CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND SCHOOLS

by

BAFUNDI ZEALOUS MAPISA

A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION (M.Ed)
(In Educational Management)

at

WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISOR: Professor R.A. Sonn

May 2011
DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation being submitted for the Degree of Master of Education at the Walter Sisulu University is my own work. It has not been submitted to any university before for any examination.

06 day of May 2011
DEDICATION

This dissertation is particularly dedicated to my parents for their unswerving encouragement from childhood to date. I also dedicate it to my friend Dr Nkonki, V.V.J. for his fundamental support for instilling in me the willpower to unleash my full potential. To my two wonderful kids, Ntlokoma and Susela for being so understanding and supportive during my studies. Thank you.
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Sonn, R.A. of Walter Sisulu University, for his continuous guidance, support and splendid perspicacity throughout this study.

My sincere word of appreciation also goes to Dr Mulenga who tirelessly worked hard to edit the language of this dissertation.

I also would like to express my appreciation to the following people: My true friends, Thozama Cingo for her valued support from the proposal stages and right through this dissertation; Messrs Luzipo Dalumzi and Ncaza Mthobeli for their camaraderie during our studies.

I would also like to thank the participants: principals of the schools where the data were collected and SMT members who gave this study their time and interest as well as making this study a success.

Financial assistance from the research unit of WSU is also appreciated.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Department of Education in the province of the Eastern Cape for allowing me to carry out this study.
ABSTRACT

During the apartheid era, that is, before 1994, principals tended to regard schools as their properties. Principals were expected to manage schools on their own without consulting the rest of the staff. From 1994 with the advent of a new political era, South Africa ended up having one National Education System. That system came up with many changes. In the new education system, the management of the school was taken from being the principal’s duty only, to the responsibility of a management team which is referred to as the school management team (SMT).

Because of the democratic nature of the SMT, it is required that educators work cooperatively as a team. The researcher has observed that this has been a challenge in some schools where principals resisted change. On the other hand, principals of schools are facing challenges due to a lack of cooperation amongst their subordinates. The establishment of SMTs does not nullify the authority of the school principal but the challenge that lies therein is that each member of the SMT must play his or her role properly.

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges facing SMT members in the GET band schools of Circuit 2 in Centane. A qualitative investigation was undertaken with the purpose in mind to develop a better understanding of the challenges facing SMTs in Circuit 2. This study was undertaken among 5 schools in Circuit 2 in Centane which falls under Butterworth District.

The researcher used convenience sampling in selecting the SMTs of schools that would participate in this research study. Due to the fact that the researcher is a principal in one of the schools in Circuit 2 he could obtain easy access to SMTs of other schools in the Circuit. The following stakeholders were identified and participated in the selected schools: principal, deputy principal and Head of Department.
Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The study was framed within the interpretive approach, and sought to unpack the perceptions of
SMT members with regard to team-management. An interpretive paradigm made it possible for the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of SMT members’ perceptions of team-management within their contexts.

The outcomes pointed to several challenges ranging from the SMT terms of reference, cooperation, sources of support and stress as a result of the work overload involved. Based on the findings, SMTs have brought the phenomenon of cooperation to the fore, and cooperation may be perceived to have many advantages. However, in order for the SMTs to play a meaningful role in curriculum management and governance issues, there is a need for them to be conversant with issues and kept abreast of developments in education as a system. It is therefore recommended that members of the SMT be exposed to continuing professional training and development in the aforementioned governance areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDO’s</td>
<td>Education development officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELRC</td>
<td>Education labour relations council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GET</td>
<td>General education and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HoD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information communication technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQMS</td>
<td>Integrated quality management systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSD</td>
<td>Occupational specific dispensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASA</td>
<td>South African Schools Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGB</td>
<td>School governing body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT</td>
<td>School management team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO</td>
<td>Learning outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of acronyms and abbreviations</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of content</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 1
**GENERAL BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION**

1.1 Background to the study                           | 1    |
1.2 Theoretical framework                            | 3    |
1.3 Rationale for the study                           | 5    |
1.4 Statement of the research problem                 | 5    |
1.5 The research question                             | 6    |
1.6 The research objectives                           | 6    |
1.7 Significance of the study                         | 7    |
1.8 Definition of pertinent terms.                    | 7    |
1.9 Limitations and steps taken to reduce their negative consequences. | 8    |
1.10 Ethics statement                                 | 9    |
1.11 Outline of the study                             | 10   |
1.12 Summary                                          | 11   |

## CHAPTER 2
**A LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1 Introduction                                      | 12   |
2.2 The composition of school management teams (SMTs)| 12   |
2.3 SMTs terms of reference and/or roles              | 15   |
2.4 Co-operation among school management teams (SMTs)| 18   |
2.4.1 Cooperation and competition                     | 18   |
2.4.2 A common vision and a common goal               | 19   |
2.5 SMT members understanding of their job description| 22   |
2.5.1 Principal                                       | 22   |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2 Deputy Principal</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3 Head of Department (HoD)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 SMTs working as a team</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1 The difference between a team and a group</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.2 The importance of teams</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.3 Heterogeneity in teams</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.4 Team effectiveness</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.5 Openness, trust and participation in teams</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.6 Management of teams in education</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.7 Limitations and shortcomings of teams</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Teamwork in the GET band schools</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.1 The educational roles of SMT</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.2 The managerial roles of the SMT</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 SMT members are overloaded as a result of their multi-faceted roles.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9 SMT members stressed about their work</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10 Summary</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHAPTER 3

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Research paradigm</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 The interpretive paradigm</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Research sample</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Research instruments</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1 Interviews</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2 Observation</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Pilot study</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Ethical considerations</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Validity and reliability</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Coding of schools and participants</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.1 Coding of schools</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.2 Coding the participants</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction 58
4.2 Analysis and presentation of SMTs responses 59
4.2.1 Emerging themes from school principals 59
4.2.1.1 Terms of reference as guidelines for principals’ operations. 59
4.2.1.2 Principals’ involvement in curriculum, management and governance issues. 60
4.2.1.3 Principals’ experience with their multi-faceted roles. 61
4.2.1.4 Cooperation and/or lack thereof among SMT members. 62
4.2.1.5 Support from the District officials 63
4.2.2 Emerging themes from deputy-principals 63
4.2.2.1 Terms of reference as guidelines for deputy - principals’ operations 63
4.2.2.2 Deputy - principals’ involvement in curriculum, management and governance issues. 65
4.2.2.3 Deputy - principals’ experience with their multi-faceted roles. 65
4.2.2.4 Deputy - principals’ perception about cooperation and/or lack thereof among SMT members. 66
4.2.2.5 Deputy - principals’ perception about the support from the District officials. 67
4.2.3 Emerging themes from HoDs 68
4.2.3.1 Terms of reference as guidelines for HoDs’ operations. 68
4.2.3.2 HoDs’ involvement in curriculum, management and governance issues. 69
4.2.3.3 HoDs’ experience with their multi-faceted roles. 70
4.2.3.4 Cooperation and/or lack thereof among SMT members. 70
4.2.3.5 Support from the District officials 71
4.3 Summary of themes/categories of SMT responses 72
4.4 Discussion of findings 75
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Summary and conclusions

5.3 Recommendations for future research

5.4 Recommendations for practice

5.4.1 Recommendations to the District office.

5.4.2 Recommendations to the SMTs.

5.5 Limitations of the study

5.6 Summary

References

THE LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of the difference between a team and a group

Table 2: List of participants.

