

THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMSTOWARDS THE  
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NEW MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WITHIN  
MALAMULELE WEST CIRCUIT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE

by

Masenyani Joseph Baloyi

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Supervisor: Ms. MF Rangongo

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the Degree Master in Business Administration (MBA) has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university, that it is my work in design and execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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**M.J. Baloyi (Mr)**

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**Date**

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research report to the Almighty God, for giving me the power to complete it. I also wish to dedicate this work in solemn respect to the most loved and respected members in the family, my late father, Mzamani Johannes Baloyi and my mother Mamaila N'wa-Gezani Baloyi.

## **ABSTRACT**

The functioning of the school within the new education dispensation has brought about radical changes in the management of schools where the formation of school management teams (SMTs) became a necessity in order to assist principals in the day to day management of schools so that effective, proper management can be applied. The introduction of the New Management System compelled the heads of institutions and all other relevant stakeholders to undergo comprehensive management training in order to contribute towards the management of schools. However, very little has been done to evaluate the perceptions of people who have to implement the new management system as to whether it is working or not.

This study was aimed at finding out the perceptions of the School Management Teams (SMTs) and School Principals towards the effectiveness of the new management system within the Malamulele West Circuit of the Limpopo Province. The study also intended to explore the gap existing between schools management policy and the way it is understood and implemented by the School Management Teams in schools.

The study utilized a questionnaire as an instrument of collecting data. Interviews were arranged with the respondents and they were interviewed following the standardized questionnaire.

The findings show that School Management Teams did not feel effective in managing schools using the new management system. The SMTs did not have confidence in implementing the strategic management plans and practicing management effectively. The School Management Teams recommended amongst others, that they be sent for training. They envisaged that training programmes would assist School Management Teams in developing the competencies they need to perform their best in their current jobs. The study has also revealed that both School Management Teams and School principals feel that they are not properly trained in management skills.

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## **ACRONYMS USED IN THE RESEARCH**

ANC:	African National Congress
OBE:	Outcomes-Based Education
SGBs:	School Governing Bodies
SMT:	School Management Team
DoE:	Department of Education
FET:	Further Education and Training

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Prior to 1994, the South African government used education as a tool to create and maintain a racially divided society. Historically black schools did not get enough resources, and educators were often not properly trained as they used to work immediately after passing grade 10. The conditions prior to 1994 were that the education system in South Africa was based on race and it was controlled by four Education Departments, for Blacks called Bantu Education, Coloureds, Indians and Whites. The administration of the education system in South Africa since the inception of democracy which led to the democratization of education needed to be reviewed, shaped, reshaped and adjusted. The change needed to suit the teaching and learning environment that has shifted in content-based teaching to Outcomes- Based Education (OBE). This new approach in the education system is learner-centered and led to shifting in assessment. This required a transformation of the school management teams, (Mathibe, 2007: 4).

Prior to 1994, School Principals were regarded as the only people who understood how a school should be run and managed in order to produce the intended results. A committee was appointed in 2000 to review the structure of the education system. After 1994, it became clear that the management of schools does not rely on the hands of the school principals. As a result school management teams (SMTs) were included.

According to Brown and Harvey (2006:4), change is one of the characteristics which indicate Organizational Development (OD) as a planned strategy. Change is designed to meet some objectives and is dependent on the inputs from the diagnosis of the problem. They further indicate that the identification of areas for improvement and problems is an important element in developing a high performing organization. However, the success of the implementation of what leads to the realization of change is among others, dependent on the perceptions of those involved in its practice. Thus, the current study seeks to find out the perceptions of the SMTs on the new management system in schools within the Malamulele West Circuit.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Due to the dawn of democracy after 1994, the Education Management has assumed a greater level of requiring new Quality Managerial Techniques. This stems from a need for South Africa's Ministry Of Education to be able to compete globally. Further, the South African system of education also needed to be seen as democratic, which intended to improve the quality of public education by holding everybody accountable. In addition, it is important that the country's academic knowledge adhere to the internationally set standards of quality.

The shift from content-based education to an outcomes-based form of education bears witness to the country's program of raising school management standards to international level. Due to this new shift, a new way of managing schools had to be introduced. The School Management Teams were introduced in all schools comprising of principals, deputy principals, and heads of learning areas (Heads of Departments), master teachers and senior teachers within the school. Formerly, school management structures were mainly comprised of parents who lacked the knowledge about school matters. Those structures displayed failure in linking the school with the community.

The functioning of the school within the new education dispensation requires the formation of school management teams (SMTs) in order to assist principals in the management of schools so that effective, proper management can be applied. The introduction of the New Management System compels the heads of institutions and all other relevant stakeholders to undergo a comprehensive management training in order to contribute towards the management of schools. SMTs who do not manage institutions in a proper way where the work done by teachers is not monitored timeously may result in high failure rate of learners at the end of the year. The South African Schools Act no 84 of 1996 laid the foundation for the active participation of School Management Teams, educators, parents and members of the community in the management of education.

Furthermore, the monitoring of institutions offering education by licensing and accrediting them as well as the establishment of the South African Qualification Authority Act No 67 of 2008, the South African Qualification Frame Work and other structures set to monitor the SMTs perception of their roles in managing schools, reflect explicitly how the country strives

to have quality public education. In relation to the school management system the Department of Education (2000:2) argues that the new education policy requires school leaders (managers) to work in a democratic and participatory way to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective service delivery. However, many school leaders are struggling to translate policy into practice.

In support of considering various ways of effective school leadership and management and involving all interested parties in the process, Langois (1992:2) argues that effective team functioning requires finding time, selecting team members, empowering team members, providing training in relevant school management skills and knowledge, developing shared goals and facilitating team functioning particularly in the early stages of the team's work. In case SMTs develop programmes or decide to act on certain things, all members of the team as well as both parents and learners have to be involved.

The school managers are expected to implement educational programmes after consulting parents and learners. Meetings for arriving at joint decisions have to be held. There are opinions and beliefs that educators do not understand what the National Curriculum Statements actually require of them. As a result there is no match between teachers' actual performance and expectations. Given the background information, a need arises to check how SMTs within an area populated by few literate people, residing in poorly resourced rural areas come to be familiar and get used to democratized school management approaches. In addition, given the new system of school management, it becomes important to find out what the SMTs and other parties within the school management perceive to be their role and responsibility and whether they think that the new system is effective or not. Further, how each school principal adapts to the new management strategies have to be probed. For all these questions to be answered, it is imperative to check the extent to which SMTs perceive the new management approaches and determine the effectiveness of their roles.

In a democratic country like South Africa, fundamental changes within the education system are expected and they have to be brought about through effective school management techniques with a backing up of positive perceptions from the SMTs. In support of this, Bamburg (1994:1) argues that leading successful change and improvement involves developing and managing critical components of schooling. These components include a

collectively held vision and mission, a strong committed professional community within the school learning environments and promoting standards for students' achievement.

### **11.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

Checking the way in which SMTs manage schools and perceive their roles in the school management system have to be done in order to produce quality results. These results form the basis for effective and efficient citizens of a country. Petersen (1993:1) argues that transformational management (Educational leadership) skills can help in developing high performing teams. Educational Leaders' transformation must be able to inspire, motivate and support teams. Furthermore, this study among other issues, intends to explore the gap existing between schools management policy and the way it is understood and implemented by the School Management Teams in schools.

### **1.4 THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Prior to 1994, the school management system was entirely based on one individual who was the principal who planned everything for the school. After the birth of democracy the new South African Schools Act of 1996 was promulgated. It clearly states that the management of school should not rely on one individual but should be a collective effort of the School Management Team. The SMT, who are the people supposed to manage schools, with the help of the teachers are still not sure of what to do and how to do it. In addition, other members within the SMTs are also not sure of what they are supposed to do or what their roles and responsibilities are. Thus, it is important to conduct research in order to find out whether the school principals and heads of departments feel the new management system it is effective or not, and what suggestions they might have.

It is equally important to find out the same from the teachers. This will hopefully help the education management planners to improve the system if need be. The information given above triggers the following question: *How do SMTs in the transformational stage perceive their roles in an attempt to create effective and efficient schools?* This question has to be addressed because answers thereof would actuate the areas of strengths and weaknesses of the SMTs and also change their perceptions to be positive and lead to yielding desirable results.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Informed by the aforementioned challenges of the implementation of the new school management system in order to create an effective teaching and learning environment i.e. achieve goals of the new school management system, the primary research question therefore is:

*Do School Management Teams perceive themselves to be effective in the new management system?*

### **Sub Questions**

1.5.1 What are the SMTs perceptions of their roles in the management of schools?

1.5.2 Do SMTs feel equipped enough to implement this new management system?

1.5.3 Do SMTs understand the policy on SMTs' operations, i.e. do they understand what their Mandate is

1.5.4 Do SMTs feel / think that the new school management system is effective?

1.5.5 What would SMTs suggest to improve the system?

## **1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To find out what the SMTs perceived as their roles and responsibilities in managing schools.
- To find out if they understood, what they were supposed to do as outlined in the South African Schools Act no 84 of 1996.
- To find out if they felt that they were effective as managers.
- To find out the kind of support they needed to be more effective or to improve their knowledge and management.
- To find out if they felt trained and / or equipped to implement the new management system.
- To find out the perceptions or opinions of SMTs on whether the new management systems had made decisions and implemented them easily.



- To formulate recommendations for future improvement regarding the shaping and reconstruction of more fitting approaches of managing schools in schools within the Malamulele West Circuit in the Vhembe District.

## **1.7 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

The critical terms in this study include Educational Management and School Management Teams and these are clarified below.

### **1.7.1 Educational Management**

In clarifying what educational management is, Westhuisen (1995:55) argues that it is a specific type of work in education which comprises those regulative tasks or actions executed by a person or body in a position of authority in a specific field or area of regulation, so as to allow formative education to take place. To support this, Bush (2003:1) adds that educational management is a field of study and practice concerned with the operation of educational organizations.

According to Butler and Christie (2000:41) management is a function which ensures that things are operating smoothly, that structures are in place to support forward movement, that processes are contained, and that the school is operating efficiently.

An important management function is that of 'holding' the organization providing the framework to fulfill its purpose. In relation to School Based Management William (2000:182) argues that it implies empowering staff to create conditions in schools that facilitate improvement, innovation, and continuous professional growth. Jacobs (1999:353) explains that good classroom management practices are about protecting the rights to receive tuition on the school premises, to allow learners to learn without fear or disturbance.

### **1.7.2 School Management Team**

School management team represents the school's management structure which is responsible for the day to day running of the school affairs and for implementing the departmental policies. According to the Department of Education (2000:8), the school management team is responsible for working out how the school can be classified best in order to bring about the

vision of the school. The school management team that formed the population of this study consisted of the school principals, deputy principals, and heads of departments.

A team is described as two or more individuals interacting with each other to achieve a particular goal and who share a common identity and have common norms. School Management Teams in public schools play a vital role towards the management of such schools because they are the highest decision-making structures within the school. The new education system requires principals of schools to establish the school management teams that will assist in the management of the institutions.

## **1.8 THE RESEARCH METHOD**

### **1.8.1 Research Design**

The research design is the plan according to which we obtain research participants (subjects) and collect information from them. The current study used a descriptive qualitative research design to collect information. The study describes the perceptions of the SMTs on the new management system as well as their perceived roles and responsibilities.

Qualitative research can fundamentally be called a descriptive form of research, it can theoretically be described as an approach rather than a particular design or set of techniques. The researcher chose this approach because it has been used successfully in the description of groups, (small) communities and organizations. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:135) the research design is the plan according to which we obtain research participants (subjects) and collect information from them. Thus, the current study used a descriptive research design to collect information about the perceptions of the SMTs on their roles in the new management system. The researcher chose the phenomenological research strategy to implement in this research. The study is descriptive in nature because it focused in the then and the current status of the education system in South Africa. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:266), descriptive research is concerned with the current status of something and it is concerned primarily with the present and does not involve manipulation of independent variables.

