaba (2011:201) the greatest challenge to school governance is the capacity to govern. Analysing documents from Tsotetsi, Van Wyk and Lemmer respectively, he asserted

that the provincial departments of education through functional units at head offices and district levels have engaged in the training of SGBs. But the actual enactment of these roles is often less than ideal. As such, the essence and effectiveness of training receive by school governors becomes questionable. In an attempt to support this claim, Mabasa and Themane in Xaba (2011:201) report that SGBs are not trained before they start work and this manifests in problems such as unfamiliarity in meeting procedures, perceiving their roles as simply endorsing what others have already decided upon, difficulty in managing large volumes of papers, not knowing how to make a contribution, to name but a few. It equally results in the lack of adequate accountability because stakeholders become less informed about school activities.

Heystek (2011:458) begins his analysis on the lack of adequate training for stakeholders by stating clearly that a large number of the South African population are not sufficiently functionally literate to meet the requirements of reading and drafting policies. That only 40.3% of people older than 20 years of age have completed primary education and another 30.8% have completed some secondary education (Statistics South Africa, in Heystek, 2011:458). To him therefore, there is a strong likelihood that many of the parent members of the governing body, even with the assumed training, do not have the necessary literacy level to read legislation, draft policies and manage budgets. Affirming the views of Xaba as mention above he alluded that even those few who have passed grade 12, may not have sufficient literacy levels to read, understand and interpret legislation to perform the functions allocated to them.

2.7.4 External imposition of vision

According to Bush (2008a:278) vision has been regarded as an essential component of effective leadership for almost 20years. Quoting from Beareet *al*, he claims that outstanding leaders have a vision for their organisation. Southworth in Bush (2008a:278) says that heads are motivated to work hard “because their leadership is the pursuit of their individual visions”. Despite a very high level of school-based management, some traces of externally influenced vision can be found in schools. The DOE at some point in time might get involved in the formulation of a school vision that is not in accordance with the general norms and standards of schools in particular and education management in general. Fallen in Robinson (2012:22) is concerned that externally imposed vision can limit the scope of school improvement approaches which could otherwise

develop but would be constrained due to a “contrived coherence”. As such any form of improvement will be put at risk by over prescription and centralisation.

In New Zealand, which has one of the most developed systems of stakeholder participation in school governance, one of the challenges faced as indicated by Thebane (2002:112) is referred to as 'sham participation'. This means that all decisions are taken at the higher levels of governance in schools and that learners for example, are expected to simply endorse those decisions. This also is a typical example of an externally imposed vision that might hinder the growth of the school. Leithwood and Beatty (2008:45) in support of this notion say that teachers' beliefs about their abilities can make a world of difference to their actual effectiveness. Therefore a high level of teacher self-efficacy in a school for instance is strongly associated with higher levels of teaching and learning as well as accountability. Hence those who feel they have considerable control over their environment are more inclined towards action than passive resignation (Leithwood and Beatty, 2008:49).

2.7.5 Inadequate teaching and learning resources.

Stakeholders may not be held accountable for failure to reach desired educational “goals” when operating with inadequate resources (Ndawi & Peasuh, 2005:211). In this regard Naidu *et al* (2012:45) explain that financial and material resources are always in short supply in the majority of schools in South Africa as a result of a historical unequal and unfair distribution of financial and material resources. According to Bush and Heystek (2003:132), accountability is however not, and cannot be diminished because of inadequate resources. To these authors, it is based on this idea that the DOE on behalf of the government implemented the policy that SGBs are encouraged to raised funds and acquire additional facilities for improving the quality of education at their schools.

Naidu *et al* (2012:46) say that the Department of Education has the responsibility to allocate funds to schools in accordance with the equity strategy of providing more resources to the poorest schools and communities. However, it is not how much resources put in schooling that changes schools outcome but how the resources are managed and used towards effective teaching and learning.

2.8. REMEDIES TO ENHANCE ACCOUNTABILITY CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION

In every institution, the role of accountability is well defined. When stakeholders do not adhere to a schools' principle or code of conduct, such an organisation is bound to suffer setbacks. In this study a number of suggestions have been made by the researcher to remedy these problems of accountability in schools. They include the following;

2.8.1. Adequately involved and informed parents about children's performance

According to Spaul (2013:63) parents of school children lack reliable information on the performance of their children relative to normal benchmarks, or relative to socio-economically similar schools in the region. As it stands, parents have to use proxies for learner's school performance, such as the levels of order and discipline in the school, or the appearance of the school, all of which are only very loose indicators of performance. This is essential for parents because though they spend more time with children at home than teachers at school, children display their different characters mostly at school in the company of friends. On this note, Feiler (2010:1) acknowledges that although it is undoubted a daunting task to form a relationship with parents who encounter difficulties engaging with their children's school, it is necessary for stakeholders to assist children's learning and development.

From an ethical and public policy perspective, Spaul (2013:62) explains that it is important to remember that one cannot focus on the rights and concerns of children and their parents to the exclusion of those for teachers; neither can one focus on the rights and concerns of teachers to the exclusion of those of children. Rather, one has to find a balance between the rights and concerns of both parties. Therefore parents on the one hand should have their rights respected by getting full knowledge (report) about their children while in school. On the other hand, both parents and learners must appreciate the effort of teachers in the delivery of their duties (Naidu *et al*, 2012:45). Great progress has been made over the years according to Feiler (2010:1) towards achieving this motive of collaboration between educators and parents. To him, a survey conducted by the office for standards in education in the UK, indicated that all participating schools value the involvement of parents and carers because education is at its best or outstanding when parents are involved.

2.8.2 Improve reliability of data and consistency of inspection judgments

According to Robinson (2012:187), part of the importance of attracting effective principals and/or school managers is by their centrality in the system at school levels. Because the government relies on school leaders for a successful implementation of policies they should also be carefully and accurately chosen. Chosen the right and quality principal or manager to an extent can ensure trustworthiness of information and consistency in judgement because such a stakeholder must have attained a certain level of qualification and experience. Robinson (2012) however arguably holds that one possible way to improve reliability of data is by the reliance on inspection results for schools and the performance of children in test. Seemingly Robinson (2012:187) maintains that reliability of data and consistency of judgement has been proven to be a flawed system due to inconsistencies and inaccuracies in marking tests and the formulaic way “outstanding” is determined as judgment. Hence inspection though still applied in most parts of Africa and with a great amount of success, is not a democratic principle. As such, stakeholders can be left with their personal judgment and self-responsibility which can equally enhance reliability of data.

2.8.3. Up-skilling of school managers through professional qualifications

Volante (2012:26) hold that the most ambitious developments in England towards enhancing leadership role of head teachers is the setting up of the National College for School Leaders (NCSL) programme by the government in 2001. This programme is meant to provide and coordinate leadership development pointing both to the importance attached to school leadership by the government and to a belief that leadership can be learned to at least some extent. Hence it resulted in the creation of a pre-service training programme called the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) which is now mandatory for all school leaders (principals and managers).

Though this policy is largely applied in England as stated by Volante, it has equally been introduced in the educational system of most countries across the world particularly in South Africa and North West University where this study is done. In a multifaceted humanity like South Africa where headship is often challenged by the law (RSA constitution, 1996) such as the right of learners, upgrading of school principals through professional qualification will go a long way to remedy leadership challenges. The DOE through the state universities has launched qualification programmes such as Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE) and National

Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) which helps to train educators from primary and secondary schools who have experience but are without qualifications (DOE, 20011/2012). In the North West University for instance where this study was conducted, the Faculty of Education and Training organises and coordinates the NPDE programme with one of its objectives being to supply educators with additional practical skills (NWU, 2008:3).

2.8.4. Ensure a balance between autonomy and accountability.

According to Maile (2002:326) the education service can only work effectively and develop creatively if stakeholders grasp their responsibilities and act accordingly. Education will collapse if parents simply wait to be told what to do or do only what they are told. Equally, it is desirable that an exercise of power by parents is fruitful, appropriate and free from harm, something that can be secured not by regulation, but through strong accountability processes. In an attempt to address the issue of balance in the management of schools, Robinson (2012:187) begins by asking the question “if schools aren’t to be inspected regularly, then how will the system know that the outstanding or good judgment is still valid?” In her argument she explains that earned autonomy should be given to outstanding schools by removing them from inspection and using interim assessment to differentiate them from under-performing schools that require inspection.

2.8.5. Increased cooperation amongst stakeholders

Bush (2007:397-398) points to the need for co-operation between stakeholders like principals and SGBs if governance is to be effective. To him, it is advantageous for a school to cooperate in leadership because it will bring about active participation of stakeholders which can result in increased school effectiveness. Also participation is justified by democratic principles and in the context of Site-based management leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder. Maile (2004:98) noted that setting up democratic structures that involve all stakeholders in the running of the school is important, but states that it requires thoughtful planning and parents need to be supported and informed, meaning that unlike cooperation, communication is also very vital. Karlsson (2002:332) however justifies that principals are dominant in all meetings because of: “their power position within the school, level of education in contrast to other members, first access to information taken from education authorities, and because it is the principal who executes the decisions taken”.

In the same vein and in an attempt to enhance school financial accountability, Swap in Koross (2009:63) suggests that there must be an increase in quality contact, for instance, between parents and teachers as well as an increase in the number of parents in school management activities because it is only through this process that there can be an adequate reporting of school finances. As such Naidu *et al.* (2012:45) say that there is need for a good rapport to be established with educators because it makes them feel at ease and encouraged to do their best. Hence this necessitates working together for a specific period before applying punitive accountability measures.

2.8.6. Provide adequate training to stakeholders

One of the preconditions for a successful implementation of quality assurance and accountability is the provision of training to both managers and educators (Naidu *et al.* 2012:45). These authors explain that a qualified educator is a prerequisite of instituting accountability, because appropriately trained educators are well equipped to produce desired educational outcomes. Hence it seems reasonable to view training as an important element of success in instituting quality assurance and accountability systems. Naidu *et al.* (2012:45) further suggested that accountability systems should be accompanied by capacity building programs aim at raising standards in management and instructional practice. By raising standard, a form of total quality management can be applied that focuses on the internal functioning of an organisation for ensuring sustainable performance improvement. Through this strategy every stakeholder in the school becomes involve in decision making.

2.8.7. Decentralisation as a strategy to enhance accountability

Serakwane (2011:109) in his study on accountability in public schooling found out that amongst the many ways to enhance accountability, devolution of decision-making and authority to lower levels of the system remains very vital. He further holds that one of the major obstacles to the effective performance of public bureaucracies in most developing countries is the excessive concentration of decision-making and authority within central government. However, the World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2004) warns that unless decentralisation is properly designed and well managed, it could diminish accountability and undermine its intended benefits.

Leithwood (2001:222) expresses the view that in countries such as New Zealand and Australia, where school reform has been substantially influenced by the philosophy of new managerialism, creating more efficient and cost-effective school administrative structures is a second central goal for devolution. Hence this goal is pursued through the implementation of an administrative control form of site-based management that increases school-site administrators' accountability to the central district or board office for the efficient expenditure of resources. Such efficiencies according to him are to be realized only by giving local school administrators authority over such key decision areas like budget, physical plant, personnel, and curriculum.

2.9. SUMMARY

In this chapter a detailed literature review with regards to the main problems of this research was done. This include a theoretical and conceptual issues of the study; the development of accountability in education ; the responsibilities of stakeholders in accountability; the different dimensions of accountability; forms of accountability relevant to the study; significance of stakeholders accountability in education; challenges involved in educational accountability and possible remedies to enhance accountability.

The subsequent chapter (three) will basically focus on the research design and methodology, bringing out clearly the empirical data collection techniques and analysis strategy for the study as well as all the ethical consideration involved in conducting a study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, a detailed literature review which encompassed a theoretical and conceptual discussion in relation to the notion of accountability was elucidated. This literature study was divided into themes and categories based on the research problems as well as the objective of the study. Among these categories was an overview of the development of accountability as a concept in the world with examples from particular countries.

In this chapter the research design and methodology which involved three schools in the Mafikeng Area and departmental officials of the North West Province was discussed. The approach used in data collection was geared towards identifying the relevance as well the challenges involved in *schools accountability*. The chapter in essence provided an overall structure for the procedures that the researcher followed including the data that was collected, and analysed.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design refers to the plan of action that links the philosophical assumption to specific methods like experimental research, survey or ethnographic research (Creswell & Clark, 2007:4). Unlike Creswell and Clark, Mouton (2005:55) views a research design as a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct the research. Affirming these views though formulated slightly differently Maree (2010:70) mentions that a “research design refers to a plan or strategy which moves from an underlying philosophical assumption to specifying the selection of respondents, the data gathering techniques to be used and data analysis to be done”. In trying to emphasise the importance of a research design in a study, Punch (2009:112) designates that it basically situates the researcher in the empirical world and connects the research questions to data.

A qualitative design was selected for this study. Qualitative research was preferred because the researcher was interested in understanding the different perspectives of which stakeholders hold about accountability in schools. That is the manner in which individuals construct their world and the experiences they have in the world (Denzin & Lincoln in Guest *et al.* 2013:3). These practices transform the world into a series of representations including observations, field notes,

interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos. Maree (2010:51) is of the opinion that qualitative research typically studies people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment and focusing on their meaning and interpretation. Also a qualitative research design was used in order to put emphasis on the *quality and depth* of information on how accountability by stakeholders can be achieved in the presence of democracy in leadership through SBM. Moreover, because most of the description and interpretations are portrayed in words rather than in numbers, a qualitative approach was seen as most valuable (Punch, 2009:3). In trying to further emphasise the importance of design in a study, Wallace and Paulson (2003:55) say that the main purpose(s) of a research design is to explain how evidence was gathered, synthesized and tested or interpreted.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Creswell and Clark (2007:4) methodology is the philosophical framework that relates to the fundamental assumptions and entire process of the research. Punch (2009:15) on the other hand argues that methodology in research is a theory about methods. It entails what lies behind the approaches and methods of inquiry that might be used in a piece of research. Whereas Wilson (2009:58) clarified that methodology is the plan of action which informs and links the methods used to collect and analyse data to answer the original research question. One might therefore say that methodology has to do with the choices we make about cases to study, methods of gathering and forms of data analysis in planning and executing a research study. Silverman (2006:15) suggest that a methodology comprises the following;

- A *preference for certain methods* among the many available to use (e.g. listening, watching, observing, reading, questioning, conversing)
- A *theory of scientific knowledge*, or a set of assumptions about the nature of reality, the task of science, the role of the researcher, and the concept of action and social actor
- A *range of solutions*, devices and stratagems used in tackling a research problem
- A *systematic sequence of procedural steps* to be followed once the methods have been selected.

A case study approach was adopted for this study because the researcher intended to gain an in-depth as well as comprehensive understanding of the main accountability concerns of school stakeholders from an educational management perspective. According to Maree (2010:75), a

case study approach is a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon under study. Creswell (2009:13) maintains that case studies are a strategies of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. This study was conducted at the instrumental level where a case provides insight into a specific theme or issue with the focus on unusual individuals, groups or events (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010: 345).

According to Yin (2014:7) there are two circumstances under which a case study design can be chosen which is holistic and embedded levels. At the holistic level it involve an organistaion (single case) while the other which is the embedded level which involves more organisations at the same level (multiple case). In this study a multiple case study was implemented against a single case because though multiple cases seem more demanding to implement, the ensuing data can provide greater confidence in the findings (Yin, 2014:7). During the data collection procedure, there was more reliability on data from a variety of sources which in this case was participants from all three schools involved and the DOE. The researcher was able to identify findings that were possibly falsified based on his knowledge about the case from a literature perspective, participant's reaction when questions were asked and personal experience. He further deliberated over contrasting issues but settled only for those that were scientifically proven. This was further made possible by focusing on the processes involved in data collection rather than the outcome as well as findings rather than verification.

According to Creswell (2009:175), qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data such as interviews, observation and document analysis rather than relying on a single data source. He holds that with multiple sources of data collection, the researcher reviews all of the data collected and make sense of it by organising it into themes and categories that cut across all of the data sources. Creswell (2007:132) further identifies another form of data in a qualitative study known as audiovisual materials, but explained that interviewing and observations require special attention because they are more frequently used than the other approaches. In this study the researcher collected data using basically three strategies which included interviews, document analysis and observation that were accompanied by field notes. It was therefore possible for aspects of bias and other instances where participants gave incomplete information

either out of fear of their superiors or the desire to protect the interest of other colleagues to be sorted out.

3.4 RESEARCH PROCESS

In this section, all the procedures involved in executing and accomplishing a research process were dealt with.

3.4.1 Selection of site and participants

Marshall and Rossman (2011:102) indicated that no one at any point and time can study everything in the universe. To them, a researcher rather makes a selection of sites and samples of times, places, people and things to study. It was based on the researcher's knowledge from the literature review in chapter two that he selected the people, places as well as time for this study. From a personal incentive, the selection of sites and participants for this study was based on the researcher's desire to examine how the concept of accountability works in practice at different levels and environment as far as school stakeholder is concern. According to Guest *et al* (2013:123) every successful research must begin with planning the logistics of an interview because it is as important as recruiting the right participants. Thus it takes more than having a place, time and appropriate person to conduct an interview.

From another point of view, Creswell (2007:118) say that one of the most important steps in the process of data collection is to find people or places to study as well as to gain access to, so that participants will provide good data. To him gaining access to sites and individuals requires several steps ranging from seeking permission from human subjects to ensuring participants' safety. In this study, the sites comprised of school grounds (particularly the classrooms, offices of principals and HODs), the Provincial Department of Education offices for selected participants only, as well as homes and place of work for SGB chairpersons that were interviewed. The homes and places of work constituted part of the research site because parents in particular are not current staff of the school and as such come to schools only during SGBs meetings or upon invitation by the principal on behalf of SMTs. Moreover special arrangements were made with participants that were on leave through telephone calls to meet with them at their private residence.

The selected participants consisted of those individuals who had particular characteristics or experiences that contributed to a greater understanding of the phenomenon under study

(Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011: 84; Best & Kahn, 2003:1). Creswell (2007:119) is of the opinion that in such a situation, one need to find one or more individuals to study through purposeful sampling, and these individuals must be accessible, willing to provide information and be able to shed light on the specific phenomenon being explored. In addition to this contention Creswell (2007:125) explains that using a purposive sampling requires the inquirer to select individuals and sites for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study.