Table 3: Summary of themes/categories of SMT responses

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Ethical clearance Approval from the WSU

APPENDIX B
Letter to the Department of Education (District Office)

APPENDIX C
Letter of permission from the Department of Education to conduct research
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>App. D</th>
<th>Letter of permission to school principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>App. E</td>
<td>Invitation for interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>App. F</td>
<td>Letter of consent from the SMTs (Sample)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>App. G</td>
<td>Interview schedule for the SMT members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>App. H</td>
<td>Observation schedule (SMT-Meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>App. I</td>
<td>Observation data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

GENERAL BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION

1.1 Background to the study

In the past school management was solely a concept referring to the duty of the school principal. Lately this concept refers to a group of people who must cooperate and work as a team in leading and managing a school in a democratic manner. Such a group of people is referred to as the School Management Team (SMT). The SMT includes the school principal, deputy principal and the Head of Department(s) (HoD).

During the apartheid era, that is, before 1994, the education management system in South Africa was demarcated according to geographical locations which included homelands; namely: Ciskei, Transkei, Venda, Bophuthatswana, etc. Those geographical regions had their own education systems which were characterized by a dictatorial and top-down approach to school management. It seems to be that principals tended to regard schools as their personal properties. Principals were expected to manage schools on their own without consulting the rest of the staff. From 1994 however, with the advent of a new political era, South Africa shift from multiple school/education management systems to one single National Education System for the whole country. That system came up with many changes. In the new education system, the management of the school was taken from being the principal’s duty, to the responsibility of a management team (Manual for school management, 2001).

Because of the democratic nature of the SMT, it is required that educators work cooperatively. The researcher has observed that this has been a challenge in some schools where principals resisted change on the one hand. On the other hand, principals of schools are facing challenges due to a lack of cooperation amongst their subordinates. The establishment of SMTs does not nullify the authority of the school principal but the challenge that lies therein is that each member of the SMT must play
his or her role properly. The purpose of this study was to investigate challenges facing SMTs in the execution of their duties.

For learners to accomplish the best education in this new education management approach, the cooperation of members of the SMTs is needed. The Education Law and Policy Handbook (1999a, p.3B-74) states “school staff establishment (that is the number of educators including the SMT members) is determined by the number of registered learners in that particular school”. This implies that as the number of educators increases, the number of educators who are serving in the SMT will also increase. For example, if the staff establishment consists of six (6) educators, then there will be one (1) Head of Department (HoD) and one (1) principal (Education Law and Policy Handbook, 1999a). If the staff establishment consists of twelve (12) educators, then there will be two (2) HoDs and 1 principal; for 18 educators there will be 1 principal, 1 deputy principal and 2 HoD’s; and for 30 educators there will be 1 principal, 2 deputy principals and 5 Heads of Departments. In other words for each and every sixth educator, there must be a HoD (Personnel Administration Measures DoE 1999b, p.4). According to the post provisioning on the promotion ladder for 2003, if the school staff establishment is consisting of only 5 educators, then there will be no HoDs and no deputy principal but the principal will manage the school by him/herself alone (Chamber Resolution on Post Provisioning 2003, p.2).

The researcher is of the view that if the principal is the only administrator, the principal will be facing a huge challenge in managing all the aspects of the school, which include the following: curriculum management, promoting information communication technology (ICT) in learning, shaping the direction and development of the school, managing quality and securing accountability, developing and empowering self and others, managing the school as an organization and working with and for the community (Collective Agreement 1 of 2008, Annexure A 10).
1.2 Theoretical framework

This study explored the challenges facing SMTs in the GET band schools of Circuit 2 in Centane. An interpretivist framework also called phenomenology was used to frame and focus the study. Phenomenologists’ main aim is to capture the lives of participants in order to understand and interpret the meaning thereof. Phenomenology paradigm endeavours to present the reality of participants from their own view points (Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, 2004).

Phenomenologists realize that observation is fallible and that all theory is revisable (Babbie and Mouton, 2003). Therefore they believe that knowledge is constructed not only by observable phenomena, but also by descriptions of people’s intentions, beliefs, values, meaning making and self-understanding (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). The researcher adopting this approach has to look at different places and at different things relating to participants in order to understand the phenomenon in point. Thus, the interpretive researcher looks for frames that shape the meaning. It thus holds that researchers in this paradigm are extremely sensitive to the role context plays in the issues under study.

This research study is situated in an interpretivist research framework with its emphasis on experience and interpretation. The purpose of this research is to gain a deep level of understanding of the challenges facing SMTs at the area of study. More specifically, this research study focused on the understanding of individual participant’s experiences of the challenges facing SMTs in their day-to-day working environment, from the standpoint of their contexts and backgrounds. It is on this basis that the study was interpretive in nature.

The foundational assumption of phenomenologists is that most of people’s knowledge is gained, or at least filtered, through social construction such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents and other artifacts. Interpretive research attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to situations, events and phenomena (Creswell, 2005).
According to Henning, et al (2004) the fundamental assumptions of the interpretive paradigm include the following: Firstly, individuals are not considered to be passive vehicles in social, political and historical affairs, but have certain inner capabilities which can allow for individual judgements, perceptions and decision-making autonomy.

Secondly, the belief that any event or action is explainable in terms of multiple interacting factors, events and processes. In essence this position holds a view that causes and effects are mutually interdependent. Thirdly, an acknowledgement of an inevitable difficulty in attaining complete objectivity, especially when observing human subjects who confuse and make sense of events based on their individual system of meanings.

