

**THE CHALLENGES FACED BY PRINCIPALS IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL POLICIES IN HIGH SCHOOLS**

BY

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**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER IN
EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING AT THE
MAFIKENG CAMPUS OF THE NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY**

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OCTOBER 2012

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DECLARATION

I, Motlagomang Letty Senna, declare that all the work contained in this research project is my original work. I further declare that any part of work, idea or abstract taken from any source is properly acknowledged in this research.



Senna M. L.

.....

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I thank God for all the blessings He has given me health, strength, wisdom and insight to succeed in this project.

Secondly, I have been particularly fortunate to be guided through this study by Professor J. R. Debeila. His extraordinary knowledge and ability, his keen astute insight, his critical comments and constant encouragement are highly valued.

Thirdly, thanks to my friends and colleagues especially Mrs. M. P. Maribe, for moral support anytime I needed it and Mr. Ntloko M. C. who assisted me with typing during times of destitute and who also at times acted as my mentor.

Fourthly, the list is endless. I thank all who contributed in this project – printing, photocopying, transport, etc.

Lastly, my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude go to my family for support, assistance, advice, cooperation and encouragement through the completion of this study.

ABSTRACT

Various research reports have indicated that principals are faced with a great challenge in the implementation of school policy. It is also indicated that the principals are not succeeding in overcoming these challenges.

The main aim of the study was to investigate the challenges faced by principals when implementing school policy.

The literature review on challenges faced by principals on policy implementation has been reviewed. The focus was also on policy making at international, national and local levels. The literature review stated and described various challenges, such as late-coming, absenteeism, school vandalism, and the disciplinary that school principals can employ. The literature revealed that the principals have long been experiencing challenges on the implementation of school policy.

Research design (both qualitative and quantitative) and methods were outlined in chapter 3.

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics through the use of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 1.5 version) and interpreted in chapter 4. In the light of the findings of this research, it was found out that indeed principals do experience challenges in the implementation of the school policy. The study also revealed that factors such as learner late-coming, absenteeism, bunking classes, being disruptive in class, leaving school without permission, disrespecting and threatening their teachers and other learners, smuggling tobacco and drugs to school and carry dangerous weapons are a great concern.

Chapter 5 entails a summary of the findings and recommendations were made which will enhance the practical application of school policy. It is recommended that:

- The principals should be workshopped and trained on implementation of the school policy. This implies that proper measures need to be implemented to assist or empower the principals to cope with challenges they face in the implementation of the school policy
- Principals need to regard consultation as a priority. They need to consult with all the stakeholders pertaining to the implementation of the school policy. Consultation should be given priority in the light of Batho-Pele Principle.
- A healthy environment is needed in the school to enforce discipline. It is recommended that good relationship should prevail among all stakeholders within the school to encourage team work and create an open supportive climate in which a conducive and clean environment will prevail.
- The Department of Education of Education should supply schools with learners support materials. When the schools have enough learner support material, learners will also be disciplined as they will be kept busy. Therefore, all the departments in the school need to ensure that there is sufficient support material in their departments. This will help instill discipline in the classroom.
- It should be clearly stated that every learner will be held accountable for his or her behaviour; to change ill-discipline, punitive strategies should be clearly communicated to the learners.

KEY WORDS

- School Principal
- School Policy
- Policy Implementation
- Challenges
- Model

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Education policies for a new South Africa show remarkable congruence with international trends. South Africa's focus on education for lifelong learning and the integration of formal and non-formal education mixed with emphasis on the need for educational development to support sustainable development on poverty alleviation and economic growth. These policy goals are not unique to South Africa and are part of a new global language about education (Broad, 2003:39).

Globally, all organisations are governed by a set of rules and regulations or policies. Educational leaders at the district and school levels are faced with both interpreting and implementing their policies. Schools receive policy directives as state regulations, but they are faced with a challenge to draw their own interpretations. Even the most prescriptive and straight forward regulations can be translated differently across the schools; by and large, schools do make attempts to abide by the policy (Bray, 2008:10).

All South African schools are governed by the Department of Education. The Department of Education formulates policies and sends them to schools where they are interpreted analysed by the school. School policy should be manageable for school Principals and teachers because they have come from specific local events or in response to school issues or demands (Davies, 2007:90).

Shaba (2006:12) points out that "the role of Principals in professional activities has been clarified so as to be in a position to formulate and implement the school policies". Shaba (2006:12) further points out that the school Principals and teachers are confronted with a vast array of procedures of every day, such as:

- To ensure that the bell rings on time (starting time of the school, regulation of periods, break interval and school out),
- To ensure learners wear proper school uniform,
- To check teachers and learners punctuality,
- To ensure culture of learning of teaching is taking place,
- To discourage absenteeism by teachers and learners,
- To discourage vandalism of school property, etc.

Good policies should drive the way that things are done in schools. If a school policy just, then the task of the Principal and the School Management Team (SMT) are to determine how to put it into practice, to allocate the necessary resources, and to implement it. The real challenges in the policy writing arena lie not only in writing the policy but also in determining its justness and implementation.

South African schools are governed by the following policy as stated in the “Policy Handbook for Educators commissioned by the Education Labour Relation Council” Section 1 of 2003:

- National Education Policy Act.
- Admission Policy for Ordinary Public School.
- National Policy on HIV/AIDS for learners and Educators in Public School and Students and Educators in further Education and Training Institutions.
- Policy for the Registration of learners for Home Education.
- Norms and standards and norms for educators.
- Criteria for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education Based on Norms and Standards for Educators 2000.
- National Policy for Designing School Calendars for Ordinary Public Schools in South Africa.
- National Policy on the Management of Drug Abuse by Learners in Public and Independent schools and Further Education and Training.

The directive principles of the national policies aim toward the advancement and protection of fundamental rights of every person is guaranteed in terms of Chapter 2 of the Republic of South Africa. These principles guarantee in particular the rights:

- of every person to be protected against unfair discrimination within or by an education department or education institution on any ground whatever;
- of every person's right to basic education and equal access to educational institutions;
- of a parent or guardian in respect of his or her child's education;
- of every student to be instructed in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practical;
- of every person to the freedoms of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression and association within education institution;
- of every person, to establish, where practicable, education institutions based on a common language or religion, as long as there is no discrimination on the ground of race; and
- of every person to use the language and participate in the cultural life of his or her choice within an education institution [National Education Policy Act 27 of 2006 (a4-5)].

This implies that the implementation of school policy is a challenging task because those who formulate the school policy need to take into account the above principles.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite attempts by the Department of Education to empower educators and Principals with regard to the promotion and development of education and training through the existence of Education Policies, South African Council of Educators Act, workshops, there seems to be challenges in the implementation of school policies (South African Council of Educators Act 31 of 2000 – E4).

The government of South Africa has ensured that it has formulated viable school policies for schools. The Principals have to ensure that such policies are effectively implemented in their schools. But it seems as if such policies are not effectively implemented. This is shown by learners roaming around in the streets during school hours, a high rate of absenteeism of learners from schools, a high rate of failure of learners in schools, and so forth. These factors may indicate that there are challenges faced by the Principals and teachers when implementing the school policies (The Mail, 2010:4).

The South African government builds schools and equips them with the necessary resources (desks, tables and chairs, computers and many more materials of learning). When walking around one finds that the new school buildings are vandalized with graffiti written on the walls, with broken windows and fences. This indicates that there must be a problem in the implementation of the school policies. The question is: What are the challenges faced by the Principals in implementing school policies?

1.3. THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question:

What are the main challenges faced by the Principals in the implementation of the school policies in high schools?

Research sub-questions:

- What are the implementation challenges emanating from the policies sent by the Department of Education to schools?
- What are the challenges encountered by the Principals when implementing school policies?
- How do Principals approach the challenges they face during implementation of the school policy?

- What are the possible solutions to resolve the challenges faced by the Principals in schools during the implementation of school policy?

1.4. AIM OF THE STUDY

The study aimed at determining the challenges faced by the Principals in the implementation of the school policies in the High schools around Mmabatho/Mahikeng area.

1.5. SUB-GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following were the objectives:

- To investigate the implementation challenges emanating from the policies sent Department of Education to schools.
- To determine the challenges encountered by the Principals when implementing school policies.
- To establish the impact of the disciplinary approach towards the misconduct of the learners in terms of the school policy.
- To identify and define the possible solutions to resolve the challenges faced by the Principals in schools during the implementation of school policy.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the media (Radio, TV, Newspapers) one hears and sees how the Department of Education and Principals at schools encourage the implementation of policies in schools to ensure that there is a law and order in the schools. There recurring problems encountered by Principals when implementing the school policy. This is shown by the habitual learner indiscipline and how the community reacts.

This study will help the Principals realize which factors are challenging when they implement the policies, and may reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the Principals in the implementations of policies at schools, which can serve as a guideline in policy formulation.

1.7. PROTOCOL OF COMMUNICATION IN HIGH SCHOOLS

The following figure indicates that for the school to operate effectively there should be engagement of all stakeholders in the school.

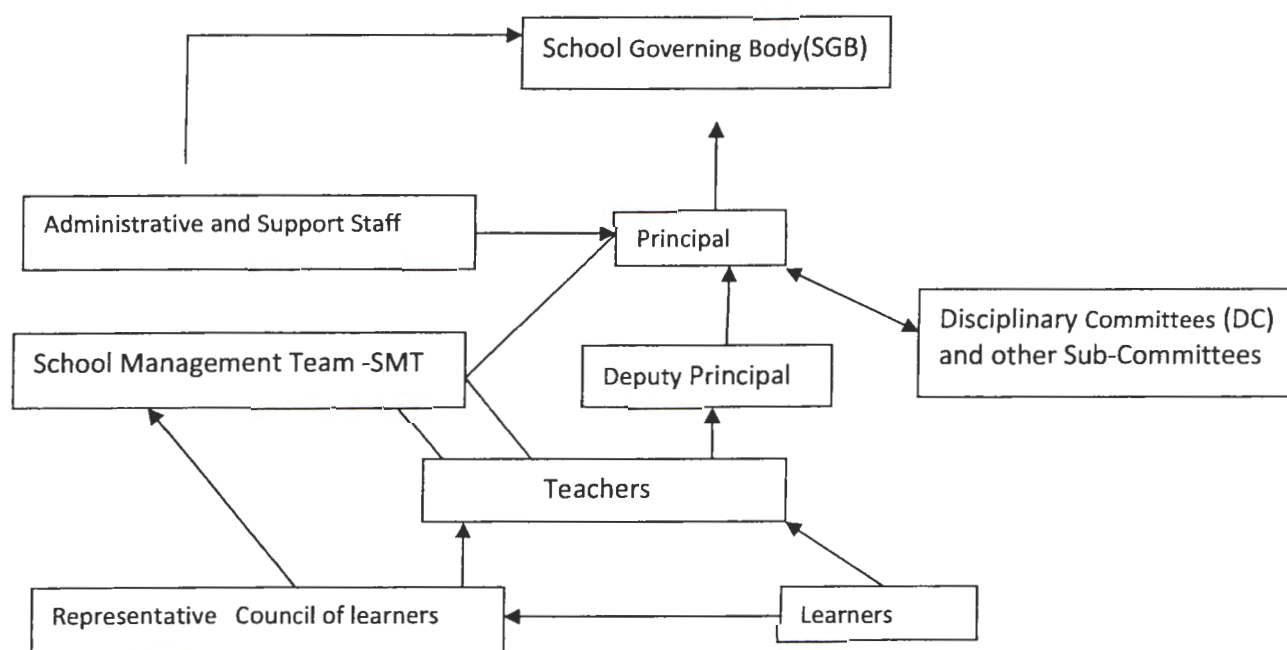


Figure 1.1: Communication protocol at the high school

Source: This Model is designed by the Researcher - M. L Senna

Explanation of Figure 1.1

The school is regarded as an extension of the family and finds itself in a secondary relationship to the family, yet, unlike within the family where education takes place spontaneously the school environment is characterised by professional differentiation and specialization (Oosthuizen, 2009, 24). This implies that the school and parents should work together in close partnership with each other in a differentiated but

unifying approach as indicated by the National Education Act [S. A. 1996 (b) Section (m) and the South African Schools Act [S.A. 1996 (c)].

