

**School Management Team Members' Understanding of Their Duties According
to the Personnel Administration Measures**

By

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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(Education Leadership)

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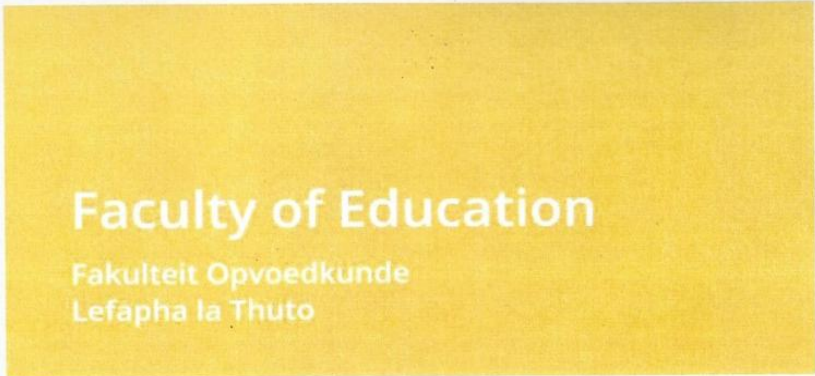
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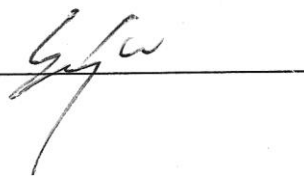
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DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Barbara Wood, hereby confirm that I am a registered professional researcher and editor and have edited the thesis:

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS' UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR DUTIES ACCORDING TO THE PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION MEASURES

By

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Place.....*Johannesburg*..... Date.....*5/10/2016*.....

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The Limpopo Department of Education for allowing me to conduct this study in the Sepitsi Circuit of the Lebowakgomo District.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to God the Almighty for giving me strength, wisdom and courage. This study is also dedicated to my family, my wife, Nomthandazo Maja, my children, Kamogelo Maja, Banele Maja and Oratile Maja, for their support.

KEY WORDS

Heads of Department, Distributed leadership, Personnel Administration Measures, Management Teams, Duties and Responsibilities, Participative Leadership.

ACRONYMS

PAM	Personnel Administration Measures
DoE	Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
SMT	School Management Team
SMTs	School Management Teams

LIST OF ANNEXURES

- Annexure A - Approval - Ethics application
- Annexure B - Permission from the Limpopo Department of Education
- Annexure C - Letter of Informed Consent - Individual participant
- Annexure D - letter of Consent - Principal
- Annexure E - Interview protocol
- Annexure F - List of figures
- Annexure G - List of Tables

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate and describe the School Management Team (SMT) members' understanding of their duties as stipulated in the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM, 1998).

A qualitative research approach was used to investigate SMT members' understanding of their duties within school management teams. Principals of three purposively selected Secondary Schools, in the Sepitsi circuit of the Lebowakgomo District of the Limpopo Province of South Africa, acted as participants for this study, together with two purposively selected members of their school's SMT. Each participant was interviewed, using a semi-structured interview. The study was framed by a conceptual framework made up of concepts gleaned from distributed leadership theory, together with the core duties of SMT members as stipulated in the PAM (1998).

The main findings of this study are that most principals still have a problem regarding the concept of working as a team and that although participants have access to the PAM document, many have not read it and therefore do not know what their roles on the SMT require. This causes conflict and disunity among SMT members, with a negative impact on leadership and management effectiveness.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

South African schools are managed and led by School Management Teams (hereafter, SMT) under the leadership of the school principal. However, Gronn (2002:423) contends that many school principals face a degree of opposition and difficulty from their SMTs when they attempt to manage and lead their schools. There appears to be serious challenges to the effectiveness and success of their leadership due to the fact that some SMT members still apply and expect a more traditional way of leadership, even though this more traditional style makes it difficult to cope with current trends in education. Although it is true that, prior to 1994, school leadership was largely associated with the principal (Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodly, & Somaroo, 2010:403), Naicker and Mestry (2011:99) posits that after the new democratic dispensation in 1994, the need arose in South Africa for a move away from a traditional leadership style to a more participatory approach to leadership in schools in order to cope with the new trends in education. Considering the above, this study focuses on SMT members' understanding of their duties as stipulated by the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM, 1998).

1.2. ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.2.1. Hierarchical order of leadership and management in South Africa

Schools in South Africa employ a hierarchical order of management and leadership according to which schools are led by a team comprising the school principal, the deputy principal or deputy principals (depending on the size of the school) and the Head or Heads of Departments (hereafter referred to as HoDs), again depending on the size of the school (PAM, 1998). Some schools do not qualify – due to their smaller learner numbers – to have both a deputy principal(s) and HoD(s) as per staff establishment, while some schools qualify to have only a principal. In such instances, some educators on the staff may be co-opted into the SMT according to their seniority, and as a result, they will be viewed as members of the SMT of that particular school.

1.2.2. Specific duties and functions of SMT members in South African schools

A number of pieces of legislation govern and guide South African schools in as far as management and governance are concerned, the main pieces being:

- a) The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996, which governs and regulates the general operations of South African schools. Chapter 3 of this Act, subsection 16 and 16A, outlines the duties and functions of the professional management of the school, which it places firmly in the hands of the principal, together with their SMT. The focus here is on principals as leaders, working together with the SMT;
- b) The Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998, which also contains the Personnel Administration Measures (hereafter referred to as the PAM). In short, this document indicates and prescribes the main duties and functions of the principal as the provision of professional leadership and management within the school. The PAM further stipulates that the deputy principal's task is to assist the principal and also to supervise the performance of staff members. The PAM further highlights that the HoDs' role is to manage the curriculum in the school. A more detailed description of the duties and functions of each of the members of the SMT in South African schools follows under the headings teaching, personnel, general administration, extra and co-curricular, and communication.

1.2.2.1. Teaching

The principal, deputy principal and HoDs teaching responsibilities are outlined and prescribed in the PAM, paragraph 4.2 - 4.4. The principal, the deputy principal and HoDs are expected to engage in class teaching as per the workload of the relevant post level and the needs of the school.

1.2.2.2. Personnel

PAM (1998) outlines the personnel roles of the principal, the deputy principal and the heads of department under chapter A, paragraph 4.2 – 4.4. The principal is intended to provide professional leadership; the deputy principal has to supervise work and performance of staff

members, while the HoDs advise the principal regarding work allocation and division among staff members.

1.2.2.3. General administration

School management team members are responsible for general administration duties as outlined in paragraph 4.2 - 4.4 of the PAM (1998) document. The principal is expected to provide professional management of the school; the deputy principal is expected to deputise for the principal during his/her absence; while the HoDs are expected to manage their respective departments.

1.2.2.4. Extra and co-curricular activities

PAM (1998) detailed the roles of the principal, the deputy principal and the heads of department in as far as extra co-curricular activities are concerned in paragraph 4.2 - 4.4. Both the principal and the deputy principal are expected to promote the extra co-curricular activities, while the HoDs are expected to be in charge of the subject learning area or phase.

1.2.2.5. Communication

Chapter A, paragraph 4.2 - 4.4 (PAM, (1998) outlines in detail the roles, which the principal, the deputy principal and the Heads of Department should play in as far as communication is concerned. The principal is expected to communicate with staff members and the school governing body members. The deputy principal has to communicate with all stakeholders; for example, parents, the community, committees, government departments, etc. The HoDs have to co-operate with colleagues in order to maintain the culture of teaching and learning in the school.

1.2.3. School Management Team members of schools in the South African setting

The South African education system acknowledges the importance of teamwork. This emanates from the manner in which SMTs are constituted, and the roles and responsibilities assigned to each member of these teams in the PAM (1998). However, the problem appears to be found not in the theoretical demands of teamwork, but rather in the practical application thereof. While numerous studies (Rosenbusch, 1997; Huber, 2004; Bevoise, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) confirm that SMT members need to work as a team, authors such as van der Mesch and Tyala (2008), and Gronn (2002) posited that the problem with implementation of teamwork in SMTs stems from members of SMTs probably misunderstanding their duties. Similarly, a study conducted by Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodly, and Somaroo (2010) found that educators perceive their role as that of being in the classroom and teaching. Educators also hold the view that they should do nothing that relates to shared leadership and management. The study by Grant *et al*, (2010) was aimed at investigating educators' perceptions and experiences of teacher leadership within the context of their schools. Their finding is significant in that all members of the SMT are assigned certain teaching responsibilities, which Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodly, and Somaroo (2010) stated are over-emphasised at the cost of the other duties and responsibilities assigned to members of SMTs.

This flies in the face of Grant *et al.*'s (2010) proposition that educator leadership within a democratic distributed leadership environment can be used as a strategy to democratise schools. These authors acknowledged the fact that there are still challenges regarding the proper democratisation process of the South African education system, whilst at the same time emphasising the importance of the role that democracy in schools can play in both the South African education system and for society at large.

In summary, although the legislative framework that governs the South African education system makes provision for and stipulates the duties and responsibilities of members of SMTs in South African schools, it appears from a number of studies as though the SMT members at the 'chalk face' of the system lack a proper understanding of these duties and responsibilities, which leads to confusion and tension within schools and a lack of proper democratisation.

1.3. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The researcher's interest in this topic was highlighted by conversations he had with the members of SMTs of other schools in his circuit. This led him to believe that many of the members of those SMTs, be they Heads of Departments, deputy principals or principals experience similar challenges in their respective schools because they appear not to understand their own and their colleagues' roles in these teams, leading to poor performance among these members in their daily duties. The researcher believes that this lack of effectiveness in the functioning of the members of the SMTs could be the result of a lack of cooperation at all levels between the members of these teams, and that this lack of cooperation in turn could be the result of a lack of understanding of the respective duties of different members of SMTs as stipulated in the PAM (1998).

Even though duties of SMT members are outlined in the PAM (1998), as discussed above, there still appears to be lack of understanding among SMT members of what exactly their duties are. Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008), in their study on perceptions of principals on team management, a case study conducted in South African secondary schools, discussed a number of findings in this regard. They found that there were misconceptions among principals regarding their understanding of their duties in the school management team, and also that principals and SMT members in South African schools experience certain challenges with regard to their duties related to school management. This researcher agrees with these authors and believes that one of the challenges experienced in managing South African schools is that the SMT members' lack understanding of the role they are required to play in the functioning of their schools' management teams. This is a major concern to the South African system of education. Such a concern was also raised by the principals in van der Mescht and Tyala's 2008 study.

These findings suggest that principals and SMT members are still unclear as to what their duties are, and this lack of understanding causes unnecessary tensions among team members. Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008) also reported the presence of tension among SMT members other than the principal. Some of the tensions were claimed to have been caused by lack of trust among members, disloyalty towards members and in some instances even threats being made against SMT members. While some of these attitudes and actions could possibly be caused by a lack of clarity or understanding of the specific

duties of each member, there could well be other underlying reasons influencing their behaviour.

In contrast, Grant, *et al* (2010:1) argued that leadership “can be stretched out over a range of people who work at different levels”. These authors alluded to a move toward a more participative mode of leadership in South Africa after the dawn of the new dispensation in 1994.

These varying perceptions of the duties of SMT members seem to suggest that there is still a lack of clarity among SMT members as to what is expected of them in those teams. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate and explore SMT members’ understanding of their duties according to the PAM, and focuses specifically on SMTs in the Sepitsi circuit of the Lebowakgomo District of the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

1.4. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite clear guidance in the PAM (1998), some principals and other members of the SMT appear not to understand their duties as members of these teams fully. This study therefore, seeks to investigate SMT members’ understanding of their duties as stipulated by the Personnel Administration Measures (1998).

1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The PAM (1998), as contained in the Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998, outlines the duties of the SMT members as described above. It is thus, fair to assume that as employees of the state are subject to the Employment of Educators Act (Act 76 of 1998), members of SMTs would be aware of and understand their duties and therefore, function according to the PAM (1998). However, despite the provision of these guidelines, there still appears to remain uncertainty among SMT members about their duties, which causes unnecessary tension in these teams (Van der Mescht and Tyala, 2008). This study therefore, seeks to investigate and describe how SMT members in secondary schools understand their duties as members of these teams as prescribed by the PAM (1998).

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question that guided this study was the following:

- How do members of School Management Teams (SMTs) in secondary schools understand their duties as prescribed by the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM, 1998)?

The following secondary research questions assisted the researcher to clarify the main researcher question stated:

- a) What do School Management Team members understand their duties in the School Management Team to be?
- b) What do School Management Team members understand the duties of the other members of the team to be?
- c) How does this understanding affect relationships between and among the members of the School Management Team?

1.7. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework guides researchers on how to plan and organise their study (Ferreira, 2012:34). The study therefore, revolves around the conceptual framework for the sake of logic and proper organisation. The researcher uses a framework of concepts related to (a) the theory of distributed leadership and (b) the duties of members of the SMT as set out in the PAM (1998).

Huber (2004:670) defines distributed leadership as “the participation of others in leadership tasks, so that there is a real empowerment in terms of true delegation of leadership power”. Grant and Singh (2009) view distributed leadership as a shared activity in which all educators and school management team members can participate, while Spillane (2005) believes that distributed leadership entails “shared leadership”, “team leadership” and “democratic leadership” (2005:143). However, distributed leadership focuses not only on

shared activity, but also on shared responsibilities among members of an organisation (Jackson & Mariot, 2012).

In order to develop the conceptual framework, the researcher added to the concepts that make up distributed leadership the following concepts related to the duties of SMT members as they appear in PAM (1998), namely, teaching, personnel, general administration, extra and co-curricular duties and communication.