Fifteen (15) participants were selected for this study and were chosen from each of the following categories: firstly, principals or deputies; secondly, SGB chairpersons (parents not working in the school); thirdly, selected teachers based on their knowledge and experience through the help of principals (most of whom were HODs) and lastly, Provincial Education Department Officials who are closely involved in school management matters ranging from school finances and educators welfare to the employment of educators. These participants were chosen from a sample of three schools, with four from each of the schools in the area (that is $3 \times 4 = 12$). The last three (3) participants were purposefully selected officials from the PDOE. This brought the total sample size to $12 + 3 = 15$

Keeping these groups in mind, participants specifically were chosen through a non-random selection method called purposive selection because of the researcher's perception that their level of discipline, academic exposure and management of school resources is amongst the best in the Area. This selection method was further motivated by some preliminary document analysis by the researcher as well as the fact that accountability is a very sensitive concern which requires an inside knowledge by whoever has to give an account. Such insight knowledge can be possessed by those officials who have handled these positions for a lengthy period of time. Therefore purposive selection can be both deliberate and flexible because it involves the selection of people who have specific characteristics or experience of the topic and can provide detailed understanding of research issues (Hennink *et al.*, 2011:85).

3.4.2 Construction and Validation of Interview questions

Interview questions were carefully and cautiously designed in accordance with the research questions and the literature study (see appendix H and chapter 2). In compiling the interview questions the researcher read and re-read the research problem repeatedly. Guest *et al.*

(2013:123) states that the process must begin with a review of the research objectives because the nature of the data captured will influence the format and content of instrument and the question with it. The initial list of questions was checked by the supervisor for consistency and structural coherence. These administrators from the PDOE were particularly managers in charge of Human resource matters (HR), school funding and employee wellness. The rest of the participants were selected as indicated in 3.4.1. Questions were purposefully re-designed or rephrased during interview sessions depending on the participant's area of responsibility and responds. The total of 15 individual interviews was conducted across all the four sites. The following are the central questions that were included in the interview schedule.

3.4.2.1 Interview Questions

- What is your understanding of the concept accountability?
- Are there other similar ideas or concept that you use in your day to day activities that relates to the concept accountability?
- How does the concept accountability work in practice in respect to your area of responsibility e.g. instructional leadership, adoption and distribution of funds, learner discipline problem etc.?
- Apart from you, who else is held accountable in the running of the school and for what?
- For what reasons are stakeholders held responsible for their decisions and by whom?
- Why must there be accountability in a school and why?
- What are the characteristic features of education accountability in your school?
- What are the challenges faced by stakeholders in your school in performing their responsibilities?
- How can the challenges of accountability be enhanced?

3.4.3 Data collection

For purpose of this study qualitative data were acquired by means of interviews with participants, document analysis and observations that were accompanied by field notes.

3.4.3.1 Interviews

According to Kvale (1996) in Marshall and Rossman (2011:142) qualitative interviews is a construction site of knowledge where two or more individuals discuss a "theme of mutual interest". Similarly Creswell (2009:221) explains that an interview is a question and answer

method of collecting information in a one-on-one situation and an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. Data collection through interviews was done in a face-to-face situation by interacting with selected respondents in their natural settings as emphasised by McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 315). Maree (2010:87) expounded that an interview is a two way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant questions to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participants. This enables the researcher to see the world through the eyes of the participants. Thus Flick (2011:112) simply articulates that the aim of the interview is to obtain individual views of the interviewees about a given issue. During the interviews participants were encourage to be vocal and tell his/her story regarding accountability issues that they know about in detail. By doing the interviews in this way the researcher was able to breakdown any idea that he might be in a position of authority towards participants.

The following important steps were used in conducting the interviews; obtaining interviewee consent; arranging venues ahead of time, using adequate recording procedures and using a design protocol. During the interviews the researcher sought out opinions, feelings, attitude and beliefs of a number of stakeholders ranging from school teachers, SGB chairs, principals and officials of the Education Department. Also, he improved his listening skills, personal interaction, question framing ability as well as follow up questions and gentle probing for evaluation. Apart from practicing these processes in an interview, Rubin and Rubin (2012:64) clarify that during the recording process which is the main activity at the time of interview, it is equally good to take notes. According to these authors the taking of notes can help to clarify muddled passages when you transcribe. In this regard, the researcher noted in writing important issues during interviews like changing voice tone, facial expression, and moments of silence. Moreover, during interview sessions certain research questions were rephrased to enhance participant understanding when and wherever they express any form of doubt through facial expression or by keeping quiet.

3.4.3.1.1 In-depth individual interviews

According to Guest *et al.* (2013:113) an in-depth interview is simply a conversation designed to elicit depth on a topic of interest. It is characterised by the following; a one-on-one conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee, utilising open-ended questions designed to lead a conversation related to the topic of interest, using inductive probing to get the depth of

stakeholder's accountability and must look and feel like a conversation. In this study individual interviews were used to stimulate further information on the research problem. Individual interviews in this study involved two persons (interviewer and interviewee). They were characterised by asking open-ended questions, supported by follow-up questions, recording of conversations and making of notes. During interviews, the researcher equally made sure that he steered up responses that differed from the main research topic strategically.

Rubin and Rubin (2012:29) explain that there are three basic characteristics of an in-depth interview which include; looking for rich detailed information from experience and narratives, not for yes or no responses; questions must be open-ended, meaning that no specific answer category is expected and lastly questions asked are not fixed, that is they can come in any order depending on the flow of participant elaboration. From the literature guide in chapter two the researcher was well informed and dealt with the different challenges as they arose. For instance during the interview process, the wordings were changed in different instances as well as skipping some questions that never made sense at that point in time (Rubin & Rubin 2012:29).

3.4.3.2. Observation

Maree (2010:83) describes observation as a systematic process of recording the behavioural pattern of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them. According to Maree (2010:83) and Marshall and Rossman (2011:139), observation basically involves using all five senses of smelling, hearing, touching, seeing and tasting because it enables a researcher to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon being observed. In support of this idea, Marshall and Rossman (2011:139) postulated that observation is central to qualitative research. To them, the term captures a variety of activities that range from mingling around in the setting; getting to know people and learning the routines; and using strict time selection to record actions and interactions using a check list to tick off pre-established actions. To Marshall and Rossman (2011:139) whether formal or informally enacted, observation entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours and artifacts in the social setting.

3.4.3.2.1. Participant observation

In this study mainly one observation type was performed known as participant observation. Mason (2002:84) maintains that participant observation is a method of generating data which

entails the researcher immersing him/herself in a research “setting” so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in that setting. During the interview processes, the researcher spend time with the participants at the various sites discussing interview questions while trying to understand assumptions, values, beliefs and experience of educational stakeholders in schools accountability. Apart from carrying out observation during interviews, the researcher also attended SGBs and HODs assessment meetings, where he acted as a participant observer. In this study the following were observed; participant reaction during interview, attitude of participants in the performance of their day-to-day tasks, posters/flyers containing pertinent issues about the school. Some of these issues included school vision and mission; stakeholder’s individual perceptions over certain concepts like “responsible teacher” and photographs of both educators and learners on various awards for the school. Practically, while participating in meetings, the researcher stood aside of what was going on, watched it, reflected about it and made notes about it in what turned out to be field notes.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992) in Mtsweni (2008:77) the term field notes refers to a written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study. To these authors all the data from participant observation studies are considered to be field notes. But then we cannot indicate field notes as a separate method. This is because during such observation process the researcher cannot record happenings in the field. Rubin and Rubin (2012:64) elaborated on the importance of field notes in a research project. According to them, when you take notes rather than recording as a researcher or when you take notes from recording rather than transcribe, you stand to face a huge set of problems such as omitting some relevant details. To Rubin and Rubin (2012) handwritten notes during an interview will barely get everything the participants say. Also when you summarise rather than transcribe it might result in misinterpretation of findings. In all, field notes are instrumental throughout research writing because they enhance accuracy in a research. Therefore no particular form of data collection technique is isolated. Rather they complement each other. During the data collection process the researcher ensured that an audio recorder was used partly to enable him to observe and make notes. Field notes therefore played a major role in the collection of data as it made the researcher flexible in the process. This was evident in the negotiation process of appointments for interviews and during interviews.

3.4.3.3 Document analysis

Another strategy utilised by the researcher in this study as a data gathering technique was document analysis. It involves making use of all form of documents that clarified the main accountability issues in educational management. Guest *et al.* (2013:252) explain that as opposed to generating documents it involves selecting both textual and visual information and analysing their content. According to Creswell (2009:187) documents enable a researcher to obtain the language and words of participants at a time convenient to the researcher as an unobtrusive source of information. As written evidence, it saves the researcher the time and expenses of transcribing. Documents in this respect enrich what a researcher sees and hear by supporting, expanding and challenging perceptions. Rubin and Rubin (2012:27) say that document analysis should constitute documents like newspapers, personal and public letters, internet post and blogs novels, diaries, and anything that appears in writing form as well as pictures and visual recording. The following documents were analysed for purpose of this study; newspapers and magazines like Mafikeng mail containing reported cases of accountability problems, SGBs report, principals report, HODs report, DOE's annual report, as well as the annual teaching plan from the NWPDOE for 2013-2016

Having conducted a wide range of the study through document analysis, the following weaknesses were identified and taken into consideration as noted by Guest *et al.* (2013:252);

- It was not easy to follow up with the person or persons who generated the documents. Most of the documents used had been in existence for as long as five years. For some reasons such as change of mandate particularly for SGB and SMT members, the researcher could not come in contact with such persons for conformity of analysis.
- Data was not generated to specifically inform the research objectives thus were not directly relevant to the current study. In this regard sufficient time was taken to properly generate themes and categories as well as analysed and link findings to themes and categories such as the problems of accountability in education.
- Lastly the quality of the data was unknown. This demanded that the recovered data be read and re-read identifying important themes by means of underlining and highlighting. This was particularly the case with school annual reports that were very voluminous.

3.4.4 Data analysis procedures

According to Creswell and Clark (2007:6) data analysis of a qualitative research such as words, images or text typically follows the path of aggregating the words or images into categories of information and presenting the diversity of ideas gathered during data collection. Similarly Creswell (2009:183) explains that data analysis in qualitative studies is that which involves making sense out of text and image data. To him, it encompasses preparing the data for analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data and making an interpretation of the real meaning. In preparation for data analysis the researcher listened to the audio-tapes and transcribed each interview verbatim. It is important to note that not every piece of data that comes to the researcher's attention is capable for use in a research project. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:91) say that data can be defective and if they are, they may affect the validity of the researcher's conclusion. To avoid the usage of such affected data after transcription, the researcher read slowly and carefully all the collected data, identifying contrasting issues as well as possibly fictitious information and separated them from the rest of the transcript.

In an attempt to achieve a successful analysis procedure, a deductive approach was adopted in which the researcher began with a large body of information sort and categorised it to a small set or abstract. Creswell (2010:99) states that data processing is aimed at allowing research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraint imposed by a more structured theoretical orientation. The analysis for this study was therefore based on the following steps: organisation of details about the case, categorising of data in terms of common themes, interpretation of single instances, identification of patterns and synthesis and generalisation into an overall description of the case.

Data from both individual and group interviews were analysed by grouping responses together. Best and Kahn (2003:203) hold that the first step in analysing qualitative research involves organising the data into different categories. To them, the method of organising data differs depending on the research strategy and collection technique(s) used. Data collected through interview were organised according to individual participants. In cases where an interview involved more than one individual, responses were grouped together across participants. Observations were considered individually and by grouping similar types of occurrences together while looking for differences among individual responses. Once the data were organised the

analysis process moved to a second phase that was description. The researcher described pertinent features of the research, namely the different settings and the individuals being studied (basically their responses and reactions). After the data sets were organised and described, the researcher entered the final phase of the process that involved interpretation and presentation of findings. He read and re-read the exact transcriptions and also played the audio-tape as often as he could to be able to establish themes. By and large the acts of comparing, contrasting, aggregating and ordering were utilised throughout the analysis process as it culminated in the expressing of categories into themes by means of open coding.

Open coding was utilised throughout the analysis process which according to White (2002:82) is "a process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data. Sentences and paragraphs from the transcript interviews were sorted by means of underlining, circling, and highlighting segments of the participant quotes which eventually enabled the researcher to identify different themes. Equally, the presentation of data which took the form of a narration was supported by the use of sufficient quotations from the participant's actual speech. Coding according to Saldana (2009:8) is not just labeling, it is linking: "it leads you from the data to the idea and from the idea to all the data pertaining to the idea". In essence it entails arranging things in a systematic order, making something part of a system or classification, to categorise (Saldana, 2009:8). To this author, when codes are applied and reapplied to qualitative data, you are codifying; a process that permits data to be "segregated, grouped, regrouped, and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanations".

Both alphabetic and numeric codes were used to represent sites and participants respectively as well as the researcher. Alpha codes that range from A-D representing the four sites involved in the study were used, while numeric codes ranging from 01-04 were used to represent participants from each of the site. For example code A01 represented participant one from site A. Note must be taken of the fact that codes were assigned to both schools and participants based on the level of the school ranging from high school through middle and primary schools respectively. The researcher on the other hand was coded using his initials which is H.T.

3.5 PROCEDURES FOR FIELD INVESTIGATION

According to Guest *et al* (2013:123) every successful research must begin with planning the logistics of an interview because it is as important as recruiting the right participants. To them, it

takes more than having a place, time and appropriate person to conduct an interview. By planning a research, Guest *et al.* (2013) stated that the process must begin with a review of the research objectives because the nature of the data captured will influence the format and content of the instrument and the question with it. All the research tools relevant for this study that comprised tape recorder, note book, pen for taking of notes, laptop for transcription and recording of findings were well in order during the field investigation.

Initially permission to conduct this research was sought from the Faculty of Education and Training, Mafikeng campus of the North West University in the form of a research proposal. After a serious deliberation at the proposal colloquium made up of professors and lecturers in the faculty, the research proposal was approved. This was followed by a research Ethics committee meeting that was held to ensure that all issues of ethics in a research were followed (see paragraph 3.6). Finally, a letter of approval to proceed with the study was obtained from the office of the director in the School of Educational Leadership Development. The letter (see Appendix A), was sent to the Area office of the DOE and office of the Superintendent General requesting permission to carry out research in the respective schools and the PDOE respectively. The above mentioned offices on behalf of the DOE granted the researcher permission to undertake the study in the areas and schools involved only (see Appendix B & C). At this point the letters were then forwarded to the principals of the three schools involve as well as the three officials from the DOE requesting their participation in the study at their various schools and offices (see appendix D, E & F). Due to the difficulty to meet with departmental officials a formal letter was addressed to them through their secretaries and personal assistants (PA) requesting an interview schedule (see appendix G).

After booking appointments with selected participants, there was an exchange of contact for continuous reminders about the interview schedules. During such telephonic conversations appropriate care was taken by the researcher to anticipate and accommodate the participants' scheduling needs. Throughout the interview session, the researcher maintained an open and friendly mood as well as a culturally appropriate greeting style during interviews. At the beginning of every interview session the researcher introduced small talk on the area of interest to the participants most of which was soccer related, to set their minds at ease. It is worth

mentioning that very sensitive questions were only introduced towards the last phase of the interview in order not to make participants feel demoralised.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

An emergent design requires ethical principles to be considered throughout all phases of planning, data collection and analysis. Marshall and Rossman (2011:121) argue that ethical considerations are more than just ensuring informed consent and protecting participant's anonymity. It also entails anticipated challenges that will occur. In this respect the researcher was emotionally firm and continuously evaluated his own behaviour. In addition to this contention Guest *et al.* (2013:104) alluded that as much as researchers endeavour to ensure safety and security of participants, they are equally exposed to a series of dangers posed either by the environment (venue) or participants themselves. In an attempt to ensure the safety of participants and the researcher, a great deal of common sense and good planning was applied during the pre-assessment of the venues and participants involvement. For example the researcher ensured that all the venues used for interviews were school venues (classrooms). This was in anticipation of the fact that it was safer in school premises. For this reason such interviews took place only during break time or after hours when learners were completely out of the premises.

Most ethical issues in research fall into one of four categories namely; protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101; Lictman, 57-59; Punch, 2014:43). Lichtman (2014:57) who describes these ethical considerations as representing a fusion gathered from many sources argues that some guidelines need to be established as a way to protect humans from exploitation and invasion of privacy. In this respect the researcher ensured that all the above-mentioned categories were thoroughly followed:

3.6.1. Protection from harm

This principle requires that research participants should not be exposed to undue physical or psychological harm. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101) the risks involved in participating in a study should not be appreciably greater than the normal risk of day to day living. If this should by any means occur such a research is best discontinued, even if it means forgoing the initial research plans (Lichtman, 2014:57). During this study, the researcher ensured that participants were not exposed to any form of stress, embarrassment or loss of self-esteem. In

an attempt to achieve this, the researcher ensured that crime free venues, most of which were campuses of the selected schools were used for the interviews.

3.6.2 Informed consent

Leedy & Ormrod (2005:101) and Lichtman (2014:59) elucidate that during a research process, participants should be told exactly the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice whether or not to participate. Lichtman (2014:59) in fact emphasised that under no circumstance should participants be coerced into participation. In this regard, participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time they felt their rights were not respected. Before the data gathering process could commence the researcher ensured that participants were fully informed by given them a general idea on what the current study of accountability requires. In respect to inform consent, Marshall and Rossman (2011:142) postulated that during a research participants must continually be renegotiated to participate. The reason behind this was to ensure that participants were willing and constantly ready to participate otherwise the researcher might be misled. A participant in one of the schools actually canceled an interview session because she felt there were better persons to take part in the interview than her and her opinion was well respected.

3.6.3. Right to privacy

Participant's right to privacy was also highly respected as one of the ethical requirements for conducting a qualitative research. Lichtman (2014:57) emphasis that any participant taking part in a research study has a reasonable expectation that privacy will be guaranteed. In this regard, under no circumstances was the researchers report either oral or written presented in such a way that others became aware of how a particular participant has responded or behaves. In fact participants performance was kept strictly confidential by the use of code numbers and letters such as S1 and P1 referring to school one and participant one respectively. Lichtman (2014:57) therefore says that privacy should be examined from two dimensions which are institutional and individual. Once the data was collected, the researcher ensured that no one else other than a few research assistants had access to the raw data. In this case the research assistants were basically the supervisor and assistant; external and internal examiners.

3.6.4. Honesty with professional colleagues

Honesty or sincerity is a basic requirement for a normal day-to-day life as is the case in educational research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:339). In this regard, findings were reported in a complete and honest fashion without any misrepresentation or misleading of other readers and researchers. Under no circumstances were data fabricated to support particular conclusions. To achieve this objective, an in-text citation method was used in which the name of the author(s) and year of publication was linked to every new idea that was originally not from the researcher.