To operationalize school-based decision-making, structures at the school level need to be put in place. Schools embracing shared decision-making typically develop committees consisting of representative of school stakeholders in the school, such as School Governing Body School Management Team, Teachers, Representative Council of Learners and administrative and support staff. The school's governance structure is supported by guidelines that specify representation and delineation of authority. The school further diffuses involvement through the use of sub-committees. Sub-committees allow a greater number of teachers to participate in the formal decision-making process and enforcement of the school policy [South African Schools Act of 1996 (c)].

Figure 1 implies that the learners should report any incident of school violation to the RCL or the teacher. If the teacher cannot resolve the matter, he or she reports to the matter to the relevant HOD. If the matter is a serious misconduct, the HOD should take the matter to the Principal. The Principal should then call the disciplinary committee or take the matter to the SGB.

The model further shows that administrative and support staff are also important in the school. They report to the Principal or SGB. It is noted that the School Management Team should be a strong and powerful body as it consists of the Principal, deputy Principal and the HODs.

The model in figure 1 simply indicates that a through communication process and follow of protocol of will assist the Principal and the teachers to implement school policies effectively. While management of the school resides with the Principal under the authority of the Head of Department in governance vests with the governance body of the school [National Policy Act Section 16].

1.8. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

- **Principal**

For the purpose of this study, the Principal is the head of the school and the leader of the school and is responsible and legally accountable for the administration and governance of the school. It means an educator appointed or acting as head of the school (Employment of Educators Act of 1998).

- **Challenges**

In this study, challenges are all the factors that serve as hindrance and a disturbance towards the implementation of the school policies (Palmer, 2008:104).

- **Policy**

Policy in this study is defined in terms of Brian and Spinks (2009:90). A policy is set of guidelines which provide a framework for achieving a purpose and specifies in general terms the kind of action to be taken in relation to an issue, with rules or procedures for its implementation.

- **School Policy**

School policy is a set of guidelines which provide a framework for achieving a purpose or goal (Brian and Spinks, 2009:90). The school cannot effectively operate without the school policy.

- **Model**

It is a theory or a construction of thought that directs thinking. A model is a schematic representation of reality containing the essential structure of some object or event in

the real world (Michael, 2009:10). In this research, the goal of this model is to simplify and explain the complexity and confusion in the school setting.

1.9. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken in the North West Province. In terms of the North West Department of Education, the province is demarcated into four regions. A region is further demarcated into districts (Areas). A district consists of Area Project Offices with a number of schools each. Therefore, in this research only five secondary schools were chosen around Mmabatho/Mahikeng area. This implies that the results or findings of this study may not be generalized.

1.10. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The following are the limitation of the study:

It was not easy to contact some of the Principals as they were busy with school administration like attending meetings. This became time consuming as the researcher had to revisit some schools and found that the Principal could not complete the interview schedule. Most of the Principals (95%) and teachers (95%) were very co-operative and willing to assist.

It was also very difficult to access some learners' documents (for example, portfolios) as learners either forgot to bring them to school or they were not available at all.

The researcher also experienced financial constraints as typing, photocopying and travelling were very expensive.

1.11. CHAPTER DIVISION

This study is divided into these five chapters:

Chapter 1 focuses on the orientation of the study on the challenges faced by the Principals in the implementation of the school policy, research philosophy, statement of the problem, research questions. This chapter also focuses on aims and objectives, the hypothesis and the duties of the Principal are indicated.

In chapter 2, focus is placed on the analysis of literature dealing with challenges faced by the Principals in implementing school policy. An attempt has been made to review international, national and local literature. Aims and objectives of the policy, policy making and the duties of the Principal are indicated.

Chapter 3 captures the research designed methods. The qualitative research method is explained or discussed. This chapter also explains the research design (which is descriptive) and data analysis method.

The data collected is analyzed and interpreted in chapter 4 and presented in relation to the research questions.

In chapter 5, the summary, discussion of the results, recommendations and conclusion are covered.

1.12. SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with orientation of the study by briefly discussing the statement of the problem, research questions, aim of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study, protocol of communication in high schools, definition of concepts and chapter division.

The following chapter captures a literature review to determine the current practices and implementation of school policies by the Principals.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Bryman (2007:170), a literature review is the first phase of the empirical study and consists of a systematic and critical analysis of the information obtained from the primary and secondary sources. A review of the literature, according to Ary (2009:99), serves and provides the following purposes and important functions:

- Defining the research problem
- Planning the study in contextual perspective
- Avoiding unnecessary and unintentional replication, and
- Relating the findings to previous knowledge.

In this chapter, sources such as books, magazines, Newspapers, internet and journals are reviewed to collect information regarding the topic. The theoretical framework underpinning the study will also receive more attention.

2.2. PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUNDS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

It is essential for qualitative researchers to be aware of the influence of philosophy on strategies of research, because without knowledge of the related philosophy, they are apt to be confused when analyzing qualitative data. By philosophy is meant the views about how to recognize things that are to be researched. Much has been written regarding the ways in which philosophical positions feed through to influence approaches to qualitative research. Four philosophical paradigms have been identified. They include positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 2008:20).

2.2.1. Positivism

Positivism is rarely evident in a fully developed form in the contemporary research, but is most usually identified with quantitative research (Rotheray, 2007:67 and Thyer, 2008:98). According to positivism, the “objective” world exists independently of any perspectives of the researchers. Therefore, researchers must disclose the objective facts. The distinguishing feature of positivism is the absence of any distinction between reality (as things that exist) and knowledge of reality (things that exist). This paradigm is present in a diluted form in some qualitative research.

2.2.2. Post-positivism

Post-positivism is a modified form of positivism that appeared after the end of World War II. It admits human beings cannot perfectly understand reality, whereas with rigorous data collection and analysis, researchers can approach the truth. Post-positivism covers a range of positions so wide that it scarcely earns the name of a paradigm. It is widely influential within qualitative research and covers positions as different as the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 2007:8; Strauss and Corbin, 2009:90), Herbert Blumer’s brand of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 2009:90), recent development under the heading of scientific realism, and detailed ways of analysing qualitative data devised by Miles and Huberman (2009:89) and Shaw (2007:45-47).

2.2.3. Critical Theory

Critical Theory comes under a narrow definition which originated in the Frankfurt School, which was founded in Germany during the pre-war years. In this document, however, such a wide definition of Critical Theory would be used that it would include the basic paradigms of any qualitative research directed at generating empowering or emancipator social change directly through research (Harvey, 2007:56) and Popkewitz (2009:89). In Japan, well-known researches in feminist research are based on this paradigm. Critical ethnography and preparatory action

research are also related to this. Reality cannot be grasped without researcher bias that is caused by historical, political, societal, ethnic, or gender condition. Research should be much related to social values, while the realization of social values is the purpose of research.

2.2.4. Constructivism

As with post-positivism, constructivism includes a wide span of positions, from those indistinguishable from post-positivism. Guba and Lincoln (2008:105) are perhaps the best known advocates of constructivism, and their views are well towards the relativist end of continuum. Their critique of conventional inquiry positions has become well known. As Lincoln summarizes it in her personal account of her journey to constructivism:

Egon and 'I' rejected conventional inquiry on three basic grounds: its posture on reality; its stance on the knower-known relationship, and its stance on the possibility of generalization (Lincoln, 2007:68).

On reality, they came to advocate multiple, socially constructed realities which, 'when known more fully, tend to produce diverging inquiry' (Guba & Lincoln, 2008:75). Realities cannot be studied "in pieces" (for example, as a variable) but only holistically and in context. The traditional image of the relationship between knower and known, researcher and object, was rejected. "Knower and known not only could not remain distanced and separated in the process of evaluation, but should probably be included" (Lincoln, 2007:68). Hence, "the relationship, when properly established [in the process of research], is one of respectable, joint control and reciprocal learning" (Guba & Lincoln, 2008:75). Finally, because there are no enduring, context-free truth statements, and all human behaviour is time and context bound, "we [those who support this paradigm] began to doubt seriously the possibility of generalization from one site to the next" (Lincoln, 2007:68).

A Post-positivism theoretical framework has been adopted in this study. This theoretical framework is significant as it is the modification of positivism; this implies that both quantitative and qualitative research designs are applicable. Furthermore, as stated ‘with rigorous collection of data and analysis, researchers can approach the truth’ (cf. 2.2.1).

2.3. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL CONTEXTS REGARDING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN HIGH SCHOOLS

In Australia, as is the case in most Western nations, schools are under intense pressure from at least four sources. Firstly, there have been increasing demands for involvement by non-educationalists in school decision-making. The effects of these demands can be seen in three recent and influential documents on curriculum produced by committees headed by computer company chief executive, an insurance executive and a retired union official (Finn, 2009:45; Meyer, 2008:23 and Carmichael, 2007:32) and the implementation of school-based management structures. The latter have involved the introduction of governance by the school councils with strong community representation.

Secondly, revolutionary changes in knowledge growth and in the application of new technologies to the teaching and learning process have resulted in an incessant call for school to modernize.

Thirdly, schools are being asked to respond to increasing and seemingly intractable social problems such as unemployment, youth suicide, and violence: problems that vary in their effects on different school communities but have deeply penetrating effects on many schools.

Lastly, the liberal-progressive, individual-centred educational philosophies that have driven educational practices for most of the post-war years are being pressured to

yield the ideological terrain to powerfully asserted economic-rationalist and utilitarian phases.

In the face of these changes, school Principals 'have found that time for constructive educational planning has diminished, and crisis management has become the norm' (Bottery, 2008:1). In particular, as Bottery (2008:1) suggests, what is of most concern is that school Principal's understandings of the espoused values of schooling are being lost in the face of the exigencies of crisis management. The danger is that the choices Principals make are being guided not by those values but by measures of expedience born of the need to simply survive crisis.

In studies of educational administration in Australia and overseas, there is general agreement that educational leadership is values driven, and therefore Principals should be cognizant of, and act appropriately towards, the many ethical problems and issues presented by schooling (Evers, Colin, Duigan & McPherson, 2009:23), Office of Education Research and Improvement (2007:7), Sergiovanna (2009:98) and Starratt (2007:22). This is not surprising, since there are very strong arguments supporting the view of all professions, including teaching, possess a moral dimension (Fenstermacher, 2009:33). Primary amongst these is the notion that the practitioner engages with an element of the client's life in order to bring about changes that are in the client's best interests. So, as examples, the surgeon alters the physical status of patients by operating on their bodies in order to improve their health; the psychologist aims to bring about improvements in a client's mental health by means of specialized conversation, and the school Principal is concerned with providing experiences for school children that will help transform them into adults capable of living good lives. All these instances are characterized by the idea that normative concerns govern the practices of professionals, that is, professionals work towards making things better. But there are always contestable judgments to be made about what is involved in living a better life, for both client and professional. And because it is not always clear just what the best action is, engagement with normative complexity is an important and enduring feature of professional life.

In a recent study undertaken by Griffith (1009:23) indicates that there is some empirical evidence that this view is supported by school Principals. In 2008, Griffith University funded a collaborative research project titled “Expectations of School Leaders.” This project was developed in association with industry partners in government and non-government education sectors. It involved intensive case studies of twelve Principals and surveys of teachers, parents and students to identify the expectations they held of school leaders. The study paralleled three similar projects in English ((led by Professor John MacBeath of the University of Strathelyde) and Denmark (led by Associate Professor Chresten Kruchov).

An interim report on the results of the study was presented at an international symposium, *Expectations of School Principals in Times of Change*. This symposium drew participating Principals and research teams together from the four countries involved in the study. That interim report included data which indicated that Principals attach a great deal of importance to the personal values they bring to their leadership role. Although the study was primarily focused on what a range of people expected of Principals, interview data included many references to how individual’s values stance informs practice. Further analysis of data was undertaken to pinpoint reported involvement. This analysis, although far from extensive, suggests that concerns with ethical behaviour, personal value positions and consistency in decision-making action are perceived by Principals to be significant issues (Shaw, 2007:45).

There is also additional evidence from other published research which indicates that school Principals find these normative complexities a major concern. For example, this has been observed by Walker’s (2008:20) analysis of school Principals’ reports of the ethical quandaries that arise for them in dealing with the competing interests of the Principals of the schooling as well as their personal sense integrity. As with most of the published empirical research concerning ethics in educational leadership, Walkers’ (2002:21) project is an American study and extent to which its findings are applicable to the Australian and Queensland contexts are unknown. However, for the Education

Queensland partners in this project, anecdotal evidence suggests to them that their school Principals do have similar concerns and that these concerns are an important feature of their daily work.