The following diagram depicts shared duties among SMT members as framed by the distributed leadership theory:

Fig 1: Distributed leadership and SMT duties

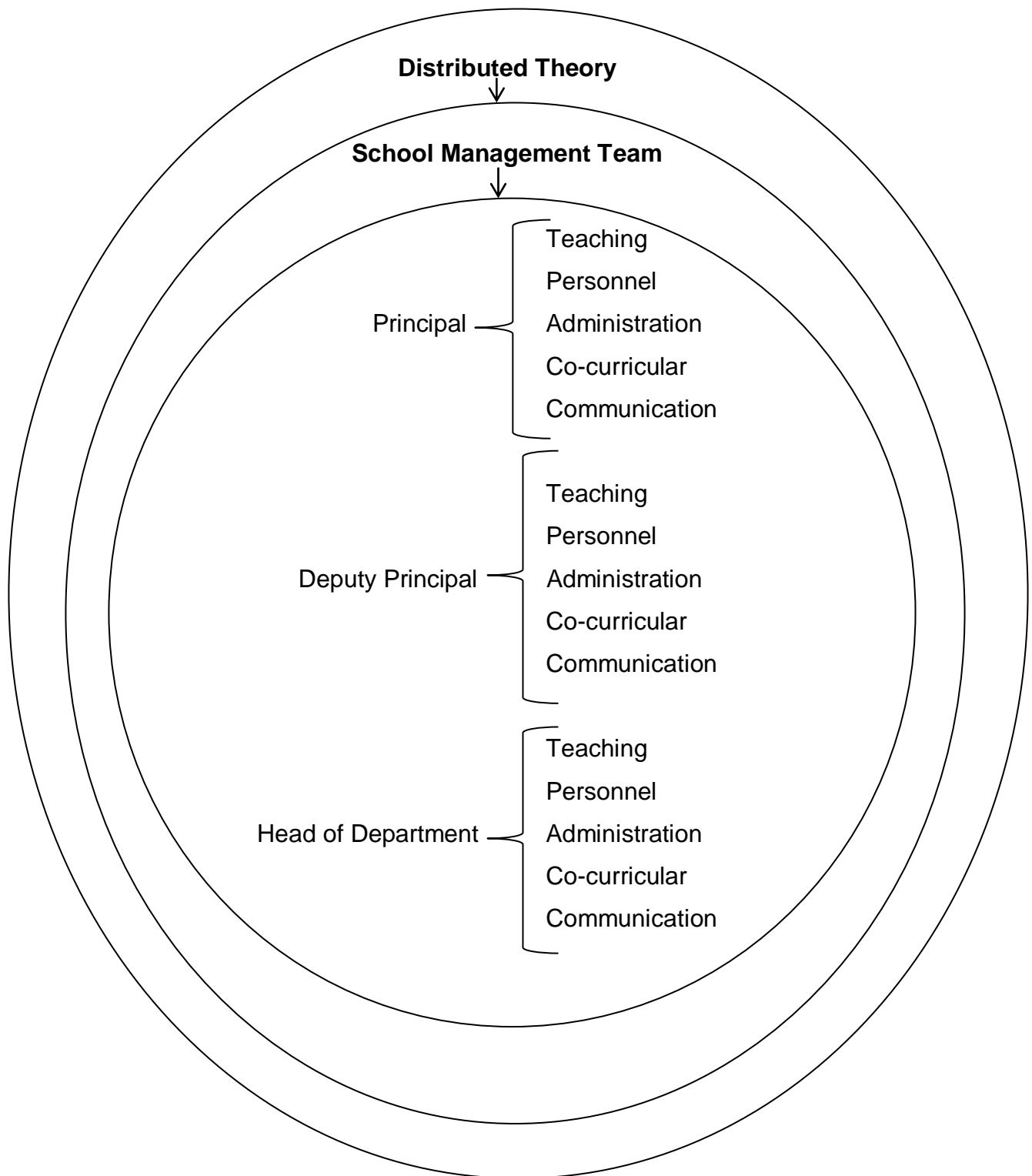


Figure 1 demonstrates the relation between distributed leadership, the members of the SMT and the duties that are prescribed by the PAM (1998). Distributed leadership theory is directly linked to the function and nature of SMTs, in that leadership within an SMT is, by the very nature of the distribution of duties by the PAM (1998), a shared activity in which all educators and school management team members participate (Grant & Singh, 2009) as well as being “shared leadership”, “team leadership” and “democratic leadership” (Spillane, 2005:143).

The common factor within the SMT is that all three classes of members (principal, deputy principal and HoD) have specific and detailed duties to perform for the school, as prescribed by the PAM (1998). All are obliged to undertake certain teaching duties, personnel management duties, extra and co-curricular duties, communication duties and also administration duties as set out in the PAM (1998). However, the difference between classes of members lies in the percentage allocation of workload that each must carry for each of these responsibilities as prescribed in the PAM (1998) Chapter A, subsection 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.

This diagram suggests that there should be interaction between and among the SMT members within a framework of leadership distributed to different role-players and at different levels (Grant & Singh, 2009; Spillane, 2005) for the welfare and proper management of schools.

1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This section’s focal point is on the research methodology and design that was used in this study. This section outlines the research approach, paradigm and design used in this chapter. It further outlines the data collection strategies used, the sampling strategies and selected participants and also the data analysis strategies used. A detailed outline of these themes is furnished below.

1.8.1. Research orientation

This study was conducted from an interpretivist perspective, which Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:22) described as, "... the central endeavour in the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subject of human experience".

The interpretivist paradigm helped the researcher to understand the meaning members of SMTs have constructed in as far as their duties are concerned. The research is qualitative in nature because, as Nieuwenhuis (2010:78) states, the paradigm views a phenomenon (SMT members' understanding of their roles as prescribed by PAM, 1998) in its practical context and situation (secondary schools in the Sepitsi circuit of the Lebowakgomo District of the Limpopo Province of South Africa). Further, reasons for selecting the qualitative paradigm for this study was because this type of research is very flexible and open-ended (Seabi, 2012:89), and because the data gathered through qualitative research is not limited or guided by only one instrument, but is conducted in-depth (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004).

1.8.2. Research sites and participants

This study used both purposive and convenient sampling techniques to select both the schools and participants. Nieuwenhuis (2010:79) posits that in purposive sampling, "participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them the holders of the data needed for the study". In other words, purposive sampling focuses on participants who share common factors, goals and ambitions. The selection of members of SMTs can therefore be seen as purposive because their selection will serve the purpose of investigating the understanding of such members of their duties and within such teams. SMT members were purposively selected because of their expert knowledge in management and leadership roles they are involved in on a daily basis.

Briggs, Coleman and Morrison (2012:141) argued that convenience sampling speaks to a situation wherein the researcher has easy access on the site under investigation. In this study, the focus is on school management team members of three identified schools in the Sepitsi circuit as this allowed for easy accessibility for the researcher.

In this regard, the study was conducted in the Sepitsi circuit of the Lebowakgomo district of the Limpopo Province of South Africa, a circuit in close proximity to the researcher and one that he has access to by virtue of his position as an employee at a school that falls within this circuit. The selection of secondary schools for the study was also purposive, as the researcher's experience in and access to these schools is better than with primary schools. Of the nine secondary schools in the circuit, the researcher selected the three nearest in geographic location (excluding his own school) to his own site for convenience.

All participants in this study were members of school management teams. Interviews were conducted with the principals and two other members of each of the school's SMTs. The two other members of the SMT were selected on the basis of the longest time spent in the post of HoD, and the shortest time spent in the post of HoD. It was hoped that the use of the principals and two other members would furnish this study with a complete and accurate picture of the perceptions and experiences of these members with regard to their duties in the SMT.

1.8.3. Data collection

A semi-structured individual interview was employed to gather data from participants. Macmillan and Schumacher (2014:6) posited that semi-structured interviews provide room for questions that allow for individual, open-ended responses, while Seabi (2012:89) describes interviews as the data collection technique of asking participants questions in order to get their honest opinions and views.

The nature of the topic under investigation suggests that this more flexible qualitative approach would deliver the richest data, because it does not restrict the participants. It affords the participants an opportunity to expand on their views, where necessary, unlike with a structured interview that relies on a fixed set of questions and often comprises multiple choice answers or closed questions.

1.8.4. Data analysis

Information gathered through the interviews from participants was brought together and analysed through the content analysis technique. According to Cohen *et al.* (2011:563),

content analysis focuses on summarisation of the collected data with the aim of having it analysed at a later stage, and also reporting about it. Similarly, Lambert (2013:361) postulated that data analysis involves ‘breaking down’ and ‘making connection’ of collected data.

Content analysis uses data collected or rather a sample of texts gathered during fieldwork by the researcher. Content analysis helps the researcher, especially during categorisation of data into themes and sub-themes, and also coding them. Coding enables the researcher in categorising the themes as observed and as received from data collected. Coding forms the core of the qualitative approach type of research. Similarly, Cohen *et al.* (2014:559) declared that, “coding enables the researcher to identify similar information”. A code in simple terms is a label given to a theme or subtheme that comprises similar ideas (Cohen *et al.*, 2014: 559).

Data gathered from participants was firstly transcribed before being categorised into themes and coded. Cohen *et al.* (2011:149) described coding as, “codes used to see how data naturally fall into clusters...” Cohen *et al.* (2002:164) states that content analysis is a tool that allows the researcher to make informed inferences on the basis of the content that is at the researcher’s disposal.

1.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Concerning ethics in research, Maree (2010:41) states that ethical considerations focus on “...issues of confidentiality of the results and findings of the study and the protection of participants’ identities used against their information”. The emphasis here is on the fact that the participants want to be sure that the information they provided and their identities will be protected. Permission to undertake this study (Cohen *et al.*, 2011) was sought firstly from the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education (see Annexure A), while consent was also obtained from the principals and members of the SMTs selected for participation. Participants were fully informed of the scope and purpose of the study, they were guaranteed anonymity and were also advised that they may withdraw from the study at any time (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Annexure B provides a copy of the letter of informed consent signed by the various participants.

Ethical clearance was sought from the appropriate body at the University of Pretoria and was duly granted (Annexure C).

1.10. OUTLINE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS DISSERTATION

The following is the structure which this dissertation followed:

Table: 1 Outline and structure of the dissertation

Chapter	Description
Chapter 1	This is an introductory chapter. The chapter elaborates on the rationale, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, conceptual framework and research methodology and design.
Chapter 2	This chapter focuses on the literature study. The chapter further assesses what other scholars wrote about this study, both internationally and nationally.
Chapter 3	The chapter presents the designs and methods used in the study, for example, research design and methodology, data collection and data analysis strategies used.
Chapter 4	This chapter presents the data collected during this study and the interpretation thereof.
Chapter 5	This is a concluding chapter. This chapter furnishes findings and also offers recommendations and suggestions for further study.

1.11. SUMMARY

The chapter provides an introduction and background to the study by briefly discussing the legislative framework for the composition and the assigning of duties to members of SMTs in South Africa. The chapter also looks briefly at the some of the research conducted in South Africa on the duties and roles of SMT members, and concludes that there appears to

be a misunderstanding and lack of understanding among SMT members about their duties as members of the SMT.

This chapter sets out the main research question for this study as “How do members of School Management Teams (SMTs) in Secondary Schools understand their duties as prescribed by the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM, 1998)?” and the secondary research questions as:

- a) What do School Management Team members understand their duties in the School Management Team to be?
- b) What do School Management Team members understand the duties of the other members of the team to be?
- c) How does this understanding affect relationships between and among the members of the School Management Team?

This chapter further outlines the research methodology and design for this study. The qualitative approach and the interpretivist paradigm were used for this study; semi-structured interviews were used as the data collection instrument for this study. The participants were SMT members who were selected purposely, namely; the principals, deputy principals and the Heads of Departments. Chapter 2 will focus on the review of literature relevant to the topic of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

A thorough review of the relevant literature is one of the most important components of research. It gives the study direction and focus, and also allows the researcher to become acquainted with what has already been written in the field of interest. The literature review helps the researcher to investigate and explore the limitations in literature, and is the primary means by which the ‘gap’ to be filled by new research is identified (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:27). Athanason, Mpofu, Gitchel, and Elias (2012:50) share a similar view when they state that the literature review helps the researcher to understand the researched question and what other researchers have said about the study in question. The emphasis here is on the fact that the literature review that appears in a study should have a direct link with what the study seeks to investigate. The main aim is to give the researcher an idea of what other authors or researchers have written on the problem at hand “It shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the one being undertaken” (Creswell, 2014:27).

This chapter presents the literature review underpinning the phenomenon at the core of this study, namely SMT members’ understanding of their duties as set out in the PAM. The review will therefore include the literature on matters such as distributed leadership and the duties and roles of SMTs and SMT members. The literature was drawn from international and national sources. In order to provide a clear picture of the phenomenon, the first section of this chapter will discuss concepts relevant to this study. Theories of leadership will then be discussed, followed by a review of the literature on the significance of teamwork, especially among SMT members.

2.2. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

According to van Deventer and Kruger (2010:65), education management focuses on the interaction between and among educational leaders who lead and manage teaching and learning.

This assertion acknowledges that education leaders have to work closely with their colleagues and other stakeholders in the management of resources such as physical and human resources that need to be managed effectively. Effective management of these resources will contribute to the primary aim of all schools, which is providing effective teaching and learning. As schools are viewed as institutions that have learning as the primary focus, this can only be achieved once proper education management is in place (Badenhorst *et al* 1995:73).

To illustrate the concept of education management further, a distinction between the terms 'leadership' and 'management' will be discussed. These terms will be defined and discussed to highlight the differences and similarities that exist between the two concepts.

2.2.1. Leadership

Cawood and Gibbon (1985:3) posits that "to lead means basically to be out in front, to go ahead with the intention of being followed", an opinion that was supported by Nkabinde (2012:33). Van Deventer and Kruger (2010:139) view leadership as a situation, where subordinates have to accept being under the control of a superior. These authors suggested that in leadership, there should be someone at the forefront who expects to be followed. Gronn (2002:428) defined leadership as a situation, where a group of people work together for a common objective, while Jackson and Mariot (2012:233) view leadership as the relationship between the various role players in a school situation, wherein everyone has to play their part.