Moreover permission to conduct interviews as well as to utilise highly confidential documents for research purposes were obtained from all participants especially the Department of Education and principals well in advance. They were well informed of the purpose as well as the aims and objective of the research. Appointments were made in such a way that research activities did not interfere with teaching and learning in the schools Interview schedules were therefore slated mostly at break time with educators and lunch time with officials from the Department of Education.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness according to Maree (2010:299) refers to the way in which the researcher is able to persuade the audience that the findings in the study are worth paying attention to. Lincoln and Guba in Marshall and Rossman (2011:40) explains that for trustworthiness to be attained in qualitative research a set of procedures could be used such as; prolonged engagement which requires a researcher to be in the setting for a long period of time; member checking which urges researchers to share data and interpretations with participants; triangulation by gathering data from multiple sources and peer debriefing which requires the discussion of emergent findings with critical friends to ensure that the analysis are grounded in the data. Out of these four procedures mention in Marshall and Rossman (2011), Maree (2010:86) argues that the more engaged the researcher is with the situation being observed, the higher the risk that he will become more subjective and will let his own biases get the better of him. Maree (2010:86) however acknowledges that despite the weakness of these procedures, being too distant can also impact negatively on the relationship that you need to build with the participants. In an attempt to achieve these standards of trustworthiness in this study, the researcher put forward three main principles namely member checking, credibility and the use of multiple sources that were instrumental in this study.

3.7.1 Member checking

The researcher used member checking strategy which according to Maree (2010:86) is a situation where “you verify your understanding of what you have observed with those observed”. Member checking involved taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to the participants and determining whether they felt they had been reported accurately. Lichtman (2014:60) argues that as important as the role of member checking is, not all qualitative researchers follow the procedure. The member checking process for this study started when the researcher took back samples of transcripts to participants who gave lengthy information through emails for cross checking and re-confirmation. A copy of this dissertation was handed to all the different institutions involved in the study in the form of a soft copy.

3.7.2 Credibility

With credibility, the researcher should ensure that there is an understanding and control of bias, instead of generalisations (Maree, 2010:113). To achieve this value, two kinds of interviews were conducted which included focus-group interviews and individual interviews. Data from these interviews were compared and integrated while bringing out similarities and differences for analysis and presentation. The researcher made sure that the participants fully comprehended the nature and outcomes of the research by asking them to comment on drafts that were communicated through emails. The participants were also assured of anonymity and confidentiality by not mentioning their names and not forcing them to participate or continue participating against their will (see paragraph 3.4.4).

3.7.3. Triangulation

Triangulation according to Maree (2010:80) is a traditional strategy of improving the validity and reliability of a research or evaluation of findings. In this study triangulation was ensured by gathering data from a variety of sources which included individual interviews, document analysis and participant observation to investigate the perception of school stakeholders of accountability. Through this approach, dependability was also ensured.

3.7.4. Multiple sources of data

A researcher cannot rely on a singular research method to provide rich data (Maree, 2010:86). According to Creswell (2009:175), qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data such as interview, observation and document analysis rather than rely on a single data source. He holds that with multiple sources of data collection, the researcher reviews all of the data collected

and make sense of it by organising them into themes and categories that cut across all of the data sources. In this study the researcher collected data using four main qualitative methods which are interview, observation, field notes and document analysis. In this way he was able to identify bias and other instances where participants gave incomplete information over certain questions out of “fear or ignorance”. Maree (2010:80) therefore stresses the importance of various data collection instruments because they enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the data gathered.

3.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design and methods were elaborated. These methods were derived from the main research approach that was qualitative as well as a design that was a case study. The research tools and procedures were equally clarified and included interviews, observation and document analysis. Interview questions were tested prior to the study and lastly issues on ethics regarding a research was raised and addressed because it constituted an important part of the study.

The next chapter deals with the presentation and interpretation of findings acquired through the different research methods mention above. The presentation of findings was entirely based on providing answers and solutions to the research problems. Therefore not every single datum collected in the field was presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS FROM THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter an empirical research design was presented that comprised all the research tools and techniques involved in the process of data collection. These data were collected from three schools in the Mafikeng Area Office and the North West Provincial Department of Education (PDOE). The chapter presents results from the empirical investigation conducted to answer the research question and sub-questions indicated in the previous chapter. The procedural approach used in the study was designed to produce data that could undergo regularity.

4.2. DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

During this phase of data analysis, the researcher transcribed the individual interviews that were done. These transcripts were analysed for themes and concepts by comparing the material within the categories, to look for variations as well as connections in the meanings. The goal was to integrate the themes and concepts into a system that offers an accurate, detailed interpretation of the data. Presentation of data from the interview was buttressed by the use of appropriate quotations from the participants' actual dialogue. The interview results were then summarised to conclude the qualitative data analysis. After the data analysis was done, results were presented by use of codes that represented the participants.

The coding process for this study was done as follows; the four sites were represented with alphabetical characters A.B.C.D based on the site where the researcher collected data first. All thirteen participants were associated with a two digit identification number e.g. 01. In trying to identify participants with the various sites during data analysis, their identity changed for instance A01. Alphabetical character A refers to site/school A, while the numeric character 01 is for participant 01. Therefore A01 means participant 01 from site A. The interviewer equally adopted a new identity during the analysis process which is made up of his initials H.T.

4.3 INTERPRETATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

Data collected through interviews were organised according to the different themes and categories from the research questions. In some instances response were grouped together under

the same themes and categories. Participant observation was considered individually as well as grouping similar types of occurrences together and looking for differences among individuals, setting and/or times. A successful interpretation of data according to Jacelon and O'Dell, (2005:219) therefore rest on the ability of the researcher to creatively identify the findings. Also, important documents like annual reports from various schools and of the provincial department of education involved in the study were well analysed by identifying relevant themes and categories relating to the study. During this phase, documents that were relevant either directly or indirectly were well scrutinized.

4.4. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

According to Wallace and Poulson (2003:55) during the presentation of findings, the most common findings within the overall range, backed by supportive quotations should be indicated. To them, the research questions or hypothesis as the case may be, should provide the basis for structuring the presentation of the findings. In this regard the presentation of findings for this empirical investigation was guided by the research questions being asked. These questions that comprised of main and follow-up questions/probing as well as participants response were presented under the following categories, themes and topics;

Table 4.1 Categories, themes and topics from the empirical study

Themes	Categories	Topics
Stakeholders understanding of the concept accountability in schools	The meaning of accountability	-Taking responsibility -Performing expected task
	Related concepts to accountability	-Answerability -Responsibility -Answerableness -Representative
Perceptions of stakeholders regarding the nature of	The pattern of accountability in schools	

accountability	Stakeholders and their responsibilities in accountability of school	-Learner security and safety -Recruitment of educators -Maintenance of school property -Taken up duties by stakeholders in school matters
	The magnitude of accountability in education	
Challenges face by school stakeholders in the accountability of schools	Challenges associated with accountability	-Externally imposed vision or conflict of interest -Non-participation by parents in children's education -Inadequate monitoring of the curriculum -Lack of competence by stakeholders and resistance to change -Late payment by the DoE -Too many responsibilities on educators -Extension of no fee policy -Roll overs from previous years -Under performance by schools and stakeholders
Strategies to enhance the challenges of stakeholders accountability of schools	Remedies to accountability problem	-Promote cordial relationship -Constantly involve and inform parents about quarterly meetings -Adequately prepare lessons -Introduction of short courses for stakeholders -Treat school properties as personal belonging

		-Additional feeding schemes by community -Renting out of school properties
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The above mention topics and sub-topics as classified above were further presented in the form of a narration from the participant's actual conversation.

4.4.1. The meaning of the concept accountability

Participants at the different sites (principals, SGB chairs, educators, & DOE officials) were asked to describe the meaning of the concept accountability based on their various understanding. From the different responses as demonstrated below, participants share a common opinion by relating their responses to performance of responsibility. Principals particularly shared a similar idea pointing to the general running of the school to achieve a set of objectives; the SGB chairs, just like officials from the DOE collectively describe the concept accountability to mean giving feedback over a task that has been entrusted on you to perform. Samples of response from participants are as follows;

As a role player, what to your understanding is the meaning of accountability?

Participant D01 said "for me accountability is more of responsibility". This participant cited an example saying if you are given the responsibility to manage a unit or a budget you have to give an account to say what you have done with the money given to you. She however added that if in the end of the month or year you are not able to do what was expected, you have to give reasons for non-achievement and how you intend to make up or what you think are your corrective measures. To participant C01 *accountability* means taking responsibility in every little thing that is happening in the school as far as teaching and learning is concern. That it included managing school finances, insuring that infrastructure is in good condition, making sure that teaching and learning is taking place, insuring that reinforcement is done and all the policies pertaining to reinforcement.

Moreover participant A04 explains that *Accountability means performing expected duties as per your contract and also ensuring that you do all these activities that are being assigned to you as an educator diligently*. This was very similar to the idea of participant C03 who equally said

“accountability refers to individuals or people at the work place having to perform certain responsibilities that carries along the mission and vision of the school. Even more was the notion of participant B04 who explained that accountability is the act of making sure that your activities as an educator aligns with vision and mission of the school that must be achieved.

4.4.2. Related concepts to accountability

During the individual interviews, participants were asked to identify other notions/concepts that have similar meaning to that of accountability. Though some initially express some form of doubt, they suggested different opinions. These responses that seemed similar in most instances, also varied at different levels as was identified. This is so because the application of terminologies in academic writing is largely guided by the idea we intend to expose, which in this case is to give report. However a greater portion of the responses from participants pointed towards one direction. In fact ten out of the fifteen participants who took part in the study said that responsibility was the most suitable word that could be used as a synonym. Some sample responses were as follows;

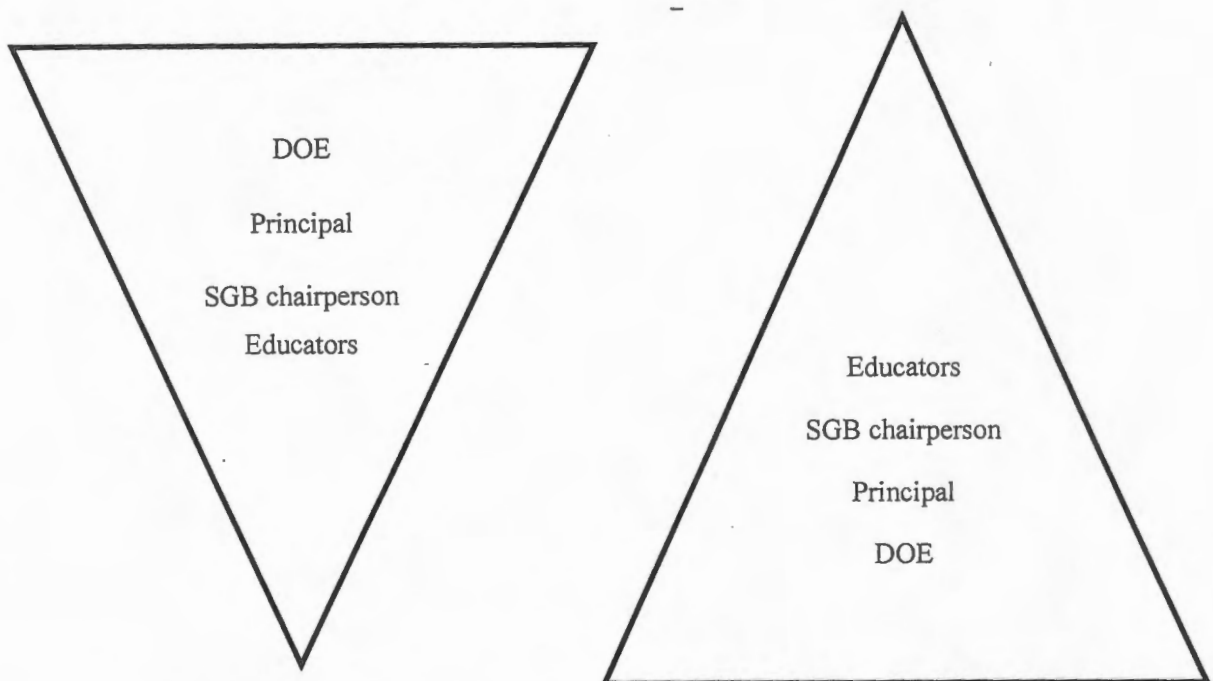
Are there other ideas or concept that you use in your day to day activities that relates to the concept accountability?

Participant B01 particularly explained that to him it is *responsibility* because he will tell someone that he is responsible for a particular thing. *Once you are responsible for that thing you must be in a position to account or give account over any decision that you take.* In that regard participant A01 explains that though it is his responsibility to account for what goes on in the entire school environment, he is not responsible for everything that happens in the school. This means that every school stakeholder including learners have to be responsible for each task that is given to them to enable him give proper reports as the accountable officer of the school. On the other hand, another concept similar to accountability according to participant B04 and D02 respectively is *answerability*. Participant B04 particularly stated that a school is a public entity entrusted upon a group of stakeholders who must report back and be answerable to the public. Worthy of mention is the fact that participants A02 and C03 raised new but familiar concepts which are *representative* and *answerableness* respectively. Participant A02 particularly stated that *representative is very relevant here because it requires one to report back to either the organisation or union that you are representing.*

4.4.3 The pattern of accountability in schools

Participants were asked to describe or demonstrate how the concept accountability is practiced in their various environments based on their different perceptions. Based on what this researcher gathered, there is generally an upward movement in the practice of accountability in schools which is in a form of hierarchy. Notwithstanding some participants also indicated that though there is a general flow from bottom to top as far as the pattern of accountability in schools is concern, there is equally a top to bottom tendency. In this regard, education officials for example are equally expected to inform or report to principals and the community at large when there is for example a delay in the delivery of school materials. This also applies to both principals and educators especially when it involves learners at schools. Below is an illustration of the pattern of accountability in schools from the empirical investigation.

Diagram 4.1 Pattern or nature of accountability illustrating side way accountability



Adapted from Westhuizen *et al* (2013:301)

How does the concept accountability work in practice in respect to your area of responsibility?

Participant B03 illustrate the opinion that *accountability is a two way process*. To him, at the beginning of every academic quarter or year, *the subject specialist come to the school and gives*

educators tasks to perform in relation to the curriculum. Now after examinations or before the end of the term, educators will in return give feedback over learner performances. Participant B01 in this regard particularly said that *to whom much is given, much is expected.* Therefore educators are expected to submit reports about learner performances to principals who then present it to us (SGB) during our SGB meetings. This idea was also shared by participant B04 who said that the DOE had introduced what is called the Annual National Assessment exams (ANA). *This is an exam written by selected schools and classes chosen by the DOE to see whether learners are performing well in specific areas of learning.* This affirms the idea of participant D02 who said that *the essence of accountability in schools is to guide and not to punish.* So as the DOE it is very important that effective monitoring is done. *For instance you monitor the work of the learners as an educator, principals monitor educators and department officials monitor principals in a school instead of just sitting at the offices waiting for positive results.*

Participant B02 talking in relation to finances said there is a financial committee in the school that consists of the Financial Secretary, the deputy principal and the treasurer of SGB. He went further to say they organise monthly meetings where this committee presents a report on expenditures after executing a particular responsibility. So in this school, *the financial secretary is responsible for all financial records and must report directly to the SGB. This however is to demonstrate the fact that where there is responsibility, there must be accountability.* In this regard, participant A02 explains that *it is critical that the SGB to adopt a school development plan that will determine what is expected of stakeholders to develop the school.* To him any money that is receive from the DOE is treated as extra funds because they look at fund raising and fees from learners as the main source of income considering that the school is classified under quintile five. *So whoever is assigned for the collection of fees for example is highly accountable to the SGB board that is in charge of the finance.* While affirming this view, B01 said *if at the end of the year these duties are not well executed those made in charge must be held to account.*

In trying to clarify how the concept accountability work in practice one of the educators coded A04 said *as an educator he knows good results with regard to learner performance is expected of him.* This implies that she has to give an account over learner performance to her immediate

boss who is the subject HOD. In this respect she plans the lessons well in time before going to class. While in class A04 said, *you engage learners in your teaching strategies by giving them activities as a checklist to see whether they understood what they were taught.* It goes further to the marking of papers, recording marks and submission to subject HODs. All these steps according to participant A03 partly makes up the accountability process involving an educator who is directly answerable to the subject HOD. She however added that on the part of the authorities at the DOE they owe us answers if there is any failure or delay in the delivery of teaching materials. In affirmation, participant B03 added that *you have to account for all these tasks on or before due date as stipulated but not without the learners playing their part in the process by doing their assignments and studying for exams.*

D02 also illustrated that at the level of the department the accounting officer is the head and works in collaboration with the Political head, who is the Member of Executive Council (MEC). Collectively he said, *we are accountable but when it comes to taking the department to task then it will be directed to the Chief Financial Officer.* This implies that though at different ranks they are answerable to each other. Nevertheless B01 explained that all educators are all answerable to him because as the principal, he represents the DOE. Though to him there is a protocol that is to be followed. For instance *if there is something that is needed from teachers, he contacts the deputy principal or HODs who represents these teachers.* In the same vein *he normally does not communicate with learners directly he said. Meanwhile they can contact him through the learner representative council (LRC) or the teachers.*

4.4.4 Stakeholders and their responsibilities in schools accountability

In the school as an organisation, a specific task is given to specific stakeholders either as a group or as individuals. Participants were asked to identify who they consider as key role players in schools and what their responsibilities were. From their discussions every stakeholder in a school including learners are key players in the functioning of a school with different responsibilities. From the different ideas gathered, no single sector or unit of a school can operate in isolation. For example the educators are there to teach learners but there will not be any teachers where there are no learners and vice versa. The main idea here is the fact that every stakeholder has a role to play as far as teaching and learning is concerned and must be accountable to someone. The following direct responses were received from participants.

Apart from you, who else is held accountable in the running of the school and for what?

Going straight to the point, participant B01 said that educators are very aware of their responsibilities as well as the repercussions for failing to comply. In respect to the issues of *learner security* in and out of school premises for example, educators, according to SASA, (1996) well understand that it is their responsibility to look after learners under their care and also to make sure they are of good conduct. He went further to say that *over the years there have been cases or situations in which principals and educators are taken to court by parents or learners for failing to provide adequate security over a particular learner*. This becomes even more problematic if the learner suffers physical injuries that can cause disability or even death. This is supported by B02 who said *fortunately enough they have never witnessed any confrontation from parents on issues of security of learners. Therefore we make sure things do not go out of order by constantly monitoring the learners in and out of the classroom. But if it does happen, not only the educator will be held accountable by the SGB but also the principal who is the overall manager of the school*.

In respect to the *employment of educators and in my position as the SGB chairperson*, participant B02 mention that *the SGB is responsible to see that the process of recruitment is done accordingly whether assigned by the department of education or for their own personal need*. In this regard he said that because of his level of exposure, connection and level of accountability to parents, they gave him the authority to hire an educator payable by the SGB whenever need arises. But however the parents and even educators can still recommend educators when there is a vacancy. Contrarily, participant C02 said it is the responsibility of the SGB to make sure all the classrooms have educators. To him *when they discover that the school needs more teachers than the ones provided by the departmental Post Provisional Model (PPM), they can hire educators in their capacity as the SGB depending on the availability of funds*.