### **1.8.2 Research instrument**

This study used interviews and questionnaires as instruments of collecting data. The questionnaires were designed to include close-ended and open-ended questions and were distributed to the identified individuals in schools in the Malamulele West Circuit. To conduct this section of this study, it took a period of two months.

### **1.8.3 Data collection method**

The research was done in a natural setting and complied with the three characteristics of interviewing as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (1993:40). These include the fact that interviews are conducted with individuals to capture their viewpoints on the research problem. The interviews were semi – structured with closed ended and open-ended questions to provide the participants the opportunity to express their true and honest opinions and words and phrases from the interviews were analysed to contribute to the findings and conclusions.

Appointments were made with respondents and data was collected through face to face interviews which were conducted using questionnaires. The respondents were treated with respect and their names were not be recorded so as to keep them confidential and anonymous.

### **1.8.4 Target population and sampling**

Population refers to the complete set of events, people or things to which research findings are to be applied (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000:550). The study was conducted in the Malamulele West Circuit which is in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province. In terms of socio-economic conditions, the circuit is mainly characterized by high rates of unemployment and illiteracy where most of the villagers do not have access to electricity and clean water. The majority of the schools in the Circuit were characterized by poor structures and school facilities on a day to day basis. The Circuit comprised of 36 schools. For the purpose of the study, all 13 secondary and 23 primary school management teams in the Circuit formed the population of the study. This implies that there were 36 teams, which consist of five members on average.

Sampling is the process of selecting a representative set of cases from a much larger set (Ragin, 1994:191). The researcher got the list of primary and secondary schools from Malamulele West Circuit office. The ages of participants ranged from 35 – 55 years. The teaching experience of participants ranged from 9 – 27 years.

## **1.9 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY**

The study sought to clarify, actuate and illuminate the roles and responsibilities of the SMTs. It will help them develop necessary skills and knowledge required when executing their duties of improving the process of teaching and learning so as to improve the general performance of the school. It will also contribute significantly to the existing literature on the importance of school SMTs and to the existing knowledge on the nature and the extent to which school SMTs handle decision-making processes. Recommendations from this study will hopefully help to improve the management knowledge and skills of SMTs. These will eventually improve the management of schools and their effectiveness as centres of learning.

## **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Bless and Higson-Smith (2006:140) argues that the study of research ethics helps to prevent research abuse and assists investigators in understanding their responsibilities. MacMillan and Schumacher (2006:144) also say that ethical issues are to be considered when researching. The following ethical issues were of interest to the researcher as they are considered to be crucial for the current study:

### **1.10.1 Informed consent**

The researcher explained what the purpose of the research was to all participants and obtained consent from them to conduct the interviews. It was also indicated that participation in this research interview was voluntary and was for the purpose of the study, and that they could withdraw from the study at any point. Welman (2005:201) mentions that the researcher should obtain the necessary permission from the participants after they are thoroughly and truthfully informed about the purpose of the interview and investigations.

### **1.10.2 Privacy and confidentiality of the subjects**

Information given anonymously ensures the privacy of subjects (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport, 2005:61). No names were required from the respondents and they were assured that the information they provided would remain confidential and would be used for study purposes. Furthermore, it was emphasized that their names would not be made available to anyone.

### **1.10.3 Minimizing potential risks**

Rubin and Babbie (1993:59) say that perhaps the clearest instance of this norm in practice concerns revealing of information that would embarrass them or endanger their home life, friendships, jobs and so forth. The researcher in this study avoided any form of activities that could cause any harm to the participants. The interviews were conducted after working hours at the respondents' homes to avoid disturbances at their respective schools.

## **1.11 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This study is limited by the geographical setting on which it is focused as well as its approach of applying qualitative methodology and strategies, thus the results may not be generalizable. The schools within the Malamulele West Circuit in Vhembe District are purposefully selected because the Limpopo Province consists of six Districts and it would have been highly impossible for the researcher to cover all the schools in various Circuits within the six Districts. The study was only confined to black schools since there were no white or multiracial schools in the selected study area.

## **1.12 THE LAYOUT OF THE STUDY**

The study's outline is as follows:

Chapter 1 gives the introduction and the background information to the study.

Chapter 2 presents a review of existing literature on school management systems, the rationale for changing/amending such systems and any lessons from other countries. The literature review also focuses on effective management teams.

Chapter 3 covers the approach to research, the research design principles applied and the methodology employed.

Chapter 4 presents research results.

Chapter 5 gives the conclusions of the study, limitations as well as recommendations for future research and implementation.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, relevant literature pertaining to the way in which the School Management system was prior to 1994 and after 1994 will be discussed as well as the literature regarding the usage of school management principles and techniques in developing, maintaining and sustaining quality.

The chapter commences by outlining the school management system prior and after the birth of democracy in the South African context and also by generally reviewing literature regarding maintaining quality in education and thereafter narrows its focus to a school context. Literature regarding school management has also been consulted in order to develop a theoretical framework for the study.

#### **2.2 DEFINITION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Westhuizen (2005:5) defines the school management system as an organization consisting of different components with the aim of providing effective education according to educational needs of a specific target group. It focuses mainly on developing the inhabitants of a country by achieving changes in learners and adults with resources and facilities at its disposal. A school management system is aimed at providing support for managing educational activities of the school managers and SMT's by processing information.

Telem (1999: 89) defines school management system as a management system designed to match the structure, management task, instructional processes and special needs of the school. As for a broad definition, contributions of the management system to schools can be defined as making programmes more effective, making the teaching process and the changes in learning professional, enabling teachers to exchange their experiences in a more systematic way, working in teams, determining needs of the students, supporting school managers and other staff in doing their duties, developing their effectiveness and efficiency by saving time

(Christopher, 2003:342). School-based management refers to all approaches to the management of public schools or systematic private schools wherein there is significant and consistent decentralization to the level of authority to make decisions related to the allocation of resources (Department of Education, 2005: 06).

### **2.3 THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PRIOR TO 1994**

During the apartheid era education in South Africa was structured so that the control of schools came from the top and the school management was undermined (Department of Education, 2001: 3). The school principal had to manage the school on his own, although the Department of Education made managerial decisions. The principal was expected to be successful if he was a good administrator. School principals worked under conditions that were regulated and were used to receiving and taking instructions. The management style received vast criticisms. The impression given is that this has totally changed in the new dispensation. The school management system prior to 1994 was characterized by segregation and was too much Eurocentric since learners were learning too much about England and Europe, and very little about their own country or their neighbours in Africa. Black education was regarded as exceedingly authoritarian and teacher-dominated at classroom and school level. Learners became alienated from the education system as it emphasized content based or learning by heart for examination purposes only (African National Congress, 1995: 2). Black education was regarded as deliberately training blacks for employment in low-graded occupations in a racially structured economy.

According to the African National Congress (ANC) (1995:3), the education system of South Africa under apartheid was characterized by three features:

- Lack of access to education at all levels of the system;
- Educational doctrines of apartheid; and
- Lack of democratic control within the education system.

All these created problems because the majority of black people received inferior education which failed to serve the needs of all the learners in the country. Due to these problems,



restructuring of the education system became the top priority of the government (Van Wyk and Mothata, 1998: 3).

According to the then Bantu Education's system of approach to SMTs' effectiveness, the circuit inspectors in the education terrain had to visit SMTs while teaching was in progress and at times collect learners' books to view the quantity and the quality of the work done in class. This would go as far as checking the administrative files of the SMTs and other members of the school management team. Findings would lead to tongue lashing and harsher recommendations on what should be done to improve the situation. This was done without giving out notices to the targeted schools. It was often a surprise visit. To negate this practice and in support of cooperative interaction during the monitoring of the SMTs, Sergiovanni (1994:145) argue that "for appraisal to be effective, it should be treated as an ongoing co-operative intervention between the supervisor and subordinates, a shared responsibility and not a once a year confrontation".

Although this form of school managers' assessment formed the foundation of educators' development in increasing their level of competency, it was entirely neither educator- centered nor user- friendly simply because it made teachers to feel being witch hunted and the mode and manner in which corrections were made created negative attitudes between the circuit inspectors, school management teams and the educators.

## **2.4 THE RATIONALE FOR THE CHANGE IN THE SYSTEM**

The Bantu Education Act, (Act No. 47) of 1953 widened the gaps in educational opportunities for different racial groups. Black schools had inferior facilities, teachers and textbooks. During the apartheid era one of the architects of the apartheid system, Hendrik Verwoerd made a statement that blacks ought not to be trained above certain forms of labour (Gillio mee, 2009: 4). The pre –1994 education system was content and memorisation based. The Department of Education decided to deliberately move away from the pre–1994 education system and the associated emphasis on the memorisation of knowledge to an Outcomes-based system of education which would enable learners to asset themselves in their immediate environment and broad community (Wolhuter, 1997: 171).

A significant development in the South African Education System over the past decade has been the move towards site (school) – based management and its associated management approaches since top down exercise of power and centralized control have demonstrably failed to produce the organisational results the advocates of traditional organisational theory claimed it would (Owen, 2001: 327). Under apartheid, the system handed down to schools for implementation was very prescriptive, content – heavy, detailed and authoritarian, with little opportunity for SMTs initiative (Weber, 2008: 12).

The introduction of the Bantu Education policy in 1953 as explained above made the majority of the black people to receive inferior education and to train black people for manual and low jobs in the country. After the new government came into power, the South African School's Act No 84 of 1996 made it possible that discrimination in education comes to an end. Education reform became the priority in South Africa since the establishment of the Government of National Unity in 1994 and has played a key role in redressing the injustices of the apartheid system (Weber, 2008:14). The demise of apartheid in 1994 was heralded nationally and internationally as a victory for democracy and human rights as it offered unique opportunities and responsibilities (Department of Education, 2006:1).

The old South African school system was outdated and a paradigm shift was needed. It has been replaced by a more outcomes-based education system. The previous system was not learner-centred so that it seemed as if the learner was less involved with learning (DoE, 2006:2). The new system is a learner – centred approach and in it the emphasis is on what the learner wants to achieve and on what the learner should be able to know, to understand, to do and to become.

The outcomes based education as outlined in the Department of education (2006:5) stipulates that:

- Learners do not only have to gain knowledge, but should also understand what they learn and thus be able to develop skills, attitudes and values during the learning process.
- Learners become active participants in the learning process and have to take more responsibility for their own learning.

- Learners are given the opportunity to work at their own pace and in different ways according to their individual abilities and level of development.
- Each learner's needs are catered for by means of a variety of instructional strategies and assessment tools.
- The learner is facilitated towards the achievement of outcomes.

The Department of Education, (2006:5) further indicates that the new system of education aims at changing the face of South African education and training, as it will amongst others:

- Integrate education and training;
- Promote lifelong learning for all South Africans;
- Be based on outcomes rather than content;
- Equip all learners with knowledge, competence and orientation needed to be successful after completion of their studies;
- Encompass a culture of human right, multilingualism and nation – building; and
- Aim at producing thinking, competent, future citizens.

## **2.5 THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS (SMTs)**

In a school situation the SMT is constituted by the School principal, the deputy principal and heads of departments. Their core responsibility lies in the management and administration of the school (Department of Education, 2005: 07). The Education Human Resource Management and Development Manual (Department of Education, 2000:2) stipulates that the SMT is a structure that is composed of the higher – ranking educators in an institution and they are there by virtue of the responsibilities they represent. As it has been mentioned, in order for the SMT to function effectively, it must have clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

### **2.5.1 The definition of School Management Team (SMTs).**

The School Management Team represents the school's management structure which is responsible for the day to day running of the school affairs and for implementing the departmental policies. According to the Department of Education (2000:8) the school

management team is responsible for working out how the school can be classified best in order to bring about the vision of the school.