Loock, Camphor, du Preez, Grobler and Shabba (2003:14) posits that leaders who succeed in leading organisations need to have focus and, direction and must also be good organisers. These authors raise two important issues about leadership – they view leadership as something that is interactive and gives direction.

The principal, the deputy principal and HoDs, are the ones who lead and manage the operations in a school. This resonates with the statement by Hoadly, Christie and Ward (2009:377), who argue that “...leadership stretches over a number of roles, including followers, and also over situations, which include artefacts and organisational structure within the school”. From these definitions of leadership, it follows that the principal, the deputy and the HoDs should be able to work together as a team that has the authority and is empowered to lead and run the schools.

2.2.2. Management

Similar to the concept of leadership, defining management is complex because there is no single ‘correct’ definition. Different scholars define management differently, but generally management speaks specifically to and about those people in an organisation who are in senior positions, but actively involved in “hands-on” tasks. A manager activates an action from the followers has to see to it that, particular action is carried out correctly. A manager needs to see things done. A manager needs to see followers doing something about a given task and has to see to its successful conclusion (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:67).

Loock *et al.* (2003:2) and Bush (2008:3) views management as the ability to influence others. Buchel (1995:46), on the other hand, describes management as one of the abilities of the leader of the organisation, and this includes being able to give subordinates regular feedback. Bush (2008:2) argues that management aims to achieve educational objectives, while Van Deventer and Kruger (2010:68) posits that management involves things done with the help of other members of the organisation. Van der Westhuizen (1992:38) highlighted the importance of control as an aspect of management. Added to this, Clarke (2007:3) argues that management’s focus was mainly on getting the systems going and operating in an organisation.

These assertions suggest that managers do not only lead followers, but also plan, regulate and monitor the actions of those followers. Managers’ major role is to activate action from the subordinates and also to make sure that tasks are completed consistently, timeously and correctly. This includes setting up and maintaining systems and procedures (operations) and carrying out the actions and tasks such as planning, organising, delegation

and motivating (Piek, 1991:1). Van Deventer and Kruger (2010:75) discussed five key management tasks and conclude that "... these tasks form part of the interrelated and interactive management process". These specific management tasks include planning, organising, leading, controlling and evaluating (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:75). These functions are carried out well by the principal and the SMT to ensure that the core business of the school – teaching and learning – can be achieved effectively. Those management tasks will now be discussed in some detail in the following paragraphs.

2.2.2.1. Planning

Every organisation needs proper planning in order for it to run smoothly. However, planning cannot be done by the principal in isolation. The principal needs the educators, the HoDs and the deputy principals. This is based on the fact that as the leader plans, there is a need to interact and communicate with other senior and staff members, which then brings in distributed leadership, according to Piek (1991:1), and Van Deventer and Kruger, 2010:75.

2.2.2.2. Organising

The leader has to organise the functioning of an organisation with the help of other stakeholders in the institution. Organising involves organisation of structures, committees and departments. As organising continues, communication and coordination takes place, which involves allocation of roles to different individuals. There will also be a need for other staff members to be allocated duties. Organising involves teamwork and the improvement of interpersonal relationships, and this again speaks to distributive leadership (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:75 and Piek, 1991:1).

2.2.2.3 Leading and directing

In order for leading to take place, the leader has to be clear about the aims (goals, vision and mission) and intended outcomes and then guide the remainder of the top team and the followers towards the aims and outcomes the school wants to achieve. Followers must be given support, for example, by motivating and training them. Leading also involves communicating with staff members, because non-communication may lead to

misinterpretation, tasks not being executed or understood, and resistance to execute. Leading is a managerial function that gives the leader the opportunity to influence subordinates through effective and efficient communication of the school's vision and mission (Piek, 1991:1; van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:75).

2.2.2.4. Controlling

Leaders must assess whether what is planned and organised is realised. It is at this stage, where leadership is involved, for example, in the supervision of educators, the motivation of good performance or calling to order ill-disciplined educators. Controlling in essence is a monitoring process. During this process, the school's leader can utilise the services of deputies, HoDs and even senior educators to assist with this function (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:75; Piek, 1991:1).

2.2.2.5. Evaluating

Evaluation of what has been done and accomplished is very important. The leader who manages instructional programmes well has to constantly evaluate and adapt the programmes accordingly. Evaluation involves taking stock and also applying corrective measures, where necessary. Evaluation also involves communicating with all involved stakeholders, whether it be for good or bad (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:75; Piek, 1991:1).

In conclusion, management is thus concerned with the correct, timeous and complete implementation and completion of activities (such as the management functions discussed above) and the daily operations of a school as guided by the departmental policies, while leadership is interested in doing the right thing for and with the people, and achieving the aims of the vision and mission of the school (Piek, 1991:1; Van Deventer & Kruger, 2010:75).

2.3. THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP

2.3.1. Instructional leadership

Cawood and Gibbon (1985:7) state that "...instructional leadership can be described as a process of guiding and encouraging the teacher along a path towards greater professional effectiveness". Kruger (2010:247) posits that instructional leadership focuses on establishing effective teaching and learning in a school situation, while Clickman, cited by Blasé and Blasé (1991:130) define instructional leadership as "... the integration of the tasks of direct assistance to teachers, group development, staff development, curriculum development and action research". Similarly, Bush (2007:401) posits that instructional institutional leadership focuses on teaching and learning, with the focus being mainly on the learning activities in a school situation.

These authors believe that instructional leadership is inclusive and collaborative in nature, focuses on what is being taught and how it is being taught. Even though the principal is the leader in the school environment, other team members have to be taken on board. Teamwork is clearly central to instructional leadership. Instructional leadership targets and focuses on the central activities of the school, which is teaching and learning (Bush, 2007:401). Instructional leadership focuses on co-operation with and of all the staff members in a school. SMT members are the ones who are employed by the Department of Education to ensure that the curriculum is implemented satisfactorily in schools and without fail. This is thus their instructional leadership role, one that is vital for schools to be able to achieve positive outcomes.

Bush (2007:401) emphasises the fact that instructional leadership focuses on influencing and activating action from others in as far as the curriculum, teaching and learning are concerned. One fault of instructional leadership, according to Bush (2007:401) is that it does not take other factors into account that are attached to schooling, for example sports and cultural activities and can therefore be quite "single-minded".

The following characteristics of instructional leaders demonstrate those tasks that need to be done by instructional leaders for effective teaching and learning in secondary schools (Blasé & Blasé, 2000).:

- a) Instructional leaders focus mainly on curriculum development, staff development and supervision of subordinates and also focus on the supporting of those subordinates;
- b) Instructional leadership focuses on multifaceted tasks that need the cooperation of other staff members

However, there is therefore a need for teamwork, if an instructional leader is to succeed in their daily operations in a school with the aim of realising the core business of a school, which is effective teaching and learning.

2.3.2. Distributed leadership

Naicker and Mestry (2011:99) perceive distributed leadership as working together with other members to promote teamwork. Distributed leadership is collective and collaborative in nature, allows managers (principals in the school scenario) to engage other staff members with expertise in the planning, organising, leading and controlling of and for effective teaching, learning and leadership (Harris, 2002:10-11). This view suggests that leadership is not only about an individual, but rather the collective, especially in a school setting. Distributed leadership forms an integral part of instructional leadership. The two concepts are interconnected and interrelated, because they both suggest that in order for effecting teaching and learning to take place, all stakeholders in an institution need to be involved (Hoadly, Christie, & Ward, 2009:377), because leadership is a comprehensive activity that involves all role-players in the school situation. Distributed leadership is a concept that will prove important for this study, as it will make up part of the conceptual framework used to frame the study.

2.3.2.1 Characteristics of distributed leadership

Distributed leadership is a theory that is often applied, especially in the 21st century; with Grant *et al.* (2010:1) noting that after 1994 in South Africa, there has been a move “towards more participation and collaboration in the practices of school leadership and management”. This theory is seen as an alternative to the traditional way of leadership, wherein the school principal leads and manages in isolation (Van der Mesch & Tyala, 2008:223). Distributed leadership views leadership as one that needs to be shared among staff members in a school (Spillane *et al.*, 2006:15; Grant, 2010:57; Jackson & Mariot,

2012:237), which means that leadership should involve every stakeholder in a school situation, teachers included, because leadership should not be individual-based, but rather group-based (Grant *et al.*, 2010:401) and should be participative and collaborative in nature (Naicker & Mestry, 2011:99; Muronga, 2011:20). These characteristics are in direct opposition to the traditional approach to leadership, wherein the principal was perceived as the know-it-all individual. Distributed leadership means that principals should include their subordinates in their leadership functions and roles, in line with their expertise in the school (Harris, 2004:13).

These authors stressed the notion that leadership is about teamwork. Their emphasis was that every stakeholder in a school is a team member, and as a result has to participate in the school's activities, together with all other members. In the distributed leadership perspective, educators should also be given opportunities to lead in specific school situations (Harries & Lambart, 2013; Grant, 2009; Grant *et al.*, 2010). This suggests that distributed leadership is highlighting the way in which leaders and followers interact with one another. In the school environment, the principals would have to share their leadership and management duties with other members of staff, while other members also are required to assume responsibility for certain tasks and duties (Jackson & Mariot, 2012:237). This is precisely the leadership and management thinking behind the duties and roles for SMT members as stipulated in the PAM (1998).

In summary, the characteristics of distributed leadership most important for this study are firstly, that leadership should be shared among staff members in a school (Spillane *et al.*, 2006:15; Grant, 2010:57; Jackson & Mariot, 2012:237; Grant *et al.*, 2010:401). Secondly, leadership is not individual based, but rather group-based (Grant *et al.*, 2010:401). The third characteristic of distributed leadership is that it is participative and collaborative in nature (Grant *et al.*, 2010:401; Naicker & Mestry, 2011:99). Lastly, distributed leadership notes that teachers should also be given an opportunity to lead in a school situation (Harries & Lambart, 2013; Grant, 2009:29; Grant *et al.*, 2010:401). These four characteristics demonstrate the importance of this perspective on leadership in today's management of schools.

Similar to instructional leadership, distributed leadership focuses on shared responsibilities among members of an organisation. Distributed leadership affords every stakeholder the opportunity to assume a leadership role in the school.

2.3.2.2 Types of distributed leadership

Grant (2009:291-292) distinguished between the following types of distributive leadership:

a) Authorised distributive leadership

In this type of leadership, the head of the institution, in this case the school, distributes duties to subordinates for execution. This type of leadership is more acceptable because subordinates feel that they own the result of the delegated task (Grant, 2009:291).

b) Dispersed distribution leadership

This type of leadership gives subordinates greater autonomy over the tasks given for execution. This type of leadership operates from the subordinates to the senior-managers of the school (Grant, 2009:292),

c) Democratic distributive leadership

This type of leadership is more concerned with action. The major focus here is on the execution of duties at hand (Grant, 2009:292).

2.4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND TEAMWORK – THE CONNECTION

Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008:223) argue that “...teamwork provides teachers with a significant role in the school decision-making process”. Teamwork is seen as occurring in a situation where a group of people work together and are committed to their common objectives or those of the organisation (Radić-Šestić, Radovanovic, Milanović-Dobrata, Slavkovic, & Langović-Milicvić, 2013:1), while Huber (2004:675) states that “the core-principles of leadership action is democracy and cooperation”. The benefits of teamwork, these authors believed, are collaboration, co-operation and consultation (van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008:223). Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008:229) also perceive teamwork as “sharing the lead”. Similarly, Muronga, (2011:31) maintain that teamwork in a school

situation requires that all stakeholders work together for the sake of the institution's progress. In a school environment, the principal, the deputy and the HoDs all have to work together with the aim of achieving the mission and vision of the school. Research has proven this approach to be more effective; however, this approach is also legislated in both the Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) and the Employment of Educators Act (Act 76 of 1998), through the PAM (1998).

The quoted authors suggested that for effective leadership in schools to take place, there needs to be a positive attitude towards teamwork and co-operation among team members. This, they collectively state, will eventually culminate in effective instruction taking place in the school. This assertion stresses the importance of distributed leadership in schools, among all SMT members: The principal, the deputy and the HoDs, together with the rest of the staff and other stakeholders, need to work together to effectively conduct the core-business of the school (Huber, 2004:670). Perhaps that is why Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008:222) argue that "...hierarchical, top-down structures are not appropriate for school leadership and management". Huber (2004:675) sums this vision up by saying that good leadership "... allows for the participation in different fields by as many staff members as possible". A similar view is shared by Nkabinde (2012:21), when she states that "...the SMT collaboratively serves the purpose of managing the delivery of education and performance of teachers in schools".

2.5. INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS

The following section focuses on the issue of school management teams. It is divided into sub-sections for (1) the global perceptions of school management teams and (2) school management teams in the South African education system.

Studies on the management of schools through using teams, have been conducted throughout the world. For instance, studies conducted in the United Kingdom by Rhodes and Beneike (2006:298) has found that management teams create closer working relationships with their colleagues, so that they can get sufficient support from them. Rhodes and Beneike (2006:302) further argue that there should be trust and support from subordinates in and among school management team members. This further strengthens the view that working in teams in schools is very important. Similarly, Harris (2002:19), in

his study conducted in England on effective leadership in schools facing challenging contexts, has found that "...the decision to work with and through teams...was a common response to the management of change." Harris agrees with Rhodes and Beneike (2006) that teamwork plays a significant role in the proper management of schools.

Similarly, studies conducted in North America in the 1980s found that instructional leadership focuses on promoting relationships between staff (Bevoise, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Instructional leadership acknowledges the importance of the principal in a school situation and also acknowledges that the principal needs assistance from other stakeholders, for example educators, SMT members, and so on. This is where the issue of the relationship between staff members becomes very important in an organisation. Instructional leadership emphasises that in order for an organisation to succeed, it needs good relationships and cooperation among members of the staff, with staff members at all levels of the organisation working together – something that can be facilitated efficiently by the use of SMTs.