Participant D03 and B04 explained that *when there is a vacancy for a teaching job, the department is informed by the school through the SGB or principal*. Therefore it is the responsibility of the DOE to advertise the job(s) either through government gazette or newspaper. D03 added that *for reasons like pressure from the schools on the urgent need of the educator we ask them to go straight away with the recruitment process of the educator(s)*. Participant A01 rounded up saying *after selecting the best three candidates from the interview*

they are recommended to the department of education for final selection. Hence the process ends with the introduction of the educator in the school.

D02 on a very serious note emphasised that *as far as accountability is concerned, people can sometimes abuse their powers or by pass authorities to achieve the said objectives or goals of the school. As a principal of the school you are the accountable officer so you can possible redirect funds to other areas of interest on behalf of the school.* By this he meant people can abuse their powers to do what is right for the department. For example *if there is need for minor renovations in the school the principal might chose to hire cheap labour without necessarily following the normal procurement procedure as the prescribed by the Public Finance Management Act no.1 of 1999.* This is linked to B01 who said he employs only male educators in his school with no major challenge from the DOE or community because to him *it is a constructive discrimination.* This means if the objective of teaching and learning is to achieve a successful outcome then the department must not bother on how it is achieved.

Still from the perspective of an SGB, participant C02 said that though they have other responsibilities to play in running the school, their main concern is on *school finances.* He holds that *at the beginning of the financial year SGB committee looks at the needs of the school and places them in order of preference.* Participant B01 said that *90% of the funds come from the DOE and the remaining 10% they request as donations from parents.* This directly means such a school is a non-fee paying school. So parents are requested to donate on a free will bases which is always not easy. As such *we rent out some of our halls and classrooms to the community to conduct workshops for some unemployed people. It is another form of raising money for the school he said.* In concomitant to the above, D03 said that *close to 90% of the budget in the department of education goes for the payment of salaries of educators and administrators* which explains why a high level of accountability is expected from educators.

D02 further said as far as accountability is concerned in respect to funds given to schools, *the most practical way to determine whether funds are utilised is through expenditure report that is drawn on a monthly basis.* This to him helps to keep Areas and Districts Managers responsible. He explains that *in a school financial year whatever is allocated to the school cannot be consumed in two months because they are a variety of activities.* Some may occur in the first quarter while the other may be in the last quarter. So in monitoring or keeping people

accountable, *we expect them to report as per the expenditure plan in their monthly and quarterly report which determines whether or not there is an over or under expenditure.* Nevertheless the department is knowledgeable of the fact that some activities are ones off, meaning a particular district or school may have an over expenditure in one quarter and less expenditure in another that must be explain during the monthly meetings

Participant D01 explained that first and foremost their services are for all employees in the department of education which include educators and office based administrators. She holds that they offer a number of services by trying to be proactive though sometimes problems do occur and we turn to be reactive. In their capacity *they deal with issues of stress either as a result of work related or personal life issues, issues of HIV/AIDS (in collaboration with the DOE) and personal financial management problems.* She holds that *the area of finance is one of their main areas of priority because of the realisation that most of the government employees are over indebted.* Therefore it is our responsibility at the employee wellness unit to make sure that all state employees at the DOE are in good health and state of mind to deliver services where necessary. AIV/AIDs programmes are however introduced by the wellness unit where prevention is encouraged by using all the available preventive measures. *But for a person that already has the virus we offer counseling services and advice on healthy living strategies.* By healthy living she added *one of our serious concerns is the fact that most of our employees are suffering from obesity.* So it is our priority to make sure we run such programmes like encouraging physical activities such as jogging or going to a fitness centre. *This helps to reduce diseases like stroke, heart failure, and even high blood pressure for our employee.*

4.4.5 The magnitude of accountability in schools

Participants were asked to describe the circumstances under which a stakeholder can be held accountable. Based on what this researcher gathered from the individual interviews, it was revealed that a lot of aspects are taking into consideration when it involves holding stakeholders (especially educators) to account for their decisions by senior authorities. Most importantly, the learner's education is considered first before any major decision is taking. Among the issues identified are cases of misconduct and sexual relationships amongst stakeholders at the work place that distort the normal day to day activity of the school. In one case between a learner and an educator, and in an attempt not to interfere with the learner's education who was at the time

preparing for his matric exams, the matter was laid to rest until the end of the year. For most of the principals they explain that they try as much as they can to ensure that issues of irresponsible staff do not escalate by serving them unofficial and official letters of warning respectively. The question and responses were as follows;

For what action and by who can you as a role player be held accountable in your school?

Participant B01 started by mentioning a situation that happened some time ago which according to him is one of his reasons for not hiring female educators. *A certain married educator got involved in a relationship with a male educator at the work place he said.* Fortunately or unfortunately the husband was informed and he came into the school premise with a gun looking for this male teacher. *Luckily enough we had been alerted of the situations he said so we had to hide the male teacher in question and told the husband to the female educator that he did not show up for school that day. The long and short of it is that the female educator abandoned her job while the investigation was going on.* Because the school could not lose both educators at the same time due the shortage of educators in the school at that time, the SMT together with the SGB reinstated the male educator. He was asked to apologise to the rest of the stakeholders and sign an undertaking to hence forth be of good character. A similar opinion was shared by participant A02 who said *they had to wait until all exams were over and submissions made then the educator was fairly dismissed.*

According to participant A01, everyone has a responsible role to play as far as school's accountability is concern. Once you have been giving responsibilities then you are most likely to be held accountable because *two people cannot be responsible for one thing.* Therefore when students fail to do their assignments for example or perform poorly they are expected to explain to the teacher as to why they did not do it or perform poorly. Meanwhile the educator whom this learner is placed under his care must equally explain why this learner did not perform well. *This is very crucial as might lead to the educator being replaced by the authorities.* Similarly participant A02 said in terms of the SASA which is the guiding legislation there is a distinction between school management and school governance. *That the governance of the school is the responsibility of the SGB, but the day to day running of the school administratively as well as teaching and learning remains the responsibility of the school manager assisted by the SMTs.* So if there is poor performance in a particular class or subject the principal and his team will be held

accountable. C02 while affirming the above contention concluded that *the SGB in collaboration with the SMT has the power to write a petition to the DOE for an educator to be fired if he/she is found guilty of misconduct or poor performances of the learners.*

A02 elucidated that *when educators are recruited into the school, as part of their orientation they are taken through the mission and vision of the school as well as the values adopted by the school so that there is no conflict of interest.* To him the school is one of those that have successfully integrated all racial groups because of its emphasis on the importance of mission and vision. *Hence, there is no challenge in that respect because some of the values are adopted from the former and late president of SA Nelson Mandela. They were based on the principles of Ubuntu, which is a Zulu word meaning humanness.* In that regard even religious differences are taken into consideration, which include the Muslim community, Indian and the black Christian community. Nevertheless A01 rounded up saying though the school is predominately dominated by Christians; *they are constantly reminded that the minority constitute a part of a whole so everyone is treated equally.*

Lastly participant D01 elaborated that *each and every organisation has a high ranking system that flows from the directors to the smaller unit.* She emphasised that *their aim as a unit is to ensure productivity in the work place and not to punish employee.* So we come up with our plans for a financial year, get a target, and then engage all employees through the distribution of responsibilities to all stakeholders. *She went further to say at the end of every month we expect reports from these stakeholders we have given responsibilities which are presented during monthly meetings to see what has been done.* This implies that some stakeholders have that responsibility to lead others in performing their responsibilities. Therefore during such presentation if a particular section in promoting teaching and learning is lacking behind the stakeholder(s) involved is expected to give an account and provide reasons for non-achievement. *Also such a person is expected to provide corrective measures towards achieving those objectives before the year runs to an end. But however cases of maladministration or embezzlement often result in investigation and suspension or termination of contract of stakeholder involved.*

4.4.6 Challenges associated with accountability

When stakeholders were asked what challenges they faced, a majority of the responses pointed toward financial constraints. These financial issues were centered on the need for money for issues like maintenance of school structures, purchase of teaching and learning resources and insufficient payment to educators as salaries. But on the whole, the rest of the challenges centres on day to day happenings around the school. Very sensitive issues were raised as challenges such as the gap between educators and principal which make the relationship strenuous. This comes as a result of pumping young energetic educators into the system from universities as against educators who never obtained such university qualifications and training. Fortunately according to these stakeholders they attend a few workshops organised by the government, but are still insufficient. The following responses were obtained during interviews;

What are the challenges associated with accountability in education

To begin with, participant B01 raised a worrying issue which according to him needs urgent attention. He said *we are forced by the Department of Education to promote failed learners who are not ready to learn on the grounds that they need to be at the same level with their age group.* A similar frustration was shared by participants B04, C03 and C04 respectively who expressed their anger saying *the entire situation is frustrating to them as educators because most of such learners are very disrespectful to educators and do not come to school often.* B04 particularly said *learners sometimes exercise truancy whereby a particular learner can take up to ten days not coming to school which endangers the performance of the school.* However B04 acknowledged that *this problem of learners being absent from school emanates from a variety of reasons such as teenage pregnancy whereby they have to stay at home and look after their children, child headed family, unaffordability of transport and lack of food for some learners can all contribute to learners not attending school.* In all C03 said *the department is failing in their strategies because at the level of matric, these learners still perform very poorly but are evaluated to have passed.* Unfortunately for these learners they are forced to drop out when they get to the university because they cannot cope. In this regard participant B04 said *learners must be helped to discover their talent by organizing school plays and shows instead of forcing them to become what they are not.*

Another challenge according to A01 is that learners write exams that are prepared by the DOE. In his own words he said *I would have loved to write my own exams here, but the department gives us exams scripts in June and November respectively*. This to him makes the teachers not to develop because *you learn better and faster when you are creative*. Besides every school and class has unique styles of teaching and learning based on how fast the learners are able to understand, he said. So when learners write exams on things that they are yet to be taught and do not perform well they tend to be discouraged. A04 therefore expressed her complete dissatisfaction saying *we are no longer able to teach as we use to do because a lot of time is spent doing paper work like attendance register and other control document*. But the bottom line is you know exactly what is expected of you which forms part of the accountability practice.

Another aspect closely related to the above as indicated by participant D03 is the *lack of proper monitoring of the curriculum by the department*. To him *employees need to visit and monitor schools about curriculum because they are subject specialist and not just to sit in offices and compile documents*. One thing leads to another said D03 there is also the *problem of unavailability of transport*. However, because of budget constraints the department cannot afford to buy cars for all the field workers as well as furniture and computers requested by stakeholders in the performance of this task. B01 raised another issue which to him is a call for concern. He said *the DOE provides them with resources like computers most of which are still lying in store rooms unused and yet complain of insufficient funds*. He explained that all educators, HODs and SMTs in general need to be trained on how to use the computers. Couple with the late payment of funds to schools by the department it becomes more difficult to perform all these responsibilities. In support of this contention B02 said *the expectation from the DOE is that school activities must continue to run as smoothly as always whereas only 50% of payment is made while the other 50% is paid late in October. And sometimes even a smaller amount is paid in after which a budget has already been made for the expected amount*.

Another crucial point raised by A03 is that *parents are not involved in their children's education*. To her parents really do not understand that they equally have a very big role to play in improving the performance of their children. Worst of all she said *they notify you of their presence as a parent only in problematic situation for instance, by expecting you to treat an individual child differently from the entire class*. A04 on her part said *confrontation in most*

cases happens with parents who do not believe educators when they sent SMSs to say the learner did not do assignment. They blame you the teacher saying you did not give enough time for the assignment and also that you failed to inform them which of course is not part of my responsibility. Still on the case of parents C01 said not all parents are cooperating. In fact he said parental involvement is very instrumental in a school but unfortunately they are not concerned over their children's performance. In anger he said as I talk to you right now I still have the report cards for some of our learners for last term and their parents have not bothered to come get it. Similarly, B04 raised the point that parents are not educated. As a result educators are left with a lot of burden to deal with. For example assignments that parents can help deal with at home is thrown back at educators especially when it involves internet search in which they should be assisted at home. This makes parents very unaccountable because they tend to know very little or nothing about their own children.

Furthermore participant D03 said another major problem they are facing is *resistance to change in the curriculum by educators*. For example he said *since the introduction of Outcome Based Education (OBE), teachers are no longer comfortable with the changes which have led to the resignation of many teachers because they feel frustrated*. For B03, *many others who remain in the system are not willing to comply with recent changes as far as curriculum is concerned*. She said as an HOD during monitoring it is usually discovered that such educators do not adhere to the new curriculum statement which exposes learners to serious challenges during public exams set by the department. *This can further result in stagnation in teaching and learning of a particular class hence poor performances in national examinations like Matric and Annual National Assessment (ANA)*. Contrarily to this situation participant B04 said *educators are sometimes exposed to situations where they are more experienced and even better qualified than the principal*. This usually results in a conflict between the educator and the principal because the principal might consider whatever effort you make as a threat to his position. This to her can lower the morale of that educator hence a cool attitude towards other stakeholders.

C03 hinted that her major concern is that there is *not enough motivation for educators*. She acknowledges that the department is doing quite a lot through the Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE) and the post graduate certificate in education (PGCE) to improve the quality of educators. But added that the issue of money is a problem, *you know money speaks* she said.

Financially we are not getting enough motivation from the department but yet so much is expected from us as educators. Why should I spend so much time planning and preparing reports for a job where I am not well appreciated? C04 equally complained that a big worry for her is that *most of the educators are working very hard yet stand on the same spot in terms of promotion or increased salary*. This affirms a previously raised opinion that many educators have resigned from their jobs this time for reasons that they believe they can get better opportunities elsewhere. Participant D02 however produced more clarity saying as the Department they do not ignore the fact that at the level of the schools in particular stakeholders complain of not being promoted. But in a few words he said *promotion is based on merit and nothing else, so any educator is free to challenge the authorities on that*.

Closely related to the aforementioned, participant D02 said most of their challenges are coming from the educators. He affirmed that as a department they have issues with regards to salaries or the payment of educators. From a practical example he said *it is the duty of the department to ensure that every classroom has at least one educator*. However in some instances *our educators go on very long sick leave as a result they vacate their classroom duties*. Unfortunately he continued the budget does not allow for extra employees that are brought on board so the challenge will be on how to pay these temporally employed educators. *Usually they will go unpaid for a while why we negotiate with the national treasury for their payments*. To him, these employees through their different unions will embark on strikes even before their payment is arranged which is very unnecessary.

C01 said their greatest challenge is that *the learners especially around the school are destitute*. Most of these learners live with parents who are not working while others went in search of employment around the country and never return. Some others lose parents at very tender age to the cold hands of death. In fact about 80% of our learners came from the neighboring villages around. Expressing a total dissatisfaction he said, *if these same learners come here and sit in rooms that are not well furnished and in hungry stomach then where is that spirit of Ubuntu that we preach*. To him each time he applies for funds for maintenance work the department tells him *your case is better, there are a lot of schools that need this support more than you do*. In all these he concluded that despite these challenges they expect nothing less than good results from us.

While affirming this, participant C02 stated that *to think of the fact that this is not a fee paying school as ordained by section 21 of SASA even makes matters worst.*

In concluding with the aspect of challenges participant A02 said *there will always be challenges where there are people, meaning conflict is inherent in every human relation.* So what is primary in school management and accountability therefore is what must be done to manage these challenges, especially conflicting issues involving learners, teachers and parents rather than tracing the origin with the intension to punish.

4.4.7 Remedies to accountability problems

Participants were asked the best possible ways by which they believe these accountability challenges can be met. For most of the responses it was about what the department of education on behalf of the government can do to enhance the situation and not what individuals can equally do to improve situations. For others especially those handling managerial positions, the core solution is through adequate engagement of stakeholder by means of consultation to be actively involved in the smooth functioning of the school. By doing things this way the attitude of pointing fingers to others upon failure could be avoided as it will now be the responsibility of all stakeholders. These responses include the following

How can the challenges of accountability be remedied?

In an endeavor to remedy the challenges faced by schools in respect to maintenance of school properties, D03 stated that *it is high time stakeholders start looking at school properties as their personal belongings.* To him when stakeholders especially community members and educators go on strike they destroy school properties, while others like learners are in the habit of constantly breaking furniture and writing on the walls. All these he said are destructive behaviours that are not necessary because when we treat the school properties as ours and not the governments', then every member of the school or community will be responsible. B02 also stated that *as stakeholders there are some destructive characters we demonstrate on school properties that we cannot do with our personal belonging.* So if all stakeholders especially learners can cultivate the habit of treating school property as their personal belongings, very little will be spend on maintenance work.

Also in an attempt to address the problem in the gap between stakeholders in terms of qualification for a better understanding of the culture of teaching and learning, educators and some principals who took part in the study affirmed that the DOE has introduced short courses like the ACE and PGCE. With these short courses both principals and educators are trained with the intention to upgrade their skills and qualification as well as for a better understanding of the curriculum. Participant C03 particularly said that *education is a lifelong learning, therefore both educators and school management in general must never be reluctant to acquire knowledge by continue studying and acquiring more information relating to the different field of study and interest*. Whereas participant B03 equally added that it can *partly remedy the issues of resistance to change because educators need to understand that teaching and learning is undergoing an evolution*. Also important here is the fact that other short courses and programmes are introduced during workshops though with very little time to digest the materials.

Again, participant B04 suggested that *educators need to adequately prepare lessons before going to class*. She added that due to insufficient time for lessons, educators must plan lessons because some of the topics can be integrated and treated as one thereby saving time. In fact she added *when you merge topics and lessons together, those that cannot change you ignore and treat them separately*. In relation to this A01 said *schools must be allowed to write their own exams based on the materials they are able to cover at a particular point in time because what matters is that before the end of the academic year they will have cover what is expected of them*. Therefore working at our own speed will limit the pressure on the educators and the SMT as a whole. This is in line with B01 postulation that *no single approach will work for every school*. Therefore if going against departmental principles can enhance the growth of the school then he would not mind because the results will speak for themselves.

As a remedy to the problem of poverty on the side of learners, B01 said *the DOE on behalf of the government has put in place feeding schemes whereby learners are at least able to have a meal while at school*. The DOE also recognises and encourages pregnant learners to come to school until a few weeks before their delivery. All these measures can greatly help to combat this challenge of learner absenteeism from school. Participant C01 equally added that *apart from food provided by the department, the school also arrange with some members of the community*

to at least provide a morning meal for these learners in need because they are still very young and cannot begin the day on an empty stomach.

Another aspect raised by B01 is *by giving stakeholders like educators, parents and learners more responsibilities in leading positions thereby preparing them for leadership positions*. C01 said that *more learners for example should be appointed as prefects both at the level of their respective classes and the school as a whole*. B01 again reiterated that it is really working for him because over the years he realised when learners are given responsibilities they tend to be more calm and productive.