### **2.5.2 The roles and responsibilities of the SMT in the management of schools**

A role can be defined as a set of integrated behaviours associated with an identifiable position (Sergiovanni, 1999: 169). School Management Teams must be made aware of their roles and that they are responsible for the fates of their respective schools and the people associated with them. Being aware of their roles, they must unflinchingly accept the obligation to take the lead in performing them with dedication. According to Bush (2008: 139), it became clear that most School Management Team members are not aware of their roles and lack of in – service training for team members before or after assuming promotion posts was cited as one important factor. School Management Teams are responsible for the management of the day–to–day administration of the school by ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place, and the efficient use of the school’s human and material resources and also putting school policies into practice.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is a growing realization that headship is a prerequisite occupation that requires specific preparation. Bush (2008: 142) notes the following reasons for this paradigm shift:

- The expansion of the role of SMTs in a decentralized system, the scope of leadership has increased;
- The increasing complexity of school contexts, SMTs have to engage with their communities to lead and manage effectively;
- Recognition that preparation is a moral obligation, it is unfair to appoint new SMTs without effective induction; and
- Recognition that effective preparation and development make a difference, and then SMTs are better leaders following a specific training.

Mathibe (2007: 523) says that South African SMTs are not appropriately skilled and trained for school management; hence the designing and content of their training programmes should be geared towards developing requisite skills and knowledge to enable them to transfer their

skills and knowledge to the school situation. Undoubtedly, South Africa's need to compete globally depends in her ability to produce citizens with potentials to enter the international competitive stage. To do so, school SMTs have to be effective. To support setting of higher standards of evaluation for the country to compete globally. Globalization is increasingly being touted as a theoretical and policy framework that would shore up prospects of development in Africa and, in that regard, could represent a paradigm shift, even if it is a flawed paradigm. It has to support teaching and learning, provide information about pupils, teachers and schools, act as a selection and certification device, as an accountability procedure, and drive curriculum and teaching.

For SMTs to function effectively, the intelligent school uses reflective intelligence to make informed choices and to create a rationale from inside the school as well as from outside about what it wants to monitor and evaluate and why. It is a cyclical, rational set achievement of the pupils as its central concern.

The introduction of a more open-ended education system and shifting of the curriculum from content teaching to outcomes-based teaching also meant the adoption of a new open and teacher centered management. Finally, a new approach to school management team's performance was engineered. To put this approach into practice, advocacy and training became a pre-requisite and SMTs had to be brought on board. For the school to function effectively School Management Teams have to be put in place and the roles to be played by each member should clearly be defined. In this regard, Hargreaves (1994:137) argues that the process needs a systematic dimension to it. Intelligent schools utilize self-evaluation strategies in order to reflect on their progress.

The SMT has the day-to-day responsibility for the professional and operational management of the school, under the leadership of the principal. This means making sure that the policies agreed on by the School Governing Bodies (SGB) are put into practice, that all areas in the school function effectively, and that people work productively towards achieving the school's vision and mission. The School Management Teams shares management functions with the principal.

Department of Education (2000:24–28) discusses the most important functions to be performed by SMTs. The following kinds of management functions will be discussed:

- Planning
- Organising
- Leading
- controlling
- An interpersonal function
- An information function
- A team – building function
- Managing school finances
- Setting up participatory structures
- Managing resources
- Keeping records
- Monitoring and evaluation

#### **2.5.2.1 Planning**

Smit, Cronje, Brevis and Vrbra (2007:114) define planning as the ongoing process of developing the business' mission and objectives and determining how they will be accomplished. Planning includes both the broadest view of the school, e.g., its mission, and the narrowest, e.g., a tactic for accomplishing a specific goal. The first component of managing is planning. Planning is the identification of a source of action in order to achieve desired results (Van der Westhuizen: 138). A manager must determine what the school's goals are and how to achieve those goals. Much of this information will come directly from the vision and mission statement for the school. Setting objectives for the goal and following up on the execution of the plan are two critical components of the planning function.

Planning in schools is done at management level by the principal and the SMT and presented down to lower level for scrutiny. The SMT is responsible for agreeing on the rules and procedures for examinations and tests, and for assigning tasks to educators. The most important thing to remember is that procedures should be consistent and fair. The SMT should set the procedures on how to operate in a school. By procedures it means those rules

and regulations which make sure that the school's structure work properly. For example, Staff Development Committee needs to agree on rules for:

- How the committee will make decisions;
- Who the committee will report to;
- How the reporting will be done; and
- How information will be shared between members.

Van der Westhuizen (1991:139) while quoting Marx, (1981: 215-216) highlights the importance of effective planning as follows:

- It is regarded as the starting point of the management action.
- It is the means of establishing whether the school is still moving in the direction of set objectives.
- It helps the SMTs towards the pursuit and achievement of objectives.
- It causes SMTs and principals to think ahead.

### **2.5.2.2 Organising**

Organising is one of the important functions of management and it is the management function which involves designing the structure of the organisation (organisational structure) recruiting people to the organisation and making provision for working conditions and systems to ensure that everyone and everything works together to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Smit et al. (2007:187) also define the process of organising as consisting of assigning the tasks necessary to achieve the organisation's goals to the relevant business units, departments or sections, and then providing the necessary coordination to ensure that these business units, departments or sections work synergistically. The SMT together with the principal should design the school structure by dividing the work, allocating responsibilities to educators so that the business of the school should take place.

An organisational structure refers to the basic framework of formal relationships between responsibilities, tasks and people. In a school situation the principal will be at the top, followed by school management teams then educators and end with learners. Decisions are

made by top management and lower management implements the decisions. In a school situation people are grouped together in order, hierarchic structures of authority in order to attain a common objective, which is educative teaching, (van der Weshuizen: 2005:113).

### **2.5.2.3 Leading**

Smit *et al* (2007: 271) describes leading as influencing people's behaviour through motivation, communication, group dynamics, leadership and discipline. Leadership is the process of directing the behaviour of others towards the accomplishment of the organization's goals. The purpose of directing is to channel the behaviour of all personnel to accomplish the organization's mission and objectives while simultaneously helping them accomplish their own career objectives. Leading involves translating plans into reality.

Managing and leading are not the same activity. Leading can be described as the art or process of motivating people so that they strive voluntarily and enthusiastically towards the accomplishment of certain accepted group goals. A manager manages personnel, this person makes sure that tasks are completed on time and policies are followed. Educators typically follow managers because he or she is the supervisor and in-charge of them. Educators and learners see a leader as someone that motivates them and guides them to help meet the organisation's goals. In an ideal situation, the manager also serves as the leader. Managers who want to lead effectively need to discover what motivates their employees and inspire them to reach the company.

The way a manager leads greatly affects the educators' morale within the school as a whole. The Employment of Educators Act No 76 of 1998 states that the SMT should create a climate that encourages new ideas and employee input. The more the educators feel that they have a say in the school, the more they will be willing to share ideas and attempt to find better ways to improve processes. For a manager to be an effective leader, he or she must also be an effective communicator. A manager that shares information and lets employees know the latest news in the company is someone that is deemed trustworthy by his or her employees. Employees feel little loyalty or trust towards a manager who does not readily give out information.



DoE (2000:12) emphasises that the new education paradigm calls on all educational leaders to use their authority and power to develop the ability of others to manage themselves and the school. Although the new education paradigm calls for the participation of all school stakeholders in leading and managing schools, very often it is the school principals and the SMTs who end up taking responsibility for making things happen. Currently in South Africa the most constructive and effective use of power is when it is used to empower others. Power can be defined as the use of authority in exerting influence and to get things done. It can either be used positively or negatively. The key to effective school leadership and management is using power effectively to ensure that everyone in the school community is heard and is able to make a contribution. Durrant and Holden (2006:144) argue that “In school improvement, a theory of ‘what works’ is not enough. Enquiry, leadership and action are interlinked because teaching is about self, complexity, identity and relationship. It is involvement in the process of enquiry, not knowledge of the results of enquiry that fuels creativity and creates the confidence which enables teachers to change practice and lead change that has impact beyond their own practice”. Using these, the functionality of the SMTs and educators had been judged and where need arises, recommendations for action to be taken suggested.

#### **2.5.2.4 Controlling**

Controlling consists of verifying whether everything occurs in conformance with the plans adopted, instructions issued and principles established (Van der Westhuizen 1991: 216). Controlling ensures that there is effective and efficient utilization of organizational resources so as to achieve the planned goals. The aim of control is therefore to monitor performance and action, ensuring that they conform to plans to attain the predetermined goals. Smit *et al* (2007:11) outlines that controlling means that managers constantly make sure that the school is on the right course to attain its goals. Controlling measures the deviation of actual performance from the standard performance, discovers the causes of such deviations and helps in taking corrective actions. Positive control ensures that the educators will do their preparation that pupils will be taught and evaluated and the tasks of the school will be carried out. SMTs can exercise control after the work has been done or during the time the work is in progress to ensure that educators are doing their work in a proper way.

Controlling consists of the following three basic purposes:

- It facilitates co-ordination;
- It helps in planning the activities to be carried in schools; and
- It helps to establish if the actual activities are the same as the planned activities.

The principal being assisted by the SMT as the highest authority figure is finally responsible for control of all delegated tasks. The principal may exercise control in two ways, namely, in a delegated manner or in a direct manner (Van der Westhuizen 1991: 219).

#### **2.5.2.5 Managing Relationships**

SMT members can be called on to play interpersonal roles as representatives of authority within a school environment. SMT members may represent a school at a sports event, choir competition, departmental meeting, and leading in an assembly or any other important meeting in the school. It is important for them to establish links with people and groups outside the school. They are also permitted to play a role in motivating and supporting educators and learners in the school. It is the prerogative of the principal to interact with the relevant stakeholders through participating in community activities associated with educational matters and community building and also serving on the school governing body structure. The school management teams can promote new forms of relationships within the school. The Department of Education (2000:30) lists ways in which these relationships can be promoted:

- Through allowing participation and involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the school before a decision can be taken;
- Managing conflicts. SMTs should realise that conflict is natural and educators and learners need to be assisted when ever they are in conflict; and
- Establishing the necessary structures where regular meetings with stakeholders can be held.

The Department of Education (2000:31) outlines the benefits of management and leadership relationships which allow all stakeholders to participate. The benefits are that,

- Educators discover common needs and processes as they see the connection between their own needs and the school's needs;
- Building participatory relationships lays a solid foundation for building a school of which the school community, the Department and the wider community can be proud of; and
- All staff and other stakeholders are invited to learn what is going on at every of the school so that they understand how their actions influence others.

### **2.5.2.6 Managing Information**

Smit *et al* (2007:169) describes management of information as information that is accurate, timely and relevant to a particular situation. Management information enables the School Management Teams to establish what should be done in a specific situation. The SMT has access to different types of information, from formal to informal sources. Members of the SMT are charged with the responsibility of regularly checking on situations and to make decisions on the basis of the information they receive.

### **2.5.2.7 Building Teams**

A team is a special kind of group of people actively operating to achieve a particular goal. Turning groups into teams is a process that requires special management skills, (Smit *et al* 2007: 312). A team is said to be effective if its members become actively involved in the process of pursuing objectives. Schools often send their educators on survival camps as a team-building exercise. There are different styles and approaches to leading and managing, but to manage best SMTs should become part of a team or part of several teams.

Teams that produce good results usually have:

- A common purpose;
- Clearly defined roles for each team member;
- A leader;
- Team members that support one another;
- A free flow of information;

- Set ways for resolving conflict; and
- Members who can see benefits in working together.

#### **(a) Types of teams that can be formed in schools**

Smit *et al* (2007: 331-332) outline the three most organized forms of teams that are found in schools. These teams are problem-solving teams, self managed work teams and cross-functional teams.

- **Problem-solving teams**

Problem-solving teams are teams that are composed of employees from the same Department or school who meet for a few hours each week to discuss ways of improving quality, efficiency, and the work environment.