Studies conducted in Germany have found that schools as organisations comprise individuals and/or groups that have an influence on the core business of the school and need to be taken on board, if the school is to succeed (Rosenbusch, 1997:331). Huber (2004:675) posits that leadership does not rely on the principal only, but also other members of the team.

Even though studies have shown that institutions have to utilise the services of all staff members in order to move forward smoothly, there is still some reluctance by some leaders to actively and consistently involve all staff members for organisational growth, development and better learning outcomes (Van der Mescht & Tyala 2008:221; Gronn, 2002:423). This might be the case in many South African public schools, where principals appear to resist the distribution or sharing of leadership responsibility with the members of their SMTs. The emphasis here is that principals must be ready and willing to share power with those they lead, and that unfortunately their refusal to share power may cause unnecessary tensions. It is also in breach of the Act.

In a study conducted in 2002, focusing on the difficulties faced in establishing effectiveness in schools, conducted among senior SMT members in British primary schools, Wallace

(2002:167) has observed that in the United Kingdom, school leadership is widely distributed even though in nature it is still hierarchical. This finding suggests that even though most schools in the UK are still managed in a hierarchical order, there is a move towards shared or distributed leadership in schools. Distributive leadership is embedded in participative leadership (Jackson & Mariot, 2012; Grant, 2009; Harries, 2004). This theory is related and interconnected to instructional leadership. Instructional leadership is rooted in the combination of task execution by stakeholders in an organisation (Cawood & Gibbon, 1985; Kruger, 2013; van de Venter & Kruger, 2010). The two terms – distributed leadership and instructional leadership – thus both focus on teamwork in an organisation.

The preceding section attempts to establish the application and importance of teamwork such as the School Management Team in effective school leadership and management in an international context. In order for such teams to operate effectively, all members of the team need to understand their roles and those of other members on the team. This is where the distributed leadership theory comes into its own – it will assist the researcher in investigating whether members of SMTs in secondary schools understand their roles and those of other members.

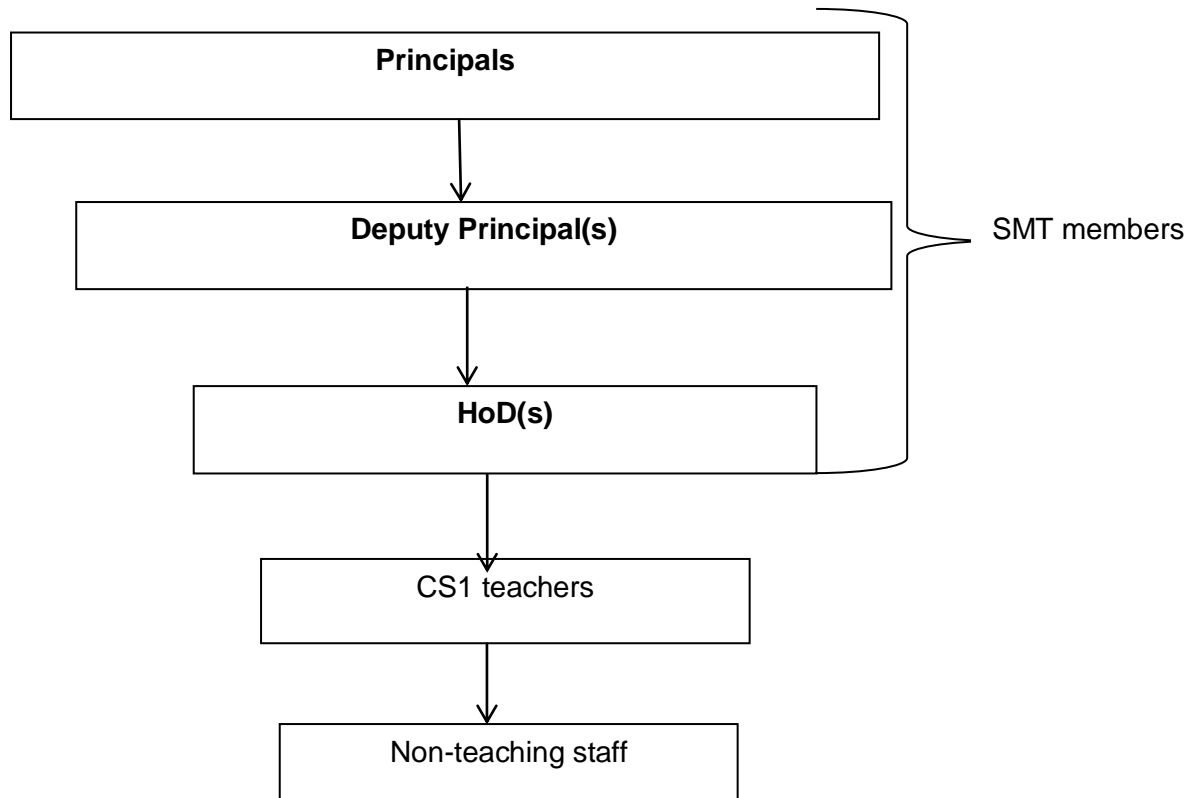
2.6. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

2.6.1. School Management Team composition

As mentioned in Chapter 1, South African schools are managed and led by school management teams (SMTs). The SMT is made up of the principal, deputy principal(s) and Heads of Department (PAM, 1998).

The most senior position within a school is held by the principal. Depending on the size of the school, the principal is supported by the deputy principal(s). The HoDs follow the deputy principal(s) in terms of the hierarchical order and seniority. This hierarchy is demonstrated in the following diagram as stipulated in the PAM (1998):

Fig 2: Hierarchical order of the SMT members in the South African context (PAM, 1998)



2.6.2. The roles of SMT members in curriculum implementation

The SMT has to see to it that their schools are run professionally, efficiently and effectively on a daily basis. These daily operations should be conducted under the leadership of the school principal (DoE, 2002:24). The above statement suggests that the schools should be lead and managed by principals together with the SMTs in accordance with the policies, rules and regulations of the department such as PAM (1998) and SASA (1996). The major aim of these regulations is the production of quality education and also the realisation of the schools' visions and missions.

SMTs become more effective when the principal and the SMTs work closely together (van der Merwe, 2002:35). The emphasis here is that a successful SMT must be able to employ the participative leadership style. Principals should be able to utilise the expertise of other members of the team.

SMTs must be able to support staff members in whatever activities they are involved in. They need to support the staff members in every respect. SMTs must have a thorough knowledge of the curriculum at hand for a smooth implementation of same.

In South Africa, teamwork is often practised. It is key to the South Africa situation and the effect of team participation in schools is production of quality education (Muller, Pitsoe & Van Niekerk, 2013:257). Muller *et al.* (2013:257) further acknowledges that the success of a school will be guided by the attitude of the principal of that particular school. There is however, some resistance among South African principals when they have to share responsibilities with their subordinates (Gronn, 2002:423).

2.6.3. Research on the use of SMTs in South Africa

Prior to 1994, the education system of South Africa followed the traditional way of leadership, wherein the principal was perceived as the most senior and superior in the school situation (Naicker & Mestry, 2011:99). However, after the new dispensation, that is post-1994, the education system that existed pre-1994 was rejected in favour of the most collective and participative type of leadership (Naicker & Mestry, 2011:99).

A study conducted by Naicker and Mestry (2011:102) in schools in Soweto found that most schools still used the traditional leadership practices with a strong hierarchy being present. Principals were still using the autocratic leadership style as opposed to the distributed leadership. Similarly, Harries (2002:12) in a student-conducted study regarding distributed leadership in schools “leading or misleading”, found that ‘top-down’ management styles in schools are a serious impediment to development.

This leads to the concept of distributed leadership, which is gradually becoming popular among leaders of schools in South Africa (Harries, 2002:11). Naicker and Mestry (2011:99) and Harries (2002:11) remark that currently in South Africa, leadership in schools is about working together and promoting teamwork and every staff member, at any level, should be afforded the opportunity to be a leader. Perhaps that is why in South Africa the so-called ‘participative leadership’ style is becoming more popular in schools, especially secondary schools.

This researcher believes all stakeholders in schools need each other for success and development of their respective institutions, irrespective of their different roles and responsibilities as stipulated in PAM (1998).

2.7. SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the literature study. The following themes emerged from the literature:

Role confusion. It was evident from literature study that there was some confusion among SMT members, when executing their daily activities because it was not clear as to what each SMT member's duties are in those teams (Mestry & Tyala, 2008; Grant *et al.*, 2010). This confusion seemed to create tension among SMT members;

Lack of cooperation is another theme that emerged from literature study. In the study conducted by Mescht and Tyala (2008), they found that there is a lack of trust among SMT members and as a result this lead to lack of cooperation among members of the team. Members become disloyal towards each other as a result.

Relational challenges is the other theme that emerged from literature study. This theme was mainly caused by principals who still viewed themselves as superiors as compared to other members of the SMT (Harries, 2002:11). Their view is in direct contrast to views shared by PAM (1998). The Department of Education circular (1996) and Grant *et al.* (2010) argued that leadership is not about an individual, but about people working together as a team.

Workload as a theme also emerged from literature study. Naicker and Mestry (2011:99) maintained that "principals are encountering heavy workloads". This was a result of the fact that principals were not ready "to relinquish power and control to others" (Harries, 2002:12).

Instructional leadership, according to Bush and Clover (2010), Cawood and Gibbon (1985) and Kruger (2010) focuses mainly on the realisation of effective teaching and learning in schools. Effective teaching and learning can only be realised through co-operation of other staff members, especially teachers, in a school situation.

Distributed leadership theory is the theory around which this study revolves. Distributed theory used with the duties of the SMTs are the guiding concepts of the study. Distributed leadership recognises the leader's ability to recognise the leadership potential in subordinates. The principal in a school situation should be able to involve other stakeholders in leadership positions, especially teachers, in a school situation for the sake of the smooth running of their schools (Muronga, 2011; Grant *et al.*, 2010; van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008).

This chapter also highlighted the issue of international and national perceptions of scholars and researchers on the duties of SMTs. Internationally and nationally, the scholars acknowledged the fact that there is some reluctance by school principals to adopt the distributed leadership approach, when they have to assess their leadership roles in schools. Most school principals still prefer the hierarchical order, wherein the principal is still 'omnipotent'. Some principals still fear that some teachers may 'take over' their leadership duties, if given too much responsibility (Rhodes & Beneike, 2006; Huber, 2004; Wallace, 2002; van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008).

The next chapter will focus on the research methodology, approach and design. The focus will also be on data collection strategies, sampling strategies and participants and on data analysis. Ethical consideration issues will also be addressed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study, including issues such as the research approach, research paradigm, research design, data collection, strategies sampling strategies, data analysis and also ethical considerations. This chapter further describes and explains the paradigm in which this study is located and the methods used to gather and analyse data.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH, PARADIGM AND DESIGN

3.2.1. Research approach

This research is located within the qualitative approach. Macmillan and Schumacher (2014:5) describe the qualitative approach as using face-to-face observations in order to collect data from participants. A similar sentiment is expressed by Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit (2004:3), who argued that in qualitative research “variables are usually not controlled”, while Drew, Hardman and Hosp (2008:21) state that “qualitative research does not tamper with the natural setting, where data is collected”. According to Silverman (2006:43), data collected through a qualitative approach cannot be manipulated by the researcher. Therefore, data collected from this approach can be dependable and reliable. These authors argue that qualitative research allows honest and unchannelled responses from participants. They further argue that qualitative research aims to capture and tap into the natural representation of data for its findings. Bouma and Atkinson (1997:206) expressed the view that qualitative research “produces data such as people’s own spoken or written words or observable behaviour”. A similar view is expressed by Nieuwenhuis (2010:78), who states that “qualitative research is based on the naturalistic approach that seeks to undent phenomena in context”. Similarly, Drew *et al.* (2008:21) declared that qualitative research does not temper with the natural setting where data are collected.

From the above, it is clear that the qualitative approach seeks to focus mainly on the naturalistic location of participants who form part of the study under investigation. A similar view is shared by Macmillan and Schumacher (2014:31) and Fouché and Schurink (2011:310), who perceives the qualitative approach as being based on and in the natural habitat of the participants. In a similar vein, these authors declare that qualitative approaches are based on the naturalistic habitat of human experience.

The qualitative approach is appropriate to this study because this research was conducted in three schools in the Sepitsi circuit. Data was collected from SMT members who were in their natural habitat, their place of work, and had to furnish the researcher with data, which is located within their natural working environment. Another important feature of the qualitative research approach is that it does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon under investigation (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:79; Gitchele & Mporu, 2012:59). This approach is therefore, appropriate for this study because it reflects on the situation of the participants at the three schools that formed part of this study, and the data collected from these schools is a true reflection of the situation prevailing at those schools, without any interventions or manipulation by the researcher.

3.2.2. Research paradigm

This study was located in the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm seeks to understand human beings from within and how they interpret the world around them (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:18; Nieuwenhuis, 2010:99). The interpretivist paradigm is thus more rooted in how people interpret their experiences and what meaning they attach to those experiences, and also reflect on the subject of human experiences (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011:17).

This researcher found the interpretivist paradigm to be the most suitable paradigm for this study as this paradigm is imbedded in the notion that reality is entailed in meanings and experiences. This study focused on the experiences of SMT members who narrated their experiences through interviews. Participants in this study furnished the researcher with data from their experiences in their job situations, and as a result, the interpretivist paradigm was the best option to assist this researcher when interpreting that particular data.

3.2.3. Research design

According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2014:28), a research design is “the process for conducting the study”. This study used a case study design. A case study allows the use of a variety of research methods (Muronga, 2011:42) or “...multiple sources of data found in the setting” (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2014:28). A case study design was the most suitable research design for this study because it grants the researcher the ability to make use of any form of data relevant for a study. The major source of data for this study was interviews, and a case study thus became the logical design for this study due to its flexibility regarding sources of data.