Also A01 said he always advises educators to *avoid conflicting situations* with learners because some of the learners and parents are very quick to say *I will take you to court*. Therefore no matter how angry an educator is with a learner(s) you should be able to deal with it without hitting them or take the matter to the SMT. Also to him, *educators are advised to avoid using swearing or nasty words to learners as they can use it back at them*. Generally he said *this whole situation occurs as a result of so many rights given to learners without equally emphasising what their responsibilities are*. Participant C02 added that sometimes he understands the plight of educators because trying to assist a child who keeps reminding you of his or her right which is equally faced by parents are very frustrating. To B03 *some children are just so naughty and stubborn sometimes and therefore require the hard way in dealing with them but how can you as a parent when they talk back at you or better still call the police to arrest you when you punish them for wrong doing*.

Furthermore participant A02 said that *in dealing with learners in a school environment a high degree of tolerance must be exercised*. To him SMT must understand that by the time they get to high schools, these kids are in their formative years where they begin to pass through the stages of adolescence hence defying authorities. Therefore one has to be very sensitive in trying to instill discipline because *dismissal is the very last option that is considered*. *Learners should rather be molded into an independent but respectable citizens who are laws abiding*, he said. B03 therefore concluded saying *the department and government in general needs to completely amend the learner code of conduct so that they will not only know about their rights but also their responsibilities*.

Participant B02 and A02 both encourage *the promotion of a cordial or harmonious relationship amongst stakeholders*. To them, at some instances *they experience the DOE over stepping their role where 1 or 2 officials fail to see the SGB as partners*. A02 particularly said in terms of SASA they all have to carry forward the interest of the learners in a school. To him *in other schools and provinces elsewhere, when they have challenges from the department they can go as far as the constitutional court which is not a priority for them*. To D02, said though it is often said *business before pleasure, our interest is not looking at the relationships that benefit the school alone*. To him *they equally look on how they are able to manage a good relationship with the educators in a manner that it is not about our ego but about advancing education in general*. Finally A02 added that stakeholders must understand that *the school in itself is not an autonomous entity therefore there must be an inter-play of ideas for a successful performance*.

More still B01 said as part of the solution to the problem of late payment by the department and *based on the level of confidence given to him by the SGB, he is sometimes asked to spend his own money in executing certain responsibilities on the basis that reimbursement will be made when the department make payments*. He further explains that it is the reason why he has a lot of slips lying all over his desk more especially for reasons of accountability. Equally as a solution to *financial challenges school buildings like halls and classrooms not in use are rented out to members of the community for training and/or workshop of different categories*. It is another form of raising money for the school.

With regards to *parents not being involved in their children's education*, C01 said that every term they meet with parents during quarterly meetings. During such meetings, parents are encouraged and reminded of the importance of their commitment to their children's education by supporting both the school and their children morally and financially. To him they keep doing this even though parents do not respond as much as it is expected. But stress that it is the best they can do because *the parents are clearly not interested*.

Finally C03 and D01 both suggested that *there should be a lot of consultations and counseling with the educators to know exactly what their problems are*. To C03 the issue here is that *the fields workers send by the department actually come to educators but do not take their grievances and recommendations seriously*. Worst of all she said *it seems the school*

representatives are afraid of their superiors, because they are actually the ones to tell their plight, but they do not for reasons like fear of being kicked out of their position.

4.5 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM OBSERVATION

Findings from observation that were accompanied by field notes were obtained from different sources and different environments where participants exercise their responsibilities. These areas of responsibilities range from educators in the classroom, principals in the school environment and departmental officials around the province particularly in the Mafikeng Area.

4.5.1. Execution of responsibilities by stakeholders

From a series of visits to the schools it was observed that stakeholders performed different responsibilities which according to them they enjoy doing and not because they were assigned to. In one of the sites the researcher *found the principal picking up rubbish (papers and plastics) around the school environment as we walked towards the classroom to be introduced to some of the educators who took part in the research.* At another site for instance an important aspect of the study was raised when the researcher asked the principal why he was picking up broken chairs and sticks when there are cleaners and maintenance persons in the school. His view on this was very clear *prevention is better than cure* he said. To him *if the children get hurt while playing, he will be call to account as the principal and not the cleaner or maintenance personnel.* A similar activity was witnessed in site A and B respectively where *educators at different levels were found cleaning their classrooms during break and closing periods of the school while the learners are away.* According to these stakeholders *performing responsibility for purpose of accountability does not only end in teaching and learning by educators and/or monitoring for principals but extents to basic hygiene conditions in and around the classrooms.*

In a similar vein departmental officials engage stakeholders in sensitization programmes where they are trained and encouraged on how to live a healthy life style; for instance during the Men's event in 2015 organised by the NWPDOE, one of the motivational (specialist) speakers encouraged men to undergo circumcision giving them the advantages they stand to gain when circumcised. The speaker however emphasised that *when one is circumcised it does not stop you from contracting HIV/AIDS but it helps to reduce your chances of contracting the disease.* This view was however not without some heavy critics from the stakeholders who attended as they murmured in disagreement.

4.5.2 The use of school property by community members

From a series of visits to the schools to negotiate/renegotiate appointment schedules for interview purposes, this researcher realised that school buildings were used by community members. These school structures were used for workshops and training as well as tutorials for some students from the Mafikeng campus of the North West University and the University of South Africa, based in Mafikeng. A close conversation between some of the participants in this training during lunch time revealed that they were undergoing training in project management. This confirms one of the research participant's views that they sometimes rent out school buildings with or without the knowledge of the DOE because it is in a broader sense to the advantage of teaching and learning. To this researchers' view it will be very important if all schools could keep their gates open for such educational-based projects because it is not only beneficial for the school alone but also to the community who are the major stakeholders of the schools. However, despite these possible benefits for the schools and stakeholders at large some form of rowdiness was evident in one of the schools. Participants for this workshop kept moving randomly which constituted some form of distraction for the learners. Meanwhile in another school it was well organised only for weekends where learners are not present in the school premises.

4.5.3 Commitment of stakeholders to their job

During the study the researcher realised that the educators, just like officials of the PDOE, were fully committed in their job to facilitate teaching and learning activities. This was witnessed following a series of cancellations of appointment meetings with the researcher for interviews. In one of the sites the interview session was slotted side-by-side other programmes. For example, during the visit of field workers from the department of education (motivational speakers) to the school to sensitise learners on the importance of studying under healthy conditions interview sessions also went on. While learners were busy with these field workers the educators squeeze out time to attend to the researcher. On the side of the departmental officials they were constantly busy with meetings which resulted in meeting with some of their assistants in acting positions.

4.5.4 Wastage of resources

Observation study equally revealed that the department spends a lot of money on resources for teaching and learning but fails to empower the employee on how to use the equipment. In two of

the sites visited evidence of computers were found unused in rooms. In a conversation with one of the school managers he revealed that the problem they have in using the computers is the lack of knowledge and skills. To him the department provides these computers in an attempt to deal with administrative issues like recording of data but educators are not offered the training it requires.

4.6 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Document analysis was done from a variety of sources including annual reports from schools and the NWPDOE, newspapers and minutes from meetings as indicated in chapter 3. These analyses exposed very important issues in educational management that are equally major requirements for accountability. Findings through this means were classified under two main categories as follows.

4.6.1. The perception of stakeholders in schools accountability

The realisation of accountability in education depends heavily on all stakeholders playing their roles. In this regard stakeholders must relentlessly continue to develop and up skill each other where necessary in order to enhance performance. The perception of stakeholders in school accountability through document analysis can be examined under the following category.

4.6.1.1 Stakeholders welfare and safety programme

The NWPDOE (2011/2012:7) annual report explained that considering the previous history of Apartheid in the country that ended in 1994, the NWPDOE is making sure that previously disadvantaged black people are motivated and encouraged to go to schools. Some of these strategies include the national school nutritional program (NSNP) to enable learners to study under healthy conditions, provision of scholar transport provide caring, supportive, and enabling environment for both learners and educators, environment free of discrimination, stigma and any form of sexual harassment. With regards to the NSNP, the NWPDOE (2012/2013) annual report affirms that all quintile 1-3 schools benefiting from this programme have been encouraged in cultivating vegetable gardens toward achieving the objective of sustainability of food programmes. The table below illustrates possible risk and outcomes that stakeholders at work place stand to face if the following identified problems are not resolve.

Table 4.2 Sample of challenges and possible effect on stakeholders

Health and environmental issues	Possible outcome
Conditions of buildings e.g. Bulbs not working in some offices and passage	Can lead to possible accidents especially in passages.
Slippery floors in school environment	Fall of stakeholders (employees) leading to injuries and possible cases of compensation.
Dilapidated school buildings, damaged floors, no fencing	Possible collapse or fall of the buildings as well as unsafe and cold conditions for learners.
Pit toilets still in existence at some schools	Unsafe conditions for learners especially the young ones
Existence of buildings without lifts	Irascibility for people with disabilities thus portraying the department in bad light.

Adapted from NWPDOE annual report 2013/2014:124

4.6.1.2. Learner performance

According to the NWPDOE, (2012/2013:8) annual report, the department of education works tirelessly toward the improvement of education in the province and in the country in general. Based on this report and in an attempt to achieve better results in teaching and learning, an Annual National Assessment (ANA) exam was introduced. The exam is usually written in 12 subjects from June to November and is compulsory in all schools with grade 12 pass rate less than 70%. The testing classes include grade 3, 6 and 9. Taking learners through this procedure will better prepare them as they go to higher grades and eventually the matric class. Learner overall matric pass rate in the province has progressively been outstanding with the exception of 2005 and 2009 that recorded a drop in the performance. The table below shows the performance of grade 12 matric class from 2004 to 2013.

Table 4.3 Matric performance for North West province 2004-2013

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
64.9%	63.0%	67.0%	67.2%	68.02%	67.51	75.7%	77.8%	79.5%	87.21%

Adapted from NWPDOE annual report (2011/2012: 26); (2012/2013:33) and (2013/2014:12)

In an attempt to ensure the attainment of an improvement plan towards ensuring successful teaching and learning, the PDOE (2011/2012) annual report called for an effective monitoring of teaching and learning process at all levels of schools system. These particular areas that require severe monitoring includes curriculum implementation, educators development in problematic subjects, quarterly visits to schools by senior and middle managers for coaching and mentoring to determine the needs for teaching and learning. Huge efforts are currently in existence in the mathematics and science sector which is faced with a high level of under-performance. Because it is one of the priorities of the province, teachers are being developed on an on-going basis as well as bursaries granted to B.Sc. graduates to enable them obtain a PGCE qualification.

4.6.1.3. Allocation of funds

According to the NWPDOE (2013/204:79) annual performance plan, ordinary public schools education makes up the greater portion of the budget allocated to the department and represents 75.9% of the total allocation. This is also evident in terms of infrastructural development and growing transfer payment to no fee schools to an amount worth R625.895-692.369 million in 2013/2014 financial year. However considering the population growth rate of the country, and other factors like mismanagement, this amount is constantly not sufficient enough.

Furthermore, upon the implementation of “NO FEE” schooling by the DOE, it meant that some schools will/do not pay fees. Considering that a greater population of the province comes from rural settlements, it explains why in 2011/2012 close to 77% of the learner population were classified as poor and thus benefited from this policy (NWPDOE, 2011/2012:20). Document analysis proved that these funds are provided per learner in the school. Looking at the quintile system in the province one may argue that the fund is unfairly distributed. According to the NWPDOE (2013/2014:80), the public ordinary school resourcing through the school funding norms on one hand affirms that in terms of expenditure per learner, quintile 1, 2 and 3 each received same amount of R1010 per learner as of 2013/2014 school year. Quintile 4 and 5 on the other hand received R605 and R175 respectively. The issue at stake here is that assuming quantiles 1 are the poorest schools as per definition of the NWPDOE, and yet receiving the same amount as quintile 2 and 3 therefore the distribution strategy is biased and not consistent.

4.6.1.4. Performance of responsibilities by stakeholders in accountability

As far as the execution of responsibilities is concerned in the province, and the Ngaka Modiri Molema district in particular every stakeholder remains an active participant towards the achievement of the goals and objectives in teaching and learning. In this regard, road shows are constantly being organised by department officials in which learners are encouraged and inspired towards the realisation of their dreams. Similarly the department organizes forums where calls, SMSs and media communication in the form of complaints, suggestions and discussions are engaged with the public and attended to immediately. In this regard the department through its strategic planning came up with the following goals and goal statement for education accountability.

Table 4.4 Goals and goals statement from NWPDOE strategic planning

Strategic goals	Goal statement
Effective and efficient governance and management support system.	-improve financial management system, human resource strategies, internal and external communication, security system and internal audit systems. -to ensure that every learner has access to text books and work books required according to national policy. -to ensure that all schools are funded at least at the minimum per learner level determined nationally. -to ensure that funds are utilized transparently and effectively.
Quality curriculum implementation and school support programs	-attract new groups of young motivated and appropriately trained teachers into the teaching profession every year. -avoid excessively large classes run by teachers -ensure healthy teacher work force and job satisfaction -that learners cover all topic and skill areas -improve parents and community participation in school governance
Improve provisioning and maintenance of physical infrastructure planned	-ensure that the physical infrastructure and environment of every school inspires learners to want to come to school to learn and teachers to teach.

	-ensure a well-managed and monitored School Based Assessment (SBA) to enhance teaching and learning
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Adapted from the Annual performance plan (NWPDOE, 2013-2016:8)

4.6.5 Infrastructural development

Text analysis according to the NWPDOE (2013-2016:80), the physical state of public schools varies enormously from very good with a great variety of educational and sporting amenities, to very poor with educational amenities amounting to very little more than a few dilapidated classrooms that are barely conducive to learning. Therefore a school meets the basic safety norms if it has, for instance drinking water, toilets, electricity and buildings that do not pose a danger to learners. In relation to funding, it is designated that if the current budget indicates that it is insufficient to deal decisively with the inherent infrastructure backlogs, then new funding models will be explored as the need arises.

In relation to infrastructural development, it is the responsibility of the school management as well as the DOE to ensure that learners study in safe, secured classrooms and environment. Some of these measures include the demolition of mud school building for new and firm ones that can serve for a longer period.

4.6.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY STAKEHOLDERS IN SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

According to the PDOE, towards the end of 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 financial years, the department encountered budget shortfalls which were presented to the provincial treasury. These shortfalls were experienced particularly in the following areas.

4.6.1 Extension of no-fee policy

According to the NWPDOE report 2013/2014 more and more schools continue to submit requests to be exempted from collecting school fees. This has been a slap to the face of the department because it equally means additional funding will be required to resolve the problem. However the department investigates through its field workers and managers to ensure that deserving cases are identified on continuous basis and attended to, should servings emanate from current baseline allocation.

4.7.2 School infrastructure concerns

The current medium term expenditure framework (MTEF) funding for school infrastructure has increased substantially but yet allocations are still not adequate to address shortfalls in schools

infrastructural funding across the province (2011/2012). However the department is taking severe measures to improve infrastructural planning to reduce costs as well as delivery of minor infrastructural projects through community base initiatives called "Itireleng" (do it yourself) which utilises local service providers.

More critical was the inability to implement infrastructural project right on time as a result of the lack of capacity on infrastructure planning (2012/2013). For instance work inspectors placed in the district did not have the required skills to adequately plan for schools infrastructural projects. The outcome of this situation is usually a poor tendering processes as well as the late completion of projects.

4.7.3 Rollovers from previous years

With close to R66.035 million as rollover in 2011/2012 financial year, it becomes a huge problem for the upcoming academic/financial year. According to the provincial department of education, this money was spend on recapitalization grant, school nutritional program, infrastructural grant as well as HIV/AIDS grant. Another possible reason that this researcher found as per the 2012/2013 annual report is that from 2009 most of the key positions in the department were occupied by acting officers. It follows that most of these stakeholders like Chief financial officer and financial directors that were either fired or on suspension were never replaced. As such procurement processes were either delayed or rolled over due to insufficient time or financial mismanagement.

Also the resolution 2 of 2003 and 1998 resolution states that educators must be used optimally (annual report 2013/2014:36). However this resolution put forward a huge challenge in that it does not state what should be done to educators who refuse to move. As a result the department has not been able to redeploy excess educators to where there is a need. It has further led to the double appointment of educators to ensure that no classroom is left without an educator.

4.7.4. Under-performance of schools and stakeholders

Findings from various documents revealed that the main objective of the department of education and the education system in general is not to seek defaulters to punish them but rather to correct them where they are wrong. The annual report from NWPDOE (2012/2013:47) financial year reveals that North West Province generally recorded a constant close down of schools that were never planned by the department. These schools that were mostly in the farm

areas were forced to merge with other smaller schools in an attempt to stabilise the number of schools in the province.

However some extreme measures are deemed necessary so long as it is for the interest of teaching and learning as well as good management. According to the PDOE the end of 2011/2012 financial year saw the suspension, firing and forceful retirement of HOD and executive managers. This however brought huge consequences for the department as close to 2/3 of senior management for a major part of the financial year was in acting capacity. In this regard service delivery was seriously hampered at critical units such as late finalization of infrastructural development as well as under performance. Despite all these critical decisions that were taken as well as the short comings that followed as a result of the decisions, the future proved brighter for the department as evident in the various matric performances mentioned earlier in 4.6.1.2.

4.7.5 Absence of employees from trainings and sensitisation workshops

Report from the DOE annual report 2011/2012 academic and financial year revealed that stakeholders constantly complain about insufficient training offered by the DOE. However when these workshops are organized educators in particular still do not show up for various reasons like protecting teaching time and other competing priorities. A further review of documents proved that educators make themselves available more in campaigns than training.

4.7. SUMMARY

This chapter presented recorded data and interpretation from the empirical finding that was acquired basically through in-depth individual interviews, participant observation accompanied by field notes and document analysis. The aims and objectives were achieved and the main research question and sub-questions answered.

The next and last chapter will centre on the fusion of findings from both literature and the empirical study, followed by critiques of the findings as well as recommendations and final conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE

RAPPORT BETWEEN FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sought to establish the relationship as well as the differences between findings from both the literature and the empirical study. It generally comprised a reminder of the previous chapters in the form of a summary, fusion of findings, limitations and delimitations of the study, recommendations of the study as well as the recommendations for future research. The chapter ended with a final conclusion of the study.

5.2. SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one presented a general orientation and overview of the study. It is made up of an introduction to the study which unveils what the study entails; a background of the study reviewing how the act of accountability is practiced worldwide; motivation for the study derived from both literature and a personal basis; followed by the problem statement and research questions; aim and objectives of the study where the purpose(s) were clearly stated; the research design and methodology that was made up of literature review, data collection and analysis strategies as well as the population and site of the study; definition of some key concepts used in the study including issues of ethical consideration.