- **Self-managed work teams**

These are teams that function autonomously, they may make and implement decisions and take full responsibility for outcomes. These teams meet daily to make decisions about the allocation of work. Each team has a leader who acts as a resource, coach and facilitator.

#### **2.5.2.8 Managing budget and school finances**

Management allocates financial resources to different departments within the school in order to enable them to attain certain goals through allocating funds to specific activities. This is done through a budget. A budget is a plan that deals with the future allocation and utilisation of various resources with regard to different organisational activities over a given period, Smit *et al* (2007:128). The principal and the SMT should follow the budget in acquiring the resources needed in a school. The principal must perform day-to-day administration and organisation of teaching and learning at the school. The SMTs must perform the departmental responsibility prescribed by law. They must organize all the activities, which support teaching and learning. The principal and SMT must manage educators, learners and finances in the school governance system. The school management teams must decide on the intra-mural curriculum, that is, all the activities to assist with teaching and learning during school hours.

The SMT is charged with the responsibility of managing and planning school finances which require them to do budgeting and money be utilised according to the Public Funds Management Act (PFMA). The principal as the professional manager of the school must be assisted by the SMT in deciding on the textbooks, educational materials and equipment to be bought (South African Schools Act (SASA), 2005, 13-14). The South African Schools Act stipulates that Governing Bodies must help and support principals, educators and other staff at the schools in the performance of their professional functions and duties.

#### **2.5.2.9 Setting up participatory structures**

The SMT needs to put in place the structures that will assist towards the achievement of the school goals and objectives. Structures are the way that different people in the school fit together. The South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 cited that in the past, most schools were structured hierarchically, with the principal at the top, the deputies below, educators below them and learners at the bottom. There were no structures for educators and learners to play an active part in managing and leading the school. The new policy framework calls for structures which allow all stakeholders to play a role. Some structures such as the School Governing Bodies, Finance Committee, and Staff Development Committee should be introduced in all schools. Middlewood (2005:176) quotes Hargreaves (2003:17) as he argues “It is vital that teachers engage in action, inquiry and problem-solving together in collegial teams or professional learning communities”.

Through such teams, teachers can undertake to respond effectively and creatively to external reform imperatives, engage in collaborative action research, and analyze pupil achievement data together in ways that benefit their pupils’ learning”. For schools to function and perform and meet the competitive standards, joint working is a prerequisite. To add efficacy for a need to work as a collective force for the purpose of effective performance Fullan (2005:8) argues that “For my own part, it is important to clarify from the work on professional learning communities that informed professional judgment must be understood to be a collective quality, not just an individual one (i.e. groups of teachers and others create a system of ongoing collective deliberation and development), and it must have strong external connections on the wider environment of knowledge, not just collaboration within”.

### **2.5.2.10 Managing resources**

It is the responsibility of the SMT to manage the resources and they need to find out where to get the resources. The SMT needs to make use of school finances to get the resources needed in a school and teachers, staff, parents, learners and members of the school community should be responsible for looking after the different resources. This helps make them feel responsible for their school and will manage to protect the school from vandalism. Smit *et al* (2007:392) outlines the school's physical resources as its tangible assets, such as office equipment, equipment and buildings.

### **2.5.2.11 Keeping Records**

Record keeping is an important aspect that needs to be managed well by the school management teams. Records of the school activities need to be very well kept if they are to be useful for analysis. Well kept records are important for problem-solving and for planning and development. It is the job of the SMT to see that the school sets up efficient systems for collecting, storing and retrieving information. The SMT should train the staff to record and store information through the use of computer and other modern technology, and to be able to get/retrieve information quickly when it is needed.

### **2.5.2.12 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation helps in determining if plans are working or not. Monitoring and evaluation is important because it helps a school to learn, develop and grow. SMTs need to continuously monitor the work of educators as well as their own work and management to see if every thing is working accordingly. The Department of Education (2000:28) indicates that it is important for the school management teams to involve other people in analyzing the effects of monitoring and evaluation procedures, by asking questions such as:

- Is the staff better motivated now?
- Are the learners' results improving?
- Is the staff working as a team?
- Are the relationships between staff, teachers, learners, the SGB and the SMT good?

According to the Department of Education (2000:28), monitoring and evaluating how plans are working are important because:

- They are in a position to create an opportunity for assessing whether the plans can be implemented or not.
- It is the norm that can be utilized in checking whether a school is improving or not.
- They help people realize they must take responsibility for what they said they would do.
- They help future planning.
- They create an opportunity for seeing whether a plan is actually helping to reach a goal or not.

### **2.5.3 THE SKILLS REQUIRED BY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS**

In order to carry the management functions, SMTs require particular skills. A good SMT will combine the skills of good leadership and management. The School management teams need conceptual, interpersonal and technical skills in order to be effective in their roles as managers.

#### **2.5.3.1 Technical Skills**

These skills include the ability to use all the tools of the particular profession superbly. In this regard, the new management system expects the SMTs and educators to demonstrate adequate knowledge of management and learning area content and use it to effectively create meaningful experiences for learners. These require the educator to have adequate knowledge of the learning area, skills, goal setting and involvement in learning programmes. To possess the aforementioned performance indicators Durrant and Holden (2006:137) quotes Saunders highlighting valuable insights as she argues “There is much more to effective teaching than the effectiveness of planning, procedures, routines, sound subject knowledge and good but flexible routines are necessary, yes, but not sufficient. He talks convincingly about the ‘generally unmodified skills and abilities that teachers possess to some degree’ which he calls ‘teaching intelligence. These skills and abilities are to some extent instinctive: things like improvisation, grace, tact, humour, rapport, rhythm, timing, empathy, being in flow what some people now call emotional intelligence.

### **2.5.3.2 Human / Interpersonal Skills**

School managers spend considerable time interacting with people, both inside and outside the organisation. Human skills are needed to communicate with, understand and motivate individuals and groups. These Human resources must be treated professionally and strictly in terms of the labour legislation. Not only the manager, but all educators at all levels, need high levels of interpersonal roles. The educators work performance depends on their ability to effectively interact with their fellow educators and their principals. Some educators have excellent interpersonal skills, but others need training to improve theirs. They should be trained how to be a better listener, how to communicate ideas more clearly and how to be a more effective team player (Robbins 1996:642). Interpersonal skills encompass the ability to work with, understand and motivate other people both individually and in groups. Good interpersonal skills are necessary for school managers to communicate, delegate and motivate.

### **2.5.3.3 Conceptual Skills**

These skills embody the intellectual ability to observe and understand the whole problem. This can be achieved by analyzing all the relevant factors and to affect the required balance and peace. Conceptual skills are really an asset to senior managers of the institution. Managers need the mental capacity to understand various cause and effect relationships in the organization, grasp how all parts of the organisation fit together and view the organisation in a holistic manner.

## **2.6 PRINCIPALS' ROLES AS MEMBERS OF SMTs**

At the professional level of the day-to-day running of the school, the principal has the responsibility to make sure that decisions are taken and tasks are completed. This may happen collaboratively with the school management teams through delegation (DoE, 2000:14).

Members of the SMT need to be trained in areas that include management, leadership, decision-making, and communication.



### **2.6.1 Training and Development**

In South Africa, many school principals and SMTs have not been trained to manage formal institutions. Schultz (2003:38) indicates that although one can agree with the notion that there are courses designed for school principals and school management teams within the province, one would argue that the courses are very short. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 states that for many years SMTs professional development has involved teachers attending conferences, taking part in seminars, workshops and short courses, but not actually participating in course or programme design. Middlewood (2005:43) argues that *Head teachers* will need to create conditions in which the leadership of a wide range of staff is fostered. The role involves striking a balance between providing direction and sharing leadership thoughts of the school community. Who leads and who follows will depend on expertise and the nature of the process being undertaken rather than on formal position”.

### **2.6.2 Management**

Van der Westhuisen, (1991:39) asserts that management is the process of planning, organizing, actuating and controlling organization operations in order to achieve a co-ordination of human and material resources essential in the effective and efficient attainment of objectives. While Smith and Cronje (2002:11) stipulate that management is the process of reaching organizational goals as productively as possible by working with and through people and other organizational resources. Smit *et al* (2007:9) define management as the process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the resources of the school to predetermined stated organisational goals as productively as possible. Management is the art of getting work done through other people. This has to do with the keeping of records, both on financial matters and school events, allocation of resources for the maximum benefit of learners and the school as a whole. All managers regardless of their skills or the level at which they are involved, engage in certain interrelated activities or functions to achieve their desired goals. To do this it entails four fundamental management functions:

- Planning - This is the management function which involves predicting future trends and determining the best strategies to achieve the objectives of the school. Planning is the management task which is concerned with deliberately reflecting on the objectives of the organization, the resources, as well as the activities involved, and drawing up the most suitable plan for effectively achieving these objectives. Planning is regarded as

the most important task of the principal and it forms the basis of all other management tasks.

- Organizing – is the management function which involves designing the structure of the enterprise, recruiting people to the school, and making provision for working conditions and systems that ensure that everyone and everything works together to achieve the objectives of the school. Guiding in management plays a crucial role because school managers have the responsibility of influencing subordinates to work willingly and striving to achieve the set goals formulated by management.
- Leading – it has to do with influencing people to work effectively to achieve the goals and objectives of the school. Smit *et al* (2007:271) postulate that in leading, management gives direction to the organisation's activities so that all its resources are deployed as effectively as possible in order to realize its goals and in the process the principal constantly implements change to improve overall performance of the school.
- Controlling – it is the management function which involves checking the system and educators to determine whether or not the school is progressing towards its goals and objectives and taking corrective measures or disciplinary action or if it is not.

Management is found at all levels and in all functions of the school, but each level and each role requires different competencies. The skills that top management needs in order to perform the function of general management as productively as possible differ from those required at a lower management level.

### **2.6.3 Decision-making**

Marx and Aswegen (1995:83) describe decision-making as a choice of the most appropriate action in order to solve a specific problem or deal with a particular situation, after deliberate consideration of various alternative possibilities. The new educational context in South Africa emphasises transparency, responsibility, democracy and accountability. School principals are expected to allow people who are involved in the school to take part in making decisions (DoE, 2000:15). Decision-making is the act of choosing an alternative from among a set of alternatives. The decision-making process includes recognizing and defining the nature of a

decision situation. Decision-making implies that managers are faced with a threat, a problem or an opportunity. Smit *et al* (2007:145) describes decision-making as the process of selecting an alternative course of action that will solve a problem. What decision makers see as relevant is determined by a combination of their history and their situation.

Decision-making is a dynamic process affected by forces within both the individual decision maker and the environment. SMT need to be conversant with programmed or non-programmed decisions. Programmed decisions are those that are repetitive and routine. Non-programmed decisions are those decisions that are made in complex, important and non-routine situations. The SMT must be in the position to apply more non-programmed decisions than educators. At the professional level, running of the school means that the principal has the responsibility to make sure that decisions are taken and tasks are completed. This may happen collaborately with the school management teams through delegation (DoE, 2000:14).

#### **2.6.4 Communication**

Van der Westhuizen (1991:420) describes communication as the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another by means of meaningful symbols. It is a way of exchanging opinions, ideas, attitudes, values and facts. Communicating is a two way activity which involves a transmitter and receiver. Managers spend most of their times communicating with other people inside and outside the organisation. The principal takes the responsibility of co-operating with all stakeholders such as educators, learners, administration personnel, security officers, cleaners and all people that visit the school for the services rendered in the school for the smooth running of the institution.

Managers can improve their communication skills by taking into consideration the right time and place to communicate. Van der Westhuizen (1991: 437) provides the following guidelines on improving communication skills between the school and the community:

- Checking the effectiveness of the message;
- Developing a supportive climate;
- Supporting communication with action;
- Choosing channels carefully;

- Avoiding value–judgments;
- Developing awareness of other persons;
- Developing self–awareness;
- Being clear and complete; and
- Being concise and correct.