Fourthly, the view that the aim of inquiry is to develop an understanding of individual cases, rather than universal laws or predictive generalizations. This however, does not mean that the findings cannot be extended logically and used in some way; otherwise the purpose of the research would be questionable. Fifthly, the view that the world is made up of the multifaceted realities that are best studied as a whole, recognizing the significance of the context in which experience occurs. Lastly, the recognition that the inquiry is always value laden and that such value inevitably influences the framing, focusing and conducting of research. These are the assumptions that underlie all elements of this research.

The notion of the researcher being separate from the subject of the research is not compatible with interpretive philosophy. As the researcher studied individual perceptions and experiences, while using the human mind to do so, it was impossible to completely separate the researcher from what was being investigated. The researcher may be considered as an "insider" during the process of conducting the research.
1.3 Rationale for the study

The researcher’s interest arose out of having been a school principal in Circuit 2 in Centane Sub-District, under Butterworth Education District. This was as a result of the researcher’s work experience through interaction and observation with other educators as a principal in Centane. The researcher has been serving as principal for ten consecutive years and has observed that due to lower learner enrolment, some schools do not have a deputy principal and this has led to more work for the principal. Some principals are appointed from other schools (that is external recruitment) whilst there are contestants of such posts within schools. The researcher has observed that this kind of recruitment brings serious challenges to the SMT and teachers, especially in terms of cooperation.

The researcher also felt that the capacity of school principals and their SMTs in circuit two (2) should be open for discussion. Such discussion would lessen any problems and challenges that might ensue and perhaps disrupt the smooth running of the school. Another reason for conducting this research is based on the researcher’s assessment of current literature and scholarship on SMTs. Research tends to focus more on the challenges facing individual school principals or managers, and less attention is paid on SMTs. The researcher viewed SMT challenges as warranting attention since the professional management of a school is not the sole responsibility of the principal of the school.

1.4 Statement of the research problem

Schools today place multiple demands on school principals, deputy principals and HODs requiring them to impart vision, initiate change, and make difficult decisions. To handle these demands, SMTs must be flexible and adaptable. In his observation and discussions with other principals before embarking on this study the researcher noted clearly that he was not the only one who was concerned about these challenges. This research study, therefore, sought to describe the challenges faced by SMT members in the execution of their duties.
1.5 The research question

The main research question that this study addressed was: “What are the challenges facing School Management Team members in the GET band?”

The sub-questions were:
- What are the terms of reference of each SMT member?
- What is the level of understanding of their terms of reference?
- What is the level of cooperation amongst SMT?
- What kind of support is there for SMT?
- What is the work load of SMT members?
- What is the level of understanding of SMT’s job description?

1.6 The research objectives

The objectives of the research study were to:
- Determine the extent to which SMT members’ operations are guided by their terms of reference.
- Determine if there is cooperation among SMT members.
- Determine if there are any sources of support for SMTs.
- Determine if SMTs are overloaded.
- Determine if SMTs are stressed about their work.
- Determine if SMTs understand their job description.

1.7 Significance of the study

The results of this study might point to gaps in SMT practices in the execution of their roles. The results of this study may lead to the identification of niches for intervention by the District officials, help tailor or customize the interventions to suite the needs of each SMT and add to the body of knowledge about professional management, particularly about the challenges facing SMTs.
1.8 Definition of pertinent terms

**General Education and Training Band Schools** General Education and Training (GET) band includes all grades from grade R to grade 9 respectively (Manual for school management, 2007, p.532).

**Management Team** might best be described as a group of people whose role is formalized and legitimized and whose purpose is problem solving and/or decision making (Duvall and Kenneth, 1981).

**School Management Team (SMT)** refers to educators who are appointed to manage the school as a whole. These appointments are either formal or informal or voluntary in the school where the Department of Education (DoE) has not yet advertised the posts and this structure includes the school principal, deputy principal and head of departments (Manual for School Management, 2007).

**Management** refers to a specific type of work in education which comprises those relative 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 (Le Roux, 2004).

**Interview protocol** is a form designed by the researcher that contains instructions for the process of the interview, the questions to be asked, and the space to take notes on the responses from the interviewees (Creswell, 2005).

**Generalizability** this refers to the extent to which findings of one study can be used as knowledge about other populations and situations (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

**Validity** means that researcher can draw meaningful and justifiable inferences from scores about a sample or population (Creswell, 2005).

**Triangulation** is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals (e.g., a principal and a student), in descriptions and themes in qualitative research (Creswell, 2005).

**Sample** is a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for the purpose of making generalizations about the target population (Creswell, 2005).
**In-depth interview** is a purposeful conversation that uses a general interview guide with a few selected topics and probes (i.e., not a set of standardized questions); this should last at least an hour (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

**Phenomenological study** is the research that describes the meaning or essence of a lived experience (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

**Interpretivist** the researcher tends to rely upon the participants’ views of the situation being studied and recognizes the impact on the research of their own background and experiences (Creswell, 2005).

**Research design** is the plan that describes the conditions and procedures for collecting and analyzing data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

**Research methods** these are the procedures used to collect and analyze data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).

1.9 **Limitations and steps taken to reduce their negative consequences**

Limitations refer to shortcomings within the research process, which are the research design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis procedures and techniques. According to Babbie and Mouton (2003), the researcher outlines the circumstances which he or she considers to be the major restrictions which may adversely affect the outcome(s), in terms of the research design. The generalizability of the findings was limited to the characteristics of the schools and the composition of their respective SMTs. This did not suggest that the findings are not useful; it simply means that greater caution is necessary in generalizing these results.

The researcher’s biases were abound to play out on him since he is a school principal and an SMT member in his own school. However, the researcher exercised reflexivity and bracketing of himself so that his own subjectivity did not cloud or contaminate the findings. Also, the researcher checked with the respondents to ensure that their responses were not misrepresented or misjudged.

Another limitation was imposed by the use or choice of instrument. Interviews yield self reported data. The danger here is that self reports are fraught with self serving
biases and the likelihood of not being realistic about the situation being described cannot be ruled out. To overcome this problem the researcher asked probing and follow-up questions. Validity was addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved by the SMT members that were approached in Circuit two (2). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) claim that the personal involvement of a researcher and the in-depth responses of individual SMT members would secure a sufficient level of validity and reliability.

The timing of data collection did impose some limitations in so far as data collection was concerned. This is because respondents were engaged in setting of examination papers, supervision of writing of examinations and marking of scripts around that time, which was March and May. To deal with this challenge the researcher made appointments with the potential respondents for interviews at their convenient times after school hours.