A case study also focuses on real people in a real situation (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:289) and “strives towards a comprehensive (holistic) understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of the phenomenon under study” (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:75). This case study seeks to establish the influencing factors of a social unit under investigation and also explores the relationship between that particular social unit and the factors. It uses people (SMT members) as the social unit and also investigates how these SMTs relate to their environment.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

According to Creswell (2014:189), data collection focuses on the collection of information either through interviews, observation and/or other techniques to collect data from participants. For this study, the researcher elected to use semi-structured interviews as data collection method.

3.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2014:6), semi-structured interviews allow for individual, open-ended responses, and opinion-shared. Seabi (2012:89) described semi-structured interviews as a technique used by researchers to collect data from participants using open-ended questions. A semi-structured interview is neither fully fixed nor fully free and is very flexible (Seabi, 2012:89). Coleman (2012:251) described semi-structured interviews as those that “take the form of a few major questions, with sub-questions and

possible follow-up questions”. These descriptions further support the fact that semi-structured interviews were the correct choice as data collection instrument, because these kinds of interviews in their very nature, have the ability to extract information from the participants with ease (Cohen *et al.*, 2014:411).

An interview protocol was created and the questions therein were used to collect data during the interviews. The questions created in the interview protocol were framed from the conceptual framework that underpins this study, concepts such as:

a) Teaching

What are duties of SMT members in relation to teaching?

b) Personnel

What are your duties as SMT members in relation to personnel or staff management?

c) General administration

What are your duties on the SMT in relation to general administration in the school?

d) Communication

What are your duties on the SMT in relation to communication in the school?

e) Core-curricular

What are your duties on the SMT in relation to the co-curricular activities in the school?

These questions were created for the interviews to be able to establish whether these members know and understand their roles in as far as teaching, administration and personnel management roles and functions are concerned, to name but a few as guided by the conceptual framework of this study. The questions were open-ended in order to allow the researcher to ask probing questions, where necessary. The aim of the data collection in this study was to investigate whether SMT members understood their duties as outlined in the PAM document. The focus was on the principals, deputy principals and HoDs of the three selected secondary schools.

A copy of the interview protocol can be found as Annexure E at the end of this dissertation.

3.4. SAMPLING STRATEGIES AND PARTICIPANTS

Sampling plays a crucial part in research (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:143). Sampling is a process whereby a researcher selects a portion of a population for a study, with that portion being a representative of a bigger population (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2014:6; Nieuwenhuis, 2010:79). Various techniques can be used to select the sample for a study. In this study, a purposive sampling technique was employed.

3.4.1. Research sites

The research site for a study is the place where the research is conducted. This study was conducted in the Sepitsi circuit of the Lebowakgomo District of the Limpopo Province of South Africa. This study was conducted in three secondary schools in that circuit. These schools were selected out of a total of nine in the circuit. The three schools were selected purposively (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:79) as well as conveniently (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2014:151). The purposive selection of secondary schools revolves around the fact that in the circuit in question, only very few primary schools have SMTs made up of more than one member, while a number of the secondary schools have SMTs suitable for the purposes and design of this study. The convenient sampling revolves around the fact that the three secondary schools selected were chosen because of being easily accessible and in close geographic proximity of the location of the researcher.

3.4.2. Participants

Various techniques can be used to select the sample of participants for a study. In this study, a purposive sampling technique was employed. According to Cohen *et al.* (2011:156), in a purposive sampling, researchers identify participants and pick them according to the particular characteristics that make them carriers of data needed to answer the research question that guides the study. This means that in purposive sampling, participants are selected based on their expert knowledge in the field under investigation (De Vos, Strydom, & Fouché, 2011:392). In purposive sampling, the researcher selects a particular group of participants with particular knowledge and skills relevant to the study. In

this study, for instance, only school management team members were purposively selected for the reason that they are most likely to have the information required to answer the study's question on their understanding of their roles as laid out in the PAM (1998).

Of the actual participants, the principals heads of the institutions formed part of this study, while the other two members of the SMT were selected on the basis of them having (a) the longest time spent on the SMT, thus most experienced and (b) the shortest time spent on the SMT, thus the least experienced. The issues of gender, age, and so forth, did not enter into the criteria for selection of participants, because the study focused on the participants' understanding of their role according to the PAM (1998), an issue that is not affected by gender, race, age, and so forth. The focal part point was their experience and perceptions in as far as their duties in those teams were concerned.

The following table furnishes how participants were selected:

Table: 2 Selection of participants

School	Designation	Gender	Post level	Pseudonym
A	Principal	Male	4	PA
	Head of Department 1	Male	2	SMT1A
	Head of Department 2	Female	1	SMT2A
B	Principal	Male	4	PB
	Head of Department 1	Female	2	SMT1B
	Head of Department 2	Female	2	SMT2B
C	Principal	Male	2	PC
	Head of Department 1	Female	1	SMT1C
	Head of Department 2	Female	1	SMT2C

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

According to Lambert (2013:361), data analysis involves ‘breaking down’ and ‘making connection’ of the collected data. The data that this researcher collected was mainly in audio form. The data was collected using the semi-structured interviews. The researcher then had to transcribe that data into written words. After having transcribed that data into words, the researcher then categorised the data into themes that developed from that data.

Data was then coded according to Cohen *et al.* (2011:559), “as code is simply a name or label that the researcher gives to a piece of text that contains an idea of a place of information”. Ferreira, 2012:34 declared that coding assists the researcher in grouping data collected into themes.

This study required that participants in this study need not have their names identified. The agreement was reached, when this researcher signed the memorandum of agreement with the participants, whereby participants signed an informed consent form, prior the actual interviews. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity even in the letters they received from this researcher. In this study, pseudonyms were used when coding data, instead of real names.

Data collected from participants were coded and themes created were guided by the concepts as entailed in the framework by the concepts of this study, for example; (a) teaching, (b) general administration, (c) personnel, (d) administration, (e) co-curricular and (f) communication. Themes created will have to be in line with those concepts as entailed in the framework of this study. A detailed analysis of those themes will be furnished in Chapter 4.

3.5.1. Content analysis

The coded data was then analysed through the content analysis technique. According to Cohen *et al.* (2011:564), “content analysis takes texts and analyses, reduces and interrogates them into summary form...” These authors further asserted that, content analysis uses data collected or rather a sample of texts collected during fieldwork and coded by the researcher. Similarly, Schwandt (2007:4) stated that such analysis meant

'comparing contrasting and categorising of data', while Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013:139) maintained that content analysis is a way of trying to make sense of data gathered.

3.6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is a framework of relevant concepts which are put together to help the researcher illuminate a topic under investigation. In this study, this framework of ten concepts was used in conjunction with the theory of distributed leadership.

The conceptual framework plays a pivotal role in this study. This researcher used a framework of concepts that relate to (a) the distributed leadership theory and (b) the duties of members of the SMT as set out in PAM (1998). This framework of concepts guided the researcher throughout this study. This study was actually planned and organised around this framework of concepts (Ferreira, 2012:34). Concepts such as teaching, general administration, personnel, co-curricular and communication were used in conjunction with the theory of distributed leadership, which were used to frame questions that resulted in the interview protocol. The questions created were then used during the interviews in order to extract information from participants.

3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section acknowledges that most educational research deals with human beings, and therefore deems it necessary to take cognisance of the issue of ethical considerations. Ethics are generally concerned with what is wrong and what is right in the way the researcher conducts a research (Mouton, 2013:238; Macmillan & Schumacher, 2014:128).

Researchers ensure that participants are free from harm in the research, and this should be communicated to the participants prior to the research being undertaken. In a similar vein; Cohen *et al.* (2011:84) allude to the fact that the researcher "must take into account the effects of the research on participants..."

The researcher assured the participants that the issue of moral consideration was a priority to him, and that there would not be any negative effect on them that pertained to their participation in the study.

In this study, this researcher submitted a letter, explaining the details of the research to the District Senior Manager of the Department of Education and the principals of the sampled schools, asking for permission to conduct the research, since this study's main source of information was human beings working at designated schools.

The researcher further took cognisance of the following important issues as far as ethics were concerned; assurance of protection from harm, assurance of the right to privacy and also assurance of confidentiality.

A memorandum of agreement was signed between this researcher and participants, whereby participants signed an informed consent form. According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2014:130), "informed consents allow participants to participate in a study or to withdraw from a study at any time".

In this study, the researcher had outlined the details of the research and also informed participants that they could terminate their participation at any time during the study without any penalty or negative consequence (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2014:130). A letter of approval from the University of Pretoria Ethics Committee, allowing the study to be carried out, was sought and duly granted. A copy of the letter is attached.

This researcher took into consideration the issue of anonymity, voluntary participation and confidentiality in the study.

3.7.1. Permission granted

The District Senior Manager of the Lebowakgomo District, of the Limpopo Province of South Africa granted this researcher permission to conduct this study. A copy of the letter granting permission is attached.

3.7.2. Voluntary participation and informed consent

Macmillan and Schumacher (2014:130) declared that “voluntary participation means that participants cannot be compelled, coerced or required to participate”.

The participants in this study participated voluntarily in this study. They were not coerced into partaking in the study. They agreed to participate after this researcher explained the purpose of the study to them. The researcher attended a meeting with the sampled SMT members prior to the interviews at each school to outline the details and the purpose of the study. The participants were informed that the purpose of this study was to investigate SMT members’ understanding of their duties as stipulated in PAM (1998).

Participants were further assured that the information collected will only be used for the purpose of this study. The participants were further informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time during the course of the study. All the participants showed interest and willingness to participate in this study after the clarifications. All participants agreed to sign the informed consent document, which they eventually signed.

3.7.3. Confidentiality

According to Macmillan and Schumacher (2014:134), “confidential means that no one can gain access to participants’ identity and/or data in a study (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014:134). Similarly; Cohen *et al.* (2014:92) perceived confidentiality as protecting a participant’s identity.

The participants in this study were assured of total confidentiality. They were further assured that their responses in this study will not be known to anyone else, except the researcher. Consequently, the collected data was saved and kept by the researcher in his personal laptop, and also by the University as per the law of the University. The data was also kept by the researcher’s supervisor.

3.7.4. Anonymity

Anonymity refers to the ability by the researcher to keep the participants' identities secret (Mouton, 2013: 244). Participants have every right to remain anonymous (Mouton, 2013:243). In a similar vein, Cohen *et al.* (2011:91) asserted that "information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity".

Participants in this study were assured anonymity. They were informed that their real names would not be used and pseudonyms would be used instead. They were also assured that the names of their schools would not be published, but that these schools would only be coded. The names of the schools and of all participants were coded in this study to make sure that they remain anonymous.

3.8. SUMMARY

In this chapter, this researcher outlined the research methodology used in this study for the collection of data. The chapter outlined the research approach used, which is the qualitative approach. This approach was relevant to this study because it uses words and numbers as is the case with qualitative research. Interaction with the participants is through face-to-face individual and spoken as well as audio-recorded interviews.

The research paradigm for this was interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm is more rooted in how people interpret their experiences and what meaning is attached to those experiences. This study investigated participants' understanding of their duties as experienced in their natural habitats, which is their school in this study.

A research study is a process followed by the researcher, while research design is a process followed by the researcher when conducting a research or rather a study (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014:28). This researcher used a qualitative case study for this investigation. A qualitative study becomes very relevant for this investigation because of its focus on real people in a real situation (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:289). The participants in this study were members of the school management teams in a secondary school situation. Data collected was through interviews. The interviews were open-ended to allow full probing and give room for honest and unchannelled responses.

This chapter further outlined who the participants for this study were. The participants were members of the school management teams, namely, the principal, the deputy principal and the HoDs. The participants were selected from three secondary schools out of the nine in the circuit. The schools were selected purposively, because of their close proximity to this researcher. The participants were sampled because of their expert knowledge regarding leadership and management in schools. The participants were selected according to the length of their service and experience in the teaching field, especially at management level.

Data collected was analysed through content analysis. Data analysis involves grouping together and labelling of data as per groupings (Cohen *et al.*, 2011: 559). In this study, the researcher grouped the particular data analysed through content analysis technique.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents data from the semi-structured interviews conducted among selected School Management Team members, namely, principals, deputy principals and the relevant HoDs. The interviews serve as the major source of information for this study.

The core of the interviews was based on the following questions:

1. How do SMT members understand their duties as stipulated in PAM?
2. What do SMT members understand their duties in the SMT to be?
3. How do SMT members understand the duties of other members of the SMT members to be?
4. How does this understanding affect the relation between the members of the SMTs?

4.1.1. Conducting the research

This researcher made individual appointments with the interviewees, allowing them sufficient time to get ready for the interviews. Three schools were identified to form part of this study, selecting the principal and two HoDs. This logically translated into interviews of nine SMT members for this study. Out of the nine, only eight SMT members were actually interviewed. The ninth interviewee did not avail herself for this interview due to personal reasons.

This researcher had two meetings with the participants at their respective schools. The first meeting was a briefing meeting. During this meeting, there was an outline of the study, its aims and objectives. Participants were also presented with the necessary documents for the study and the interviews, such as the proposal, the letter of request to conduct the research, a letter from the Provincial Department of Education granting this researcher a permission to conduct the study and the letter requesting their participation in the study. All participants duly accepted, except one SMT member at school C who initially agreed, and

signed relevant documents and declined at a later stage because of family problems that kept her away from the school most of the time.

The researcher spent almost the whole day at each school, because each member would join this researcher for interviews once they were ready, and also once again when they were free from their teaching activities. Participants were interviewed during the same date per school, but during different times. It was only at school A, where the principal became available for interviews at a later stage due to management commitments.

This study concentrated on three schools in the Sepitsi circuit that fall under the Lebowakgomo District of the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The schools are located approximately 90 km outside the nearest city, which is Polokwane. The schools are all secondary schools, and no primary school formed part of this study. All these schools are situated in rural areas. There are, however, two schools that are about 1 km away from the tarred road.