## **2.7 THE PRINCIPAL’S SHARED ROLES IN EXERCISING POWER EFFECTIVELY**

The DoE (2000:12) emphasises that the new education paradigm calls on every educational leader to use their authority and power to develop the ability of others to manage themselves and the school. Although the new education paradigm calls for the participation of all school stakeholders in leading and managing schools, very often it is the school principals and the SMTs who end up taking responsibility for making things happen. The most constructive and effective use of power is when it is used to empower others. Power can be defined as use of authority in exerting influence and to get things done. It can either be used positively or negatively. The key to effective school leadership and management is using power effectively to ensure that everyone in the school community is heard and is able to make a contribution.

## **2.8 THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN DECISION– MAKING**

Drucker, as cited in Bell (1992:15), stipulates that in every decision-making situation the action manager has to harmonise the requirements of the immediate and long range future. This can be accomplished through ensuring that the manager does not impose decisions on other staff members. In this study school management teams are alerted to the fact that they need to pay heed to the input of other stakeholders in their management and administration. Decision- making can be defined as the process of choosing between various courses of action and can be classified by the relative uniqueness of the problem (Smit *et al*, 2007:164).

SMTs should be prepared to be involved in participative/group decision–making. Participative decision- making offers educational administration the opportunity to voluntarily share their power with subordinates and the clients of the school system, professional control of the schools and access to the huge potential for improved education that participative

management provides (Bell, 2006:153). SMT members through engaging in participative decision-making create an opportunity for openness so that other stakeholders are on board for all the activities of the school that affect them in one way or the other.

The SMTs have the formal responsibility and the authority to make decisions. It is significant to note that on issues of professional management this type of responsibility is under the authority of the provincial head of the education department because s/he is the employer. SMTs should understand that with regard to governance, the authority is under the School Governing Body (SGB) (Department of Education, 2000:24). Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 cites that the interest and concerns of all sectors within a school's community as well as those of the department are vitally affected by the ways in which decisions at schools are made. Forms of democratic decision-making and accountability must emerge in schools and the principal's role in establishing those procedures is crucial.

### **2.8.1 Advantages of group decision-making**

The South African Schools Act (SASA) No 84 of 1996 emphasizes collaboration and collective decision-making between school stakeholders. During the apartheid system of education, the autocratic style of leadership that was prevalent in schools meant that there was very little opportunity for educators to make decisions. Top-down mandates from the education department created a constant stream of schedules through which educators were told what to do. Smit *et al* (2007: 153) highlight the advantages of group decision-making which are discussed as follows:

- A variety of skills and specialised knowledge can be used to define and solve a problem or recognise an opportunity within the school.
- More organization members will be committed to decisions, since they will have participated in the decision-making process.
- Participation in problem-solving and decision-making will improve the morale and motivation of educators.
- Allowing participation in problem-solving and decision-making trains people to work in groups through developing group process skills.

- Diversity: varied cultures, age groups and gender, all add to the diversity of the group which gives us varied perspectives and enhances the kind of ideas the group can come up with.
- Error detection: when there are many people working together, mistakes and errors that may have accidentally gone unnoticed and had serious consequences are spotted by other team members.
- Motivational effect: the group decision making may even have a motivational effect on the team if the team is a successful one.
- Collective understanding: the members together come to a decision after much deliberation and discussions and so everyone has a better understanding of the course of action to be followed.
- More acceptances of the final decisions are likely.
- More alternatives are likely to be generated.
- Multiple and conflicting views can be taken into account.
- Beliefs and values can be transmitted and aligned.

### **2.8.2 Disadvantages of group decision-making**

- It may be more time consuming and lead to slower decision-making.
- Groups are more likely to satisfy than an individual, especially when group meetings are not run effectively.
- One group member, or a sub-group, may dominate and nullify the group decision.
- It may inhibit creativity and lead to conformity and groupthink.
- Costs of time and human resources towards building a team.

## **2.9 THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE IN THE NEW MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Since 1994 a number of commissions and task teams were employed by government to do the spadework for the new education system. The current structure of the school management system is comprised of school principals, deputy principals, heads of departments and teachers. The following publications of the Department of Education came into place: The White paper on Education of 1996, a new Education Policy Act No 27 of 1996, The South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 and Further Education and Training Act No 96 of 1998.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) No 84 of 1996 makes provision for two types of schools in the system—public and independent schools. Both types of schools follow the same curriculum and adhere to minimum standards set by the Department of Education. Whilst public schools are funded by the state, independent schools provide their own funding although their access to state subsidies is not precluded. The South African Education System is entirely based on the following principles, namely:

**a) Equality**

The equalization of education provision and opportunities therefore became a cornerstone in the construction of a new education system. The 1995 White Paper states that the challenge is to create a system which fulfils the vision to open the doors of learning and culture for all. The main task was to build a fair system of equal rights. In the process of ensuring education and training for all, the emphasis must be placed on the elimination and correction of historically developed inequalities.

**b) Desegregation**

The elimination of school segregation was regarded as a prerequisite for establishing equal opportunities. The education system was racially segregated and marked by inequalities. The various racially and ethnically based education departments were merged into one national education and nine provincial education departments in 1994. The South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 prohibits any racial criterion for the admission to any school, including private schools.

**c) Democratisation**

It has been explained that the pre-1994 education system was an exceedingly authoritarian, dictatorial, top-down managerial exercise, the 1995 White Paper for Education and Training indicates that the principle of democratic management had to be reflected increasingly at every level of the education system by involving role players in education.

#### **d) Multiculturalism**

The pre-1994 education system was too Eurocentric as it overemphasized cultural differences and unique features, with the exclusion of people's common cultural heritage. From explanations in the 1995 White Paper and stipulations in the South African Schools Act of 1996 it is clear that the new education system needs to support the worldwide reformation movement of multicultural education (Wolhuter, 1997:163).

The public school structure is organized according to a broad National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that was adopted by Act of parliament in 1999. The key objective of the NQF was to create an integrated education system which would encompass learning outcomes from formal, informal and vocational sectors including the early childhood development (ECD), general education and training (GET), further education and training (FET) and higher education (HE). The framework brings together education and training, skills development and the needs of a critical democracy, social and economic development. The unifying factor for all educational offerings is a single set of "critical and developmental outcomes" which learners need to attain, regardless of whether they follow a formal or informal learning pathway (Department of Education, 2007:4).

Dekker and Van Schalkwyk (1996: 475) summarize the South African School structure in Figure 2.1 below according to the South African Qualifications Authority Act, No. 58 of 1995 which provides a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). There are three broad bands in the system – General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education (HE). Alongside the GET are informal providers for ABET at four levels. FET is offered by formal schools as well as private providers and non-governmental organizations (NGO's). Further Education and Training takes place from grades 10 to 12 and also includes career orientated education and training offered in other Further Education and Training institutions – technical colleges, community colleges and private colleges. Diplomas and certificates are qualifications recognized at this level.



**Table 2.1. A summary of the South African school structure according to the National Qualification Framework levels**

<b>NQF Level</b>	<b>Bands</b>	<b>Types of Qualifications and Certificates</b>	
8	Higher Education	Doctorates, Further Research Degrees	
7		Higher Degrees, Professional Qualifications	
6		First Degrees, Higher Diplomas	
5		Diplomas, Occupational Certificates	
4	Further Education and Training	School/College/Training Certificates / Mix of units from private providers	
3		School/College/Training Certificates/Mix of units from private providers	
2		School/College/Training Certificates/Mix of units from private providers	
1	General Education and Training	Senior Phase (Grades 7, 8 & 9)	ABET Level 4
			ABET Level 3
		Intermediate Phase (Grades 4, 5 & 6)	ABET Level 2
		Foundation Phase (Grades 1, 2 & 3)	ABET Level 1
		Pre-School/ECD	

## **2.10 A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW SYSTEM OF EDUCATION**

The previous system of education was not learner-centred so that it seemed as if the learner was less involved with learning while the new system is a learner-centred approach. (DoE, 2006:2). A comparison is made below:

**Table 2.2 Differences between the old system of education and new education system**

<b>Old Approach</b>	<b>New Approach</b>
Minimal involvement of learners	More meaningful involvement of learners
Exam driven	Learners are assessed on an on – going process
Rote – learning	Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action
Syllabus is content – based and broken down into subjects	An integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, learning is relevant and connected to real–life situations
Textbook/worksheet – bound and teacher Centred	Learner–centred, the teacher is the facilitator, the teacher constantly uses cooperative learning to consolidate the new approach
The syllabus is seen as rigid and non - negotiable	The learning programmes are seen as guides that allow teachers to be innovative and creative in designing programmes
The content is placed into rigid time – frames	Flexible time–frames allow learners to work at their own pace
The aims and objectives are specific to the Subject	Specific outcomes are cross – curricular and intended for life–long learning
The emphasis is on what the teacher hopes to achieve	The emphasis is on outcomes-what the learner becomes and understands

## **2.11 CENTRALISED v/s DECENTRALISED AUTHORITY (MANAGEMENT)**

Van der Weshuizen (1991:141) asserts that in a centralized authority decisions are made by top managers, in this case by the Head of Department (HOD) in the provincial department. The apartheid regime in South Africa imposed a system of education where schools did not have authority and power to control and manage themselves. Centralized management is management practice in which all or most decision makers who have authority, control and responsibility for the entire organization are located in one central office. In any organisation such as a school, concentration of authority and powers in the hands of top management is referred to as centralization. Centralization of the powers in respect of planning and control is not a new thing in any management.

Decentralization is defined as the spread of power away from the center to local branches or governments (Van der Weshuizen, 1991:141). Decentralization involves the transfer of decision-making powers and responsibility from central government to lower levels of government institutions or private institutions. This could be a transfer of responsibility involving the distribution of resources and management tasks. It has to do with the distribution of the administrative functions or powers among several local authorities. In education, decentralization has been seen as the way of giving schools more power with the purpose of giving them greater educational decision-making autonomy (Department of Education, 2007:15).

### **2.11.1 Advantages of centralization**

- Facilitates personal leadership. There is no doubt that the centralised office helps in establishing an educator leadership which may be profitable through efficient and strong central leadership.
- Equitable distribution of work. In order to group together the economies and the working through combining departments goes a long way as people will be sharing the workload. Uniformity of activities. Through centralisation, uniformity of activities ensures uniform decision and uniform process.
- No duplication of work. Centralised personal leadership, uniformity of activities and specialization leave no scope for duplication of work within a school.

- Quick decision making. Centralised office organisation helps in quick decision- making when an opportunity comes.
- Standardization and training facilities enhanced. Centralised office equipments help in standardizing the work and helps in extending the training facilities to everyone and every work in the school which needs specialization, attention and standardization.

### **2.11.2 Disadvantages of centralization**

- Delay in work. Quick decision is possible only at the top level and when the top management is not available this results in delay of work since it is the top that is to take decision and nobody else.

Decentralization has become very popular in South African organizations that include schools as a method of empowering workers. When decentralizing power and authority, a more democratic organisation is created in which managers at lower levels such as school can decide on issues such as the allocation of resources and flexible working hours (Smit *et al*, 2007:197-198) states that the decision whether to centralise or decentralise authority is based on the following factors:

- The external environment. If the environment is more complex then the decision is to decentralise.
- The history of the organisation. Organisations follow the history of the organisation when it comes to centralisation or decentralization.
- Skills of lower level managers. If lower- level managers in a school would be able to make sound decisions, decision making in the school would be centralized.
- The size and growth rate of the organisation. It is impossible to manage very large schools without decentralising.

### **2.11.3 Decentralization offers the following advantages**

- By decentralising, the workload of top management is reduced, enabling them to devote more attention to strategies.
- Decision making improves because decisions are closer to the core of action and time is not wasted by referring the matter to a higher authority.

- There should be improved morale and initiative at the lower levels of management.
- Decentralisation of decision making renders it faster and more flexible.
- Decentralized authority also fosters a competitive climate in the organisation.