1.10 Ethics statement

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), qualitative research is more likely to be personally intrusive and as such the researcher had to seek permission from those who are in authority, that is, principals of schools through letter writing so as to be allowed where possible to conduct his research (See Appendix D, p.102). The researcher wrote a letter to the local Department of Education (DoE) requesting permission to conduct the research on challenges facing SMTs in the GET band schools in circuit 2 at Centane (See Appendix B, p.99). Having been granted such permission, the researcher met the SMTs in their respective schools and the purpose of the study was explained to the SMTs. The researcher waited for a positive response before he began his research. In this study, human beings were the focus of investigation and as such the researcher looked closely at the ethical implications of what he was proposing to do. The issues that the researcher considered were as follows:
Protection from harm: SMTs as participants would not be subjected to embarrassment, unusual stress, or loss of self esteem (Leedy and Omrod, 2001).

Informed consent: SMTs as participants in this research were told by the researcher about the nature of the study, and that if they agreed to participate, they would have the right to withdraw from the study at any time (Leedy and Omrod, 2001).

Right to privacy: The researcher kept the nature and quality of participant’s performance strictly confidential (Leedy and Omrod, 2001).

Honesty with professional colleagues: The researcher reports his findings in a complete and honest fashion, without misrepresenting what he has investigated (Leedy and Omrod, 2001).

1.11 Outline of the study

The study consists of five (5) Chapters, which are arranged as follows:

Chapter 1

In Chapter one the research problem is introduced to the reader. It is in this Chapter that the general background and orientation of the study, statement of the problem and the researcher’s motivation for the study are presented. The important concepts used in the study are clarified in this Chapter as well.

Chapter 2

Chapter two gives a review of the related literature on the challenges facing SMTs.

Chapter 3

Chapter three presents the research methodology. It describes and justifies the research design that is used for the study and the sampling procedures employed. It also describes the data collection instruments and how the data would be collected.
The trustworthiness and transferability of the research instrument are also described in this Chapter.

Chapter 4

Chapter four focuses on the data analysis and discussion of findings.

Chapter 5

In this Chapter the summary, conclusion and recommendations on how the Department of Education may intervene and assist SMTs in the execution of their jobs are presented.

1.12 Summary

Chapter 1 has introduced the topic to be investigated. The background to the topic has been given in this Chapter too. The research problem has been stated and the research methodology has been outlined in this Chapter. The Chapter also gives a clear demarcation of the study and a brief exposition of the study. The next Chapter focuses on an extensive literature review which informed this study on the challenges facing SMTs in the GET band schools in Circuit 2 in Centane would be given through an extensive literature review.
CHAPTER 2
A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of literature review is to form the theoretical framework of the research. In the light of the problem statement presented in Chapter one, the current Chapter presents the readings consulted by the researcher to establish what has been researched in the areas of focus of this study, namely, challenges facing SMTs. These challenges as perceived by the researcher include SMT’s knowledge about their terms of reference and/or roles, co-operation among SMTs, sources of support for SMTs, SMT members’ understanding of their job description, work load of SMT members as a result of their multi-faceted roles and SMT members’ stress resulting from their work.

As argued in Chapter one, school management was exclusively the duty of the school principal. However, lately school management refers to a group of people who must cooperate and work together as a team in leading and managing the school in a democratic manner. Such a group of people is referred to as the school management team (SMT). The SMT includes the school principal, deputy principal and the Head of Department(s) (HoDs).

2.2 The composition of school management teams (SMTs)

Literature reviewed reveals that in countries like Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and elsewhere the concept of school management team is substituted by senior management team. Senior management teams typically hold considerable responsibilities for the management of schools in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom (Wallace and Hall, 1994). According to Wallace and Hall, these responsibilities include making major decisions on behalf of the entire staff about school policy and practice and the overall running of the school. As such, SMTs
occupy a powerful place in school-decision making and are key contributors to leadership in the school.

It is clear from literature reviewed in this regard that despite their existence in schools for some time now and the important role they play in school life, in Australia little research has been conducted into SMTs. Cardno (1999) has made a similar observation in relation to the lack of research on SMTs in New Zealand where self-management notions, and hence SMTs, have been in practice for almost 25 years. Research that has been undertaken, although not much, has mainly come from the United Kingdom.

As noted in the literature reviewed the personnel composition of SMTs is often school specific, and the inclusion of the head/principal and deputy head(s)/deputy principals is typical. Wallace and Hall's (1994) case study research of SMTs in secondary schools in the UK indicated that membership extended beyond the principal and deputy principals to include one or more senior teaching staff. In some instances the concept includes school councils or boards where in parents, teachers and possibly representatives of the wider community are also likely to hold membership. In the study conducted by Wallace and Huckman (1996) it was noted that in some small primary schools that consisted of fewer than ten teachers, all teaching staff could constitute the SMT.

Wallace and Huckman (1999) also reported that membership on the team was not automatic. Rather, several principles governed the formation of SMTs, namely: the necessity of ensuring coverage of major areas of school wide management, a conception of what constituted a balanced team in terms of personalities and expertise and recognition of existing senior post holders and the desirability of fluid membership to allow other staff interests to be included at particular times (Wallace and Hall, 1994). Noteworthy is the fact that the issue of who is included and who is excluded in SMTs is a micropolitical question itself in so far as such decisions and the
consequences of those decisions are likely to require reference to power, interpersonal relationships, collaboration and cooperation.

Walker’s (1994) view is that teams must not be formed by chance. Walker (1994, p.39), commenting on a particular research project, laments: “Teachers were formed into teams without thought of composition, structure or accountability”. It is Walker’s view and the current researcher shares that view that the end result of this approach would be ineffectiveness and in acute cases dysfunctional teams. Ineffective and dysfunctional in the sense that due to inappropriate combination of team members, they find themselves not pulling together and therefore only certain members of the team may end up doing the job.

Sheard and Kakabadse (2001, p.137) assert that the team may be apparently functional, but some individuals have no intention of accepting any decision that involves them personally doing anything differently. Research in Israel found that the number ranging from seven to ten members was an optimal size for obtaining effectiveness (Drach-Zahavy and Somech 2001, p.49). They further argue that team size was found to affect effectiveness through its effects on team structure as well as on team processes.

Mears and Voehl (1994, p.7) also contend that in practice, effective teams are actually small, with the ideal team size between six and seven people on the average. Belbin (1981, p.107) on the other hand argues for flexibility in the number of team members and to him this “...depends on the amount of work that needs to be performed”. He suggests that the size of SMT is dictated by the tasks that the SMT is to perform. Wallace and Hall (1994, p.47) argue that there is “no direct relationship between the size of the school and the number of senior staff in the team”. The Education Human Resource Management and Development Manual (DoE 2000, p.2) is equally vague about the composition of SMTs.