Chapter two entirely dealt with some major accountability concerns of school stakeholders in education. It started with an introduction which conceptualised the concept literature followed by a theoretical framework of the study where some relevant theories to the study were introduced; the nature and development of accountability in education from a world view ranging from developed to developing countries; the different dimensions of accountability that included political, legal and educational dimension; the roles of stakeholders of accountability in education that explored all the areas where school stakeholders are involved in the performance of their responsibility; procedures of accountability in education that comprised professional, bureaucratic and cultural accountability; the relevance of accountability in education; the challenges faced by stakeholders in the performance of their responsibilities as well as the remedies to meet the challenges.

Chapter three basically was the research design and methodology. It encompasses the research process which is made up of selection of sites and participants of the study that revealed the exact number of participants who took part in the study and the venues for the collection of data; followed by construction and validation of the interview questions; data collection procedures that ranged from individual interviews, participant observation and document analysis; data analysis procedure; procedure for field investigation; and all the aspects of ethical consideration were examine.

Chapter four was centered on analysis and presentation of results from the empirical study. It was made up of the following sub-categories that included data analysis process; interpretation of qualitative data; followed by presentation of research findings that were obtain and presented under the different themes and categories. These various themes and categories included interviews; observation and document analysis.

Chapter five focus on a rapport between findings, dissimilarities in findings, recommendations and the conclusion. In a more detailed manner it was made up of a summary of all the chapters, a discussion of findings from the literature and the empirical study followed by a correlation of the findings. The chapter was rounded off with recommendations of the study as well as a recommendation for future research study, not forgetting the limitations and delimitation.

5.3. DISCUSSIONS ON THE CORRELATION OF FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

The findings presented here are a representation of key issues of the study from a literature perspective and individual interviews with participants as well as document analysis from the empirical study. These results were brought together to identify similarities between them as well as differences in the form of a discussion.

5.3.1. The meaning of accountability

In the literature survey, the concept accountability was well digested by different authors like Spaul (2013:53); Seakamela (2011:4); Van der Westhuizen (2004:173) and Maile (2002:326) bringing out the meaning of the concept as well as tracing the origin of the concept from United States of America. Champion in the meaning of the concept accountability was Spaul (2013:53) who said *accountability* means to account for one's outcomes or performance and to accept responsibility for those outcomes. Also Bush & West-Burnham (1994:309) in a more detailed explanation said although the idea of accountability would denote different meanings depending

on the context and the issues at stake, in practice “*being accountable*” means performing certain functions to the satisfaction of a person or interest group whilst complying at the same time to standards set by a higher authority.

From the different perceptions raised by the different stakeholders from the empirical study, particular features that illustrate the meaning of accountability were mentioned. It includes financial accountability, service delivery by all employees including educators to facilitate teaching and learning in the school. The most common aspect from the different participants across the sites was their constantly relating the concept accountability to responsibility. For example participant A04 explains that *Accountability to me means performing expected duties as per your contract and also ensuring that you do all these activities that are being assigned to you as an educator diligently.*

Looking at both the findings from the literature and the empirical study, one can therefore say that *accountability* means taking *responsibility* over resources that have been given to an individual or organisation to ensure a proper functioning of the organisation which in this case is the school. It follows that the resources must be well utilised and reports given back to the employer which might either be negative or positive. Also it indicates that responsibility must be given for one to be able to account.

5.3.2. Related concepts to accountability

From a literature point of view two key concepts in relation to accountability were mentioned. Firstly Suspitsyna (2010:568) explains that just like in education, political accountability is that which involves direct contact with voters and responsiveness through elected officials. That it in fact encompasses *answerability* to both the government and the public. Also Farrell and Law (1999a:6) in trying to conceptualise accountability said it is closely connected to *responsibility* because those who have been given responsibility are equally asked to give an account of their performance.

Unlike in literature, the empirical study equally revealed similar ideas though differing at some points. In affirming the existing literature, participant B01 particularly explained that to him it is *responsibility* because he will tell someone that he is responsible for a particular thing. “Once you are responsible for that thing you must be in a position to account for or give account over

any decision that you take". Participant B04 equally affirmed that it is *answerability*. She particularly stated that a school is a public entity entrusted to a group of stakeholders who must report back or be answerable to the public.

Responsibility and answerability therefore seem to be the concepts that are common from both studies. These concepts were captured from participant's initial speech that was either direct or in the form of a statement.

5.3.3. The pattern/nature of accountability in schools

The study from a literature perspective revealed how the concept accountability is applicable in countries across the world including the US, UK and SA in particular. Koyama (2014:280) says that in the USA accountability in education is two-fold. That is it has become nearly synonymous with testing in teaching and curricula and that there is data-monitoring, which is inextricably linked to testing and is often used to justify the test results. Hence stakeholder in the USA spend much time producing, managing, interpreting, and analysing data to be included in student test score tallies, yearly school progress reports, learning environment surveys, quality review documents, and annual school report cards which form part of the big picture about accountability in schools (Koyama, 2014:281). Robinson (2012:13) however added that until the 1970s head teachers traditionally led the schools in partnership with local education authorities (LEAs) and government in the UK. Also Seakamela (2008:2) talks about the democratisation of education in South Africa after 1994 and the implications it had in the country's education as far as accountability is concerned. It shows a total delegation of authority in the governance of the school to the SGBs. Nevertheless a broader picture of the pattern of accountability was focus on three main dimensions that were political, legal and educational dimensions which all pointed towards giving an account over responsibilities conferred on an individual either to a senior authority or the community.

A stakeholder's perspective from the empirical study discloses that there is generally an upward drive in the practice of accountability in schools through hierarchy as indicated mostly by educators and principals. Notwithstanding some participants also indicated that though there is a general flow from bottom to top as far as the trend of accountability in schools is concerned, there is equally a top to bottom tendency. In this regard, education officials for example are equally expected to inform or report to principals and the community at large when there is for

example a delay in the delivery of school materials. A04 on the one hand for example said that as an educator she knows good results with regards to learner performance is expected of her. This implies that she has to give an account over learner performance to her immediate boss who is the subject Head of Department. Participant B03 on the other shares the opinion that it is a two way process. To him, at the beginning of every academic quarter or year, the subject specialist come to the school and gives educators task to perform in relation to the curriculum.

Though findings from the empirical study show that in the educational arena mostly educators are held accountable in respect of learner performances, traces of accountability on the side of the senior officials can be found. This therefore implies that all the stakeholders involved in school matters are in one way or the other answerable to someone, not minding the position they occupy.

5.3.4 Roles of stakeholders of accountability in education

Determining what each job in a school a stakeholder performs is a key managerial decision. Volante (2012:12) holds that because of the complex range of situations that confront stakeholders and leaders in particular, there is no ideal list of skills or traits that can define the role of school administrators comprehensively. Therefore all the schools stakeholders perform managerial functions at different levels in which they are required to support each other in administering the school and ensuring that educational goals are obtained. The roles played by stakeholders in education are evident in the following domains;

5.3.4.1. Learner discipline and safety

Based on the literature study paragraph 2.5.1, Oosthuizen (2006:79) said that when a learner commits a serious misconduct like rape, theft or possession of drugs in the school, the principal and the SGB should have a meeting with a senior public prosecutor and probation officer to inform them of their intentions. This brings about a partnership with the officials regarding the rehabilitation of such a learner. These misconducts are documented by the constitution (SASA, 1996), Section 8a (1) which stipulates that unless authorised by the principal for genuine educational purposes, “under no circumstances should a learner have in his or her possession on school premises or during school activities dangerous weapons or illegal drugs” (Rossouw & Oosthuizen, 2012:36). However, Naidu *et al* (2012:25) clarifies that the greatest obligation placed on stakeholders in South Africa is to protect the children in their care from foreseeable

dangers, irrespective of whether those dangers arise from the careless acts or intentional transgressions of others. Thus although the overarching responsibility of educators at school level is to teach, their first imperative must be that of not doing harm to the children under their care.

Findings from empirical study revealed that every stakeholder in a school including learners is a major player in the functioning of a school. In the school as an organisation, specific tasks are given to specific stakeholders either as a group or as individuals. This was affirmed by participant B01 who said that according to SASA (1996) educators are much aware of their responsibilities as well as the repercussion for failing to comply. Participants admitted that in respect to learner safety in and out of school premises it is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the school to look after learners under their care and also to make sure they are of good conduct. Participant B01 further said that over the years there have been cases or situations in which principals and educators are taken to court by parents or learners for failing to provide adequate security over a particular learner. This becomes even more problematic if the learner suffers physical injuries that can cause disability or even death. This was supported by B02 who said “fortunately enough there have never witnessed any confrontation from parents on issues of security of learners”.

Therefore it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to make sure those issues of learner discipline and safety does not get out of order by constantly monitoring the learners in and out of the classroom under ones care. But if it does happen, not only the educator will be held accountable by a senior authority but also the principal and SGB who are in charge of governance of the school.

5.3.4.2. School finances

Another important aspect of schools management where a high degree of accountability is required from stakeholders by the state and community in particular is the area of finance. Koross, Ngware, and Sang (2008:61) in literature paragraph 2.5.2 say that the involvement of parents as stakeholders in management of schools usually has a positive influence on financial management outcomes. They clarify that since finance matters are critical in school management outcomes, it is important for educational stakeholders to increase their parental role as it can go a long way to strengthen and improve school financial accountability. Based on the importance of

parents in school financial matters, the SASA (RSA, 1996:18) affirms that parents must constitute a 50% majority plus one member of the total population. Also the DOE in accordance with SASA (Act 84 of 1996) imposes important responsibilities on the state with respect to public schools. Amongst these responsibilities conferred on the state is that which requires state funding of public schools derived from the constitutional guarantee of equality and recognition of the right of redress. In fact the Act provides that "The State must fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of past inequalities in educational provision" (RSA, 1996:Section 34).

Base on participants' views from the empirical study, the SGB participants acknowledged that though they have other responsibilities to play in running the school, their main concern is on finances. C02 particularly holds that at the beginning of the financial year SGB committee looks at the needs of the school and places them in order of preference. Participant B01 said that 90% of the funds come from the DOE and the remaining 10% they request as donations from parents on a free will bases. This is the complete opposite of another school classified as a fee paying school where most of their income comes from school fees and fund raising by parents. In another circumstance school properties like halls and classrooms are rented out to the community to conduct workshops and training which was also confirmed through participant observation. Also D02 said as far as accountability is concerned in respect to funds given to schools, the most practical way to determine whether funds are utilized is through an expenditure report that is draw on a monthly basis. This to him helps to keep Area and District managers responsible.

Document analysis on the other hand reveal that from the NWPDOE annual performance plan (2013/204:79), public ordinary schools education makes up the greater portion of the budget allocated to the department and represent 75.9% of the total allocation. This is also evident in terms of infrastructural development and growing transfer payment to no fee schools to an amount worth R625.895-692.369 million in 2013/2014 financial year. However considering the population growth rate of the country, and other factors like mismanagement, this amount is constantly not sufficient. This further affirms the idea from the literature study that the government as a stakeholder is spending so much on education and therefore deserves to hold stakeholders accountable.

From the findings of both literature and the empirical study, basically two common sources of income are identified which is that from the state and the SGB. Nonetheless other avenues were discovered from the empirical study which includes school fees for schools classified as fee paying schools, the rental of school properties to members of the community and partnership with individual sponsors. Findings from both sources affirm that the government invests heavily on education therefore a good result is the least they can expect.

5.3.4.3. Learner performance

Amongst other things learner performance outcome is also a significant issue that needs to be address when the issue of stakeholder's accountability is mention. According to Smith and Ngoma-Maema (2003:345) in paragraph 2.5.3 the quest for the provision of quality education to learners is basic to transformation movements in education system. Volante (2012:53) explains that the assessment of student performance is changing largely because students face a world that demands new knowledge and abilities. Therefore to help students improve in their studies requires changes in both assessment methods at the school and classroom level as well as new approaches to instruction and high-stakes assessment. Therefore a change in an organisation like a school is an unavoidable feature in human experience which is very relevant in a school environment (Van der Westhuizen, 2013:183). In the middle of these changing circumstances, stakeholders particularly educators and the subject specialists at the DOE still have that responsibility to ensure that learner performance is improved.

From the empirical study stakeholders acknowledged that it is the responsibility of the educators to ensure that the learners perform well in their studies. A04 particularly said that as an educator she knows good results with regards to learner performance is expected of her. Meanwhile participant B01 also shared that apart from being a manager of the school he is also in charge of the school curriculum that equally makes him the head teacher. He said at the beginning of the school year, he receives a program/lesson guide from the DOE through subject specialists and together with the entire subject HODs redesign the lesson guide to suit the school. However, the bottom line is that the primary agenda is to ensure that learners are well educated with excellent performances. Results from document analysis further confirm that over the last ten years, the province in general has been improving progressively in terms of learner performance from 64.9% in 2004 to 87.21% in 2013 (see paragraph 4.6.1.2)

Learner performance is no doubt one of the areas where a high level of accountability is needed from stakeholders particularly educators and principals in the school. The empirical study, like the literature, reveals that there are varieties of method of designing the curriculum which is subject to change. Findings from document analysis confirm that the process is working for the province though with several critiques on the quality.

5.3.4.4. Maintenance of School property

From the literature, paragraph 2.5.4 Section 21 (1a) of the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996) includes the maintenance of school facilities among other functions of School Governing Bodies (SGBs). As such, in time of allocation of schools finances from the Provincial Department of Education a fraction is directed for the maintenance of school facilities. The Bellevue School District report (BSD, 2012) as well as Nhlopo (2009:2) illuminates that school facilities among other things include buildings, play grounds, equipment and furniture that must not be abused by users. This body (BSD) also indicated clearly that students or non-students who abuse school property may be disciplined and required to pay for the damage incurred. These ties in with an earlier clarification on accountability by Van Der Westhuizen (2004:173) that it involves giving account to designated people about one's action concerning mandated duties. School facilities do not only get destroyed by users and/or consumers but also suffer depreciation. For this reason there is always need for a maintenance committee which is part of the SGB body. According to section 21(1a) of SASA (84 of 1996), in Rossoauw and Oosthuizen (2012:51-52) if school facilities suffer massive depreciation, the SGB may apply to the head of department in writing to maintain and improve the schools property, buildings and grounds occupied by the schools, including school hostels.

D02 on a very serious note mentioned that one thing he knows as far as accountability is concerned is that people can sometimes abuse their powers or bypass authorities to achieve the said objectives or goals of the school. For example he said as the principal of a school you are the accountable officer so you can possible redirect funds to other areas of interest on behalf of the school. By this he meant if there is need for minor renovations in the school the principal might chose to hire cheap labour without necessarily following the normal procurement procedure as prescribed by the Public Finance Management Act. This is linked to B01 who said he employs only male educators in his school with no major challenge from the DOE or

community because to him “it is a constructive discrimination”. He goes further to say, “the end justifies the means”. Meaning if the objective of teaching and learning is to achieve a successful outcome then we have nothing to worry about.

Base on document analysis, the DOE holds that a school meets the basic safety norms if it has, for instance drinking water, toilets, electricity and buildings that do not pose a danger to learners. Therefore it is designated that if the current budget indicates that it is insufficient to deal decisively with the inherent infrastructure backlogs, then new funding models will be explored as the need arises. This is in relation to what participant B01 said that each time they apply for extra funds for renovation the department tells them there is no money.

5.3.4.5. Educators recruitment and selection

According to Bush and Middlewood (2013:145) in paragraph 2.5.5, there is the assumption that people are the most important resources in an effective school or college. Thus it is unquestionable that having the best possible staff in place is highly desirable or the best priority for a school. A cross-section study on the recruitment of educators as indicated by Bush and Bell (2013:147) shows that for most countries such as UK, Canada, Australia, and even New Zealand, educators are appointed by leaders and governors. In others like Greece and Cyprus, Bush and Bell holds that all qualified teachers are allocated to a particular area of the country. Nevertheless, for other cases like Germany a mixed system is practiced where decisions to employ can be taken both as the state or federal government. Thus in times of reporting only those directly involved will be requested to give an account for whoever is selected and why. Naidu *et al.* (2012:96) sketches the picture that the selection of staff in SA is in the hands of SGBs, but indicated that at some point in time they may not be directly involved in recruitment considering that all adverts for post are published in provincial gazettes. Bush and Middlewood (2013:147) say that the recruitment process is carried out “centrally” through the provincial education departments. The provincial DoE is informed of existing vacancies while the employing department advertises and does the screening process based on the norms and standards of the job. Bush and Middlewood (2013:147) however stated clearly that the SGBs are responsible for the final selections.

From the empirical study participant B02 and C02 both affirm that the SGB is responsible to see that the process of recruitment is done accordingly whether assigned by the department of

education or for their own personal need. However B02 holds that because of his level of exposure, connection and level of accountability to parents, they gave him the authority to hire an educator paid by the SGB whenever need arises. As such he takes full responsibility in that department but parents and even educators can still recommend educators when there is vacancy. C02 holds that when they discover that the school needs more teachers than the ones provided by the departmental Post Provisional Model (PPM), they can hire educators in their capacity as the SGB from their own coffers. D03 and B04 share the idea that when there are vacancies for teaching jobs the department is informed by the school through the SGB or principal. D03 further explained that the normal procedure requires jobs to be advertised either through the government gazette or newspaper. But because of reasons like pressure from the schools on the urgent need of the educator we ask them to go on straight away with the recruitment process of the educator. Participant A01 added that after selecting the best three candidates from an interview, they are recommended to the department of education for final selection. Hence the process ends with the introduction of the educator in the school by the SGB

Findings from both the literature and the empirical study indeed clarifies one of the motivations of the study that the recruitment of educators is not the responsibility of a particular sector of the school alone but involves a process. However it equally reveals that the SGB is at the centre of the entire process more than any other stakeholder though at some point in time the recruitment process may not be followed if well justified.

5.3.4.6. Taking up of duties by stakeholders in school matters

Another relevant aspect found from the empirical study through interview revealed that stakeholders at the employee welfare and wellness unit have the responsibility in making sure fellow stakeholders work under healthy conditions. Participant D01 explained that in their capacity as welfare and wellness unit, they deal with issues of stress either as a result of work related or personal life issues and issues of HIV/AIDS as well as financial management problems. She holds that the area of finance is one of their main areas of priority because of the realization that most of the government employees are over-indebted. Therefore it is their responsibility at the employee wellness unit to make sure that all state employees at the DOE are in good health and state of mind to deliver services where necessary. This particularly is vital because when stakeholders like educators are not in a good mine set they might not be able to

deliver to the learners. For this reason they offer counseling to stakeholders on how to live a healthy life style. By healthy living she added "one of our serious concerns in recent time is the fact that most of our employees are suffering from obesity". So stakeholders are encouraged to do physical activities like jogging or going to a fitness centre as it helps to reduce diseases like stroke, heart failure, and even high blood pressure.