2.4. EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS VERSUS PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Public schools are different from private schools, in terms of their funding and administration. Public schools receive most of their funds from the government; whereas private schools rely on private sources, such as tuition from the parents and donations from the private organizations. Though, most public schools are administered by local government, the overall funding is contributed by the local, state and federal governments. Private schools are under the control of a private body or charitable trust (Weiss, 2007:57).

In the United State, public school education is more common than private education, and about 90 percent of children attend public schools. Basically, there are three stages in a public school, namely, primary or elementary school (kindergarten to 5th grade), middle school or junior high school (6th to 8th grade) and secondary or high school (9th to 12th grade).The policies for each stage are set by the board members, elected under jurisdiction.

2.5. EDUCATION PROBLEMS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The first and foremost educational problem of public schools in the larger schools size and student population. On average, most public schools are twice the size of private schools. According to a study, public schools have an average of 16 learners per teacher, whereas private schools have an average of 13 learners per teacher. The reason for higher ratio of learners in public schools may be due to free education. Whatever the reason may be, learners of public schools receive less individual attention, as compared to learners in private schools.

Since public school education is free, the academic curricula and programs may not be as refined as those of private schools. Usually, they offer the same programs and standardized tests for all the learners. In short, what the learners learn in public schools is decided by the state. On the other hand, private schools offer alternative curricula and have their own assessment program.

In public schools, all the learners gain admission, irrespective of the learner's talent. They cannot deny any learner who has applied for admission. Sometimes, this may result in a slow learning pace for the talented learners. On the other hand, private schools have full authority to reject a student who is not up to the mark. Hence, many times, private schools perform better in standardized achievement tests (Weiss, 2007:56).

Another educational problem of public schools is a higher rate of violence and learner dropout. It is due to the fact that public schools accept all learners, irrespective of their behaviour and talent. In case of private schools, they select learners on the basis of their assessment, thus resulting in a safer culture and learning environment. However, in order to clear doubt, one can always check for previous records and school rankings before sending a child to any of the public schools. A parent can also meet the Principal for a better perspective, regarding the safety, and the rules and regulations of the school (Choy, 2007:45).

Though public schools have some educational problems, there are certain advantages to public school education. Since the learners' populace is greater in public schools, exposure to various kinds of people from different socio-economic backgrounds teaches students to get along with people, irrespective of their social status.

2.5.1. School-based Decision-making

Since the release in 1983 of the National Commission on Excellence in Education Report, *A Nation at Risk*, there has been a widespread call for education reform

(Kaufman, 2009:44). The reform efforts of the 1980s and 1990s focused on organizational, curricular, and instructional changes necessary to improve the quality of education. Almost without exception, national reform reports advocated decentralization and enhanced teacher involvement in decision-making as a means of fostering the necessary changes within school.

School-based decision-making is a concept based on the fundamental principle that individuals who are affected by the decision, who possess expertise regarding the decision, and are responsible for implementing the decision, should be involved in making the decision. This concept is often attached to the broader school system reform efforts of decentralization and school-based management, where decision-making authority is shifted from the district to the local school level (White, 2008:55). Some educators use the terms ‘shared decision-making’ and ‘school-based management’ interchangeably; others see shared decision-making as a component of ‘school-based management’ or decentralization. In general, the goal of school-based decision-making is to ‘empower school staff by providing authority, flexibility, and resources to solve the educational problems particular to their schools (David, 2006:52).

2.5.2. Key elements of School-Based Decision-Making

School-based decision-making rests on two well-established propositions:

- The school is the primary decision-making unit and its corollary; decisions should be made at the lowest possible level.
- Change requires ownership that comes from the opportunity to participate in defining change and the flexibility to adapt it to individual circumstances; the corollary is that change does not result from externally imposed procedures (David, 2006:46).

These propositions recognize that those closest to the technical core in education systems, because of their access to information concerning students' diverse characteristics, needs, learning styles, and performance levels, are better positioned to make decisions about educational programs than those farther removed from the teaching and learning process. Thus, decisions concerning curricula, instructional technologies, and other school initiatives will be most effective and enduring when carried out by those who feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for those decisions.

According to Thyer (2008:67), for school-based decision-making to work, four key resources need to be present to develop the capacity to create high performance in organizations: Firstly, there should be the presence of knowledge and skills in new instructional strategies; interpersonal, problem-solving, and decision skills for working together as a team; business knowledge for managing the organization, including budgeting and fiscal planning; and assessment strategies for analyzing, interpreting, and acting on school performance data.

Secondly, information about the performance of the school, including student performance data, budgets, and demographic trend data should be present. Thirdly, the school should have power and authority to make decisions, especially in the areas of curriculum and instruction, staffing and personnel, and resource allocation and budgeting, and fourthly, there should be reward for high performance, including intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, such as salary adjustments, professional development opportunities, performance-based pay, group or team-based rewards, and public recognition for their accomplishments hiring, firing, assignment, curriculum initiatives, textbooks, and assessment procedures.

2.5.3. Effectiveness of School-Based Decision-Making

Although school-based decision-making is often the centrepiece of school reform, there remains little empirical evidence that relates it to improved performance. Most

of the evidence for effectiveness of decision involvement at the school level focuses on teachers and administrators. Studies exploring schooling variables have generally found positive relationships between decision involvement and the schooling outcomes, such as schooling commitment, job satisfaction and schooling change. In addition, studies have found that participation enhances communication among teachers and administrators, contributes to the quality of teachers' work lives, and assists in professionalizing teaching and democratizing schools. Other research on school-based decision-making has generally been descriptive, and yet a substantive body of research has not yet explored causative relationships between school empowerment and school improvement or learner achievement. Nonetheless, the combined effects related to participative structures that are democratic and collaborative and focus mainly on issues of curriculum and instruction are likely to bring about change at the classroom level (Davies, 2007:99).

2.5.4. Clarity of purpose and access to information

Schools that are active in decision-making have a vision statement that focuses their decision-making process on the technical core of schooling which is teaching and learning. Determining the school's vision is a school-wide effort affording the faculty the opportunity to understand the power of their commitment to decisions they make. Those involved in decision-making understand the necessity of using school-based and learner-centered data to inform their decisions. In district where data are limited or not disaggregated at the school level, the decision-making process is limited and rescinded to issues that hold less promise of impact on the schools' educational program (Broad, 2003:47).

2.5.5. Power and authority relationship

Frequently, when decision-making authority is delegated, the degree of authority given to site manager is often limited and ambiguous. In schools where there is confusion over decision-making authority, issues addressed at the school level tend to

focus on secondary-level issues, such as school climate, scheduling, safety, and parent involvement, rather on than primary concerns, such as instructional programs and strategies, learner achievement, and school performance. In order to focus on the primary issues affecting school success, decision-making authority in the areas of curriculum, staffing, and budgeting must be real and authentic (Main, 2009:40).

2.5.6. Administrative support and the role of central office personnel

District-level support of school-based decision-making is crucial to its success. Superintendents play instrumental roles in moving central offices from a directive function toward a service orientation and resource support network. This shift in roles from a bureaucratic orientation to a service school is often difficult and misunderstood by those occupying various roles in the district office and in the schools (Merriam, 2009:37).

2.5.7. Policies at the district, state, and federal levels

In a similar manner, decision-making latitude is often restricted at the school level by various state and federal policies or mandates. Under school-based decision-making, school are encouraged to make decisions regarding the curriculum and supporting instrumental strategies. These decisions should be made within a framework of district goals or the core curriculum required by the district or state. Yet schools are often limited by state mandates affecting their educational programs and are similarly restricted by compliance requirements related to federal funded programs within their school or districts. Thus, these competing and often contradictory policies constrain school-based decision-making (Merriam, 2009:37).

2.6. CURRENT EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are key developments in educational policies indicated in the Policy Handbook for Educators commissioned by the Education Relation Council Section 1 of 2003:

- Increasing involvement by the government via Manpower Services Commission and the Department of Education and Science in areas of planning, decision-making and control that were previously the responsibility of the Local Education Authority and teachers.
- An emphasis on the notion of accountability and banking models of management and administration. This involves, for example, 'formula-led' funding, a process whereby budgets are allocated to fixed ratios regardless of special needs and circumstances and the evolution of financial responsibility to individual 'cost centres'.
- The attempt to define a national core curriculum for all students from 5 to 16 and from 16 to 19.
- A concern with certification and standards for teachers as well as students. This has led, for example, to the setting up of the Council for the Accreditation of Teachers (CATE) to oversee teacher training, the proliferation, for students, of pre-vocational and other forms of award at 16 plus, as well as a wide range of graded assessments for the earlier years of schooling.
- The systematic development of pre-vocational training for 14 to 19.
- A concern to respond to the potential divisions but also potential richness of life in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society, for example, by taking inherent racism in the curriculum and by requiring schools to produce policies which will promote equal opportunities for both sexes – at a personal, institutional and curriculum level.
- A determination to extend the possibilities of parental choice and partnership: for example, through changes in governance; the endowment of City Colleges; schemes to enable schools to opt-out of local authority control; the encouragement of parental fund-raising, and the voucher scheme.

These policy schemes have found their way into the curriculum through a concern with 'preparing learners for life in modern world'.

The intense pressure for Principals to be instructional leaders who can more effectively implement standards-based reform has given unprecedented prominence and political visibility to the problems of preparing school Principals. Few disagree about what is wrong with how our nation recruits and prepares school Principals; the flaws are strikingly similar to the ones identified in 1987. The disagreements arise when policy and institutional leaders try to address those flaws and create more coherent systems for developing and supporting and supporting educational leaders. The challenges of trying to create more coherent statewide systems for developing and supporting school leaders are framed through the lens of four core questions: How do state policies shape the talent pool? What is the current condition of leadership preparation? Why is change needed? What are the options for action? Asking these questions should be the starting point for policy and institutional leaders who are trying to improve a state's capacity to develop and support educational leadership (National Education Policy of 2006).

2.7. POLICY MAKING

Policymaking, whether at the international, national, state, district or local levels, is inevitable a political process, because it entails developing definitions of a good society. Policy comes from several sources: international bodies, national governments, states, districts, and of course local communities. A specific policy may articulate a way to move forward.

Policies can originate at the local level. Local policies may be more manageable for school leaders because they have come from specific local events or in response to local issues; schools are at the centre of the web because they are where policies hit the ground.

At present the time, for example, schools are preparing written policies on assessment. The school policy lists the purposes or functions of assessment and then the action to be undertaken by teachers to put the policy into effect. The written policies:

- Provide an explicit link between aims and actions,
- Give unambiguous guides for action, ensuring consistency between teachers in operating the policy,
- Save time and help avoid confusion or conflict in the school,
- Allow the school to check consistency between policies
- Help the school to explain to its partners what it is doing and why
- Support planning, since sound policies are part of a maintenance system and poor policies or lack of policy becomes a priority for development (Burgess, 2007:91a).

2.8. THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND THE POLICY

Schools and the organizations typically have a manual of procedures called policy. Policies set direction, reflect existing practices or establish new ones, and call for the allocation of resources to further their goals. School leadership should be democratic, encouraging meaningful participation and building capacity for participants to direct their own futures within a shared framework and common purposes (Gale & Densmore, 2009:29). Principals have choices about policy implementation; they can take charge of these choices – they can be proactive instead of reactive (Raillis & Goldring, 2009:45).

2.9. QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

Successful Principals are organized, passionate people, who are flexible and firm, driven and relaxed. They must be leaders, who enjoy working with many types of people. A good sense of humor, loyalty, and a good set of morals will also come in handy. They should be decisive, and have problem-solving skills, especially under pressure. They are effective time managers, with fantastic communication skills, both written and verbal, as well as listening skills. They are open to other cultures and beliefs, and must be good motivators. They are also fit, with enough stamina to keep

up with schools full of children, parents and teachers who all have problems, concerns, and stories to share 9Merriam, 2009:37).