According to the manual the SMT is a structure that is composed of the higher-ranking educators in an institution. Belbin (1981, p.126) reiterates, “Management
teams are commonly made up of members holding particular appointments. They are there by virtue of the offices or responsibilities they represent.” From the above statement the researcher wishes to deduce that when a teacher applies for a Head of Department (HoD), or deputy principal or the principal post, s/he is applying for a management post. Therefore, in schools, one cannot divorce a particular higher post from any managerial functions attached to it. As has been mentioned, in order for the SMT to function effectively, it must have clearly defined roles and duties, and the researcher now turns to those roles and duties.

2.3 SMTs terms of reference and/or roles

“A role can be defined as a set of integrated behaviours associated with an identifiable position,” (Sergiovanni, Burlingame and Thurston 1999, p.169). He views a role as having a relation to the position of a person to play that role. This, therefore, means that the role a particular person is to undertake would be, in a way, influenced by his/her position. However, there is little agreement on the issue of SMT members’ roles and duties both locally and abroad.

Research in Britain has shown that it is evident that many heads and senior staff are inadequately prepared for their new responsibilities (Bush 1995, p.5). The researcher is of the view that amongst the responsibilities Bush is mentioning, the roles and duties of the SMT form part of it. Similarly in a South African context, Lukhwareni (1995) argues that school management teams must be made aware of their roles and that they are responsible for the destiny of their respective schools and the people associated with them.

Being aware of their roles, they must bravely accept the commitment to take the lead in performing them with dedication. In discussions with colleagues 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 quoted as one glaring short-coming. Lukhwareni (1995) affirms this view when he
emphasizes the fact that SMT members are not familiar with their roles and provides an answer for the malfunctioning of the SMTs in managing schools.

Lukhwareni (1995) cites the lack of training of prospective managers as one of the key factors. He also claims that the absence of proper support from the Department of Education (DoE) is a key factor for the oblivion the SMTs find themselves in. It becomes evident to the researcher that SMTs need intensive training in school management.

In the same vein, Scott and Walker (1999) argue that without the right support, teamwork can be little more than a token form of democracy, and if schools are to optimize their use of teams, they must face up to some of the inconsistencies evident in their structures, systems and processes. Accounts such as this suggest that there is a need for an oversight government structure such as the DoE to conduct workshops and seminars for SMTs so that the latter are kept abreast with their roles and functions.

It is human nature that people do not know all. Therefore, from the arguments stated above it becomes apparent that for SMTs to function more effectively, support from the DoE is imperative. The Education Human Resource Management and Development Manual (DoE 2000, p.2) argues that the new education policy requires school leaders and managers to work in a democratic and participatory way to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective delivery, but many school leaders and managers are struggling to translate policy into practice. The implications of such a claim or observation are discussed below.

Firstly, in this case the term “school leaders” as used in the above quotation connote the SMTs and the manual expects them (school leaders) to know their roles and functions in school management in order to facilitate effective delivery. Secondly, the Education Human Resource Management and Development Manual (DoE 2000, p.2) suggest that by virtue of being leaders, they must be at the forefront of school activities and initiate new ways of doing things. This reminds the researcher of a
workshop he attended on vision crafting (held on the 16 August 2007 at a local school). The researcher was invited by the District office to attend this function. One of the facilitators said school leaders must not be afraid to make mistakes in their endeavours to explore new ideas of doing things.

In November 2001 a survey research in Queensland and New Zealand explored the impact of school-based management and other reforms on the role and workload of secondary school principals (Billot, Marat, Cranston, Ehrich, and Reugebrink 2002). Broadly, the results of this research confirmed Wildy and Louden’s (2000, p.182) assertion that the school restructuring movement has had an impact on the knowledge, skills and dispositions required of school leaders. The assertion goes further and points out that at the same time, principals are under more pressure to provide clear leadership, to guarantee the efficiency of school management processes and to be more accountable to external stakeholders and authorities than otherwise.

Significantly, more than 80 percent of Queensland and New Zealand secondary school principals who responded to the survey under discussion indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied in their roles despite substantially increased pressure and workloads associated with school-based management and other reforms. A concern commonly cited by Queensland respondents, however, was a lack of sufficiently skilled and able senior staff to whom significant management and operational responsibilities could be confidently delegated in order to free up time for strategic leadership by the principal.

This concern was typically accompanied by an expressed desire for professional development in changing management and team building and a need for more support staff (Billot, et al., 2002). In the light of these findings, the role and workload of deputy principals in secondary schools emerged as an important area for further research. While there is a vast body of literature that examines the role of the principal or head in schools, it has been only in recent years that attention has focused on the working practices and relationships of members in the SMTs. Yet, under school based management, the reality is that principals do not act alone; they
work not only with members of the SMTs but also other staff members and the wider school community.

2.4 Co-operation among school management teams (SMTs)

2.4.1 Cooperation and competition

According to Scott and Walker (1999) for teams to operate effectively the organization needs to emphasize cooperation rather than competition. This means that team members need not compete in their practices but to be more supportive and persuasive of other members in trying to reach a common goal or consensus.

On the other hand there is of course room for healthy competition, as Belbin (2000, p.74) argues: Competition is healthy; it leads to progress; it operates in the public interest. Hayes (1997, p.199) agrees when he argues that appraisal systems which put the team members in competition with one another, or which fail to recognize the achievements of the team as a whole undermine the co-operative dimensions of teamwork and can be extremely demoralizing to team members.

Whatever kind of competition team members embark themselves on; one kind should compensate the other, rather than paralyzing the organization. Thus Hayes (1997, p. 214) suggests that competition between teams has to be carefully managed so as to ensure that it is competition about achievement rather than competition about organizational resources. In an organization it is healthy for the members to have conflicting ideas and strive towards their adoption. This is in line with Bush’s (1995) political model of organization. Bush (1995, p.73) asserts, “Conflict is viewed as a natural phenomenon...” Here members can compete for their views to be adopted. Nevertheless, it is obvious that for positive competition to prevail, the teams must share a common vision and goal.
2.4.2 A common vision and a common goal

Bush (1986, p.49) argues that, “democratic models assume a common set of values held by members of the organization.” These may arise from socialization which occurs during training and the early years of professional practice. These common values guide the managerial activities of the organization and in particular are thought to lead to shared institutional objectives. About this issue it is stated that “A vision is a blueprint for change. It must be dreamed and imagined before it is achieved” (DoE 2001, p.79)

This suggests that SMTs, all school stakeholders and other people who are interested in the education of learners should be given an opportunity to voice their aspirations and expectations. A school’s vision therefore has the capacity of changing the status quo of an institution including its SMT practices. Senge (in Wallace, 1996) defines a vision as a mental image of the future state of an organization that we hope to create. Literature reviewed suggests and the researcher shares, the view that vision building is both individual and a group enterprise.