Observations affirmed the above view that AIV/AIDs programs are introduced where prevention is encouraged by using all the preventive measures available in the unit. For instance during the men's event in July, 2015 organised by the NWPDOE in the Mafikeng area, one of the motivational speakers encourage men to undergo circumcision giving them the advantages they stand to gain when circumcised. The speaker however emphasised that when one is circumcised, it does not stop you from contracting HIV/AIDS but it helps to reduce your chances of contracting the disease. This view was not without some critics as some participant's murmured in disagreement.

In a similar capacity it was observed during this study that stakeholders performed different responsibilities which according to them they enjoy doing because they expect the learners to copy from them. In one of the sites it was found that the principal picked up rubbish (papers and plastics) around the school environment when he took the researcher around to be introduced to some of the educators who took part in the study. In another site for instance an important aspect of the study was raised when the researcher asked the principal why he was picking up broken chairs and sticks when there are cleaners and maintenance persons in the school. His view on this was very clear, "prevention is better than cure" he said. That if the children are hurt while playing, he will be called to account as the principal and not the cleaner or maintenance personnel. A similar activity was witnessed in site A and B where educators at different levels were found cleaning their classrooms during break and closing periods while the learners are away. According to these stakeholders performing their responsibilities for purpose of accountability does not only end in teaching and learning for educators or monitoring for principals but extends to basic hygiene conditions in and around the classrooms.

From the different ideas gathered, no single sector or unit of a school as an organisation can operate in isolation. Therefore in terms of who should be held accountable in a school, for what and by whom, it can logically be argued that every stakeholder involved in the running of the

school is able to be held responsible. This is evident from the findings of literatures and the empirical study which reveal that drastic measure like suspension and dismissal can be taken with stakeholders who failed to perform their responsibilities or task. Findings from the empirical study equally revealed that at the school level a principal is generally the accountable officer but not without the support from HODs, SMTS and SGBs. The SGB for instance comprises selected stakeholders from all the sections of the school. This to a large extent implies that every stakeholder including non-teaching staff like parents can also be held accountable because they constitute a majority of the SGB.

5.3.5 Challenges of accountability in education

The implementation of accountability principles in a democratic setting or an organisation like a school in particular remains very instrumental in the growth of that organisation but it is often faced with numerous challenges that are either natural or man-made. The following discussion gives a rapport between the literature and the empirical study;

5.3.5.1. Non-participation by parents in their children's education

From a literature perspective paragraph 2.7.1, Kramlich (2012:109) in his findings said that the higher the level of parental involvement in their children's education, the greater their academic achievements. To him if a team is made up of only teaching staff, the parents may feel as though their input is not valued and may withdraw entirely from the process. Xaba (2006:15) advocates the promotion of the best interest of the child as the critical cornerstone of educational delivery of South Africa. In the SASA (RSA, 1996a), it is stated that SGBs are required to develop mission statements for schools and the best way to achieve this is by engaging in school development planning. However in a study conducted by Bechuke, (2011:50-55) in three schools of the Mafikeng area, it was revealed that parents who legally constitute a majority of the SGBs do not attend meetings. According to Heystek (2011:461), the legislation of South Africa might create the impression that parents must do the actual work in SGBs because they are the majority and provide the chair of the governing body. But this is the case mostly in schools where parents are wealthy and more educated. In the case of poverty stricken schools, decision making and policies are strictly in the hands of the principals due to the incompetency of parents, making the process of accountability questionable.

During the empirical study, educator participant unanimously voiced out that parents are not involved in their children's education. A03 particularly said that parents do not understand that they equally have a very big role to play in improving the performance of their children. To her the only time you hear from parents is during a problematic situation. A04 on her part said confrontation in most cases happens with parents who do not believe when an educator sent SMSs to say the learner did not submit a project or assignment. They blame you the teacher saying you did not give enough time for the assignment and also that you failed to inform them which of course is their responsibility to see that the children do their assignments. Still on the case of parents C01 said not all parents are cooperating. In fact he said parental involvement is very instrumental in a school but unfortunately they are not concerned over their children performance. Expressing his anger, he said "as I talk to you right now I still have the report cards for some of our learners for last term and their parents have not bothered to come get them".

Over and above, both the empirical and literature study share the idea of parents not involving themselves in their children's education though in different categories. For instance while stakeholders from quintile five schools complain about parents not attending SGB meetings, those at quintile one and two schools talk of a complete absence of parents for reasons like illiteracy. As such this leaves a large burden in the hands of the SMTs and even educators.

5.3.5.2 External imposition of vision

According to Bush (2008a:278) in paragraph 2.7.4 vision has been regarded as an essential component of effective leadership for almost 20 years. To him, outstanding leaders have a vision for their organisation. In this regard heads are motivated to work hard "because their leadership is the pursuit of their individual visions" (Bush 2008a:278). Despite a very high level of school-based management, some traces of externally influenced vision can be found in schools. The DoE at some point in time might get involved in the formulation of a school vision that is not in accordance with the general norms and standards of schools in particular and education management in general. Fallen in Robinson (2012:22) is concerned that an externally impose division can limit the scope of school improvement approaches which could otherwise develop but would be constrained due to a "contrived coherence". As such any form of improvement will be put at risk by over-prescription and centralisation. However Leithwood and Beatty (2008:49)

affirm that those who feel they have considerable control over their environment are inclined more towards action than passive resignation.

From interviews with participants, participant B01 raised a worrying issue which according to him needs urgent attention. He said “we are forced by the Department of Education to promote failed learners who are not ready to learn on the grounds that they need to be at the same level with their age group”. A similar frustration was shared by participants B04, C03 and C04 who expressed their anger saying the entire situation is frustrating to them as educators because most of such learners are very disrespectful to educators and do not come to school often. In all C03 said the department is failing in their strategies because at the level of matric, these learners still perform very poorly but are evaluated to have passed. Unfortunately for these learners they are forced to drop out when they get to the university because they cannot cope. In this regard participant B04 said “learners should rather be helped to discover their talent by organising school plays and shows instead of forcing them to become what they are not”. On the same basis, A01 is of the opinion that they write exams that are prepared by the DOE. In his own words he said “I would have loved to write my own exams here, but the Department gives us exams scripts in June and November respectively”. This to him makes the teachers not to develop because you learn better and faster when you are creative. So when learners write exams on things that they are yet to be taught and do not perform well they tend to be discouraged.

In this regard, though SASA (1996) lays emphasis on the democratisation of education to the level of the school very key decisions are still taken by senior authorities without due consultations and collaboration with the schools. Thus even though key decisions must come from the DoE it should be after considerable consultations with educators and SMTs at large.

5.3.5.3 Inadequate teaching and learning resources.

Literature from Ndawi and Peasuh (2005:211) in paragraph 2.7.3 suggested that stakeholders may not be held accountable for failure to reach desired educational “goals” when operating with inadequate resources. In this regard Naidu *et al* (2012:45) explains that financial and material resources are always in short supply in the majority of schools in South Africa as a result of a historical unequal and unfair distribution of financial and material resources. According to Bush and Heystek (2003:132), accountability is not, and cannot be diminished because of inadequate resources. To these authors, it is based on this ideas that the DoE on behalf of the government

implemented the policy that SGBs should be encourage to raised funds and acquire additional facilities for improving the quality of education at their schools. Naidu *et al* (2012:46) say that the department of education has the responsibility to allocate funds to schools in accordance with the equity strategy of providing more resources to the poorest schools and communities. However, it is not how many resources are put into schooling that changes schools outcomes but how the resources are managed and used towards effective teaching and learning.

Partially affirming the literature above, participant D02 from an individual interview said “most of our challenges are coming from the educators”. He affirmed that as a department they have issues with regards to salaries or the payment of educators. From a practical example he said it is their duty to ensure that every classroom has at least one educator. However in some instances the educators go on very long sick leave and as a result they vacate their classroom duties. Unfortunately he continued the budget does not allow for extra employees to be brought on board so the challenge will be on how to pay these temporarily employed educators. Usually they will go unpaid while we negotiate with the national treasury for their payments he said. To him, these employees through their different unions embark on strikes even before their payment is arranged which sometimes end up in destruction of school properties.

Findings by means of observation unfortunately proved otherwise in relation to the lack of teaching and learning facilities. It was observed that the department spends a lot of money for resources like computers but the actual problem is that they fail to empower employees on how to use the equipment. In two of the sites visited evidence of computers was found unused in store rooms. Though one of the participants indicated that money is actually allocated by the department for the purchase of resources but the problem is the money comes in late and as a result he has come to an agreement with the SGB to use his personal money to be refunded when payment is made by the department. B01 said the department provides computers in an attempt to deal with administrative issues like recording of data but educators are not offered the training it required to use the computers.

5.3.5.4 Level of competency by stakeholders

Another great problem that affects the level of accountability by stakeholders in education is the level of competency by educators in dealing with teaching and learning problems. In this regard, Moloi (2007:472) in paragraph 2.7.2 explains that there is a general acceptance that teacher

reliability and punctuality are problems that contribute to a weak culture of teaching and learning. Such problems can impact negatively on the level of accountability in an institution as well as on learner attitudes and discipline. According to Leithwood and Beatty (2008:25), evidence from a study conducted by Weiss (1999) in the U.S department of education suggests that working conditions may have different effects on teachers as stakeholders especially the beginner teacher. Under such circumstances Feiler (2010:144) suggested that stakeholders can actually support each other to boost their capability; for instance parents can overtly celebrate teachers work through thank you letters, occasional articles in local newspapers that explain teachers' special programmes or approach and an appreciative note to the superintendent about a teacher.

In South Africa, there is however the lack of responsibility, dedication and commitment on the part of many educators and learners (Van der Horst & McDonald, 2003:3). One of the reasons according to these authors is that the attitudes and values of many adult South Africans of this decade were formed in the apartheid era characterised by division. Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:4) added that another reason why stakeholders might be incompetent is because they did not receive adequate educational and training opportunities in the past.

Affirming the aspect that working conditions may have different effects on teachers as stakeholders, B04 said educators are sometimes exposed to situations where they are more experienced and even better qualified than the principal. This according to her usually results in a conflict between the educator and the principal because the principal might consider whatever contribution you make as a threat to his position, whereas you are trying to assist. This to her will lower the morale of that educator hence a cool attitude towards other stakeholders. Also in an attempt to address or reduce the gap between stakeholders and to ensure a better understanding of the culture of teaching and learning, all the educators and some principals who took part in the study affirmed that the DOE has introduced qualification programmes and short courses. They include the Advance Certificate of Education (ACE) and Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) is attended by principals and educators to upgrade their skills and qualifications as well as for a better understanding of the curriculum. Participant C03 particularly said that "education is a lifelong learning" therefore both educators and school management in general must never be

reluctant to acquire knowledge by continuing to study and acquiring more information relating to the different field of study and interest.

5.3.6. Remedies to enhance accountability challenges in education

From both the empirical study and literature it was affirmed that in dealing with challenges in schools the interest of the learners is placed first before every other stakeholder. The empirical findings particularly showed that when stakeholders failed to deliver or to adhere to the school code of conduct, dismissal comes as the last option unless in cases of serious misconduct. In every organisation, the role of accountability is well defined. When stakeholders do not adhere to schools principles, such an organisation is bound to suffer setbacks. Below are a number of correlated suggestions from the study to enhance accountability challenges.

5.3.6.1. Adequately involved and informed parents about their children's educations

From the literature review paragraph 2.8.1, Feiler (2010:1) acknowledges that although it is undoubtedly a daunting task to form a relationship with parents who encounter difficulties engaging with their children's school, it is necessary for stakeholders to assist children's learning and development. By assisting children in learning and development, parents can endeavour to check and monitor the children to see that all assignments are done, must enquire from authorities to see that children are in school as well as making sure they are at home during closing times. According to Feiler (2010:1) great progress has been made over the years towards achieving this motive of collaboration between educators and parents. To him, a survey conducted by the office for standards in education in the UK, indicated that all participating schools value the involvement of parents and carers because education is at its best or outstanding when parents are involved.

With regards to parents not being involved in their children's education, C01 said that every term they meet with parents during quarterly meetings to encourage and also to remind them of the importance of their commitment to their children's education by supporting both the school and their children morally and financially. He also acknowledges that parents are very difficult persons to handle which explains why when they are called upon for meetings they do not respond as much as it is expected. But "it is the best we can do because the parents are clearly not interested".

5.3.6.2. Up skilling of school managers through professional qualifications

Volante (2012:26) in paragraph 2.8.3 holds that the most ambitious developments in England towards enhancing leadership role of head teachers is the setting up of the National College for School Leaders (NCSL) programme by the government in 2001. This programme is meant to provide and coordinate leadership development pointing both to the importance attached to school leadership by the government and to a belief that leadership can be learned to at least some extent. Hence it resulted in the creation of a pre-service training programme called the national professional qualification for headship (NPQH) which is now mandatory for all school leaders (principals and managers). Though this policy is well applied in England as stated by Volante, it has also been introduced in the educational system of most countries across the world particularly in South Africa. The DOE through the state universities has launch programs such as the Advanced Certificate for Education (ACE) and the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) which helps to train educators from primary and secondary schools who have experience but are without qualifications (DOE, 20011/2012). In the North West University for instance where this study was conducted, the Faculty of Education and Training organises and coordinates the NPDE program with one of its objectives being to supply educators with additional practical skills (NWU, 2008:3).

Findings from the empirical study reveal that the huge gap that sometimes exist between stakeholders in terms of qualification can result in conflicting situations which is not a good culture of teaching and learning. All the educators and some principals who took part in the study affirmed that the DOE has introduced short courses like the Advanced Certificate of Education (ACE) and the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE). With these short courses both principals and educators are trained in an attempt to upgrade their skills and qualification as well as for a better understanding of the curriculum. Participant C03 particularly said that “education is a lifelong learning” therefore both educators and school management in general must never be reluctant to acquire knowledge by continuing studying and acquiring more information relating to our field of study and interest. Whereas participant B03 added that it can partly remedy the issues of resistance to change because educators need to understand that teaching and learning is undergoing an evolution.

From both points of view teaching and learning is an ongoing practice for all stakeholders who have the interest of the organisation at heart. As indicated in the study the world is evolving just like education, therefore stakeholders must endeavour to embrace all form of change. This will go a long way to improve the teaching abilities and techniques of educators and managers.

5.3.6.3. Increased cooperation amongst stakeholders

With regards to the importance of cooperation in education, Bush (2007:397-398) in paragraph 2.8.5 said it is advantageous for a school to cooperate, especially in leadership because it will bring about active participation of stakeholders which can result in increased school effectiveness. Also participation is justified by democratic principles and in the context of Site-Based Management leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder. In this regard Maile (2004:98) noted that setting up democratic structures that involves all stakeholders in the running of the school is important, but states that it requires thoughtful planning and parents need to be supported and informed, meaning that, unlike cooperation, communication is also very vital. In the same vein and in an attempt to enhance school financial accountability, Koross *et al.* (2009:63) suggested that there must be an increase in the quality of contact, for instance, between parents and teachers as well as increasing the number of parents in school management activities because it is only through this process that there can be an adequate reporting of school finances. As such Naidu *et al.* (2012:45) say that there is need for a good rapport to be established with educators because it makes them feel at ease and encouraged to do their best. Hence this necessitates working together for a specific period before applying punitive accountability measures.

Findings from the empirical study showed the need and importance of a harmonious relationship in a school environment. A01 said he always advises educators to avoid conflicting situations with learners. For him some of the learners and parents are very quick to say, “You know what, I will take you to court”. So they try to avoid touching learners as much as they can. Therefore no matter how angry you become with learners you should be able to deal with it without hitting them or take the matter to the SMT. Participant C02 explains that sometimes he understands the plight of educators when they disagree with learners because trying to assist a child who keeps reminding you of his or her rights might be very frustrating. Furthermore participant A02 said that in dealing with learners in a school environment a high degree of tolerance must be

exercised. To him the SMT must understand that by the time they get to high schools these kids are in their formative years where they are beginning to pass through the stages of adolescence where they begin to defy authorities. Therefore one has to be very sensitive in dealing with learners in terms of instilling discipline because “dismissal is the very last option that we consider”. Thus participant B02 and A02 both encourage the promotion of a cordial or harmonious relationship amongst stakeholders as the best possible solution.

In relation to department officials A02 said in some instances they experience an over stepping of authority by the DOE where 1 or 2 officials do not see the SGB as partners. He further said unlike in other schools and provinces, who will take the department to court when they disagree they instead try to accommodate. D02 said though it is often said business before pleasure, “our interest is not looking at the relationships that benefit the schools alone”. To him they equally look on how they are able to manage a good relationship with the educators in a manner that it is not about individual’s ego but about advancing education in general. Finally A02 added that stakeholders must understand that the school in itself is not an autonomous entity therefore there must be an inter-play of ideas for a successful performance.

Collaboration must therefore be practiced at all levels of the school involving stakeholder. In doing this the objective of education which is to promote successful teaching and learning must be place in high esteem.

5.3.6.4. Ensure a balance between autonomy and accountability.

According to Maile (2002:326) in paragraph 2.8.4, education services can only work effectively and develop creatively if stakeholders grasp their responsibilities and act accordingly. He elaborated further by saying that education will collapse if parents simply wait to be told what to do or do only what they are told. Equally, it is desirable that an exercise of power by parents is fruitful, apt and free from harm, something that can be secured not by regulation, but through strong accountability processes. Robinson (2012:187) on the other hand emphasised the need for schools to be monitored regularly. She however explains that earned autonomy should be given to outstanding schools by removing them from inspection and using interim assessment to differentiate those under performing schools that require inspection.

Similarly from the empirical study both interview and document analysis confirmed that officials at the DOE spend so much time attending meetings instead of practically going into the field to monitor how teaching and learning is implemented. However findings from document analysis equally suggest that efforts are being made to reduce the number of meetings attended by stakeholders. Also with regards to the ideas of Robinson (2012:187) calling on the need for earned autonomy to be given to outstanding schools, results from the empirical study reveal that the DOE has organised ANA exams which are written in 12 subjects from June to November. The exams are compulsory to all schools with a grade 12 pass rate less than 70% and the testing classes include grade 3, 6 and 9 (see paragraph 4.6.1.2).

5.3.6.5. Improve reliability of data and consistency of inspection judgments

Robinson (2012:187) in paragraph 2.8.2 arguably holds that one possible way to improve reliability of data is by the reliance on inspection results for schools and the performance of children in test. Seemingly Robinson (2012:187) maintains that reliability of data and consistency of judgement has been proven to be a flawed system due to inconsistencies and inaccuracies in marking tests and the formulaic way “outstanding” is determined as judgment. Hence inspection though still applied in most parts of Africa and with a great amount of success, is not a democratic principle. As such stakeholders can be left with their personal judgment and self-responsibility which can equally enhance reliability of data.