2.10. CHALLENGES REGARDING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Education policies are seldom implemented exactly as intended. The Department of Education initiates a policy which should be translated and retranslated many times before reaching the classroom. Law can be intentionally or unintentionally adapted to fit local conditions. Education leaders at the district and school levels are faced with both interpreting and implementing their school policies. Districts receive policy directives as state regulations, but they must draw their own interpretations. Even the most prescriptive and straightforward regulations can be translated differently across districts; by and large, districts do make attempts to abide by the policy (Burgess, 2007:2009).

Some researchers argue that policymaking can happen only in communities: public policy is about communities trying to achieve something as a community. Good policies should positively guide the way that things should be done in schools. If a policy is just, then the task of the Principal is to determine how to put it into practice, to allocate the necessary resources, and then to implement. The real challenges in the policy arena lie not only in writing policies but also in determining its justness and implementation.

Policies represent desired values and outcomes in education. The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of educational policy in achieving the preferred states is in large part dependent on leadership at the school level, where policies hit the ground. Policy leadership entails both articulating policies (the way they do things around here) and creating new ones through a process of democratic deliberation (the way they want things to be around here). Getting the moral principles out on the table and getting them right are integral to getting policies and their attendant programs, procedures and practices to work (Burgess, 2007:90).

2.11. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement and support also have a profound role on teaching and learning. It has a significant effect on the quality of the learners' experience of teaching and learning in the schools and also on their results. Without co-operation between the parents and the educator each have a special and important role to play in the education of the child. The right of learners to basic education places the obligation on them to attend school regularly during school hours. Should a learner be absent, his or her parent or legal guardian must notify the school and explain the absence (Burgess, 2007:92).

2.12. ORIGINS OF LEARNERS' MISBEHAVIOUR

Learners misbehave for a variety of reasons. Generally, the behaviour is a symptom of an underlying problem:

- The problem may be a personal crisis that the learner has to deal with.
- The problem may be in the classroom and related to the teacher, other learners, the learning material, or it may be in broader school.
- The problem may be at home, in the neighbourhood or in the community.
- The problem may be health related, for example hyperactivity.

Discipline must be maintained in the school and the classroom to ensure that education of learners proceeds without disruptive behaviours and offences (South African Schools Act 84 of 1996).

2.13. ORIGINS OF LEARNERS' DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS IN REGARD TO THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL POLICY

The origins of learners' discipline problems feature in this study in the sense that, for the Principals to maintain discipline and to implement the school policy effectively, they have to understand the school community and especially where learners come

from and their circumstances. Many learners come from difficult and stressful circumstances which they cannot cope with. The causes of their discipline problems can, in some instances, be traced to their inability to deal with these circumstances.

The following are some of the discipline problems:

- Family conflict between parents and siblings,
- Poverty in the home leading to stress and tension
- Violence in the neighbourhood and fear for personal safety in the home and travelling to and from school,
- Racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination,
- Inability to cope with the physical and emotional changes of adolescence,
- Peer pressure to rebel against school,
- Feelings of alienation and isolation,
- Inadequately prepared teachers,
- Teachers with negative attitudes,
- Under-resourced schools in dilapidated conditions,
- Unmet special learning needs,
- Bullying and intimidation either within or outside of the school,
- Being ridiculed in class
- Being different (accent, culture, religion) and then ridiculed or isolated at school,
- Death or divorce in the family (National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996).

Learners who have experienced any of the situations mentioned above may feel unhappy and frustrated in school. An unhappy or frustrated child is unlikely to be focused in the class and therefore be more likely to display disruptive behaviour, have little or no motivation, low self-esteem, may lack concentration or become pathetic.

2.14. EFFECTIVE WAYS OF IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

It is imperative to indicate that the objectives in managing the effective implementation of the school policy are crucial in enhancing the culture of effective teaching and learning. Since the school policy serves as the guideline at the school, it is an essential cornerstone and it is indispensable. Without ensuring that the school policy is effectively implemented, the school cannot hope to achieve desired students achievement (Owens, 2001:67).

It is important that for the smooth running of the school, policies need to be emphasized. According to Muller and Roberts, (2002:45) indicate that formal processes in dealing with the effective implementation of the policies in the school should be provided to the school stakeholders by the School Management Team. This implies that all the school stakeholders should be familiarized with the school policies, procedures, support services and resources. As also indicated in figure 1.1, communication through protocol is very much important. The school community need to have an input on the school policy.

The effective implementation of the school policy is also enhanced by professional development of teachers, where they are time to time, familiarized with professional skills for communicating within the school community. Therefore, there should be an extensive programme preparing principals and teachers for the effective implementation of the school policy.

2.15. SUMMARY

School-based decision-making provides a framework for drawing on the expertise of individuals who are interested in and knowledgeable about matters that affect the successful performance of students. This process depends heavily on the district's leadership to define the parameters of decision-making, to define overarching goals,

and to provide the information and professional development necessary to make effective, long-lasting decisions.

In chapter 2, focus is placed on the analysis of literature of challenges faced by the Principal in implementing school policy. An attempt has been made to review international, national and local literature. Aims and objectives of the policy, policy making and the duties of the Principal are indicated.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology. The qualitative research design and its characteristics are discussed. The validity and reliability of data and ethical considerations are explained. It deals with specific techniques that ought to be used in order to produce valid scientific findings.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is defined as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem. This simply refers to a plan. The purpose of this research design is to plan and structure this study in the manner that maximizes the validity of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:2). Both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used in this study.

3.2.1. Qualitative research design

Strydom (2005:101) describes qualitative research design as a research that attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intentional of developing an understanding of what is being observed for the study. Qualitative research design is a process wherein the researcher collects and analyses data in a systematic way. It concentrates on the research process, tools and procedures that are used in this study.

Qualitative research is based on interpretive paradigms. Qualitative research is an umbrella term and indicates that it actually encompasses a wide range of research

approaches and research methodologies. It refers to the systematic and theoretical answers to complex human problems.

Qualitative research is deemed as the kind of research approach which focuses on the study of natural settings, and it is more interpretive. The qualitative researchers build an extensive and critical theory, by collecting detailed records concerning the context. Generally these methods examine people words and action in narrative or descriptor ways more closely representing the situation as experienced by the Principal. Therefore, the methodology and design of this study are based on the qualitative method.

3.2.2. Characteristics of qualitative research

Qualitative research can be defined as “multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:2). To illustrate this concept, the researcher describes the characteristics of qualitative research. Because many authors have pointed out many different characteristics, the researcher discusses only three that are regarded as important in this study.

3.2.2.1. Meanings from the inside

Qualitative researchers attempt to understand meanings that people give to their deeds or to social phenomena. In other words, the researchers see people from the inside. For example, when the researcher conducts interviews with the Principals he/she will have questions such as how does the Principal feel about late coming, the policy with regard to stakeholders (Principal, Deputies, HOD's, Teachers, RCL, Learners and SGB). How does the Principal feel about the school in regard to stakeholders respecting policy of the school? What sort of limitations do they notice about their stakeholders? What strategies do they use to deal with conflict at school from both parents and learners? What are the tacit rules which cover their human relations? The

answers to such questions would be very interesting for Principals who want to improve the smooth running of their schools.

3.2.2.2. Direct contacts

Quantitative researchers may be able to do surveys without direct contact with the objects of research: they can collect data by using hired and trained interviewers or by mailing out questionnaires. Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, often enter into the natural fields of people whom they study, and have face-to-face interviews with them. Because of this, qualitative research is sometimes called “fieldwork”. Although this direct connection with people may give insight into the school community, it also gives rise to several ethical problems, which quantitative researchers may not face. These ethical problems are dealt with later in this document (Strauss and Corbin, 2009:8).

3.2.2.3. Analytic Induction

Analytic induction is major logical system of qualitative research. The rule is: take one case, and develop a working hypothesis to explain it. After that, take another case, and examine whether the hypothesis can explain the new case. Then, take the third case, and repeat the same process of examining and revising the hypothesis. When it is not necessary to revise the hypothesis further and the hypothesis is expected to fit any cases if the hypothesis is sufficiently redefined. As the choice of cases to be examined has an important bearing on the trustworthiness of analytic induction and is related to the sampling procedures of qualitative research mentioned below. This approach has been developed most fully by Strauss and Corbin (2009:8). Not all qualitative research follows this approach, but the inductive approach to design, fieldwork and analysis is one of the most influential characteristic of qualitative inquiry (Blumer, 2007:8).

3.2.3. Population and Sample

This study was conducted in Mmabatho/Mahikeng area, in the North West Province. This study focused on the challenges faced by the Principals and teachers in implementing school policies. The following five high schools were targeted, Danville High School, Mafikeng High School, Kebalepile High School, Sol-Plaatje High School and Letsatsing High School.

According to Ary (2009:9), population is defined as all members of well defined class of people, events or objects. A sample is a group which is elected from the population and is, thus, less than the population, while remaining as representative as possible. Leedy and Omrod (2009:74) indicate that a sample is more manageable than the population for conducting a research. In this research, through purposive sampling, the researcher interviewed five school Principals and a questionnaire was administered to twenty five teachers through random sampling This implies that the ratio of 1:5 per school). Purposive and random samplings are given attention in this study.

3.3.3. Data collection method

In this research, the following research methods and data collection strategies were used in this study: questionnaire, literature study, document analysis, , observation and interview.

3.3.3.1. The Questionnaire

In this research, data from the teachers were collected using a questionnaire. A questionnaire comprises a group of investigative questions used to gather information from the respondents, and it is regarded as one of the commonest tool for gathering data (Blanche & Durrheim, 2002:293). The questionnaire used consists of a number of questions, whose answers are rated on a scale of ten (10). Before constructing the

questionnaire, the researcher consulted with some professional in this area of research for assistance.

3.3.3.1.1. The design of a questionnaire

Measurement is tool of research and validity is the attempt to determine whether a type of measurement actually measures what it is presumed to measure. The scientific procedure of drafting a questionnaire forms a crucial aspect of developing any instrument since ‘what you ask for is what you get’ (Kahn, 2000:103). Some of the rules for constructing a questionnaire, as indicated by Borg and Gall (2009:131) are as follows:

- Clarity is essential (ambiguity must be avoided);
- Short item preference (compared to long ones);
- Negative items should be avoided;
- Simple language must be used; and
- Biased and leading questions be avoided.

The main aim of the questionnaire was to gather views of the challenges faced by the Principal from the teacher’s point of view, and also to supplement information gathered from qualitative data.

The questionnaires were self-administered, that is, the respondents were given the opportunity to complete the questionnaires without the interference of the researcher. The questionnaires were left with the respondents and collected later after completion.

3.3.3.2. Literature study

When conducting a literature review, the researcher needs to find out more about the topic being researched. This enables the researcher to understand what other researchers are saying about the topic. This was actually done through reviewing

public documents such as books, newspapers and information from electronic device such as the internet.

Creswell (2009:125) state that a literature review “comprises a vital component of a qualitative study as it is the place where the researcher provides the reader with a useful background to the problem”. Thus, it is important for the researcher to explore relevant literature concerning the challenges faced by the Principals in the implementation of the school policy.

3.3.3.3. Interviews

A direct method of collecting information in one-to-one situation as well as interchange of views between two or more people on topic of mutual interest is called an interview (Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, (2006:480). This is a conversation with an aim and is flexible and adaptable. It is a flexible toll for data collection because it allows the researcher and the interviewees to discuss their interpretations, and to express how they regard situation from their perspectives.

The researcher used structured open-ended interviews to collect data because such an interview offers a versatile way of data collection and can be used with all age groups.

3.3.3.4. Observation

McMillan and Schumacher (2008:89) define observation as “an interactive technique of participating to some degree in a naturally occurring situation over an extended time and writing extensive field notes to describe what occurs”. Cohen (2007:78) gives the distinctive features of observation as a research data collection technique that offers the researcher the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring situations. This technique was used to observe in the school environment. This technique always supplement interview.

Observation has been described as “the most intimate and morally hazardous” form of social research (Loftland, 2008:20). Patton (2009:205-216) has demonstrated that there are variations in observational methods. First, the extent of the researcher’s participation can vary from full participation to conduct to onlooker observation. For example, researchers can enter the school premises as users (full participation), or as onlookers or spectators (least participation).

Second, there is a continuum between overt and covert observation. In overt observations, people know they are being observed whereas in covert observation, they do not. One reason why covert observations are conducted is that people might behave differently when they know they are being observed. There is much ethical discussion about covert observation (for example, Bulmer, 1982), in particular about the difficulties in declining the extent to which the observations should be overt or covert. For example, in day centres for people with mental disabilities, should all the users be informed of the observations, even though some might fear for them unduly or others may attend the centres for a limited time?