Schools A and C are average-sized schools in that they comprise a principal, a deputy and HoDs who are permanently employed by the Department of Education. School B, however, had only one principal, no deputy principal, and the HoDs form part of the SMT as they are senior teachers at the school. The school is very small.

4.2. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section focuses on the analysis of data obtained from the field. Thematic analysis led to themes being established during data analysis as outlined in Chapter three. The themes were created by this researcher guided by the duties of SMT members as stipulated in the PAM document and also guided by framework of concepts and research sub-question of this study. The following are some of the themes identified from data analysis: Teaching; Administration; Personnel; Knowledge of their duties; Allocation of duties; Relations; and Understanding of PAM.

4.2.1. Duties of the principal

4.2.1.1. Teaching

During data analysis, it was observed that most principals do not see themselves as getting involved in daily teaching. According to them, daily teaching is something that only the teachers get involved with. This is in total conflict with PAM (1998), which requires them to allocate a certain percentage of their time to teaching.

4.2.1.2. Administration

Most participants believe that the principal's major role is to see to it that teaching and learning take place in schools, while some participants perceive the principal's role as that of allocation of duties only.

4.2.1.3. Personnel

The role of the principal is generally accepted to lead and guide subordinates, especially regarding teaching and learning, according to PAM (1998). The general feeling of most principals regarding personnel management is only to enhance the culture of learning and teaching. Their claim is similar to the one raised under PAM (1998).

4.2.2. Duties of the deputy principal

4.2.2.1. Teaching

The deputy principals in this study view the role of the deputy principal as that of being the deputy to the principal, and to offer support to the Heads of Departments regarding the curriculum coverage and implementation.

4.2.2.2. Administration

The deputy principals who participated in this study do not seem to understand the major differences between the principal and the deputy principal. However, they acknowledge that

principal and the deputy principal are not on the same level in terms of their positions in the school, despite them not having any major difference in their administrative duties. The inability to differentiate between the duties of the principal and those of the deputy is probably due to the fact that two schools do not have permanently employed deputy principals. Only school B has a permanently employed deputy principal. In the other two schools, HoDs act as deputies.

4.2.2.3. Personnel

Participants state that the deputy principal's duty regarding personnel is to guide and supervise staff members' performance in a school "to ensure quality teaching in class".

4.2.3. The role of the head of department (HoD)

4.2.3.1. Teaching

Most participants in this study perceive the HoD's major role being to teach and being an overseer, while SMT1C and SMT1A agree that the HoD's role is one of monitoring and moderating teachers' work rather than actually teaching in class.

4.2.3.2. Administration

The HoDs are of the opinion that HoDs are in charge of the learning aspects in the school. The HoD makes sure that effective teaching and learning in a school takes place. They further agree that HoDs see to it that good teaching standards are maintained. The general feeling among the participating SMT members in this study is that the HoD's major function in a school is that of monitoring and support. They further perceive the HoD's role as that of moderating school tasks prior to actual administration of those tasks in their respective departments.

4.2.3.3. Personnel

Participants view the HoD's major role being that of managing teacher's activities in school, especially regarding curriculum delivery. This is in agreement with PAM (1998), which states that the HoD's role is that of overseeing the curriculum implementation in the school.

4.2.3.4. General functions of the SMT

The perceptions held by participating SMT members are divided on what the actual functions of the SMTs are. Four SMT members believe that the major functions of the SMT member are getting policies and procedures in place for the effective running of the school. According to SMT1C, the major role of the SMT is to "draw up school policies for the smooth running of the school".

The principal of school C (hereafter, PC) believes that every activity in the school needs to have "policies in place", so that all these activities, for example teaching, monitoring, mentoring, and so forth, can be implemented with ease.

The other four SMT participants believe that the duties and functions of the SMT encapsulate management and planning. They believe that management and planning are the core functions of the SMT. According to the principal of school A (hereafter, PA) the core-functions of the SMT are "to ensure that the school is managed satisfactorily". SMT1 of school C (hereafter, SMT1C) believes that the role of the SMT, and of the HoD specifically, is "to help the principal manage the school".

The principals argue that effective SMTs must be able to administer the written work, check lesson preparations, class attendance by both teachers and , and also to see to it that there is comprehensive and accurate curriculum coverage by the teachers.

During the interviews, this researcher observed that, generally, members of the SMT know what their duties are in the management of the school, as evidenced in this discussion.

4.2.3.5. General duties of the SMT regarding teaching

The general feeling among the HoDs and principals (except for one) is that the duties of the SMT are to see to it that effective teaching and learning takes place. They do not see themselves as people who should engage in actual teaching, but rather to monitor other teachers teaching in class. They believe that their role is merely “to ensure that effective teaching and learning” takes place.

They further believe that it is their other role to “make sure that all the teachers do their work”. They generally agree that their role is one of being an overseer.

However, one principal (PA) seems to have studied PAM (1998) well because he acknowledges that as the principal, he also has a role to play in as far as teaching is concerned. He states that a principal has “to engage in class teaching as per workload of the relevant post level as stipulated”.

There seems to be some disagreement among respondents as to what the duties of the principals are in schools beyond the fact that principals are overseers of their subordinates’ daily activities in the school situation.

4.2.3.6. General administration duties of the SMT

These themes focus on the duties of the SMT members in relation to the general administration in a school. What role do SMT members play in as far as the general administration and daily operations of the school are concerned?

Some participants – especially HoDs – believe their roles are to monitor and support teachers. Other participants believe that their roles include general administration duties like stock-taking, budgeting, completion of master files, admission of learners, drafting of school time tables, and so forth.

Beyond such duties, SMT 1 of school A (hereafter, SMT1A) believes that the administrative role of the SMT in a school is also crafting and implementation of policies, “to help drafting

and implementation of policies such as the policies on discipline, on uniform and on culture”.

SMT1C believes that their role is to take minutes, especially during SGB meetings. Regarding this issue, the researcher observed that there is no uniform interpretation or understanding as to what the SMT administrative duties are.

4.2.3.7. General duties of the SMT regarding personnel management

The general feeling of the three principals is that as heads of school, their major role with regard to personal management is one of enhancing the culture of teaching and learning in their respective schools. PA states that their role as principals is, “to enhance the culture of teaching and learning”, and in a similar vein, principal of school B (hereafter, PB) contends that their role is “to ensure quality teaching in class”.

On the other hand, the other SMT members, specifically HoDs, believe that it should be one of monitoring and support. They also perceive themselves as overseers. SMT1C argues that their role is to monitor staff members in the school, with SMT1A arguing that their task is to moderate and support educators in their respective departments. The other members of the SMT see their roles as making them responsible for allocating work equitably among staff members in their respective departments.

4.2.3.8. How do SMT members know their duties?

The assumption made for this theme is that participants would be able to furnish the researcher with documentation, policies and handbooks that guide them as to what their daily duties are or should be in their schools, especially as members of the SMT.

Generally, most members of the SMT agree that the guiding document for duties is the PAM (Personnel Administration Management) document. SMT1A PA and PB point out that PAM (1998) is the supreme document that outlines their duties.

SMT1A states that their school does not have the PAM document, but they know about it. This researcher also observed that not every SMT had easy access to the document, and

as a result, they seem to experience problems in knowing precisely what is expected of them as members of the SMT. This view is shared by one HoD of SMT1C who indicates that they use the “duty list”, which does not seem to be an official DoE document. It is evident from the interviews that there is a need for official DoE documents to be dispatched to and readily available at schools.

4.2.3.9. Allocation of duties to the SMT

Most participants seem to be satisfied with the way duties currently are allocated to them, especially principals, as they feel they are being allocated duties according to their capabilities and expertise. However, SMT1C, an exception to the rule, states that SMT members are being overloaded with work allocated to them. However, there seems to be a general feeling of contentment among SMT members in as far as work allocation of their duties is concerned.

4.2.3.10. Knowledge of duties by SMT members

The participating principals and HoDs claim that they know exactly what is expected of them in as far as their daily activities or duties are concerned as SMT members. While most agree with this statement, one HoD, SMT 2 (hereafter, SMT2B) argues that there are no clear guidelines as to what they should do as SMT members, that official guiding documents are not available, giving the principal the opportunity to give instructions to subordinates as he wishes. According to the HoD, this does not give SMT members, especially HoDs something to fall back on, especially when there are misunderstandings among the SMT members.

4.2.3.11. Understanding of the PAM document

Most SMT members do not know much about the PAM (1998) document beyond being aware of its existence. Only three participants can give some information on what the PAM (1998) document entails. SMT1A, PC and SMT2C agree that the PAM document “outlines the roles and responsibilities of the SMT”. Other members of the SMT, in as far as the knowledge of the PAM document and its content are concerned, believe that it “indicates

that the SMT members must help in the planning and organisation of school policies that will ensure the smooth running of the institution”. SMT1A and SMT1C believe that the PAM (1998) document says that there should be a relationship between educators and the SMT.

When participants were interviewed on this issue, this researcher could see that they were puzzled, and a bit lost. This level of confusion can be severely detrimental to the South African education system, because one cannot expect teachers or SMT members to understand their roles and duties, if they do not have access to this basic legal document (PAM) and do not know exactly what it entails.

4.2.3.12. Relations among SMT members

All participants, except for PA and SMT 2 of school A (hereafter, SMT2A) perceive the relationship among themselves as being cordial. SMT1A refers to the relationships at their school as being that of “trust”; PB views the relationship at their school as being “healthy”. SMT2B perceives the relationships at their school as being “good”, while PC views them as being “sound”. SMT1C and SMT2C declare that the relationships at their schools are “satisfactorily mutual”.

However, PA does not agree with the other participants concerning relationships as he feels that “where there is no shepherd, the sheep faint”. He obviously does not hold much faith in his subordinates or their abilities. He feels that subject heads report academic matters to the deputy principal and the deputy then reports to the principal, who is the accounting officer. He believes the total welfare of the entire school rests solely on his shoulders. This also implies that he has no direct relationships with the remainder of his staff.

Only one respondent, SMT2A, admits that there is not always mutual respect at their institution. However, the participant does not regard the situation as being volatile.

4.2.3.13. Factor(s) that have an impact on SMT relations

This section is divided into the following subthemes; Workload conflicts; Size; Time; and Co-opted HoDs.

4.2.3.13.1. Workload

The major complaint being raised by respondents is the workload being put on SMT members. Participants argue that there was no real difference between the SMTs and ordinary staff members and that there is a (far too) fine line between the amount of work allocated to SMT members, and that allocated to ordinary staff members. They claim that the amount of work allocated to them for teaching is almost equal to the load of their other management duties. SMT1C believes that the workload allocated to them has the greatest negative impact on their execution of their daily management duties.

4.2.3.13.2. The size

PB believes that “the size of the institution has the greatest impact on the relationship between members of the SMT”. The principal is referring to the size of the school he is leading and managing. This school, as indicated earlier on in this chapter, has only one principal, no deputy principal, and HoDs who were co-opted into the SMT as they are senior teachers. It should also be noted that the principal at this school has no office, nor do the HoDs. All SMT members and staff members share one classroom, which serves as both the principal’s office and the staffroom.

As the school is small, all SMT members are being given more work to do, such as also teaching. This issue causes other members of the SMT to have regular conflicts with the principal, because they are often under severe stress.

4.2.3.13.3. Time

PA highlights that the other issue that impacts negatively on any relationships within a school is time consciousness among SMT members. According to him, some members have a serious problem of “non-compliance of sticking to time”. He also complains that these staff members have a problem of meeting deadlines, especially regarding submissions to the circuit office. According to this principal, some of these members get irritated when having to be reminded by him to make submissions on time. This causes unnecessary conflicts and frictions among the SMT members.

4.2.3.13.4. Co-opted HoDs

The HoDs at school B and one HoD at school C so far have not been officially and permanently employed by the State. They were co-opted into the SMT office on the basis of being senior teachers. They do not have any (official) authority compared to other officially and permanently employed HoDs. Some staff members do not take them seriously, especially when the principals of the schools are absent from school. This could be the reason why principal PC said, “the HoD will find it a little bit difficult to manage”, especially during his absence. Co-opted HoDs, according to PC, sometimes find themselves in confusing role situations because of the Teachers Unions at the school. The union members would verbally attack them for being the principal’s ‘puppets’ and not being ‘comrades’. They would then feel torn between being ‘comrades’ and being ‘managers’ at school. According to PC, this conflict would sometimes create tensions among the SMT members.

4.2.3.13 Conflicts

SMT1A and SMT2A acknowledge that there are conflicts among SMT members. SMT2A believes that where there is a positive relationship, there also has to be some conflict, their school included. According to SMT1A, challenges among SMT members are mainly caused by “financial matters” and that some members of the SMT believe that “the SGB was given excessive powers regarding the financial matters of the school”. SMT1A further argues that SGB members’ excessive powers over the finances of schools causes the schools to allocate funds under budget regarding the curriculum matters. According to him, “curriculum matters are no longer given the necessary budget” as a result.

4.2.3.14. Challenges experienced

The focal point of this section is the challenges the SMT members experience regarding the allocation and performance of their duties in their teams.

4.2.3.14.1. Understaffing

PB believes that the challenge caused by understaffing impact negatively on the allocation and performance of roles, tasks and duties on the SMTs. Similarly, SMT2C perceives the “shortage of teachers” as the major challenge when faced with the execution and performance of their tasks. SMT2C further maintains that teacher shortages was sometimes caused by the process called the Rationalisation and Redeployment (hereafter, R & R) of teachers from one school to another. This SMT members views this process as the main cause of instability in schools.