A common vision begins with the vision of each individual involved. Thus a common vision has its roots in a personal ‘dream’. Coetzee, Hawksley, and Louw (2001, p.12) elaborates on a personal vision as follows: A vision is a picture in your mind. To visualise is to see this picture. Your personal vision for the future is a picture you create in your mind of what you want your life to be like, almost like your dreams for the future. It seems like all in all, a vision is the ambition and expectation of all stakeholders. It gives a broader picture of what all the stakeholders want to achieve at the end of the day.

A vision is also a long-term phenomenon. Hayes (1997) supports this view by suggesting that a vision must be clearly articulated, must be original, must be developed and negotiated by the whole team, and must be attainable. Let me analyze these points one by one. “Must be clearly articulated” means that the vision must be written in a language that is clear and simple, using words which carry clear meaning
to all members. The vision “Must be original” means that an organisation needs to
develop its own vision, one which reflects members’ own aspirations and the context
in which they work. Therefore the voices of the stakeholders must feature
prominently in the vision.

The third point is self-explanatory and it states that a vision must be developed and
negotiated by the whole team. All stakeholders need to be part of the crafting of the
vision of their school so that they can identify with the school and the vision itself.

Lastly, the vision must be “attainable”. Although a vision must be ‘dreamed’, Hayes
(1997) suggests that it should be an achievable dream. Let us take an example of a
very poorly resourced school in a rural area where teaching and learning takes place
under a tree. Hayes (1997) suggests that they must not dream of having a school
computer laboratory instead of thinking about the shelter first. Therefore, a vision
must be a priority the school community needs to achieve in their endeavours to uplift
themselves.

For the team to achieve a common vision each member should realize that their
contributions are fundamental and that the rest of the team depends on the
individual. At this juncture the researcher wishes to bring in Belbin’s metaphor of a
team as a game. Belbin (1993, p.87) says that the term ‘team’ is imbued with a
meaning derived, in the first instance, from games. Each player in a team has a
position and a specific responsibility. The skills of the players are important, but the
strength of the team depends more especially on how well the players combine. Star
players who fail to pass the ball are no longer an asset and may be dropped in favour
of those who fit in best.

In a school situation, Belbin’s (1993) metaphor is in line with Hayes’s (1997) definition
of teamwork. However, Belbin’s argument goes a step further and suggests what to
do when a team has a non-performing member. He suggests that if one member is
not performing as expected, then that member is no longer part of the team. He
further warns that while teams should be changed due to poor results, there are also
occasions when teams need to be changed in advance of likely failure (ibid, p.93). He suggests that leaders should anticipate that there is a likelihood of team members not to click and make necessary arrangements accordingly. This is a vital step towards achieving a common goal. However, Hayes (1997, p.56) argues that common goals cannot be taken for granted. What he means here is that common goals need to be negotiated and co-determined by team members; more importantly, they need to be consolidated before “…a team is built or begin acting fully as a team” (Ibid, p.56). The above argument reiterates the notion that teams are built for a purpose or a goal. Therefore teams determine their common goals by “…creating conditions in which people will begin to perceive the team members as ‘us’- as belonging to the same unit and identifying themselves with it” (Hayes 1997, p.56). Among the ‘conditions’ identified as essential in this regard are dialogue and personal commitment.

Wallace (1996) elaborates on the above view and argues that, the process of shared vision has two important elements. According to Wallace a shared vision requires extensive dialogue between the key stakeholders to agree on a statement of belief about the desired future state of the school district and individual schools. Not only that, but that it also requires each participant to think seriously about personal beliefs regarding knowledge, learning, teaching, assessment, and the like in order for them to make a meaningful contribution to realization or implementation of that vision.

It is clear from Wallace’s views that members of the team, especially the SMT, should understand and identify with the vision in order to establish rapport among the school’s stakeholders. The vision of the school should be initiated by the SMT and spread to the rest of the stakeholders. The school needs to have a SMT that is ambitious and creative. To have that kind of a SMT, its composition should be carefully constructed. The working SMT should be part (especially taking the leading role) of vision crafting and the composition of the SMT should therefore be a priority.
2.5 SMT members understanding of their job description

2.5.1 Principal

According to Education law and policy hand book, (1999a) the duties of the principal are to ensure that the school is managed satisfactorily and in compliance with the applicable legislation, regulations and personnel administration measures as prescribed. The principal has to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner and in accordance with approved policies.

Research on SMTs in both primary and secondary schools has revealed that principals play and occupy a critical role in the SMT (Wallace and Hall, 1994; Wallace, 1996 and Walker, 1993). Wallace and Hall (1994) for example reported that teams could not exist without the commitment and leadership of principals, because they alone had the authority to create conditions for others to participate in sharing the decision-making. Principals according to Wallace and Hall (1994) hold major responsibility for creating and promoting a culture of team work which include among many others laying the ground rules for meetings, setting the agenda for joint work and helping to identify the tasks and responsibilities of other members.

The principal holds a unique position in the SMT as he/she is both a leader of the team and, at the same time, a member of the team. This position has the potential for creating tension on the one hand. Furthermore, if the team does not work, the principal may be held accountable by other stake holders. As Wallace and Hall (1994, p.78) observe, “adopting a team approach in more than name is a high risk strategy for them [heads]”. If the team does not work, not only does the principal lose credibility but also the potential ‘synergy’ which is often the result of working with others (Wallace and Hall, 1994). The responsibilities of principals in SMTs is thus significant, to not only be seen to be supportive of collaborative decision-making, but to actually effect it in practice because of the benefits for the school.
2.5.2 Deputy Principal

The Education law and policy handbook (1999a) also outlines the duties of the deputy principal has to assist the principal in managing the school and promoting the education of learners in a proper manner. The deputy principal has to maintain a total awareness of the administrative procedures across the total range of school activities and functions.

According to Rowley (1999), the deputy principal originates from the designation of a senior teacher to accept responsibility for an overflow of lesser administrative tasks in order to reduce the workload of the principal. The definitive study by Austin and Brown (1970) found that assistant principals had little discretionary power in the way in which they performed a large range of responsibilities. The survey of Austin and Brown also showed that assistant principals had responsibility for a broad range of disparate tasks. The assistant principal’s role could be defined as “whatever the principal wants.” Consequently the specific responsibilities of assistant principals varied from school to school.