Despite these difficulties, observations are powerful tools for researchers. For example, a researcher visiting the setting to conduct interviews may unintentionally uncover much interesting data and many themes while waiting for interviewees to arrive. Even if one plans to use interview data only, visiting and observing the setting in which the interviewees are located must help you find important topics around the research. You might notice something that nobody has talked about in your interviews because it is so familiar to them that they think it too unworthy or they may simply not want to talk about it (Smith, 2009:110).

In this research, the researcher observed the actual duties of the Principal and the activities in the school. Through observation the researcher was able to record notes on all the non-verbal body languages and, facial expression of the interviewees and the actual duties of the Principal to help her to incorporate them into them into the

verbal information and to allow the investigation to access invisible knowledge from the respondents.

Field notes were organized in descriptive notes that included a description of the physical setting and accounts of particular activities. They include reflective notes consisting of the researcher's personal thoughts such as speculations, feelings, problems, ideas, impressions and prejudices (Creswell, 2009:153).

The researcher took notes pertaining to the institutional environment that prevailed on her arrival. The co-operation and acceptance extended by the school management team was also noted. In general, the school atmosphere and learning culture was also observed as an important element.

3.3.3.5. Document analysis

There are usually many documents associated with research settings. According to Burgess (2007:17), there are three sorts of distinctions among documents. One is made between primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources have a direct relationship with those who are studied. They include letters, diaries and reports. Although these documents describe first-hand accounts of situations, they should not be accepted uncritically and "it is essential to locate them in context", where they were produced (Burgess, 2007:124). Secondary sources are transcribed or edited from primary sources, and it should be remembered that they may include errors that the transcribing and editing processes made.

Another distinction is made between public and private documents. For example, for children, the public documents would include portfolios, newsletters and published books. Private documents would include the children's diaries and letters written by children to their parents and vice versa. Among public documents, official documents and records may be important (Berg, 2009:182). They include case files and staff

diaries that the Principal shares as information resources for the smooth running of the school.

The term ‘document analysis’ according to Creswell (2009:90), refers to the information obtained from materials produced by Principals. The researcher reads through all the documents to gain a sense of their content and obtains evidence of the implementation activities. Different documents will be used to assist the researcher to obtain information.

Documentary analysis allows the researcher to collect sufficient data. For the purpose of this research, the following school governance and management documents related to the school policy were scrutinized and analysed at research sites during the on the site observation visits, if available;

- School rules and regulations
- Learners’ code of conduct
- Learners’ disciplinary record book

3.3.4. DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGIES

Weitzman (2007:90) explains that data analysis consists of data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification. In this research the information is displayed in the tabular forms which are readable, with the meaning clearly spelt out.

Data analysis entails bringing order, structure and meaning to the time consuming creative and fascinating process of sorting the mass of data (Marshall & Rossman, 2008:66). Data analysis indicates the statistical techniques to be used in data analysis and specifies how that will be presented. In this research, data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (version 15) which enabled the researcher to compute frequencies, percentage and mean. Data is presented in tabular forms in quantitative data.

Data collected by means of the interview were analyzed. The analysis of the interview data was based on procedures as formulated. According to Wadsworth (2008:99) data analysis is the process of systematic searching and arranging the interview transcripts field notes and other materials that the researcher accumulated to increase an understanding of them enables the researcher to present what has been discovered. Analysis involves working with data organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it searching for patterns, discovering what it is important and what is to be learnt and deciding what researcher tell others.

Furthermore, the interview is a flexible tool for data collection because it allows the interviewer to make adjustments as the situation requires. It enables the interviewer or interviewees to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from these respective points of view.

3.3.4.1. Analyze the data while collecting them

Unlike in quantitative research, data analysis in qualitative research can occur before the data collection process has been completed. Indeed, Coffey and Atkinson (2006:10) suggest that in qualitative research:

“We should never collect data without substantial analysis going on simultaneously. Letting data accumulate without preliminary analysis along the way is a recipe for unhappiness, if not total disaster”.

In unstructured interviews, for instance, you should start to analyse what is being said while talking with people, otherwise, you will not be able to decide what questions to ask next in the conversation. In qualitative research, doing data analysis while collecting data is the “principle of interaction between data collection and analysis” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 2009:114).

Moreover, it is important to remember that the researcher is not the only person engaging in such a simultaneous analysis. The person being interviewed is also engaging in what Holstein and Gubrium call “indigenous coding” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2009:56: also compare Shaw, 1999:175). That is, interviewees may also analyse what they say while being interviewed. The researchers should take this into their consideration when they start to analyse the interview data.

3.4. INTERVIEWS

An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the Principal questions to collect data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviour of the Principal. The aim of a qualitative interview is to see the world through the eyes of the Principal. Such interviews can be a valuable source of information, provided they are used correctly. The aim is always to obtain rich descriptive data that will help to understand the Principal’s construction of knowledge of social reality.

According to Ary (2006:236), interview means a direct method of collecting information in one-to-one situation as well as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. The interchange is between the Principal who is experienced and the researcher who has to obtain insight in order to provide findings to a research question.

The purpose of the interview, in the wider context of life and serves three main purposes:

- To gather and evaluate data information having direct bearing on the research objectives,
- To test hypothesis or suggest new ones, and
- To be used in conjunction with other methods to corroborate data (Cohen & Morris, 2007).

According to Fuller (2007:126), interviewing is a common method used for collecting data or information from people and it can be classified according to the degree of flexibility, structured and unstructured interviews.

3.4.1. Types of interview

3.4.1.1. Unstructured interview

Unstructured interviews are also called informal conversational interviews: these interviews do not have any predetermined set of questions instead the researchers and interviewees talk freely (Burgess, 1991b:22). Unstructured interviews are often used in combination with participatory observation (mentioned below) and although they may look easy to conduct, novices usually find them difficult because the researchers have to generate and develop questions according to what the interviewees say.

Semi-structured interviews: sometimes called guided interviews, these are somewhere between structured and unstructured interviews in format in that the researchers prepare interview guides that consist of a set of questions. The guides allow researchers to generate their own questions to develop interesting areas of inquiry during the interviews. This types of interview is widely used as the qualitative interview (Flick, 2007:76).

All three types of interview can be used in combination (Patton, 2009:287). For example, after conducting structured interviews, researchers can conduct semi-structured interviews and finally unstructured interviews or, conversely, they may start with unstructured interviews to relax the interviewees, and move to a semi-structured interview format.

3.4.1.2. Structured interview

Structured interviews: sometimes called standardized interviews; these often used in quantitative research. In structured interviews, researchers ask the same set of questions, in the same order, using the same words, to different interviewees. Structured interviews are convenient for comparing different interviewees' answers to the same questions, and when a team of researchers is involved in conducting the interviews.

According to fuller (2007:83), a structured interview is a written list of questions open-ended or closed-ended prepared for use by an interviewer in a person-to-person interaction. The researcher asks a predetermined set of questions which are detailed and developed in advance. It allows for probing and clarification of answers. The researcher chose to use this type of interview because it provides uniform information which ensures the comparability of data. In this research, the researcher also used this type of question where the researcher administered the structured questions.

3.5. SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

There are different types of sampling techniques which are divided into two major groups, namely, probability and non-probability designs. In this research two types of sampling techniques are used i.e. simple random sampling and purposive sampling (population and sample size, cf. 3.2.3).

3.5.1. Probability Design

- **Simple Random Sampling**

The simple random sampling is the easiest random sample to understand and the one on which the other types are modelled. In simple random sampling, a researcher develops an accurate sample frame, selects elements from the sample frame according

to a mathematically random procedure, then locates the exact elements that was selected for inclusion in the sample (Henry, 2000:75). In this research, the research used the teachers list, arranged them in alphabetical order and applied this sampling.

3.5.2. Non-probability design

- **Purposive sampling**

Purposive or judgemental sampling as it is also referred to – is an acceptable kind of sampling for special situations. It uses the judgement of an expert in selecting cases or it selects cases with a specific purpose in mind. With purposive sampling, the researcher never knows whether the cases selected represent the population.

Purposive sampling is appropriate in three cases. Firstly, a researcher uses it to select unique cases that are especially informative. Secondly, a researcher uses purposive sampling to select members of a difficult-to-reach, specialized population. For example, if the researcher wants to study prostitutes it would be impossible to list all of them and sample randomly from the list. Lastly, another situation for purposive sampling occurs when a researcher wants to identify particular cases for in-depth investigation. The purpose is less to generalize to a larger population than it is to gain deeper understanding of types (Neuman, 2007:226).

For the purpose of this study (as indicated in cf. 3.2.3), purposive sampling was adopted, the reason being that the researcher specifically chose the Principals as they are the ones who are more knowledgeable about this area being researched.

3.6. DATA COLLECTION

In this research, data were collected through questionnaires and interview where the researcher used a ten scale questions for a questionnaire (agree, not sure, disagree) and, a semi-structured interview. An example of the following questions were asked in

the interview, “Do you think that the Department of Education formulates and sends sound policies to schools (Briefly explain)”, “What are the challenges do you encounter when analyzing the policy from the Department of education?” (Please elaborate), “Is it easy to implement policies from the Department of Education?” (Briefly explain), “What does your school policy say about late coming and absenteeism of learners?” (Please, briefly explain), “What are the problems do you normally encounter when implementing school policy”. Briefly explain?

3.7. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Guba and Lincoln (2009:90) refers to trustworthiness as a simple set of criteria that has been provided for judging qualitative research. To establish trustworthiness in this study validity and reliability are used.

3.7.1. Validity of the study

Validity in research is concerned, for instance, with the soundness and the effectiveness of the measuring instrument. It refers to the extent to which research design is scientifically or appropriately conducted.

3.7.1.1. Credibility

In this study, credibility is the accountability for the whole research process which has to do with the use of credible tools, such as questionnaire, literature review and interviews, to measure the extent of the problem and answers to the problem. Furthermore, the authority of this research was taken into consideration as questionnaire and interview need to measure precisely what they intended to measure (Struwig & Stead, 2010:69).

3.7.1.2. Application

Applicability refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied or transferred to other similar contexts and settings or with other groups (Poggenpoel, 2009:24). Research meets the transferability criterion “when the findings fit into contexts outside the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity or goodness of fit between the two contexts” (Vali, et al. 2008:99).

As qualitative research is contextual and because each situation is unique, the findings may be transferred but may not be generalized. According to Guba and Lincoln (2008:99), the responsibility for applicability or transferability lies with the person who wants to transfer the results. Therefore, the researcher has to present descriptive data to allow comparability.

3.7.1.3. Low-inference descriptors

Concrete, precise description from field notes and interview elaborations is the hallmark of this study to identify patterns in the data. It means that during the interviews, descriptions are literal and important terms used and understood by the Principal. This ensured accuracy between the meanings of the interviewees and the researcher’s perceptions of those meanings.

3.7.1.4. Consistency

Consistency refers to the degree to which the findings of the research remain consistent should the research replicated with a similar sample context (Vali, et al; 2008:102).

3.7.1.5. Triangulation

Triangulation is methods or strategies which are used for cross-validation among sources, data collection methods and theoretical framework (McMillan, 2008:31). To test the regularity, the researcher compares different sources and methods to see whether the same pattern keeps occurring. By using different types of data collection methods, data was collected. This is important because if the data collected using different methods show the pattern, that pattern is more credible. This logic supports a well-known qualitative research technique called ‘triangulation’. If data is collected from different sources or from different researchers, triangulation can also be used. Although this technique has received much criticism because it “assumes a single fixed reality that can be known objectively”, it is believed to be a useful tool for qualitative research (Seale, 2009:53-61).

For this study, verbal clarifications were triangulated by literature review, interview and observation. Therefore, the corroboration between these three methods served to enhance the validity of this study.

3.7.2. Reliability of the study

Reliability is the extent to which test scores are accurate, consistent or stable. Additionally, reliability is a matter of whether particular techniques, applied repeatedly to the same object, yield the results each time. In this research, data obtained from the pre-interviews were in order to test validity and reliability of the study.