4.2.3.14.2. Misplaced HoDs

PC claims that the other serious challenge among SMT members is HoDs heading the wrong departments. In essence, because of understaffing, HoDs would be forced to head any department, irrespective of their particular skill. For example, a HoD who majored in languages would be heading the science stream or the commercial stream or both. According to PC, this ultimately affects the general performance of the school. PC also acknowledges that most HoDs lack the relevant information and knowledge due to the fact that they did not “further their studies on management” and PC believes that “this is the biggest problem”.

4.2.3.14.3. Content of work

SMT2A believes that disagreement between the DoE and the teachers was a major challenge for them in as far as the content taught in schools. According to this participant, teachers are reluctant to teach the content the DoE requires them to offer because they feel it is not up to standard and is very inferior. This participant further believes that the local DoE is dysfunctional, and this does not improve the relations with teachers.

4.2.3.14.4. Submissions

SMT1A claims that “some educators do not honour the submission dates, making it a challenge to the SMT”. It should be noted that the Department of Education requires schools to make regular submissions, and if some teachers do not submit on time, this will

create problems for the SMT as it would mean they would be failing as managers of schools. This issue or challenge was also addressed under the theme 'time consciousnesses.

4.2.3.15. How to overcome challenges experienced as viewed by participants

This section will also be subdivided into subsections (subthemes) for clearer understanding. It should be noted that this section focuses on mechanisms, which participants propose to overcome the challenges they experience.

4.2.3.15.1. Workload

Workload has been a challenge that most SMT members experience at their schools and one that is a serious challenge to them. As a result, some participants propose mechanisms to overcome this challenge. PA suggests to decrease the workload for SMT members by "augmenting the workforce" and also incentivising them where the workload cannot be reduced.

4.2.3.15.2. Lack of information

PC perceives lack of information as the major deterrent in as far as the effective and efficient management of schools is concerned. This is also tied to perceived lack of academic knowledge with regard to managerial duties. PC suggests that a course on management offered specifically to SMT members would help a great deal. The participant further suggests that SMT members must be encouraged to attend management meetings organised by the DoE to gain exposure and experience.

4.2.3.15.3. Understaffing

PB perceives understaffing as the major challenge at schools, and also suggests that employment of more staff members, especially those in management positions, could bring a relief to schools, reducing workloads and resulting inefficiencies.

4.2.3.15.4. Leadership

According to Tondeur (2008:9), “leaders give examples and stimulate members of their organisations”. This assertion purports that leaders have to work closely with subordinates if they hope to succeed as leaders and managers of schools.

During the interviews, it was evident that there are still some leaders, principals specifically, who are reluctant to involve other subordinates, especially in the SMT when leading and managing their schools. As a means of trying to address this challenge, SMT1A suggests that leaders need to lead by example and must be able to create a climate conducive for working” so that the staff in turn can be able to “give inputs” and take ownership of decisions and resolution taken in SMTs. PB suggests more teamwork among SMT members, and SMT2B suggests better communication among SMT members.

4.3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A number of themes emerged from the data presented in the previous chapter. The sub-questions were guided by the main research question, which is; Do members of the school management team understand their duties according to PAM? These themes are detailed as follows:

4.3.1. Teamwork

Participants indicate that most principals still have a problem with teamwork. The response from most participants is in conflict with the distributed theory, which this study is modelled around. The participants’ perceptions are also in conflict with what other authors suggest (Rhodes & Beneike, 2008; Harris, 2002; Huber, 2004). They described teamwork as working together for better results. This lack of teamwork leads to the next research question, whether SMT members actually know what their duties are or should be.

Gronn (2002:423) proposed the hypothesis that some principals still do not believe in working closely together with their subordinates because there is no resistance from their subordinates to their approach, something that seems to be more apparent in the South African situation.

The inability by some principals to work in teams is further supported by van Mescht and Tyala (2008) and Harries (2008), who argued that some principals still have a problem with their actual teams. Some principals are also obviously loathe to let go of their singular and ultimate power. One participant indicated that the principal was the one who allocated them duties “willy nilly”, and that did not go down well with her. She further indicated that the principal would give them other duties that were not part of tasks allocated to them, and expected them to act promptly on them. She said, “I don’t like the way the principal will come to me and say I want that thing now”. There is no teamwork involved.

4.3.2. SMT members’ understanding of the duties of other team members

All three principals claim to know the PAM (1998) document that carries the roles and responsibilities of SMT members. Two HoDs also know of the PAM (1998) document and its contents. One HoD reports only to have heard of it.

The inaccessibility of the PAM (1998) document to all SMT members in the three selected schools makes it difficult for SMT members to know, understand and accept their roles. This leads to the main research question, which seeks to investigate the SMT members’ understanding of their duties as stipulated in PAM (1998), which is meant to promote instructional leadership among SMT members.

Instructional leadership is perceived as that which promotes good relationship among SMT members (Bevoise, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Instructional leadership complements distributed leadership in that it promotes shared leadership, which according to Jackson and Marriot (2012), Grant (2009) and Harries (2004), promotes participative leadership. In the South African context, researchers such as Naicker and Mestry (2011) and Harries (2002) declared that distributed leadership promotes shared and participative leadership. The two concepts are reflected in this study as it uses these concepts and the distributed theory to answer the main research question, which aims to establish the SMT members’ understanding of duties as outlined in the PAM (1998) document.

4.3.3. Workload distribution

Participants report their dissatisfaction with the way principals –as members of the SMT – distribute most of the duties and hold onto powers that suit them. Mescht and Tyala (2008) also observed that some principals abused their positions to the detriment of other members of the SMT. The primary question which the study tries to establish is whether members of the SMT fully know and understand their roles and duties as prescribed in the PAM (1998). The PAM (1998) document details the duties of each member of the SMT and this, in essence, implies that members of the SMT should not have a problem regarding the distribution of duties among SMT members. However, probably because of such document not being available to SMT members and thus no knowledge available of their rights and duties, there exists unequal distribution of duties by the principals.

4.3.4. HoDs with expertise

One of the recommendations made in Chapter 5 is that the DoE should employ HoDs with relevant expertise. This point was raised as most HoDs positions could not be filled due to the deputy principal's inability to employ them permanently and too few positions being filled, resulting in a lack of appropriate skills and qualifications being utilised.

Hoadly, Christies and Word's declared that HoDs are the ones who are supposed to lead and manage the operations in the school, specifically the curriculum. However, most participants, especially HoDs, indicate that they are unable to be effective in their daily duties because subordinates do not take them seriously because of their temporary employment in those posts, and this makes them less effective even in cases where they may know what the PAM (1998) requires them to do.

Van de Venter and Kruger (2010:68) and Van der Westhuizen (1992:38) state that management involves doing things with the help and support of other members of the organisation. This is in line with the distributed theory that underpins this study. This theory views leadership as being shared with staff members (Spillane *et al.*, 2006:15; Grant, 2010:57; Jackson & Marriot, 2012:23).

Grant *et al.* (2010:401), Naicker and Mestry (2011:99) stated that distributed theory requires HoDs to work hand-in-hand with subordinates. However, as most HoDs in this study report that they were not taken seriously by their colleagues as they are in 'acting' or temporary

positions, their relationship with the SMT members becomes negatively affected. This leads to the secondary question, which investigates the relationship between and among the members of the school management team.

4.3.5. PAM document

During the interviews, this researcher also observed that most SMT members do not have any practical experience with the documents that are needed to run an institution like a school, especially the PAM document that outlines their duties as managers. Some of the participants indicate that they do not have the document at their school, they have only heard about it and would appreciate having a copy at their school:

According to this researcher's knowledge and the prescripts of the DoE, it is compulsory for every school to have the PAM (1998) document as contained in the Employment of Educators Act no. 76 of 1988. This is a legal requirement as the document guides management and SMT members how to share the responsibilities at school. The availability of this document should also provide some clarity and subsequently decrease the levels of tensions among SMT members, because everyone will know exactly what is expected of them in those teams. The workload could also eventually be distributed more evenly among members.

4.3.6. Managerial expertise

The majority of participants in this study demonstrate a lack of knowledge and information in relation to managerial duties. That also implies that they do not know the exact roles each team member is supposed to take on, nor do all of them have the requisite management skills. This is probably a result of the fact that most of them were co-opted into the SMTs. They relied mainly on their principals who would tell them how to function as an SMT member. It is mainly the HoDs who are affected by this situation.

4.3.7. SMT members' understanding of their duties

Most HoDs seem to interpret their role as that of monitoring and moderation of teachers' school work. Some SMT members also teach and execute administration duties, as stipulated in PAM (1998).

4.3.8. SMT members' understanding of the duties of other team members

This question aimed to establish what informs SMT members of the roles each one of them is supposed to play in their teams. All three principals indicate that the PAM document is the most important document in school management. Three HoDs also know about the PAM document, even though one HoD never read a copy. The other two HoDs do not seem to know what role to play in the SMT, obviously not having internalised the content of the PAM document. This sentiment is expressed by SMT2B, who states that "only the principal tells me what I have to do".

4.4. SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher presented the data obtained from participants of the three secondary schools in the Sepitsi Circuit. These data was mainly collected through interviews with participants. While interviews were the major tool for gathering the data, the researcher supported the evidence with observation and field notes taken during the interviews. This chapter presented the findings from both the literature and the interviews.

The collected data was arranged into themes. Those major themes were developed from the transcribed data. The themes related to the concepts that formed the conceptual framework of this study. As a result, the following themes from the conceptual framework were developed: Teaching; Administrative: Personnel. These themes were developed and analysed in relation to the school management team members' duties in those teams.

Sub-themes were developed by this researcher while studying the data collected. The following were the sub-themes that were discussed in detail in this chapter: General functions of the SMT; General duties of the SMT regarding teaching; General administration

duties of the SMT; General duties of the SMT regarding personnel management; Allocation of duties to the SMTs.

This chapter further elaborated on the sub-themes that were related to the research questions that guide this study. The developed sub-themes are as follows: How do SMT members know their duties; Knowledge of duties by SMT members; Relationships among SMT members; Understanding of PAM; Factors that have an impact on SMT relations; Challenges experienced and how to overcome those challenges.

This chapter further elaborated on the research findings of the study. During the literature study, it was indicated that most members of the school management did not know what their specific duties in those teams were. During the interviews, this researcher observed the confusion among members of the school management team in as far as their roles and their specific duties were concerned. Some principals felt that the HoDs wanted to take over the principal's role, while on the other hand, some HoDs felt that the principals were not willing to get input from SMT members and they remained very autocratic.

The next chapter will deal with a brief discussion of the findings, recommendations, the significance of the study, suggestion for further study, and the study's limitations.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the duties of the School Management Team (SMT's) members in the Sepitsi circuit of the Lebowakgomo district of the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The major aim of this study was to investigate whether the members of the SMT understand their duties as outlined in the Personnel Administration Measures document and also whether they understand the roles of other members in the same SMT.

5.2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section focuses on the summary of findings with regard to the literature review and data collected from the field.

This section will be divided into the following sub-themes. The sub-themes were developed during data analysis of this study. This researcher regards these sub-themes as very important for this study.

The major findings will be outlined under the following themes; Teaching duties; Administrative duties; and Personnel duties. These duties will be discussed in relation to the roles played by members of the SMT in a school situation.

The above themes were informed by the concept of distributed leadership and duties of SMT members as stipulated in PAM (1998).

5.2.1. Duties of SMT with regard to:

5.2.1.1. Teaching (principals)

Kruger (2010:247) maintained that the principal has to create an environment for “effective teaching and learning” in a school. A similar sentiment was shared by Bush and Glover (2010:10), who declared that the principals have to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning in schools.

PAM (1998), however, goes beyond the creation of a conducive environment and requires the principals to allocate a certain percentage of their time to teaching in a classroom. However, the participants in this study did not see teaching as one of the principals’ role, obviously not aware of the requirements listed in PAM. Their sentiments are aligned with those stated by scholars.

5.2.1.2. Administration (Principal)

The responses regarding the administrative tasks are quite diverse among participants. Some members of the SMT argue that the role of SMTs lies merely in the allocation of duties, while other participants view the principal’s role as being that of the overseer. Similarly, PAM perceives the role of the principal in an administrative light and seeing to it that effective teaching takes place in schools. The size of the school and the available personnel to handle all tasks also obviously influence the distribution of roles.

5.2.1.3. Personnel (Principal)

Most participants agree that the principal is the final accounting officer in a school. They also feel that principals have the ultimate power and control over subordinates. PAM, on the other hand, perceives the principal’s role as being more of a guide for subordinates. They should interact and work closely with subordinates, according to PAM. Some principals still see the teachers’ role as being in the classroom and having nothing to do with management (Grant *et al.*, 2010:401).

5.2.1.4. Teaching (Deputy Principals)

During this study, most participants seemed to have a problem when defining the differences between the role of the principal and that of the deputy principal. However, some participants maintained that the role of deputy principal is that of being a “stand-in” for the principal, especially in his absence. Most participants view the role of the deputy principal as leaning too much to execution of administrative duties.

5.2.1.5. Administrative (Deputy Principal)

PAM (1998) views the deputy principal’s role as that of being the second in command to the principal. Respondents showed some confusion regarding how the role of the principal and that of the deputy principal differed when discussing administration. This confusion could probably be caused by the fact that there was a lot of multitasking among the SMT members, especially those in school A and school C. The other reason could be that the permanently employed deputy principal at school B was not available for the interview; he had to be replaced by the HoD, who probably did not have sufficient knowledge as to what the administrative duties of the deputy principal were or should be.

5.2.1.6. Personnel (Deputy Principal)

When discussing how the deputy principal interacts with subordinates, respondents seem to agree with the sentiments stated in the PAM document. Buchel (1995:89) argued that the deputy principal “liaises between the staff and the principal”. This assertion is in agreement with the PAM document, which advises that the deputy principal has to act in the absence of the principal.

5.2.1.7. Teaching (HoDs)

Similar to the view of the roles of principals and deputy principals, the HoDs are perceived as overseers of other educators’ activities in a school situation. PAM (1998), on the other hand, stipulates that the HoDs must also teach, as outlined under distribution of duties in the PAM document.