#### **2.11.4 Disadvantages of decentralization**

- There is danger of loss of control.
- There is danger of duplicating tasks.
- Decentralisation of authority requires more expensive and more intensive management training and development to enable managers to execute their delegated responsibilities.
- Decentralisation also demands sophisticated planning and reporting methods.
- Empowerment of lower level managers and employees.
- Ownership and acceptance of decisions made.

### **2.12 CHALLENGES FACED BY SMTs IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW SYSTEM**

The education policy requires school leaders and school management teams to work in democratic and participatory ways to build relationships and ensure efficient delivery. However many school leaders and their SMTs are struggling to translate policy into practice. The Department of Education (2000: 2) emphasises that poor resources and an absence of the culture of teaching and learning make it difficult; and even if school communities are willing to make a contribution, they are often living in poverty themselves as they are poorly educated and unemployed. School management teams face serious challenges when it comes to the implementation of the new system because they themselves are not aware of their roles and responsibilities as they are not properly trained. SMTs may need to have a self-authoring way of knowing in order to participate effectively in the implementation of the system (Johnson, 2004: 29).

### **2.13.1 Challenges encountered**

#### **a) Lack of clarity with regard to their roles and responsibilities**

The SMTs need to be conversant with their roles and be committed to carrying them out. The inclusion of parents in the education of their children through the introduction of School Governing Bodies (SGB) created problems because most SGBs could not understand the role they should play in schools. Section 16 of the South African School's Act 84 of 1996 provides that school's governance is vested in its school governing body. The governing body stands in position of trust to the school. School governance means determining the policy and rules by which a school is to be organized and controlled. It includes ensuring that such rules and policies are carried out effectively in terms of the law and the budget of the school. The principal has delegated powers to organize and control teaching and learning at the school effectively. However, the HOD has the power of expect co-operation and compliance from the principal in matters of school management.

#### **b) Lack of resources to utilize in their schools**

The majority of schools within the Malamulele West Circuit have a challenge of accommodation where-in learning takes place outside due to the shortage of classrooms. It is equally important to indicate that some schools with low enrolments experience challenge as educators together with the principals are fully engaged in teaching. This led to the school management teams failing to execute their duties since they carry heavy workloads, hence administration duties suffer.

#### **c) Lack of support by the Department of Education**

SMT members find themselves in a dilemma because it becomes so difficult to them to assist and provide support to educators because they themselves lack comprehensive training to be provided by the Department of Education. Workshops attended by school management teams were rather too skeletal, conducted only for two to three days.

#### **d) Lack of discipline among educators and learners**

The SMTs experience a serious challenge when it comes to educators who misbehave in schools by coming late at work, absenteeism, drunkenness, lack of cooperation, failing to attend their classes on time. Learners on the other hand are not disciplined because they abuse drugs, they fail to attend school regularly, they often come late when they come to school, and they often carry dangerous weapons to schools (Jones and Jones, 1995:6). The unbecoming behaviour of educators and learners make the tasks of principals and school management teams more difficult. Van der Westhuizen (2005: 130) indicates that good discipline is one of the key characteristics of an effective school. Without discipline effective teaching and learning cannot take place. Learners learn best in an orderly and safe environment. Discipline is one of the most important management functions in a school. Principals and school management teams have a duty to maintain proper order and discipline (Van der Westhuizen, 2005:160). All public schools are required to have a code of conduct (disciplinary policy). According to section 8 of the South African School's Act 84 of 1996, a governing body of a school is expected to develop a code of conduct for the school.

#### **2.14 SUMMARY**

This chapter, outlined literature pertaining to the way in which the school management system was prior-1994 and after 1994 as well as the rationale for the change in the system. The roles and responsibilities of SMT members were also highlighted. SMTs are given authority over other staff members by virtue of the position they occupy in the school hierarchy. That is why they have to be creative and supportive while executing their tasks. School management teams that are charged with the responsibility of implementing departmental policies still face challenges such as lack of resources to utilize in their schools, lack of discipline among teachers and learners. The training that is conducted by the ministry of education is not well integrated with the problems or challenges they face because the facilitators themselves are not yet sure as to what is to be done during those training. It thus becomes important to find out what SMT members perceive their roles and whether they feel effective or not. The next chapter will outline the method used to answer questions posed by this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Gay and Airasian (2000: 94) define research design as a blueprint or detailed plan for how a research study is to be conducted. Vockell (1993: 150) defines research design as the systematic scheduling of the time at which treatments are administered to subjects and at which observations are made of the performance of the subjects. Research design is a set of procedures that guides the researchers in the process of verifying a particular hypothesis and excluding all other possible hypotheses or explanations (Bless and Higson Smith, 2006:156). Research design allows the researcher to draw conclusions about the relationship between variables.

This chapter presents the research design used, research methods, sample and sampling procedures, respondents and the instruments. The study was conducted in the Vhembe District within the Malamulele West Circuit which consisted of 23 Primary schools and 13 Secondary schools. Research design is the selection of units and comparative forms in order to make a descriptive statement.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Fullan (2006:43), while quoting The Design-Based Research Collective (2003:6), importantly, design-based research goes beyond merely designing and testing particular interventions. Interventions embody specific claims about teaching and learning, and reflect a commitment to understanding the relationships among theory, designed artifacts, and practice. At the same time, research on specific interventions can contribute to theories of learning and teaching. The research design represents the plan according to which relevant data are collected (Creswell, 1994:154). In this regard, this study considered usage of school management principles in schools by the SMTs and also checked their efficacy and provided means for intervention where necessary. Gall (1996: 767) explains qualitative research as an inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretation and these constructions tend to be transitory and situational.



The dominant methodology is to discover these meanings and interpretation by studying cases intensively in natural settings and by subjecting the resulting data to analytic induction. The researcher has chosen qualitative research approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2001:2) defines qualitative research as a multi perspective approach to social interaction aimed at describing, making sure of interpreting this interaction in terms of meanings that the subjects attach to it. Bless and Higson Smith (2006:157) indicate that qualitative research approach has to be conducted utilizing a range of methods, which would use qualifying words and descriptions to record and investigate aspects of social reality.

- (a) It allows the researcher to use an inductive form of reasoning, developing concepts, insights, understanding patterns in the data and generalization as the point of departure.
- (b) The researcher captures data and discovers meanings once they become immersed in the data.
- (c) In qualitative research, data are presented in the form of concepts, words, themes and categories.
- (d) The research design is unique and evolves throughout the research.

Qualitative research is the approach of studying people in their natural environments as they go about their daily lives. It tries to understand how people live, how they talk and behave and what captivates and distresses them (Tutty, 1996:30).

Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, which is how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. Through the use of qualitative research the researcher is directly involved with the participants in the research project. By so doing, the researcher wants to understand the world from their point of view and to understand the meaning of their experiences. The objectivity in qualitative research is that the researcher has to understand the experiences and meanings of words that the respondents will have provided (Gall, 1996:124). In this research it was based on the perceptions of SMTs towards the effectiveness of the new school management system.

Mecnell (1995:87) asserts that a case study involves the in-depth study of a single example of whatever it is that the researcher wishes to investigate. In this study, the case study focuses on the perceptions of the SMTs towards the effectiveness of the new management system. Bless and Smith (1993:87) asserts that a case study involves the in-depth study of a single example of

whatever it is that the researcher wants to investigate. What is interesting to the researcher is that the case study provided the researcher with an opportunity to communicate with the participants and getting to know what their feelings and ideas were and to gain access to the knowledge the researcher would not otherwise have had access to. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:85-86) point out that the research design provides the overall structure for the procedures the researcher follows, the data the researcher collects and the data analysis the researcher conducts.

### **3.3 THE POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

#### **3.3.1 Target Population**

Bless and Higson Smith (2000:150) assert that population is the complete set of events, people or things to which the research findings are to be applied. The population of the study involved principals, deputy principals and Heads of Departments for both Primary and Secondary schools in the Malamulele West Circuit. The population consisted of 36 school principals and 108 members of school management teams. The total population was 144.

#### **3.3.2 Sampling**

“Sample” in this study refers to a subset of elements of the total population selected for the purpose of the investigation. Sampling procedure or technique involves the selection of specific research participants from the entire population and is conducted in different ways according to the type of the study (Tutty, 1996: 105). For the purpose of the study, the researcher used purposive sampling. According to Mecnell (1995: 39), purposive sampling occurs when a researcher chooses a particular group or place to study, because it is known to be the type that is wanted. The researcher has chosen it since it selects unique cases with a special purpose in mind and which are informative. When applying purposive sampling, the researcher used his own judgment about which respondents to choose. The researcher picked only those who met the purpose of the study.

Babbie (1992:192) defines a sample as a special subset of a population observed for the purpose of making inferences about the nature of the total population itself. Sampling is the group of elements drawn from the population, which is considered to be the representative of the population and which is studied in order to acquire some knowledge about the entire sampling

(Bless and Higson Smith, 2002:156). According to Vockell (1993:356), a respondent is a person who gives responses to a measuring instrument. Respondents are the people who answer questions or give opinion in a survey or an interview. In this study, *respondents* refer to people who provide data for analysis by responding to a survey questionnaire. The total number of the research population was 108. The principals' experience in the principals' positions ranged from 15 to 27 years; deputy principals' experience ranged from 9 to 23 and Heads of Departments' experience ranged from 10 to 19 years. The interview sample had 30 respondents. Out of 30 interviewees, ten were principals, five males and five females; twelve were deputy principals, seven females and five males and eight were heads of departments, six were males and two were females. The total sample is represented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 respectively below.

**TABLE 3.1 Total interview sample for the study**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Targeted</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Research Tool</b>	<b>Total</b>
Principals	5	5	36	10	Interview Schedule	10
Deputy Principals	5	7	12	12	Interview Schedule	12
Heads of Department	6	2	8	8	Interview Schedule	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>30</b>		<b>30</b>

**TABLE 3.2 Total questionnaire sample for the study**

<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>TARGETED</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>RESEARCH TOOL</b>
School Management Teams	88	51	Questionnaire
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>51</b>	

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION**

#### **3.4.1 Research Instrument**

I had two questionnaires; one for the principals and another for the members of the SMTs (see appendix A and B). The study also had the interview schedule that was used for face to face interviews (see appendix C). Vockell (1993:22) defines research instrument as any sort of data collecting technique. Research instruments in this study have to do with techniques that the researcher employed in accumulating relevant data from the respondents. Merriam (2002:12) differentiates three major sources of data collection or research instruments in qualitative research which are interviews, observations and questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher to SMT members.

#### **3.4.2 Data Collection Method**

##### **3.4.2.1 Questionnaires**

Gall (1996:767) defines a questionnaire as a measure that presents a set of written questions to which all individuals in a sample respond. In this study questionnaire refers to the list of questions seeking information about people’s opinion or customs designed by the researcher for the purpose of attaining the goal of the study. The total number of my research population was 36 school principals and 108 members of the school management teams totaling 144 as explained on 3.3.1. The researcher sent out questionnaires to be completed by 88 respondents and I gave the respondents a period of three weeks to complete the questionnaires.

Both open and closed ended questions were used. In an open-ended questionnaire the respondents are requested to provide their own answers to the question and they are free to answer in their own words, since there are no alternatives provided. The researcher designed open-ended questions with the reason of obtaining information about the respondents' opinions, attitudes and relationships. The researcher also designed closed ended questions since in closed ended questions answers are provided and there is less risk of misinterpretation. When the questionnaires were collected after three weeks only 55 (about 58%) were completed and returned back to the researcher.

The questionnaires included the following key issues:

- The respondents' views or perceptions of the new management system as compared to the old one.
- Whether the new system has facilitated planning, organising and decision-making.
- How they managed their roles and responsibilities in order to be effective.