3.8. ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical issues related to Principals are very important and have been much discussed. All qualitative researchers should give serious thoughts to these issues particularly as

the nature of qualitative research adds its own complications. In this comment, the researcher dealt with some ethical issues pertaining to qualitative research. They include confidentiality, informed consent, emotional safety and reciprocity.

3.8.1. Confidentiality

Very few people would willingly express their most private details, opinions and emotions in public documents knowing that their names would be published. Thus, confidentiality is a vital requirement for credible research (Main, 2009:90). Qualitative researchers require prolonged engagement in the field in order to carry out effective research. In this study, the researcher assured the Principals about the privacy, to keep this information confidential. Thus, as much attention has been paid to maintaining the confidentiality of the individual Principals.

3.8.2. Informed consent

Gaining informed consent is essential for all sorts of research and the flexible nature of the qualitative research design causes particular problems. Because of such an emergent design, Bartunek and Louis (2009:36) emphasize the importance of repeatedly confirming informed consent. In a qualitative research project, prospective Principals often do not have full knowledge of the type of events that will unfold during a study. Informed consent must then reflect awareness that such events cannot entirely be predicted. As a result, a revised view of informed consent seems warranted, in which consent is negotiated at different point in the research cycle. Informed consent is not something that can be handled once and for all at the Sensitive beginning of a study (Bartunek and Louis, 2009:37). Through this strategy, openness from the respondents was encouraged.

3.8.3. Emotional safety

Qualitative interview research gives inquirers many opportunities to involve the Principals emotionally about sensitive topics (Renzetti & Lee, 2009:11). As Padgett (2008) states:

“Many qualitative interviews elicit intense discussions of painful events such as divorce, death of a family and domestic abuse. Sensitivity to research ethics dictates that these topics are not gratuitously: they should either be volunteered by the respondents or inquired about when they are the focus of the study”.

In this instance, the researcher had good listening to assist the Principal (interviewee) to be more open and give as much information as possible.

3.8.4. Reciprocity

The relationship between the methodology of qualitative research and professional practice is major question that falls outside the scope of this chapter. However, the question of reciprocity is important to note. Qualitative researchers tend to have more personal relations with the research Principals, and the reciprocity of research will be more keenly noticed among both researcher and Principals (Glesne, 1999,:24).

3.9. SUMMARY

In this chapter, research design and methods have been discussed. Both qualitative and qualitative research designs have been used. Qualitative research design is explicitly stated, described and discussed as it is the core of this research study. This chapter also indicated research methods and other procedures such as how data collected. These methods assisted the researcher to have a better understanding of the problem

and a broader perspective. As indicated in the design, this study in interpretive and measures are taken to ensure validity and reliability of data.

The next Chapter presents an analysis of the data and presentation of findings.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In chapter 3 the research methods and design were discussed. In this chapter, data collected through questionnaires, interviews, on site interviews and analysis of documents is presented and discussed.

4.2. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The main method of data analysis in this study comprised the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (Marshall & Rossman, 2008:60). The process of data analysis is defined as a link of sub-processes which are data reduction, data display and, lastly, verification of data (Miles & Huberman, 2009:90). The data collected should always be thoroughly analyzed and verified.

Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data; it builds grounded theory (Draft, 2010:39). According to Creswell (2009:90), in qualitative analysis is conducted simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation and narrative report.

The main purpose is to describe, explore and analyze the experience of individual Principal's working life. This is done through condensation of extensive and varied data and literature study.

4.2.1. Categorization of data

Tesch (2008:87) presents a systematic and explicit overview of qualitative which focuses on computer applications. It states that there are three core steps, namely, developing an organizing system, segmenting the data, and making connections.

These help the researcher to categorize the themes of the data for interpretation and analysis.

The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (version .15) program was used to analyse data collected quantitatively, using descriptive statistics. The researcher constructed tables with explanations or interpretations underneath to help the reader understand each table easily. Data collected qualitatively were analyzed by using Textually Oriented Data Analysis (TODA) method. This is a qualitative descriptive approach which aims at gaining insight and Principals are provoked to give their best responses (Merriam, 2009:92). This is the approach the researcher used to analyse qualitative data.

4.2.2. Data verification and validation

Verification involves the researcher's interpretation, drawing meanings and conclusions from the given data. It involves comparison, contrast, noting of patterns and clustering themes (Department of National Education, 2007:79).

Validation includes checking, questioning and interpretation of research findings. It is a way verifying checking the reliability and precision of the research process (Henning, 2008:148). It entails checking for any bias that can influence the process of drawing conclusions or neglect any research aspect. All procedures or decisions applied in this research processes were evaluated.

4.3. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS FROM QUANTITATIVE DATA FOR TEACHERS

A total of 25 respondents took part in this study by responding to the questionnaires and fortunately 100% of the questionnaires were completed and returned. Presentation of findings and interpretation from quantitative data is outlined from Table 4.1 to Table 4.10.

In all the tables the researcher used the following rating scale:

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Responses on challenges on the implementation of the school policy are presented in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Challenges on the implementation of the school policy

STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
4.1: Late coming is a problem in your school	100%	-	-	-
4.2: There is a high rate of absenteeism in our school	-	30%	70%	-
4.3: Learners are bunking classes because class rules are not emphasized	-	90%	10%	-
4.4: Learners are disruptive in classes even if the teacher use effective teaching strategies	-	50%	50%	-
4.5: Some learners leave school without permission	40%	60%		-
4.6: Some learners disrespecting and threatening their teachers and other learners	-	100%		-
4.7: Some learners carry tobacco and selling drugs in the school premises	100%	-		-
4.8: Some learners come to school being under the influence of intoxicating substances	-	5%	95%	-
4.9: Some learners carry dangerous weapons to school	-	100%		-
4.10: School policy (rules and regulations) is always read and explained to the learners	100%	-	-	-

4.3.1. CHALLENGES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL POLICY

Item 4.1: Late coming is a problem in your school

It is clear from 100% of the respondents in item 4.1 that late coming is a serious problem in schools. This implies that punishment for late-coming is lenient or late-coming is being ignored at schools.

Item 4.2: There is a high rate of absenteeism in our school

In item 4.2, it is indicated that 30% of the respondents agree that absenteeism has a high rate at their school whereas 70% of the respondents disagree. The schools with 70% might suggest that there is an enforcement of school policy pertaining to absenteeism.

Item 4.3: Learners are bunking classes because class rules are not emphasized

Following item 4.3 a majority of respondents (90%) indicate that learners that are bunking classes and 10% indicate that learners do not bunk classes. The implication is that there might be a stronger emphasis and enforcement of the school policy on bunking classes.

Item 4.4: Learners are disruptive in classes even if the teacher use effective teaching strategies

Item 4.4 shows that 50% of the respondents agree that some of the learners are disruptive in class and the other 50% disagree. This indicates that 50% of the respondents, who agree with the statement, believe that if an educator uses effective strategies learners will not be disruptive. But the other 50% indicates that even if an educator uses effective teaching strategies, if some learners decide to decide to misbehave they can do it irrespective of the school policy.

Item 4.5: Some learners leave school without permission

In item 4.5, all the respondents (40% strongly agree and 60% agree) that some learners leave school without permission. This is an indication that some learners disrespect school authority and the school rules and regulations.

Item 4.6: Some learners disrespecting and threatening their teachers and other learners

Table 4.6 indicates that all the respondents (100%) believe that some learners like disrespecting and threatening their teachers and other learners. The implication is that this type of misconduct needs a very serious attention.

Table 4.7: Some learners carry tobacco and selling drugs in the school premises

In item 4.7, all respondents (100%) strongly believe that some learners carry tobacco to school. This implies that educators are aware that learners do smuggle tobacco and drugs to school and they smoke. Therefore this is a very serious misconduct. There should be an emphasis on the school policy where all the school stakeholders are informed.

Item 4.8: Some learners come to school being under the influence of intoxicating substances

Item 4.8 indicates that only 5% of the respondents agree that some to school under the influence of intoxicating substances and 95% do not agree. This implies that it is not a common phenomenon to see learners coming to school carrying intoxicating beverages or being under the influence of intoxicating beverages. It is a very rare case, unlike drugs.

Item 4.9: Some learners carry dangerous weapons to school

Item 4.9 show that some learners carry dangerous weapons to schools. This has a great negative impact on the school policy implementation. Carrying weapons to school is also classified as a serious misconduct.

Item 4.10: School policy (rules and regulations) is always read and explained to the learners

In Item 4.10 it is indicated that 100% of the respondents agree that school policy (rules and regulations) is always read to the learners. These imply that misconduct is committed by those who ignore school policy.

4.4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS FROM THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPAL

All five (5) sampled Principals from different schools were interviewed. The five interview schedules were numbered 1 up to 5 to avoid confusion when analyzing data. The interview was a preferred tactic to explore Principals' opinion sensibly in their own words. The responses of each Principal are indicated as Principal 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5.

4.4.1. Implementation of challenges faced by the principal emanating from school policy

- *What are the implementation challenges emanating from the policies sent by the Department of Education to school?*

Principal 1: "Yes, because without policies schools will not be functional. Up to this far even if there are challenges in the implementation of the policy, it is easier in our school because I work jointly with the school stakeholders."

Principal 2: "Yes, policies give direction to the functioning of the school, hence sound policies are sent to school to avoid confusion. However, teachers are lazy when coming to analyzing departmental policies. People are resistant to change. You would find that one of the biggest challenges is that the sent by the government are not relevant to the school level."

Principal 3: "The Department of sound policies does formulate sound policies. It is just that sometimes the policies are not relevant to the school environment. For

example, a policy meant for private schools and be sent to government or public schools. Hence, in our school, the School Management Team is responsible in ensuring that the policy is to the level of the school needs.”

Principal 4: “Yes, the policies are sound and understandable. I have been the Principal for more than 13years. All the policies just need to be analyzed and reduced to the school level. I did not encounter too much problems thus far. But it is a real challenge because you need to ensure that you analyse and implement it correctly.”

Principal 5: “The Department’s policies do make sense. It only depends on the school how they interpret the policy. At times the policy from the Department of Education is very easy to analyse because it would be in line with the school community demands. I sit with my School Management Team and scrutinise the policy before passing it as the school policy.”

ANALYSIS:

The general views of the Principals (Principals 1-5) are that the Department of Education do send sound policies to schools. Majority of the Principals indicate that the policy from the Department of Education needs careful analysis and interpretation. Principal 3 indicates the problems arise when the policy is not meant for the relevant schools, “a policy meant for the private schools and sent to government schools”. This means that the policy will not be functional. For instance, a 1:25 ratio where the educator is suppose to teach 25 and in public school a teacher is teaching between 45 to 60 learners in a class without adequate resources. According to the responses (majority stating that the policy is understandable), the implication is that the challenges of implementation lies with the school.

Principals (1-5) indicate that can be easily analysed and overcome the challenges when and effectively implemented provided the School Management Team is assisting the Principal.

4.4.2. Challenges in effective implementation of the school policy

- *What are the challenges encountered by the Principals when implementing school policies?*

Principal 1: “It is not easy to implement school policy. Some of the teachers are reluctant to enforcing the school policy to learners. Late coming, absenteeism and bunking classes are my major concern. The school policy discourages absenteeism. They affect the performance of the learners.”

Principal 2: “School policy is not easy to implement. It is sometimes difficult to discipline some of the learners using alternative punishment, as some of the ill-discipline behaviour starts from home and streets – drug abuse and so forth.”

Principal 3: “The implementation of the school policy needs the co-operation of teachers, the parents and the School Governing Body. The challenge is sometimes on school vandalism (breaking school windows and so forth” and parents do not cooperate.”

Principal 4: “Late coming and absenteeism are challenging factors. For the effective of the policy, School Governing Body and parents need to work together. The parents of this community are not cooperative and thus make it difficult to implement the school policy.”

Principal 5: “The challenges I encounter in school policy implementation is curbing some of misconducts – such as carrying weapons, graffiti and so forth. Sometimes teachers become very difficult in accepting and assisting to implement the policy. During the discussion of analysis of policy, the teachers would keep quiet as if they accept it. To my surprise they would be passive when coming to the implementation.”

ANALYSIS:

It is evident from the responses that the principals are faced with a great challenge in

implementing the school policy. The most common factors the majority of Principals highlighted are absenteeism and late coming. Principal 5 shows that schools are not a safe place anymore where learners carry weapons to school. The Principal's indication of graffiti shows that the school environment or premises do not show a culture of effective teaching and learning.