5.2.1.8. Administration (HoD)

HoDs are responsible for management of their respective departments (Buchel, 1995:64). Similarly, Nkabinde (2012:10) further regarded the HoD as someone who manages teaching and learning activities in the school. According to this researcher's opinion, HoDs are the core of the teaching and learning activities in a school situation because they are in charge of the curriculum. A similar view is held by SMT1C, who postulates that "the HoDs role is to help the principal manage the school". Generally, most participants in this study seem to agree that the role of the HoD is "to manage and support educators". However, one participant (SMT1C) argues that the HoDs role is also "to take minutes" during SGB meetings. Perhaps this SMT member had to take SGB minutes because of the small size of the school.

5.2.1.9. Personnel (HoDs)

There are distinct similarities between the personnel functions and the administrative functions of the HoDs. According to PAM, the HoDs have to be experts in the respective departments and their respective subjects. They have to be able to manage their respective departments effectively. Managements of subjects automatically entails management of subordinates (personnel).

A similar view is shared by most participants in this study. The principal of school B believes that HoDs "ensure quality teaching in class", and further posits that the HoDs major role in a school is to "monitor and support" the teachers.

5.3. SUMMARY OF SECONDARY FINDINGS

5.3.1. Role confusion

It was clear from the literature study that there was some role confusion among SMT members in the execution of their daily activities. This role confusion probably emanates from the fact that SMT members are not clear of what their duties are in the SMT, and they are probably not clear either of what the roles of other members of the SMT are supposed to be (Mescht & Tyala, 2008; Grant *et al.*, 2010).

This problem is also evident during the interviews, when most HoDs are stating that they are not happy with how the principals work with them. SMT2B indicates that “our manager will command you to do something that he did not allocate during allocation”.

During the interviews, the researcher observed that most HoDs did not see actual teaching as being part of their roles; instead they felt their role should have been one of policy crafting and monitoring of teachers’ work. According to PAM, teaching should be part of their task, but this may not be their sole responsibility.

5.3.2. Relationship challenges

It was evident from the interviews that there exists an on-going challenge regarding the relationships among SMT members in the schools that participated in this study. SMT2A postulates that there is a challenge in as far as their relationship with the principal and among themselves as members of the SMT is concerned. Some principals declare that “there is no mutual respect, shared concept, team relation and spirit of collegiality”. The other problem is that some principals still regard themselves as being omnipotent. There seems to be a major gap between the principal and the remaining staff, with a loss of trust, a lack of input or consultation, or lack of fair allocations of tasks occurring.

A serious relationship challenge is evident in school B. The HoD was close to tears when asked how she knew what her specific duties were in the SMT. The researcher observed that the attitudes of the principal of school B and the principal of school C are similar. They are in direct conflict with the views shared by PAM (1998) and the Department of Education (1996), which require schools to decentralise leadership in schools. This view was also shared by Grant *et al.* (2010) when they stated that “the main idea underpinning this view is that leadership is not individual or positional, but instead is a group process in which a range of people can participate”.

5.3.3. Workload distribution

It was evident from the data presented that there were some signs of equitable allocation of duties to members of the SMT. It was only in very small schools, like School B, that SMT members tend to become overloaded because of fewer teachers.

5.3.4. Lack of cooperation

In a study conducted by Mescht and Tyala (2008), they found out that there was a lack of trust among SMT members. This led to disloyalty towards each other. These authors believed that this challenge was caused by lack of clarity of the duties of each members of SMT. Similarly, during the interviews; it was evident from the principals of school C and school B that they experienced some major challenges regarding cooperation among SMT members in particular and teachers in general. Only PA seemed very pleased with the way SMT members and teachers work together.

5.4. THE NEED FOR DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

The findings of this study indicate that it is necessary for South African schools to opt for distributed leadership in order to succeed as institutions of learning. The study established that even though there was a move towards distributed leadership in some schools (Grant *et al.*, 2010), not enough was being done to ensure that there was buy-in from the principals towards adopting a positive attitude of shared roles in schools. It was also evident from the interviews that the majority of HoDs would like to be involved in the decision-making processes at schools, but some were denied that opportunity by the principals who wanted to retain their own power.

5.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

This study is valuable to the researcher in a personal capacity and also for his professional development. This study also has a significant value to policy-makers and implementers in the province at all levels to improve the standard of education. This study elicited some challenges and strengths that will help the Department of Education to improve the way in

which they manage education in the province. This study also outlined the significance of distributed leadership in South African schools.

The findings of this study should assist policy-makers in the DoE to find ways of educating SMT members about distributed leadership and the significance thereof in their management of schools. The study highlights the importance of the PAM document being distributed to all schools, being accessible to all SMT members and such members becoming trained in the application and implementation of the rules therein. This should significantly assist SMTs in gaining the required knowledge about exactly what their duties are in the SMTs.

The findings of this study will also help tertiary institutions to include, in their training of educators, the contemporary theories like distributed leadership in the curriculum. This will equip prospective teachers and principals with the relevant and needed skills.

Furthermore, the findings of this study will contribute to the current research literature in education management in general and also concerning current leadership theories such as; participative leadership, distributed leadership and teacher leadership.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the findings that were outlined, the following recommendations are made, which are listed below:

5.6.1. Workshops

The Department of Education in the Limpopo Province should hold regular workshops and seminars for all SMT members in schools, especially secondary schools because of the expected outcomes of Grade 12s at the end of the year. These meetings should be conducted at least once a quarter. The workshops should focus on the challenges these members experience in the execution of their duties and how to overcome those challenges.

5.6.2. In-service training

It should be compulsory for SMT members to be entered into in-service training programmes by the Department of Education and also at the expense of the Department of Education. There should be some form of monetary incentives on successful completion of those courses. This will guarantee that teachers looking for promotion to HoD, or SMT members, will be up-to-date on the latest management skills and theories; that they will understand the implications of the PAM rules and regulations and will be able to apply them in their schools. On-going in-service training should lead to better skilled, up-to-date teachers and thus better education in South Africa.

5.6.3. Programme on distributed leadership

There should be a special programme for principals that outlines the significance of distributed leadership in schools. This should reduce or eliminate fears among principals as to why teachers should be actively involved in decision-making processes in the schools.

5.6.4. HoD with expertise

The Department of Education should employ HoDs according to their expertise and place them in the relevant positions in schools. Mismatched placements will result in frustrated HoDs and a loss of their skills, resulting in poorer teaching at these schools.

5.6.5. Programme on duties of SMTs

There should be a special training programme/seminar for SMT members that outlines their duties to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings and role confusion among members of the SMT. This programme can be developed by the Department of Education and held at the relevant tertiary institutions or alternative suitable locations.

5.7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study show that there is lack of clarity on the intended duties among SMT members, as outlined in Chapter four. This study also shows that some SMT

members do not experience participative management and leadership in schools, especially in the schools of the Sepitsi Circuit of the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The following recommendations for future research are therefore made:

A study similar to the present one should be conducted, but on a larger scale. Researchers should conduct a similar research in other circuits in the Limpopo Province as well as in other provinces to investigate the role and duties of SMT members and the respective principals and teachers and their impact on the academic performance of the learners in the province as compared to other provinces in South Africa.

The study on the duties of SMT members should also be conducted among other members of staff, such as the CS1 teachers. This will help them when they join the SMT to know exactly what is expected of them.

The Department of Education should appoint members of the school management team permanently in their respective positions, for example, principals, deputy principals and heads of department.

There should be a study conducted that investigates the impact of the workload of SMT members and their performance on their daily activities as stipulated in PAM.

The Department of Education must surely have an influence on the subjects offered by tertiary institutions that produce prospective teachers. The teachers who are produced by these tertiary institutions should be able to produce quality results in schools. The Department of Education should influence the crafting of the curriculum for these prospective teachers in those tertiary institutions.

Future researchers should investigate the understanding of the duties among curriculum advisors of the Sepitsi circuit. A thorough investigation will help in developing the schools and the circuits.

5.8. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were a few limitations that need to be considered.

Some SMT members were not really enthusiastic to participate in this study. Some SMT members suspected that the researcher could be a DoE representative, and it was a challenge to get them to trust and open up during the interviews.

While conducting the interviews, the researcher realised that the validity of this study could have been strengthened by involving more schools, if not all the schools in the circuit. Even though the interviews went smoothly, and even though identified participants were interviewed, there was however, one member of the SMT at School B who did not participate in the interviews due to personal reasons. Her participation in this study could have helped in strengthening the validity of this study.

Two schools did not have permanently employed deputy principals. This limited the study regarding how they perceive their duties and those of other members in the SMT. It was only school B that had a permanently employed deputy principal.

The actual time spent with the interviewees was not enough, because most wanted to be interviewed during breaks and during sport times, which was on Wednesdays. More time spent with each person could probably also resulted in more information.

5.9. SUMMARY

This is a more comprehensive summary because it outlines what each chapter entails. Each chapter will be briefly summarised in this summary.

Chapter one provides an introduction to and background for the study reported on here by briefly discussing the legislative framework for the composition of and the assigning of duties to members of SMTs in South Africa. This chapter also looks briefly at some of the research conducted in South Africa on the duties and roles of SMT members, and concludes that there appears to be a misunderstanding among SMT members about their duties as members of the SMT.

This chapter sets out the main research question for this study as “How do members of School Management Teams (SMTs) in secondary schools understand their duties as prescribed by the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM, 1998)?” and the secondary research questions as:

- a) What do School Management Team members understand their duties in the School Management Team to be?
- b) What do members of School Management Team understand the duties of the other members of the team to be?
- c) How does this understanding affect relationships between and among the members of the School Management Team?

This chapter further outlined the research methodology and design for this study. A qualitative approach was used for this study, and the interpretivist paradigm was selected for this study. Semi-structured interviews were used as the data collection instrument for this study. The participants were SMT members who were selected purposely, namely; the principals, the deputy principals and the Heads of Departments.

Chapter two focused on the literature study. The following themes emerged from the literature:

- a) Role confusion. It was evident from literature study that there was some confusion among SMT members when executing their daily activities, because it was not clear as to what the duties of each member of the SMT’s duties are in those teams (Mestry & Tyala, 2008; Grant *et al.*, 2010). This confusion and no clear boundaries or clear allocations created tension among SMT members.
- b) Lack of cooperation is another theme that emerged from literature study. The study conducted by Mescht and Tyala (2008), established that there is a lack of trust among SMT members and as a result this leads to lack of cooperation among members of the team. Members become disloyal towards each other as a result.
- c) Relational challenges is the other theme that emerged from literature study. This theme was mainly caused by principals who still viewed themselves as superiors as compared to other members of the SMT (Harries, 2002:11). Their view is in direct conflict with rules stated by PAM (1998). The Department of Education Circular (1996) and Grant *et*

al. (2010) argued that leadership is not about an individual, but about people working together as a team.

- d) Workload as a theme also emerged from literature study. Naicker and Mestry (2011:99) maintained that “principals are encountering heavy workloads”. This was a result of the fact that principals are not ready “to relinquish power and control to others” (Harries, 2002:12).

This chapter also highlighted the issue of international and national perceptions of scholars and researchers on the duties of SMTs. Internationally and nationally, the scholars acknowledged the fact that there is some reluctance for school principals to adopt the distributed leadership approach when considering their leadership roles in schools. Most school principals still prefer the hierarchical order wherein the principal is still ‘omnipotent’. Some principals still fear that some teachers may ‘take over’ their leadership duties if given too many responsibilities (Rhodes & Beneike, 2006; Huber, 2004; Wallace, 2002; van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008).

Chapter three outlined the research methodology used in this study. This chapter further outlined the research approach used, which is the qualitative approach. This approach was very relevant to this study because it is an approach that uses mostly words. Interaction with the participants is through personal, face-to-face interviews. The research paradigm for this was the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm is more rooted on how people interpret their experiences and what meaning is attached to those experiences. This study investigated participants’ understanding of their duties as experienced in their natural habitats, which is the school in this study. Data collected was through semi-structured individual interviews to give room for honest and unchannelled responses.

This chapter further outlined who the participants for this study were. The participants were members of the school management team, namely, the principal, the deputy principal and the HoDs. The participants were selected from three secondary schools out of the nine in the circuit. The schools were selected purposively, because of their close proximity to this researcher. The participants were sampled because of their expert knowledge when coming to leadership and management in schools. The participants were selected on their service and experience in the teaching field, especially at management level. Data collected was analysed through content analysis. Data analysis involves grouping together and

labelling of data as per groupings (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, 559). In this study, the researchers grouped particular data analysed through content analysis technique.

Chapter four presented the data as obtained from participants of the three secondary schools in the Sepitsi circuit. In this chapter, the collected data was arranged into themes. Those themes were developed from the transcribed data. The themes were related to the concepts that formed the conceptual framework of this study. As a result, the following themes from the conceptual framework were developed: Teaching; Administrative; Personnel. These themes were developed and analysed in relation to the school management team members' duties in those teams as stipulated in PAM (1998).

The other themes that were discussed in this chapter were; General functions of the SMT; General duties of the SMT regarding teaching; General administration duties of the SMT; and General duties of the SMT regarding personnel management.

This chapter further elaborated on the sub-themes that were related to the research questions that guide this study. The developed sub-themes are as follows: How do SMT members know their duties; Knowledge of duties by SMT members; Relationship among SMT members; Understanding of PAM; Factors that have an impact on SMT relations; Challenges experienced and how to overcome those challenges.

Chapter five summarised the main findings of this study. The chapter summarised and displayed the duties of SMT members, the challenges faced by these members, the limitations and also the benefits of the distributed theory. This researcher further observed numerous aspects from international perceptions and South African perceptions on duties of the SMTs. This study should be helpful to the Department of Education in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The recommendations made in this study, if implemented, can have a very positive impact on the standard of education in this circuit in particular, and in the province in general.

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