Across schools, assistant principals were involved in almost every administrative responsibility. Despite the subordination of the deputy principal to the principal’s authority to allocate responsibilities, it appears that the work activities of both deputy principals and principals are drawn from the same pool of administrative responsibilities. Historically, the deputy principalship has been characterized by a lack of effective job descriptions. The descriptions may not make clear the full range of responsibilities. In an Australian study, Kourra (2000) reported that the role of the assistant principal was far broader than the official role description entailed.

2.5.3 Head of Department (HoD)

Furthermore the Education law and policy handbook, (1999a) lists the duties of the Head of Departments as follows; to engage in class teaching, be responsible for the effective functioning of the department and organize relevant/related extra –
curricular activities so as to ensure that the subject, learning area or phase and the education of learners is promoted in a proper manner.

In addition, the Head of Departments are responsible for the effective functioning of the department and organize relevant/related extra – curricular activities so as to ensure that the subject, learning area or phase and the education of learners is promoted in a proper manner, to be a class teacher, to co-ordinate evaluation/assessment, homework, written assignments, etc. of all the subjects in their departments, to assess and record the attainment of learners taught, to be in charge of a subject, learning area or phase, to jointly develop the policy for their department.

2.6 SMTs working as a team

Belbin (1981) and Hayes (1997) have both argued that the term ‘team’ is derived from the field of sport. They also claimed that the rules and roles of players in sports apply to those of the team of an organisation. In an organisational context a team is a group of people actively cooperating to achieve the same goal or purpose (Hayes, 1997, p.52). A team therefore is said to be active, in that all members are involved in the process of pursuing objectives. Everard and Morris (1996, p.156) define a team as “a group of people that can effectively tackle any task which it has been set to do”. They further argue that the contribution drawn from each member is of the highest possible quality, and is one which could not have been called into play other than in the context of a supportive team. The word “effective”, in adverbial form the definition of team above, means that the quality of the task accomplishment is the best available and makes full and economic use of the resources (internal and external) available to them (Ibid, p. 156). Van der Bank (2000, p.9) claims that effectiveness means, “Doing the right job right”. Van der Bank’s definition suggests that if a team is set and its tasks are specified and the team does something that it is not mandated to do, although correct, that team is not effective.
Shea and Guzzo in (Drach-Zahavy and Somech 2001, p.52) define team effectiveness as the “production of designated products or the delivery of services per specification”. According to Wallace and Hall (1994, p.3) a team has two or more people and it has a specific performance or recognizable goal to be attained furthermore the coordination of activity among the members of the team is required for the attainment of the team goal or objective. Wallace and Hall’s definition of a team depicts two things, the number of people constituting the team and their designation. From these definitions, one can deduce that when more than one person has a joint role to play, they constitute a team.

Wallace and Hall (1994) are of the view that in order for people to be committed in their endeavours to produce good results they must be in teams. Sheard and Kakabadse (2001) also pointed out that; teams are an effective way of making people productive when they work together. Sheard and Kakabadse isolate a team from a collection of 11 people to carry out a task. This collection or group of people in Sheard and Kakabadse’s view might have different interests and subsequently not coordinate their activities. However, it is clear that there may be disparity between teams and groups. It is against this background that the researcher now will explore the difference briefly.

2.6.1 The difference between a team and a group

A team as defined by Hayes (1997) is “...a group of people who are task focused, co-ordinated, each contributing their own personal talents and abilities and energies to the job at hand.” Hayes sees a team as people having a common vision and working on a task with enthusiasm and determination. He assumes that people in a team will utilise their skills and capabilities to achieve a common goal. The views Sheard and Kakabadse (2001) present on what a group is are also worth looking at. Sheard and Kakabadse also argue that a group is loose. By ‘loose’ they mean that people in that group do not work in a co-ordinated manner and have different interests. Given this view, one can conclude that it is likely that in a group people might pull in different directions. This is a direct opposite of what is expected in a team.
Hayes (1997, p.28) defines a group as: “a group of people working together - amicably enough, but without coordination, common objectives and a sense of teamwork”. According to Mears and Voehl (1994), the fundamental difference between a team and a group is that a group is a collection of individuals who are in an interdependence relationship with one another. A team goes beyond that in that members are encouraged to share in the ownership of the team’s functions and direction. However, recently the father of the team-role theory (Belbin, 2000) argued that there are six distinct differences between a team and a group; namely: size, selection, leadership, perception, style and spirit. These differences will be discussed them in detail later in this Chapter. Belbin (1981) claims that the essence of a team is that its members form a co-operative association through a division of labour that best reflects the contribution that each can make towards the common objective.

From the above statement it is evident that each team member is expected to contribute equally towards a specified goal. The amount of work to be done should be negotiated with the rest of the team and each member takes up a portion of it. As it may be noted from the definitions of these two concepts; team versus group, there is a very thin line of demarcation between a team and a group.

In order for one to know and understand the ways teams function as contrasted in the way groups do it is vital for one to be aware of the distinguishing features of each one of them. Belbin (1981) acknowledges that there is a discrepancy between a team and a group. As a point of departure he first highlights the difference in terms of personality and states that a team differs from a group in that it demands from its member’s personal adjustment in playing one of a limited number of parts that together form an effective pattern.

Then he goes on to the numerical values of the two and says a group refers to a number of people brought together for a common purpose while being too numerous to allow team role relationship to form. As numbers in the group increase, the identity and special role contribution of every individual member diminishes and correspondingly the role of the leader becomes enlarged (ibid, p.114). In a later
publication, Belbin (2000, p.114) argues that a team comprises a limited number of people selected to work together for a shared objective in a way that allows each person to make a distinctive contribution.

Furthermore, Belbin (2000) states that leadership and style in a group and in a team differ in that in a team, leadership is shared or rotates. In groups the leadership stays unchanged in spite of changing focus of the work, for solo leaders are not easily challenged or displaced. Solo leaders impose their own particular style and preferences on others. According to Belbin (2000, p.21) it is evident that teams are more productive than groups and had develop a useful language of inputs designed to facilitate the working relationships of team members. From the views articulated above, it can be argued that for teams to be productive, they must be democratic in their practices.