4.4.3. Approach towards challenges

- *How do Principals approach the challenges they face during implementation of the school policy?*

Principal 1: “There is a code of conduct which says that all learners that are late be given certain chores maybe for fifteen minutes after school. On absenteeism learners should give a report to the educators from the parents why they were absent.”

Principal 2: Learners who are late are given extra work in the school yard. When problem of late-coming persists, parents are called to intervene. Absenteeism is dealt with by indicating in the attendance register. Absenteeism of two weeks in succession results in the learner being withdrawn. On issue of drug abuse the School Governing Body and parents are involved. This is seen as a serious misconduct.”

Principal 3: “The parents are called in to repair or repay for the vandalized items. If the parents are not cooperative the learner is suspended until the parents respond.”

Principal 4: “I work hand in hand with educators when coming to issues of discipline. For late coming learners are given minor chores like picking up papers around the school premises. They are different also recorded through the assistance of RCL where parents' involvement may be needed for the learner's habitual late-coming.”

Principal 5: “There are different disciplinary actions taken against late comers. All learners have been given the code of conduct and disciplinary actions to be taken

against them. It states that when learners becomes absent for two weeks without informing the school, parents are notified. If there is no response from the parents, the learner will be suspended and eventually be withdrawn. On the issues of weapons, graffiti, drugs on school premises, the learner is given a learner to call the parents where a written warning will be issued. If the behaviour continues, the learner is expelled from school.”

ANALYSIS

It is evident from the Principals that each school has a policy in place. There are disciplinary measures outlined in the school policy to be taken against certain misconducts committed by the learners, such as:

- Late coming,
- Absenteeism,
- Vandalism,
- Drug abuse,
- Lack of parental involvement or cooperation.

On the issue of absenteeism, Principals 1 and 2 indicate the seriousness of absenteeism by demanding a proof of absence from the parents. Principal 5 shares the view the same view by saying that if the parents do not respond, “if there is no response from the parents, the learner will be suspended and eventually be withdrawn.” On the issue of school vandalism, Principal 3 indicates that at times parents do not cooperate. They do not respond when informed or called to the school about the learner and this makes it difficult for the Principal and teachers to implement the policy effectively.

4.4.4. The possible solution to resolve challenges

- *What are the possible solutions to resolve the challenges faced by the Principals in schools during the implementation of school policy?*

Principal 1: “There is a positive impact when the policy is emphasized and implemented by all stakeholders in the school. The learners’ attendance and punctuality will be improving only when there is an emphasis on the school policy.”

Principal 2: “When there is a spontaneous communication with the parents discussing the learners, learners will know that if they become absent for no reason, their parents will be informed. Most of them become absent for a reason. The ”

Principal 3: “By giving learners extra work once they misbehaved. Learners hate extra especially after school. So, most of them minimize late coming. Some of the learners do not like to work.”

Principal 4: “Once teachers take the leading role in supervising attendance, absenteeism and bunking classes of learner will fade away. In other words, joint effort by the school leaders in curbing any undesired behaviour is imperative.”

Principal 5: “The school has involved learners in drawing a code of conduct and the RCL is given roles in dealing with disciplinary issues. The teachers are working together with the parents in terms of instilling discipline. Regular meetings with parents, either it be during open day where parents are allowed to come and scrutinize their children’s books or to come and discuss the progress of their children, they are also given an opportunity to talk about the school rules and regulations. This put me in a better position as the Principal to evaluate the effectiveness of the school policy.”

ANALYSIS

When comparing the responses, they all suggest that there is a positive impact towards challenges in terms of discipline. Principal 2, 4 and 5 indicate that there is cooperation in the school; “inform parents and are in loco-parenticis”, “teachers are taking a lead” and that the “RCL is given a role in dealing with disciplinary issues”. The implication

Principal 1 emphasises that the school policy becomes effective when it is emphasised. Further solutions towards the problems faced by the principals are suggested in the recommendations.

4.5. DATA FROM OBSERVATION

The researcher visited the researched schools several times to observe the conduct of the staff and the learners as far as the school policy is concerned.

The following is the presentation and analysis of the observed information from the staff (4.5.1.) and the learners (4.5.2.) and in this regard the researcher named the schools A – E.

4.5.1. STAFF

1.5.1.1. Principal's punctuality to school

In all the schools (A – E) the principals were punctual and they arrived at least 15 minutes before the first bell rings. In all schools there were first and second bell at an interval of 5 minutes. The first bell was notifying the school community that the school starts and they should move to their first activity of the day, be it assembly or classroom activities. The second bell meant the commencement of such activity, be it in the assembly or teaching and learning.

4.5.1.2. Teacher's punctuality to school

A majority of the teachers arrived early and others arrived when the first bell rang. In school A, C and D it was observed that all teachers were punctual (at least 5 minutes before the school official starting time). In school B and E some teachers came during the second bell and at least one of the teachers in school E arrived 30 minutes late at school.

4.5.1.3. Teachers' punctuality reporting to classrooms

Teachers in school A and D achieved 100% punctuality rate reporting to their classrooms because when the second bell went off they started teaching or were already in the classroom ready to teach. But in the other three schools (B, C and E) either a teacher was still looking for something – textbook, chalk and so forth, or in the staffroom preparing to go to the classroom or chatting to fellow teachers along the way to their classrooms – about 5 to 7 minutes wasted of their teaching time.

The following has been observed from the learners

4.5.2. LEARNERS

4.5.2.1. Learners absenteeism

It was observed that learners in all schools were frequently and regularly absenting themselves without informing teachers or providing written proof of his/her absence from school.

4.5.2.2. Learners coming late to school

It has been observed that school A, C and D achieved 100% punctuality. In these schools, the principal, teachers and the RCL were very cooperative and very strict on this matter. They had learners' late coming register. They close gates immediately after the first bell rang and move to their classrooms. In school B and E, there were monitoring, some teachers were standing at the gates, but learners were still flocking into the school even after the second bell went off. It became apparent that in school E, there was no rigid method of regulating late coming such as a learners' late coming book or teachers in charge for late comers.

4.5.2.3. Learners going late to the classroom while on school premises

It is observed that from school A, C, and D a majority of learners (98%) were in the classrooms except in one classroom (School C); some learners went to the toilets during the second bell before going to the classroom.

4.5.2.4. Learners not responding to the bell (reluctant)

Some learners in school A, B, C and E were observed running to their respective classrooms during the first bell. All learners in school A and C were attentively waiting for the teacher to begin teaching. Some learners in school D did not respond to the first bell, they rather went to the toilets or take their friends half-way to their classrooms.

4.5.2.5. Learners' noise level in the classroom

It was observed that in school A, C and D silence prevailed during the lessons and even when the periods changes. Except of course, when the activity requires learners to speak or applaud, constructive noise making. In school B and E, there was lot of noise during lessons and when the periods changes. It was even worse during break time.

4.5.2.6. Learners' smoking in the school premises

In school A, C and D no learners were observed smoking in the school premises. In School B majority of the learners, especially boys were observed smoking in the toilets. In school E both boys and girls were smoking in the school premises (in the toilets and behind the classrooms).

4.5.2.7. Learners using weapons in the school

In all the schools (A-E), some learners were found in possession of weapons in the school premises. The most common weapons were table knives and screw drivers. In school E, one of the learners was in possession of a butcher knife.

4.5.2.8. School buildings

It was observed that the school buildings in school A, C and D were neat especially in the classrooms. The walls in the girls' toilets were neat. In the boys toilets there was a little graffiti. In school B and E, the buildings were dilapidated, with graffiti almost everywhere, including in the classrooms. However, there were number of classrooms which have been re-painted to erase graffiti (school B and E).

4.5.2.9. School environment

Some schools are well fenced. In school C and E the fence is broken and learners get in and out of the school premises through it. The environment has been kept clean except school E with tall grass about 100m from some of the classrooms.

4.6. Analysis of written documents

In this research the researcher analyzed the class register, learners' portfolio, learners' code of conduct, classroom rules and disciplinary record book. This assisted the researcher in reaching the objectives of this study.

The following is the presentation and analysis of documents:

4.6.1. Class register

All schools have class registers. In some classrooms in school E teachers were not in possession of the class register. It became apparent that school attendance rate was

relatively fair in all schools. But school B and E experienced a high rate of absenteeism.

4.6.2. Learners' portfolios

The researcher targeted grade 12 learners' portfolios which ranged from below average to outstanding. Not all the required portfolios were available. After examining the available portfolios, the researcher found out that all the portfolios were well controlled, marked and evaluated. It was only few with incomplete work in the below average category.

4.6.3. Learners' code of conduct

A code of conduct serves as a guideline towards the discipline in the school. It is central and crucial to the management of discipline. All schools have the learners' code of conduct as a requirement by South African Act.

In all schools, the principals acknowledged that they democratically involved parents, learners and School Governing Body during the drafting, drawing and adoption of learners' code of conduct.

4.6.4. School rules

All the schools have the school rules and regulations. The school rule clearly stated the vision and mission of the school. In all of the school rules and regulations matters such as school uniform and school fees are emphasized.

4.6.5. Classroom rules

The majority of teachers had classroom rules pasted against their classroom walls. Some school rules such as in school A, C and D were pinned against the notice board.

These rules included emphases on punctuality, respect and listening. In school B and E, there were no school rules in their classrooms.

4.6.6. Disciplinary record book

All the schools have learners' disciplinary record books indicating the date of the offence, the time, the name of the learner, his/her grade, age, gender, the offence and sanction.

4.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the findings of the empirical investigation conducted to determine the challenges faced by the principals in the implementation of the school policy in high schools. The findings clearly indicate that there are challenges faced by the principals at school. The findings also reveal that despite the challenges, the principals in some schools are working hard to curb them.

The following chapter provides the findings, recommendations and the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the summary of findings, recommendations and the conclusion of the study. The recommendations are done in combination with the research questions (chapter 1), literature review (chapter 2) and the empirical data presented in chapter 4.

5.2. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.2.1. Findings from the literature study

The following are findings from the literature:

Findings based on research question 1: What are the implementation challenges emanating from the policies sent Department of Education to schools?

Objective 1

- The literature reveals that, policymaking, whether at the international, national, state, district or local levels, is inevitable a political process, because it entails developing definitions of a good society. Policy comes from several sources: international bodies, national governments, states, districts, and of course local communities. A specific policy may articulate a way to move forward (cf. 2.7).

Findings based on research question 2: What are the challenges encountered by the Principals when implementing school policies?

Objective 2

- From the literature study, it found out that Principals have found that time for constructive educational planning has diminished, and crisis management has become the norm. What is of most concern is that school Principal's understandings of the espoused values of schooling are being lost in the face of the exigencies of crisis management. The danger is that the choices Principals make are being guided not by those values but by measures of expedience born of the need to simply survive crisis (cf. 2.4).
- In studies of educational administration in Australia and overseas, there is general agreement that educational leadership is values driven, and therefore Principals should be cognizant of, and act appropriately towards, the many ethical problems and issues presented by schooling. However, there are very strong arguments supporting the view that all professions, including teaching, possess a moral dimension (cf. 2.3).
- The intense pressure for Principals to be instructional leaders who can more effectively implement standards-based reform has given unprecedented prominence and political visibility to the problems of preparing school Principals (cf. 2.6). Few disagree about what is wrong with how the nation recruits and prepares school principals.

Findings based on research question 3: How do Principals approach the challenges they face during implementation of the school policy?

Objective 3

- The reform efforts of the 1980s focussed on organizational, curricular and instructional changes necessary to improve the quality of education. Almost without exception, national reform reports advocated decentralization and

enhanced teacher involvement in decision-making as a means of fostering necessary changes within school (cf. 2.5.1).

Findings based on research question 4: What are the possible solutions to resolve the challenges faced by the Principals in schools during the implementation of school policy?

Objective 4

- Schools and other organizations typically have a manual of procedures called policy. Policies set direction, reflect existing practices or establish new ones, and call for the allocation of resources to further their goals. School leadership should be democratic, encouraging meaningful participants to direct their own future within a shared framework and common purpose. Principals have choices about policy implementation; they can take charge of these choices – they can be proactive instead of reactive (cf. 2.8).