#### **3.4.2.2 Interviews**

Merriam (1998:83) argues that multiple questions, leading questions and questions that require yes or no should not be entertained. An interview is defined as a research technique in which a conversation is carried out with the purpose of obtaining certain information. The researcher first requested for permission from the principals of schools to conduct the interviews in their schools and permission was granted to conduct the interviews after school hours. The interview process was unstructured. They were asked the same questions to which they were expected to provide responses without being interrupted in the process. The researcher interviewed thirty SMTs from the ten schools selected. The interviews took 10 days to conduct. Three SMTs members were interviewed per day.

All the interviews were conducted after school and were conducted in their places of work in order to honour their personal comfort. At the beginning of each interview the researcher greeted all the school management team members and principals, introduced himself to them, and informed them of the purpose of the interview and its significance. The interviews lasted

for about three hours. The face to face interviews were conducted with 30 respondents (see 4.2). The interviews were transcribed by hand. In all the interviews an interview schedule was used (see Appendix C). Following the interview schedule helped the interviewer to be focused and not to ask irrelevant questions. Using an interview as one of my research tools which gave the respondents a chance of demonstrating what they knew about their roles as SMT members and also their perceptions towards the effectiveness of the new management system.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis in qualitative research is a challenging and a highly creative process. It starts with data collection. Vockell (1993: 37) states that data analysis is what one does with questionnaires and interview information gathered from the respondents. The data was analysed qualitatively. Qualitative data are in the form of words. Tutty (1996: 89) is of the opinion that words contain both rich descriptions and an understanding of their underlying meanings. The purpose of analysis in qualitative studies is to sift, sort and organize the masses of information acquired during data collection. The data was analysed according to Tesch's approach (1990: 154-156), namely eight steps of data analysis:

- (i) The researcher gets a sense of the whole by reading through all of transcription carefully. Then the researcher jots down some ideas as they come to mind.
- (ii) The researcher selects one interview document, the most interesting, shortest, the one on top of the pile and goes through it. Further the researcher asks himself what the document is all about and writes what comes up in the margin.
- (iii) When the researcher has completed reading all the respondent's answers, then they make a list of all the topics. They make sure that similar topics are clustered together from the topics into columns that might be arranged as major topics, unique ones and leftovers.
- (iv) The researcher makes sure that topics are abbreviated as codes and codes will be written next to the appropriate segments of the text. The preliminary organizing scheme is then done to check whether new categories and codes emerge.
- (v) The researcher finds the most descriptive wording for the topics and turns them into categories. The related topics are grouped together and the researcher draws a line between the categories to show interrelationships.

- (vi) The researcher makes a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetizes the codes.
- (vii) The researcher makes sure that the data material belonging to each category is assembled in one place and the preliminary analysis is performed.
- (viii) Finally, the researcher records the existing data, showing similarities as well as differences.

### **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The following ethical considerations were considered:

- a). The researcher sought permission from school principals to conduct the study in their schools. Permission was granted on condition that the study be conducted outside working hours.
- b). Adequate explanation of the purpose of the study was provided to all the respondents in order to obtain informed consent from them.
- c). The names and all identifying particulars of respondents were not requested or recorded (where they were known) for purposes of anonymity.
- d). All information was kept confidential.
- e). It was made clear to respondents that they could withdraw from the study at any time, should they wish to do so.
- f). A report will be made available to the involved stakeholders who may be interested in reading it.

### **3.7 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

The researcher has experienced several problems during the research process which include the following:

- Some of the respondents did not keep the appointment set for the collection of the promised data.
- The researcher had to wait for too long to get the requested information and as a result, the completion of the research project was delayed.
- Other respondents gave the researcher incomplete information.

### **3.9 SUMMARY**

Chapter three presented the research design and methodology of collecting data. The research design, sample and sampling procedure, method of data analysis, data collection procedure or techniques, ethical considerations and problems encountered in the study were discussed in full. The next chapter will present the results from the study.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH RESULTS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The primary research question that this study sought to answer was what the perceptions of the School Management Teams were towards the effectiveness of the new management system within the Malamulele West Circuit of the Limpopo Province. This chapter presents the data gathered through interviews and questionnaires. Vockell (1993: 39) stipulates that data analysis and interpretation is what one does with questionnaires and interview documents gathered from the respondents. The data is analysed qualitatively. Qualitative data are in the form of words, because words contain rich descriptions. In this chapter the research data is analysed and interpreted in order to make the findings of the research project clear.

#### **4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with 30 respondents and sent out self-administered questionnaires to 88 respondents. The data for interviews was collected from 10 schools within the Vhembe District in the Malamulele West Circuit. Out of 30 interviewees, ten were principals, five males and five females; twelve were Deputy Principals, seven females and five males and eight were Heads of Departments comprised of six males and two females. The rationale for providing the biography of principals and SMTs in this study is to reveal their backgrounds in relation to the context of their work situation. The researcher at the same time has undertaken to guarantee these teachers with anonymity in the research.

**TABLE 4.1: Profiles of the respondents in terms of gender, experience in management and formal qualifications.**

RESPONDENT	GEN DER	DESIGNATION	QUALIFICATION	NO OF YRS
1	F	Deputy Principal	M.ED	23
2	M	Principal	B.A.	19
3	M	Principal	BCOM	21
4	M	Principal	BADMIN	20
5	M	Principal	ACE	23
6	M	Principal	BCOM HONOURS	24
7	F	Head of Department	STD	13
8	F	Head of Department	STD	19
9	M	Head of Department	FDE	17
10	M	Head of Department	ACE	14
11	F	Deputy Principal	M.ED	22
12	F	Principal	BCOM	19
13	F	Principal	ACE	21
14	F	Principal	HDE	20
15	F	Principal	HDE	23
16	F	Principal	BCOM	24
17	F	Deputy Principal	BCOM	15
18	F	Deputy Principal	ACE	14
19	F	Deputy Principal	STD	13
20	F	Deputy Principal	BA	9
21	F	Deputy Principal	BCOM	11
22	M	Deputy Principal	HDE	13
23	M	Deputy Principal	HDE	15
24	M	Deputy Principal	BA	12
25	M	Deputy Principal	FDE	10
26	M	Deputy Principal	HDE	19
27	M	Head of Department	FDE	17
28	M	Head of Department	FDE	15
29	M	Head of Department	HDE	12
30	M	Head of Department	HED	10

### **4.3 RESEARCH RESULTS**

In order to gather data on the research problem, the following interview questions were included in the interview guide (see appendices A, B and C):

- What is your view on the new management system as compared to the old one?
- How is planning and organizing done as compared to the old system?
- How do you manage your roles and what do you do to remain effective?
- How effective are communication procedures?
- How easy is it for you to handle conflicts and discipline?
- What do you do to keep the staff remain motivated?
- Have you been work-shopped on operational management of the new management system?

#### **4.3.1 Views on the new management system as compared to the old one.**

Generally, the respondents felt that the old management system was more user- friendly because they could take decisions quicker. Nobody would ask questions which could lead to delay in implementing decisions due to influence from unions and personal rights. One respondent indicated that there was no longer management in schools. SMT is simply a name. Everything is done when approved by the unions. Members of the SMT agreed that they did not have power to lead and manage like before because of democratic procedures being enforced and reinforced by the teachers under the influence of the unions. To them, the old management system was better as compared to the new. However, some teachers who were not in the management generally reflected that the new management system was better since it was open and provided space for them to have a say than to be dictated to.

#### **4.3.2 How planning and organizing was done comparing the new and old systems.**

According to the respondents, there was a need for decisive action on management of schools. “We take time to take decisions, and then take time to bring back feed back or implement decisions due to the fact that we have to consult and that consumes a lot of time. At times we happen not to agree on issues which have to be implemented on a particular date”. This has a negative bearing on the progress in schools. Once a decision is taken and implemented, there is

a need to monitor it and make follow ups, but that is not always easy. “We will be accused of being after certain teachers and often there are conflicts between union representatives and us as school managers”. Contrary to all these, teachers felt that planning and organizing procedures have been well reflected. “We just have to be consulted and take decisions together”. One respondent also felt that there was direction given the managing principle. However, there were other factors such as absenteeism and staff late coming which severely impeded the efficient functioning of the schools. Closer monitoring needed to be improved as well as the cooperation of staff members. Some said there was no clear direction on what to plan and organize. “Your mind does not work. You wait for an instruction and act on it and it is not challenged by the staff members”.

Some SMT members felt that all was well in the new education system as they even had to consult their subordinates whenever a decision had to be taken so that everybody in the school is taken on board. They indicated that the old school committees and principals used to dictate. According to them, there was nepotism and favouritism and no one could challenge that. Only friends and relatives would be delegated to do a particular task. In case there was a promotional post, only friends and relatives of the school committee members and the principal would be considered. Now, only democracy rules. People are appointed through interviews being monitored by the unions.

#### **4.3.3 How respondents managed their roles.**

The general view on this one was that they all had roles such as controlling the work of educators and seeing to it that teaching and learning took place at schools and they managed them. However, some were more effective than others and others overlapped and yet others understepped while there were those that did nothing. Some use servant management approach where managers are tyrannical. They felt that their effectiveness was limited by the rights of the teachers and that they could be challenged in court any time.

#### **4.3.4 The effectiveness of communication procedures**

Some SMT members indicated that communication was very bad in schools because there was no feedback given from the School Governing Body meetings. They also reflected that some principals were not approachable and they led schools fearing parents and the department of

education. In this regard, many members of the SMT said that it was laborious and time consuming to be expected to communicate all issues to staff members before they were implemented. “We know how to run schools. Why take a long way to think whether to do the right thing or not and ask for permission?”

#### **4.3.5 Handling of conflicts and discipline.**

Effective discipline contributes to a school’s effectiveness and involves keeping order, consistently enforcing fair, clear and well understood rules and the infrequent use of punishment”. Discipline forms fundamentals without which teaching and learning cannot effectively take place.

The respondents generally agreed that the issues of conflict handling and maintaining discipline were quite complex. All people have rights. They feared that any form of punishment could be interpreted as an abuse of power and they could be charged and lose their jobs. They all feared that they called a parent to discipline his or her child in order to avoid getting into trouble. They argued that they usually involved union site committee to handle conflicts with them so as to avoid being blamed for bias.

#### **4.3.6 Helping staff to remain motivated.**

Some respondents felt that they were motivated intrinsically to do the best they could irrespective of the circumstances at the schools. Others reflected that they felt unmotivated because they had to consult teachers on all issues and at times teachers influenced wrong decisions which they had to account for alone. To them this was discouraging. One SMT member indicated that they appreciated good work done by educators. SMTs gave incentives in motivating hard working staff members.

#### **4.3.7 Training and workshops conducted on the new management system.**

The respondents generally agreed that the workshops they attended were very ineffective and short and they were conducted after school and during those times educators were tired and it could not be simple for them to concentrate. Respondents did not seem to be happy as they felt that training needed by all teachers seemed to have been reserved for the chosen few. Most

respondents were not happy with the mostly theoretical training offered during training. Respondents also expressed great concern over the high teacher-pupil ratio in predominantly black schools. Even those who conducted workshops were not clear. Therefore, to them, the old education system was far better. Other members of the SMT responded by saying that *“Few teachers are taken to the workshops and they are expected to come back and pass on the information to those (teachers) who could not be invited for a workshop.”*

#### **4.3.8 Decision-making in schools.**

Decision-making in schools was still regarded as being the role of the SMT members only. Educators within the institution were not invited to voice their opinions. When critical decisions were to be taken, the principal together with the SMT members handled the situation. When it came to the drawing up of the school policy, only educators who were members of the School Governing Body together with the principal did it in secondary schools the learners and the parents who were elected to serve in the SGB were the only people to draw the policies that should govern the institution. They felt that the SGBs should engage educators on the lower level so that they could be able to take informed decisions.