Participant B04 carefully indicated that the problem they faced as educators who fail to prepare lessons is that you come to class not knowing what to do at a particular time. Therefore she said educators need to adequately prepare lessons before going to class. Hence because of the insufficient time for lessons educators must plan lessons because it helps to try and integrate some of the topics. This alone saves a lot of time which you would have used in treating them as separate lessons. In relation to this, A01 said schools must be allowed to write their own exams based on the materials they are able to cover at a particular point in time because what matters is that before the end of the academic year they will have covered what is expected of them. This is equally important because when you make your own choices it is easy to account for them thereby keeping a good record. This is in line with B01 postulation that no single approach will work for every school. Therefore “if going against departmental principles can enhance the growth of the school then he would not mind because the results will speak for themselves”.

However, as much as it is important following some design principles to achieve better outcome in teaching and learning, choosing the right quality principal or manager to an extent can equally ensure trustworthiness of information and consistency in judgement. This is because such stakeholder must have attained a certain level of qualification and experience as well as exposure.

5.4. DISCUSSION ON DISSIMILARITIES OF FINDINGS

Following an intensive study conducted by means of literature and the empirical study that was made up of interviews, observations and document analysis, a number of differences were identified particularly in the empirical study that constituted the main contribution of the study. They include the following;

5.4.1. Related concepts to accountability

In both the literature and the empirical study findings reveal that responsibility and answerability are mostly use when issues of schools accountability is mention. In relation to the dissimilarity in the choice of words referring to accountability, two concepts (representative and answerableness) that had similar description but different names were identified. These concepts were identified through interviews from the empirical study and well defended by the participants. Participant A02 particularly stated that accountability is related to *representative* because it requires one to report back to either the organisation or union that you are representing. Whereas participant C03 simply said accountability is similar to *answerableness*. When probed by this researcher to know the reasons behind her choice of concept she said “to whom much is given, much is expected”.

5.4.2. Quality of education for learners

Findings from this study well affirm that the DOE is introducing new approaches in teaching and learning in an attempt to improve on the standard and quality of education. Results from test scores in quarterly performance by learners as well as in national examinations like Matric and ANA equally confirmed that these strategies are working for the department (see paragraph 4.6.1.2). Contrarily findings from the empirical study by means of individual interviews reveal a misrepresentation and/or presentation of learners’ actual performance. This was evident with participant B01, C03 and C04 who all attest that *the DOE is persuading them to promote failed learners for reasons that they need to meet up with their age group*. Unfortunately most of these

learners do not qualify to study at a university. Even when they do, they end up dropping out due to poor performances.

5.4.3. Recruitment and selection of educators

The literature study reveals that in some countries like Canada and the UK, educators and school managers are appointed by senior stakeholders (see paragraph 5.3.4.5) while in others like Germany a mixed system is done involving the state and federal government. This is similar to South Africa where it is the responsibility of both the DOE and the school through the SGBs to recruit teachers. However, findings from the empirical study painted the picture that the process involved in the selection of educators that include advertisement, screening, interview, selection and introduction of the selected educator is usually not adhered to. This leaves the task of employing educators in the hands of either the SGBs or DOE. Worst still is a case where an SGB member who doubles as the school manager singlehandedly employs educators with permission from the SGB. This however affirms previous findings from literature that though the attention in the managing of schools has been shifted from the principal (one man show) to the SGB, they still have a greater role to play because they represent the DOE.

5.5 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

These notions over the years have been very relevant in the collection of data especially in a qualitative research approach. The theme was treated as part of chapter five and not chapter one because apart from the delimitation, it equally contained issues of shortcomings that can be determined only at the end of the study. In this regard Marshall and Rossman (2011:76) elucidated that all proposed research projects have limitations thus there are no perfect research designs. Discussing the limitation of this study helps to remind the reader of what the study entails, its limits, and how its results can or cannot contribute to understanding. For the purpose of this study which involved stakeholder's accountability, the limitation and delimitation of the study was well defined.

5.5.1 Limitations

In this study, a number of issues acted as constraints to the achievement of the aims and objectives of this dissertation. The aspects of accessibility and willingness to provide information were key challenges in this study which resulted in altering the initial research population as was

indicated in the proposal of the study. Despite all the assurance of the level of confidentiality in the study, some participant still held back information for fear of losing their job or running into confrontation with their boss. Those who managed to participate tried to twist words that could possibly mislead the researcher. These however made the researcher very much alert and vigilant on what data to be recorded or not. These circumstances resulted in the changing or replacement of some participant though at the same capacity in order not to distort the objectives of the study. Such a scenario was evident when some participants denied a tape recorder to be used and rather preferred note-taking on the part of the researcher while others claimed to be busy but were constantly on leave.

Secondly because of some financial constraints and transportation difficulties, the study was based only in and around the Mafikeng township area. The mode of transportation in the area required the researcher to make several stopovers before arriving at a required destination which was very costly. Though the nature of the study (qualitative approach) required that a small number of schools be involved thus a smaller population size, it was partly motivated by the lack of finance to ensure mobility from one township to another.

Moreover, the language barrier largely impacted the quality of data that were gathered. This was because the area of study comprised mostly Setswana speaking participants as against the researcher who could best communicate in the English language. During the study, some initially selected participants specifically teachers, were replaced by others who could better communicate in English in order to ease the flow of information. Despite these measures, a few familiar non-English words were still used such as *neh*, *nah*, *iyoo* and *akere* which were not of any interference to the findings. Notwithstanding the researcher ensured that the quality of information gathered was not manipulated through a checklist as explain in paragraph 1.8.1.

5.5.2. Delimitation

The study “perceptions of stakeholders of accountability in schools” was carried out in the Mafikeng Area of North West province. Because of the nature of the design (qualitative approach), only three schools were selected from a group of schools in the area including some selected departmental officials. They included primary, middle and high schools, as well as purposively selected officials from the PDOE. The main motivation behind the selection of these

schools was based on their quintile ranking. Quintile ranking according to Mbatsane (2006:19) refers to the grouping of schools depending on their poverty index. The national norms and standard for school funding (NNSSF, 1999) elaborated that the physical condition of the school alongside the relative poverty of the school community are used to determine the school's quintile. In this regard the primary, middle and high schools represented quintile 2, 3 and 5 respectively which represented both poverty stricken schools and financially stable schools. Though other schools in the area and province in general were not part of the study, they were not completely neglected. These schools were however taken into consideration during the literature study (see chapter two). These enabled the researcher to ensure that the said aims and objectives of the study were attained.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings from both the literature review and the empirical study, the following recommendations were made;

5.4.1. The need to intensify training of stakeholders

It is recommended that more intensive training sessions be organised per annum in future which will be characterised by complete monitoring by senior stakeholders. Both the literature study and the empirical study acknowledged the fact that the government is making a lot of effort to train educators as school governors in general. It was equally realised that these training sessions usually take a very short period which does not give stakeholders the opportunity to grasp something meaningful. Training of teachers in particular at the work place will enable them to deal with the new curriculum issues. This is very relevant because the study revealed that educators are faced with changing situations that either forces them to resign or resist change. Also the term of office of the SGBs need to be revised from three to four years or more because the level of understanding particularly by stakeholders in the primary and middle schools is very low. Therefore it might take them a much longer period to comprehend their roles and functions and to implement them in accordance with the requirements of SASA.

5.4.2. Introduction of a computerised system in teaching and learning.

In an attempt to enhance teaching and learning strategies the department needs to introduce an electronic teaching system where learners will be provided with tablets and educators with projectors or touch screens to facilitate teaching. Results from research shows that stakeholders

complain of spending so much time in the compilation of documents for accountability reasons like marking of registers as well as the use of chalk in writing on black boards. A review in South Africa Broadcasting (SABC, 2) live on the 18 of April, 2015 at 7:30 am revealed that several provincial education department in South Africa such as the Gauteng province are already practicing electronic teaching in some schools. This is further in line with Naidu et al (2012:188) earlier suggestion that learners should be provided with computers in each classroom and well equipped with internet access.

5.4.3. Stakeholders should endeavour to look for other avenues of financing schools

Stakeholders are call upon to derive other methods of funding like engaging with stakeholders as partners. Also schools can collaborate with the department to give out school properties like classrooms not currently in use for rental to members of the community. However it must be done in such a way that teaching and learning is not interrupted. Findings revealed that both the SGBs and the DOE have the responsibility to finance schools though with a greater percentage of the money to come from the DOE depending on the quintile ranking of the school. Findings from empirical study particularly revealed that most of the schools in the North West Province are classified under poverty stricken school. This means that there is a heavy responsibility on the DOE to provide for these schools. It logically follows that these schools cannot all be self-sufficient at a given point in time.

5.4.4 Regular school visit by circuit managers

In realisation of the fact that too many meetings are held by leading stakeholders, it is recommended that the number of meetings be cut down while monitoring is emphasised. In line with the need to pay more visit to the schools, document analysis suggested that the process must begin by identifying and replacing substantive vacant positions thereby ensuring sufficiency of employees. This can be followed by a decrease in the number of meetings which circuit managers are expected to attend thereby allowing them to visit more schools regularly. These circuit managers, or field workers as the case may be must endeavour to address problems identified as soon as possible without the situation getting intensified.

5.4.5. Intensify the role of parents by giving them more responsibilities.

Parental involvement in various schools' financial activities should be encouraged and increased by the DOE and the SGBs by giving them more responsibilities like dealing with issues of

misconduct within the school without involving the DOE. This may increase participation of parents in schools' financial management and may further lead to parents handling general school matters as their own. Also, parents are the primary educators of children because they spend more than 12 in 24 hours with the children at home. The role of parents in their children's education must therefore be considered and implemented by the SGB as part of their responsibilities. Hence more parental participation for example through assignments should be able to increase the performance of children in the process of learning.

5.6. RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study title "the perspective of stakeholders of accountability in school aimed at exploring what different stakeholders think of the concept accountability was attained". The study comprised major concerns of accountability like the meaning of accountability; the nature of accountability, challenges faced by stakeholders in accountability as well as possible remedies all from a stakeholder's perception. The stakeholders involved were particularly school principals, SGB chairpersons, educators and selected officials from the DOE who are directly involved in school matters in the Mafikeng Area of North West Province in general. It is hereby suggested that another study be conducted on the same area of accountability, but this time from higher institutions of learning like colleges and universities as against the current study that focused on primary, middle, secondary/high school. This will be aimed at discovering the complexities of accountability at the different levels of the educational system through a comparative study.

5.7. SUMMARY

It is clear from the participants' responses through interview and the literature review that both the Department of Education authorities and SMTs including educators have dissimilar conceptions as to what their task on accountability in schools entails. Generally, there is a widely held assumption that the poor quality of education arises from a lack of resources and that the solution to educational crisis in SA is to make more resources available through quality service delivery. However considering the amount of money (R17592 billion in 2012/2013 financial year) allocated to basic education alone at national level according to the 2012/2013 NWPDOE annual report proves otherwise. It is to a large extent true that the delivery of basic education depends on the availability of finances. But it is equally true that money alone cannot address school crises without the following issues being addressed; a system of accountability in which

those responsible for the delivery of quality basic education are called to account when they fail to discharge their obligations; secondly by addressing allegations of corrupt practices through thorough investigations of the allegations and taking actions by implementation where suitable and lastly the participation of all stakeholders at all levels including the unions and civil society to ensure that the system is improved and the resources are well spent on quality education for all south Africans.

Moreover, it is often stated that a person cannot be held accountable for something which he has no power to determine how it functions or works. Based on the principles of decentralisation in education through school based management, school governors should therefore be given the full responsibility to determine the pace at which teaching and learning is done. This must include methods of testing learners, methods of dealing with learner discipline problems, school financial issues and even the recruitment of educators. It is only through a complete delegation of authority that stakeholders can be held fully accountable.

5.8 Concluding remarks

This study sought to develop a conceptual framework of stakeholder's accountability in selected schools of the Ngaka Modiri Molema district of the North West province. During this study it became evident that for a stakeholder to be held accountable he/she must first be giving some responsibilities. Moreover looking at the various objectives design for this study which included clarifying stakeholders' understanding of the concept of accountability in schools; determine the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the nature of accountability of school matters in the Mafikeng area; determine the challenges face by school stakeholders in the accountability of schools in the Mafikeng area and deriving strategies to remedy the challenges of stakeholder's accountability of schools in the Mafikeng area, a conclusion can be drawn that the said aims and objectives were achieved. Therefore in a school environment every stakeholder involved in the running of the school is capable of being held accountable.

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APPENDIX A



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The Principal/District Official/department of education

Education Leadership Development
Tel: 018 3892500 (Secretary)
Email: eliza.senne@nwu.ac.za

Date: 2014/11/19

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This is to confirm that Mr. HT Tabe (Student No: 24736732) is a Masters student registered at the North-West University, Mafikeng Campus. The title of the dissertation is "The Accountability of School stakeholders: An Educational Management Perspective."

Permission is requested to enter your area/district/school to collect data from the following school officials; teacher(s), principal(s), parent(s), SGB chairs, and officials of the department of education. Data collection will be by way of interviews (both individual and group interview), document analysis and observations. Collection of data will occur outside school contact time so as not to interfere with teaching and assessment processes or office duties.

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

Should you enquire more information about the project, kindly contact the supervisor for this project Prof Van Wyk, phone no (+27) 835009019.

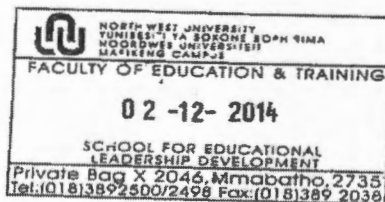
Herewith permission is requested to perform this research in your school/area. It would be appreciated if you would kindly grant permission to this student. Any assistance given to the student to perform the research will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Prof P du Toit

Director: School for Education Leadership Development (School in which the Masters programme is registered)

NWU, Mafikeng Campus



APPENDIX B



Education and Sport Development

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

corner Thelesto Tawana and
Modib Molena Road
Montshioa
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e-mail: mkokong@nwpg.gov.za

Enquiries : Kokong NM
Cell No. : 083 632 6928
Tel No. : 018 384 6007/3233/2828
Email : mkokong@nwpg.gov.za

Date : 24 March 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

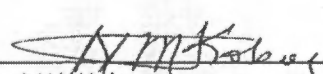
Permission is herewith granted to **Mr Tabe Hennandes Tabe**, (student No: **24736732**) to conducted research at

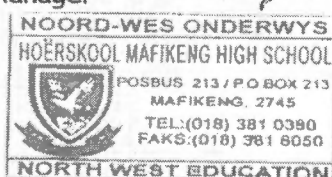
1. **Ipeleng Primary,**
2. **CN Lekalake Middle,**
3. **Mafikeng High School in the North West Province.**

THEME: "The Role of educators in managing learner discipline in school."

Disturbing lessons and teaching time must be totally avoided. A copy of the research finding should be made available to the Area Office and the schools that you will be attending to.

Wishing you well in your study


Mr NM Kokong
Area Manager



"Towards Excellence in Education"

APPENDIX C



Education and Sport Development

Department of Education and Sport Development
Departement van Onderwys en Sport Ontwikkeling
Letapha la Thuto le Tšhabololo ya Metshameko

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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL

Inq: Mphiliso Tyatya
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pyatya@nwpg.gov.za

06 May 2015

**To: Prof P. Du Toit c/o University of the North West
o.b.o Mr. H.T. Tabe
School of Education Leadership**

**From: Dr. I.S. Molale
Superintendent General**

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Reference is made to your letter regarding the above matter. The content is noted and accordingly, approval is granted to your kind self to conduct research as per your request, subject to the following provisions: -

- That you contact the officials of the department whose scope of work is germane to your research topics as listed.

Contact details are as follows:

SCOPE	MANAGER	CONTACT DETAILS
HR Matters	Messrs. M. Keetile & O. Motang	018 388 3426/3602
School Funding	Messrs R. Molema & z. Mtila	018 388 3498/3886
Employee Wellness	Me. K. Menong	018 388 3909

- That as far as possible the general office functionality should be compromised by the research process.
- That participation in your project will be voluntary.
- That the findings of your research will be made available to the NW Department of Education & Sports Development upon request.
- That the principle of confidentiality will be observed in its strictest terms in relation to information sourced from such research.

With my best wishes

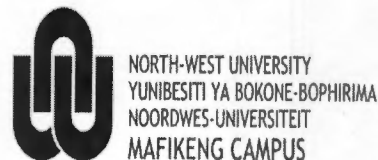
Thanking you

**DR. I.S. MOLALE
SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL**



"Towards Excellence in Education and Sport Development"

APPENDIXG



SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Department of Education

North West Province

To whom may be concern

I hereby seek to request your personal permission to conduct an interview with you regarding my research topic (the perspective of stakeholders of accountability in schools: A critical analysis). I am HT TABE student no. 24746732. I study Education Management in the school of Educational Leadership Development at the Mafikeng campus of the North West University. This research comprises the main part of my study program.

All necessary letters of permission has been obtained from the appropriate offices as part of the ethical consideration for the study. The interview and every discussion out of it will be treated as confidential.

Sir/madam I will be grateful to get a quick response from your office regarding the interview schedule which should be at your convenience.

Regards,

Tabé HT (0717760073)

Attachments

- Letter from the Director (School of Educational Leadership Development), Mafikeng Campus of the NWU
- Letter from the office of the Superintendent General

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANTS

TOPIC: THE PERCEPTION OF STAKEHOLDERS OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN SCHOOLS:
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

I would like to do an interview with you in relation to the above topic. It is important that you respond according to your subjective point of view and express your opinions. I am going to ask you these questions concerning situations in which you have the knowledge and experience from your day to day job and you are expected to recount those situations for me. Questions may be rephrase where need arises.

- 1) As a role player, what is your understanding of the concept *accountability*?
- 2) Are there other ideas or concept that you use in your day to day activities that relates to the concept accountability?
- 3) How does the concept accountability work in practice in respect to your area of responsibility?
- 4) Who are the other key role players in your school and what are their responsibilities? or
- 5) Apart from you, who else is held accountable in the running of the school and for what?
- 6) For which actions and by whom can you as a role player be held responsible in your school?
- 7) Why must there be accountability in a school and to whom?
- 8) What are the challenges faced by stakeholders in your school in performing their responsibilities
- 9) How can the challenges be remedy to enhance accountability in your school?

APPENDIX L

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8	Catherine M. Farrell. "Changing Forms of Accountability in Education? A Case Study of LEAs in Wales", Public Administration, 01/1999 Publication	<1%