5.2.2. Findings from the empirical study

Findings stemming from the empirical study

Objective 1

To investigate the implementation challenges emanating from the policies sent Department of Education to schools.

- It is indicated that the Department of Education send sound policies to schools (cf. 4.4.1).
- It is indicated that the problems arise when the policy is not meant for the relevant schools, “a policy meant for the private schools and sent to

government schools”. This means that the policy will not be functional. For instance, a 1:25 ratio where the educator is suppose to teach 25 and in public school a teacher is teaching between 45 to 60 learners in a class without adequate resources (4.4.1).

- According to the responses (majority stating that the policy is understandable), the implication is that the challenges of implementation lies with the school (4.4.1).

Objective 2

To determine the challenges encountered by the Principals when implementing school policies.

- A majority of the principals are faced with a great challenge in implementing the school policy. The most common factors the majority of Principals highlighted are absenteeism and late coming (cf. 4.4.2).
- The results also show that schools are not a safe place anymore where learners carry weapons to school (4.4.2).
- The indication of “graffiti” shows that the school environment or premises do not show a culture of effective teaching and learning (4.4.2).

Objective 3

To establish the impact of the disciplinary approach towards the misconduct of the learners in terms of the school policy.

- The findings revealed that each school has a policy in place. Even if some did not reveal disciplinary measures, there are disciplinary measures outlined in the school policy to be taken against certain misconducts committed by the learners, such as: late coming, absenteeism, vandalism, drug abuse and graffiti (cf. 4.4.3).
- It is revealed that the issue of school vandalism is treated with seriousness (cf. 4.4.3.).
- It is also indicated that absenteeism is a concern whereby the school authority demand a proof of absence from the parents or medical practitioners (cf. 4.4.3).

Objective 4

To identify and define the possible solutions to resolve the challenges faced by the Principals in schools during the implementation of school policy.

- It was found that there is a positive impact towards challenges in terms of discipline of learners (cf. 4.4.4).
- One of the solutions indicated is that, if there is cooperation in the school between all stakeholders (RCL, teachers, SMT, SGB and parents) it becomes easy to deal with disciplinary issues (4.4.4).
- It is revealed that an emphasis on the school policy leads to smooth running of the school (cf. 4.4.4).

5.3.3. Correlation of the findings from the literature study and empirical study

The findings from the literature and the empirical revealed a significant correlation. It

became evident that the existing policies set direction, reflect existing practices or establish new ones, and calls for the allocation of resources to further the goals.

The empirical study as well as the literature has shown that policy comes from several sources. The Principal plays a major role in communicating the importance of the policy, that is, the involvement of all stakeholders in the implementation of the policy.

In studies of educational administration in Australia and overseas, there is general agreement that educational leadership is values driven, and therefore Principals should be cognizant of, and act appropriately towards, the many ethical problems and issues presented by schooling (Evers, Colin, Duigan & McPherson, 2009:23). It is evident from the empirical studies and the literature review that the principals are faced with a great challenge in implementing the school policy. The most common factors a majority of the Principals highlighted are absenteeism late coming, and learners carry weapons to school.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the discussion of the findings of this study, a number of recommendations are made with a view to make contributions to encourage the Department of Education and the school community to support the principals in bringing new ideas and development in the school as a result of the policy implementation. The following specific recommendations are made to facilitate the process of addressing the challenges that are raised in this study:

- The principals should be workshopped and trained on implementation of the school policy. This implies that proper measures need to be implemented to assist or empower the Principals to cope with challenges they face on the implementation of the school policy.

- Principals need to regard consultation as a priority. They need to consult with all stakeholders pertaining to the implementation of the school policy. Consultation should be given a great priority in the light of Batho-Pele principle.
- A healthy environment is needed in the school to enforce discipline. It is recommended that good relationships should prevail among all stakeholders within the school to encourage team work and create an open supportive culture in which a conducive and clean environment will prevail.
- The Department of Education should supply schools with learning and teaching support material. When the schools have enough support material, learners will also be disciplined as they will be kept busy. Therefore, all the departments in the school need to ensure that there is sufficient support material in their departments. This will help to instill discipline in the classroom.
- It should be clearly stated that every learner will be held accountable for his/her behaviour; to change ill-discipline, punitive strategies should be clearly communicated to the learners.
- The general views of the Principals (Principal 1-5) are that the Department of Education send sound policies. Principal 3 indicates that the problem arises when the policy is not meant for the relevant school, for example, “a policy meant for the private schools and sent to government schools”. This means that the policy will not be functional. For instance, using a 1:25 ratio where the teacher is suppose to teach 25 learners and in public school a teacher is teaching between 45-60 learners in a classroom without adequate resources. According to the responses (a majority stating that the policy is understandable) the implication is that the challenges of implementation lie with the school.

5.5. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

- More has to be done in terms of developing programmes that will assist principals in facing challenges of the implementation of school policies.

5.6. CONCLUSION

From the findings it is evident that the Department of Education send implementable policies to the schools. It shows that principals experience challenges as far as the implementation of policies which suit the demands of the school, and that there are problems the principals encounter when implementing the school policy.

Some of the main challenges are that the principal needs to apply unambiguous policies on all contentious issues in the school. This should be done in line with the policies as they are changing. The principal needs to ensure that everyone at the school is accountable for his or her behaviour, the entire school discipline and, specifically, the implementation of teaching and learning culture. Certain challenges facing Principals arise with regard to the day-to-day running of the school, such as ensuring that discipline is instilled.

In light of the findings from this study it is recommended that the ability of the principals to perform certain administrative and managerial tasks need to be improved, hence the principals should be workshopped and trained on the implementation of the school policy. In the recommendations it is also highlighted that the effectiveness of the smooth running of the school will be improved when consultation is given a high priority with a view to the Batho-Pele principle, enabling a healthy environment, and the Department of Education supplying with learner support material.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDUCATORS

My name is Letty Motlagomang Senna, I am a Masters student at the University of North West, Mafikeng Campus. I am doing a research on THE CHALLENGES FACED BY PRINCIPALS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL POLICIES IN HIGH SCHOOLS. I would like you to answer the following questions about the topic. Your answers will be treated with strictest confidentiality. Please feel free to answer the questions and ask me where you do not understand.

Table 4.1: The challenges faced by principals in the implementation of school policies in high schools.

STATEMENT	SA	A	D	SD
4.1: Late coming is a problem in your school				
4.2: There is a high rate of absenteeism in our school				
4.3: Learners are bunking classes because class rules are not emphasized				
4.4: Learners are disruptive in classes even if the teacher use effective teaching strategies				
4.5: Some learners leave school without permission				
4.6: Some learners disrespecting and threatening their teachers and other learners				
4.7: Some learners carry tobacco and selling drugs in the school premises				
4.8: Some learners come to school being under the influence of intoxicating substances				
4.9: Some learners carry dangerous weapons to school				
4.10: School policy (rules and regulations) is always read and explained to the learners				

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PRINCIPALS

My name is Letty Motlagomang Senna, I am a Masters student at the University of North West, Mafikeng Campus. I am doing a research on THE CHALLENGES FACED BY PRINCIPALS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL POLICIES IN HIGH SCHOOLS. I would like to conduct an interview with you about the topic. Your answers will be treated with strictest confidentiality. Please feel free to answer the questions and ask me where you do not understand.

1. What are the implementation challenges emanating from the policies sent by the Department of Education to schools? Briefly Explain.

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2. What are the challenges encountered by the Principals when implementing school policies? Briefly elaborate.

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3. How do Principals approach the challenges they face during implementation of the school policy? Please specify.

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4. What are the possible solutions to resolve the challenges faced by the Principals in schools during the implementation of school policy? Please explain.

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Thank you for your time

APPENDIX C

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR STAFF AND LEARNERS

STAFF	OBSERVATION
1. Principal's punctuality to school	
2. Teacher's punctuality to school	
3. Teachers' punctuality reporting to classrooms	
LEARNERS	OBSERVATION
1. Learners absenteeism	
2. Learners coming late to school	
3. Learners going late to the classroom while on school premises	
4. Learners not responding to the bell (reluctant)	
5. Learners' noise level in the classroom	
6. Learners smoking in the school premises	
7. Learners using weapons in the school	
8. School buildings	
9. School environment	

APPENDIX D

ANALYZED DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENTS	ANALYSIS
1. Class register	
2. Learners' Portfolios	
3. Code of conduct	
4. School rules	
6. Classroom rules	
7. Disciplinary record Book	

APPENDIX E

AN EXAMPLE OF THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES OF THE PRINCIPALS

Researcher: “Good morning madam, how are you?”

Principal: “Morning madam, I’m fine and how are you?”

Researcher: “I am fine too. I am Motlagomang and I am doing a research on ‘The challenges faced by principals in the implementation of school policies in high schools.’ I would like to conduct an interview with you about the topic. Your answers will be treated confidentially.

Question: “Do you think that the Department of Education formulates and send sound policies to schools? What could be the challenges emanating from such policies?”

Response: “Yes, policies give direction to the functioning of the school, hence sound policies are sent to schools to avoid confusion. Not all the policies would be applicable to our school community where the interests of the community were not clearly outlined. I have to ensure that before implementing such policy, it is relevant to our school community.”

Question: “What are the challenges that did you encounter when analyzing the policy from the Department of Education?”

Response: “Some of the teachers are lazy in analyzing departmental policies. People are resistant towards change. You would find out that some of the policies are not relevant to the school level?”



Question: “What are the challenges do you encounter when implementing the school policy?”

Response: “School policy is not easy to implement. It is sometimes difficult to discipline some of the learners using alternative punishment, as some of the ill-discipline behaviour starts at home and the streets – drug abuse and so forth.

Question: “How do you approach the challenges you have mentioned in terms of discipline?”

Response: Learners who are late are given extra work in the school yard. When the problem of late coming persists, parents are called to intervene. Absenteeism is dealt with by indicating in the attendance register. Absenteeism of two weeks in succession results in learners being withdrawn. On the issue of drug abuse, the School Governing Body and parents are involved. This is seen as a serious misconduct.”

Question: “What is the impact of disciplinary approach towards these challenges?”

Response: “They know that if they become absent for no reason, their parents be informed. Most of them become absent for a reason. There has been great improvement because even teachers become involved in the whole process of emphasizing the implementation of the school policy. There is an active involvement of the teachers, RCL and the SGB.”

Researcher: “Thank you for your time.”

APPENDIX G

232 Masshuge Street

Montshiwa

Mmabatho

20 June 2010

The Area Project Manager

MAFIKENG, APO

Ngaka Modiri-Molema District

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a Master (Med.) student in Educational student in Educational Management at the University of North West (Mafikeng Campus). I am doing a research (dissertation) on 'THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE PRINCIPALS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL POLICIES IN HIGH SCHOOLS'.

I therefore request your permission to conduct this research in some of the high schools in Mmabatho/Mafikeng Area in the North West Province. I will be doing interview with the principals, give questionnaires to the teachers and also doing observations.

Hoping that my application will be considered.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. L. Senna', written over a dotted line.

M. L. Senna (Ms.)

APPENDIX H



education

Lefapha la Thuto
Onderwys Departement
Department of Education
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

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Private Bag X15, Mmabatho 2795
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NGAKA MODIRI MOLEMA DISTRICT

Enquiries: Ms. Catherine Ramatae
Contact: 018 397 2022

To: The Principals (Ngaka Modiri-Molema District)

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

This is to inform all principals in Ngaka Modiri-Molema District schools to allow Ms. Motlagomang Letty Senna to conduct research in designated high schools in this district. She is conducting the research on the "Challenges faced by principals in the implementation of school policy in high schools.

Note that this research is conducted with the understanding that it is in the fulfillment of the researcher's Master degree dissertation with the University of North West.

Thanking you in advance.

S.M. Semaswe
ACTING EXECUTIVE DISTRICT MANAGER

26-02-2010

Date



APPENDIX 1



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
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Date: 24/11/2011

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

The dissertation entitled

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY PRINCIPALS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL POLICIES IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Submitted by

M.L.SENNA

For the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

In the

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION
MAFIKENG CAMPUS
NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY**

has been edited for language by

Mary Helen Thomas B.Sc.(Hons) P.G.C.E

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Mh Thomas'.

Ms. Helen Thomas

Lecturer

School of Undergraduate Studies