#### **4.3.9 Management Development Programmes attended.**

The views of the principals and the SMTs about the management development programmes that they attended were very clear. They were called to workshops on the implementation of the new management system. Those workshops were conducted by the officials from the provincial Department of Education. The respondents indicated that the training they received or attended took a short time; they felt that they could not be taken on a crash course for one and a half day and be expected to implement the new system correctly. They also reported that only few principals and SMTs were sampled to attend those management development programmes and they were expected to come back and pass on the information to those who could not be invited for the workshop. They were also not in favour of the idea of training that took place after a hard day's work, when they are tired and ineffective. The training was not planned well. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents were not happy with the mostly theoretical content offered during those training.

#### **4.3.10 Suggestions on improvement of management development programmes.**

The respondents generally agreed that for the management development programmes to be effective in future, it was of significant importance that government officials schedule the workshops for at least five full days where the principals and the SMT members can be invited so that they could understand what the new system required of them. It is suggested that government should consider employing competent facilitators who have the expertise as far as outcomes based education is concerned.

#### **4.3.11 The Structure of future Management Development Programme**

About 65% of the respondents were in favour of the workshops, whereas 35% were in favour of a seminar. Those in favour of a workshop indicated that a facilitator could be able to engage the participants timeously, unlike in a seminar. The respondents indicated that the arrangements for such training should be arranged by the officials of the Department. However, when it came to conducting them, the majority of the respondents felt it would be better if the government could employ a private facilitator to conduct such programmes.

### **4.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented results from information that was collected from respondents. The results indicate that overall, the respondents felt that the old centralised way of school management was better than the current one. However, a few lower rank teachers expressed opposite opinions. They felt that working on SMTs and consulting all the time made the processes of planning and decision-making more difficult and slower. They also appeared to understand their roles. However, they felt it was at times difficult to exercise their powers due to the roles of unions. The respondents further felt that communication and dissemination of information in schools were difficult and time consuming. Handling conflict and motivating staff were reported to be difficult for the respondents. Overall they were unhappy with the type of training some of them had received on the new management system and suggested that the department should dedicate more time to training.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the interpretation and conclusions on the data analysis of Chapter four will be made. The chapter will conclude by making recommendations and suggesting further research.

#### **5.2 CONCLUSION**

From the findings of this research report, it is clear that respondents did not feel effective in managing schools using the new management system. The SMTs did not have confidence to implement the strategic management plans and practicing management effectively. Schools should have clear strategic plans for giving direction. It is clear from the reflected views that both SMT members and teachers were not inspired to carry the visions and the missions of their schools. For the schools to be effective, it is important that all the people in schools be co-owners of the visions and missions of the schools. This would make them to work effectively and efficiently. For effective operation, the school managers should strike a balance between good interpersonal relationships with the staff, learners and the parent community.

From the respondents, it was clear that the SMTs were afraid to discipline learners. It is important for the SMT members to adapt their management styles to the new and allow staff to help them set standards and encourage the whole school community to participate in the management of the school and also encourage team work among staff members. In conflict situation, the SMT should help the staff solve their work related problems and facilitate opportunities for staff training and professional development. However, they did not feel equipped enough to handle conflicts and discipline.

In terms of motivation, many respondents felt very demotivated as they did not like having equal say with the level one educator who was not in the management positions. They felt that it was the same as being not in the management because they found it very difficult to come up with new views as they were constantly challenged by other staff members. However, the



level one teacher also felt being demotivated since some in their schools were not included when critical decisions were taken.

From the findings, it is clear that the perceptions of the members of the SMTs were negative on the new management system. There is always a need to refine processes and procedures in order to become even more effective in the implementation of the new management system. A climate should be created in which members of the SMTs, teachers and learners are empowered to continuously check and re-check their work and strive for effective performance.

The only way in which schools can be effective and grow is only if the people who make up the schools continue to grow and learn and feel empowered. Strong emphases must be placed on self improvement and life-long learning. The SMT members should develop programmes that enable staff to continuously upgrade their knowledge, skills and performances. SMT members who are well trained are more vital, interesting, inquiring and up to date in their field. They will transfer such qualities to the work environment and they are more likely to find quality solutions to instructional problems and will make a more interesting experience for their colleagues and learners. The training of staff should also be regarded as an investment in quality education for learners.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are based on the findings and the conclusions of the study:

#### **5.3.1 Training of SMTs**

- **Management Skills**

It is of utmost importance that SMTs should be well trained, well ahead of the time of implementation on the new management system through proper dissemination and implementation skills. This must be done during the initial pre-in-service training of SMTs, and should be followed up with sustained in-service training on a regular basis as the management of the system develops further. The training should be geared towards preparing SMT members for the management of the new system. The Department of Education timeously conducts training workshops for SMT members. However, the principals of schools should encourage their school management team members to attend such workshops

so that they are capacitated into the management of the system in order to perform a variety of managerial and leadership activities and to enhance team cohesiveness.

Training programmes will help SMT members to develop the competencies they need to perform their best in their current jobs. Training increases SMTs self efficacy which is a person's expectation that he or she can successfully execute the behaviours required to produce an outcome. For educators, those behaviours are work tasks and the outcome is effective job performance. Training then is a means to positively affect self efficacy because school management teams may be willing to undertake job tasks and exert a high level of effort and individuals are more likely to perceive their effort as leading to performance.

- **Types of programmes, length and preferred times**

SMTs should be trained on programmes such as development programmes that include formal training and off-job formal training. In order to work efficiently, educators need a good understanding of how to do their jobs and it is the responsibility of principals and SMTs to improve productivity by way of training their subordinates. Development programmes will help SMTs to develop competencies that will enable them to continue to advance in their careers over the long term. SMT members should be allocated enough time to attend their training so that they may be able to manage the system in a proper way. Workshops that used to be conducted during afternoons when members of the SMTs were tired should not be continued with as they are not helpful. The department should consider conducting training of SMTs on management issues during school holidays so that they can have enough time of capturing the information well. When members of the SMTs are trained, they would be able to help other members at school level to implement the system and manage it well.

- **Budget**

An annual budget geared towards the training of SMTs should be set aside. The SGBs must be motivated to allocate funds after assessment for training purposes and ongoing evaluation of how far things have come. The budget should assist in the training of staff members by SMT members so that they are not left behind when it comes to the implementation of the new system.

### **5.3.2 Further Research**

The following suggestions are made for further investigation:

- The study was confined only to 23 Primary and 13 Secondary schools in the Malamulele West Circuit in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province. It is therefore suggested that the study be extended to other circuits and districts of the Limpopo Province in order to assess if different findings may be reached regarding the perception of the SMT towards the effectiveness of the new management system.
- The study should be conducted on the other members of staff who are not members of the SMTs to get their perceptions on the effectiveness of the new system.

### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

SMTs have the responsibility of managing the implementation of the new system of education and are also required to know the roles they need to play in order to ensure that the system is implemented. Lack of conducting effective workshops on the introduction of the new education management system led to ineffectiveness in its implementation process. Coupled with lack of strategic leadership and management, the morale of the schools has been adversely affected leading to lack of discipline. Ineffective ways of communication, lack of motivation from teachers, weak roles and responsibilities of staff members, and conflicts resulted in the school management teams being ineffective.

We should therefore understand the link between effective leadership and effective management. If there is strategic management plans in schools which are well honoured, schools would be effective. Hall and Hord (1987) have indicated that the SMT is primarily responsible for the implementation of change in schools and must therefore be conversant, not only with the factors that cause resistance to change but must be managed. All these clearly show the negative perceptions that members of the School Management Teams have on the new education management system as well as their stances.

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## APPENDIX A

### **RESEARCH TOPIC: The Perception of the School Management Team Towards the Effectiveness of the New Management System within the Malamulele West Circuit of the Limpopo province**

The purpose of the study is to gather data from the relevant respondents that would be used for the purpose of achieving the goal of the study on the perception of school management teams towards the effectiveness of the new management system within Malamulele West Circuit. Data would be used for this study only.

#### **Instruments**

- Please complete all questions
- Don't write your name and school
- Complete the questions by either a tick or cross where applicable.
- Note that there are no right or wrong answers
- Thank you for your understanding.

### **QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE PRINCIPALS**

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1. Please indicate your gender.

Male	1
Female	2

2. Please indicate your age.

30 – 35 years	1
36 – 40 years	2
41 – 45 years	3
46 – 50 years	4
Over 50 years	5

3. How many years did you work as a principal of a school? \_\_\_\_\_.

4. What is your highest academic and professional qualification?

Diploma	
Degree	
Honours	
Masters	
PHD	

5. What is your view on the new management system as compared to the old one?

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6. How is planning and organizing done as compared to the old system?

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7. What are your roles and responsibilities within the new management system?

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8. How do you manage those roles and what do you do to remain effective?

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9. How effective are communication procedures / processes?

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10. How easy is it for you to handle conflicts and discipline?

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11. What do you do to keep the staff motivated?

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12. Have you been work-shopped/ trained on operational management of the new? Management system? Yes or No  
If yes, what issues were included in the training?

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13. What would you suggest could be improved in the system?

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14. Who makes decisions about what? What kind of help and information do you need to make decisions that are good for teaching?

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15. What management development programmes have you attended as a Principal?

Name of programme \_\_\_\_\_

- Where was the programme conducted?

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- Which institution offered the programmes?

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- What was the duration of the programme?

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- Was this programme useful or not?

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- What do you think could be improved in such programmes in future?

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16. As School Principal, what kind of Management Development Programme do you need/prefer?

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17. How do you prefer the programmes to be structured, e.g. Seminar, or workshop?

- Provide a reason why?

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- Who would you prefer to make arrangements and the facilitators of the programmes?

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- Any additional comment, positive or negative on the new school management system?

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## APPENDIX B

The purpose of the study is to gather data from the relevant respondents that would be used for the purpose of achieving the goal of the study on the school governance system/style. Data would be used for this study only.

### Instructions:

- Please complete all the questions
- Don't write your name and school name
- Complete a questions by either a tick or cross
- Note that there are no right or wrong answers
- Thank you for your understanding

## QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE SMT

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1. Please indicate your gender.

Male	1
Female	2

2. Please indicate the age group you belong.

20 – 25	1
25 – 30	2
35 – 40	3
Over 40 years	4

3. What is your highest academic and professional qualification?

Diploma	1
Degree	2
Hons (BA ED)	3
M ED	4

4. How many years did you serve on the School Management Team \_\_\_\_\_?

5. How is the leadership style of the principal in school management?

Autocratic	1
Democratic	2
Laissez-fair	3

6. What is your view on new the management system as compared to the old one?

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7. How is planning and organizing done as compared to the old system?

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8. What are your roles and responsibilities within the SMT?

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9. How do you manage your roles and what do you do to remain effective?

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10. How effective are communication procedures / processes?

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11. How easy is it for you to handle conflicts and discipline?

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12. What do you do to keep the staff motivated?

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13. Have you been work-shopped / trained on operational management of the new management system?

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14. What would you suggest could be improved in the system?

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15. Who makes decisions about what? What help and information do you need to make decisions that are good for teaching?

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16. What management development programmes have you attended as an SMT member?

- Where was the programme conducted?  

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- Which institution offered this programme?  

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- What was the duration of the programme?  

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- What was the purpose of such programmes?  

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- Was this programme of any use to you?

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- What do you think could be improved in such programmes in future?

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17. As a member of the School Management Team, what kind of Management Development Programme do you need?

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18. How do you prefer the programmes to be structured, e.g. Seminar or workshop?

- Provide a reason why?

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- Who would you prefer to make arrangements and facilitators of the programmes?

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- Any additional comments, positive or negative, on the new school management system?

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## **APPENDIX C**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS AND SMT**

1. What is your view on the new management system as compared to the old one?
2. How is planning and organising done as compared to the old system?
3. How do you manage your roles and what do you do to remain effective?
4. Have you been trained on operational management of the new management system?
5. How effective are communication procedures?
6. What do you do to keep the staff motivated?
7. What are your roles and responsibilities within the SMT?
8. What management development programmes do you need or prefer?