As way of summarizing the differences between a team and a group the following comprehensive differences as proposed by Belbin (2000) are relevant for this study:

Table 1: Summary of the differences between a team and a group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TEAM</th>
<th>GROUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Medium or large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>Crucial</td>
<td>Immaterial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Shared or rotating</td>
<td>Solo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Mutual knowledge understanding</td>
<td>Focus on leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Role-spread co-ordination</td>
<td>Convergence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit</td>
<td>Dynamic interaction</td>
<td>Conformism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6.2 The importance of teams

With specific reference to education management in South Africa which is the central issue in this study, the assertions made by Hartshorne and Garaudy (1999) provide a good base for a discussion on the concept of teams in the management of education. Hartshorne and Garaudy (1999, p.105) postulate that “South Africa inherited a state education system from the apartheid era that was not only divisive and discriminatory, but also ineffective and inefficient”. They also point out that, that system was further characterized by a particular low level of morale among the teachers in the system and a poor standard of management performance. The poor standard of management highlighted by Hartshorne and Garaudy is a result of a lack of a legitimate management structure that is able to listen to other people’s needs. “Legitimate” as a term is used here to highlight the fact that a number of role players in the structure should be able to make fundamental decisions with regards to the ways in which they can manage their schools within a given domain.

The structures have legal and moral authority to make these decisions. Furthermore, the argument is informed by the fact that during the apartheid, there was no consultation in as far as managerial imperatives of education system were concerned as already discussed. Looked at against the apartheid education management system and practice, the Task Team Report on Education in 1999 can be understood as proposing a completely different approach to education management. The Task Team Report (DoE 1999c, p.14) argues that managers can no longer simply wait for instructions or decisions from government. It also points out that the pace of change and the need to be adaptable and responsive to local circumstances requires that managers develop new skills and styles of working. The report suggests or implies that education managers now must be capable of providing leadership for teams, and able to interact with communities and other stakeholders both inside and outside the system. It is these new skills and styles of working that make current education very dynamic.
However, to effect such a change, there should be a way of involving more than one person in managing the school. This should be done with good results and relationships in mind. Hence the researcher finds that Sheard and Kakabadse’s (2001) definition of a team above is still relevant and indisputable in this context. Murgatroyd and Morgan in Van der Bank (2000, p.9) assert that teams are desirable in schools because:

- They maximize the creative talent within the school and promote learning.
- They are learning units because they encourage the transfer of knowledge as well as skills.
- Teamwork is more satisfying than working alone (teams must however be well managed, trained and developed).
- Teams promote problem ownership.
- Teams can cover a wider range of problem solving than a single individual could cope with.

The five reasons Murgatroyd and Morgan advance in their advocacy for a team approach to education management provide a hard stitch against which to determine what an effective team should be doing. In the light of the foregoing discussion on “team” as a concept in education management this study takes the view that teamwork is a way in which managers and other role players’ potentials and capabilities are utilized, nurtured and optimized. This is because when one’s skills are being used, they become ‘sharper’ in that they are given enough exercise and evaluation throughout. As those skills are exposed to exercise and evaluate necessary adjustments to them could be made in order to have them (skills) function better and to their maximum. The last point on this is that the way teams are composed is very important because it determines the effectiveness of a team. After all the points outlined and discussed in the foregoing parts of this discourse, attention at this point turns to the concept of heterogeneity in teams.
2.6.3 Heterogeneity in teams

Drach-Zahavy and Somech (2001) suggest that for the team to be effective it must be highly heterogeneous (in terms of functionality, education and team tenure). They see the diversity in teams as the driving force for the achievement of results; this is because people from different backgrounds bring with them different experiences and different knowledge bases. Team members varied exposures enable them to approach a task from different angles and thereby solve problems amicably.

Maier (in Drach-Zahavy and Somech 2001, p.45) similarly argues that team heterogeneity enhances the breadth of perspective, cognitive resources, and overall problem-solving capacity of the group. Heterogeneity refers to “a greater mix of educational backgrounds of team members” (Drach-Zahavy and Somech 2001, p.46). Mears and Voehl (1994, p.80) reiterate this point when they say, “Sound teamwork is based upon an effective mix of people, and each person should realize the unique contribution he/she can make to the team.”

The notion of heterogeneity is, however, not as simple as it seems. Belbin (1981, p.20) asserts, “…the deliberate creation of homogeneity in a management team has the effect of unbalancing the occupational breakdown of the teams we compose”. He is of the view that it is common understanding and background that make team members work in harmony. Fundamental to this assumption is what Belbin (1981, p.19) calls “the principle of elective homogeneity”. In a nutshell, Belbin suggests that the way we create our heterogeneous teams is influenced by a certain commonality we see in the individual members (that is, we are actually looking for similar features in those individuals). He further claims that “…managers recruit in their own image”. They try to find copies of themselves to make up a team. This may be a dangerous tendency, since it may reduce heterogeneity and could lead the creation of a team composed of a group of people who all think the same.

On the other hand Musaazi (1982, p.54) argues that homogeneity is the degree to which the members are similar in age, sex, culture and background. He believes that
homogeneous teams are created according to fixed criteria. There must be some commonality on the part of the individuals and they must have similar interests and experiences. Bush (1986, p.49) argues that the common background and education of participants form part of the justification for the normative assumption that it is always possible to reach agreement about goals policies.

In a South African school context true heterogeneity would be difficult to accomplish at this stage, particularly if one includes the criteria of culture and language. This is because, despite the democratic environment schools are operating under, some schools still seem to employ teachers on the basis of their ethnicity. This ensures that only a particular race group is dominant in a particular school, and ultimately, this leads to lack of cultural diversity in the composition of teams in schools. The teams (SMTs in Circuit 2 in Centane) investigated in this study are indeed non-heterogeneous in this sense.

### 2.6.4 Team effectiveness

Many writers - such as Everard and Morris (1996, p.156), Van der Bank (2000, p.9), Shea and Guzzo in Drach-Zahavy and Somech (2001, p.52), Sheard and Kakabadse (2001, p.133) and Scott and Walker (1999, p.55) associate the team concept with effectiveness. They are of the view that if people work as a team surely they are capable of producing fruitful results. According to the Education Department Manual on SMTs (DoE 2000, p.26), teams that produce good results usually have a common purpose, clearly define roles for each team member, 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 quality perhaps lacking in this list is that of creativity. Mears and Voehl (1994, p.80) argue that an effective team needs to be both creative and empirical. Belbin (1981, p.126) argues that the effectiveness of a team will be promoted by the extent to which members correctly recognize and adjust themselves to the relative strengths within a team, both in expertise and ability, to engage in specific team-roles.
Belbin (1981) here maintains that two heads are better than one, and that team members must recognise their capabilities and their specific roles in the team. The researcher thinks that the premise from which to move therefore, from a team point of view, is to strive for cooperation and sharing of ideas. Belbin perceives the level of ‘readiness’ of the team members to take responsibility as being of utmost importance. Furthermore, an effective team is the one in which development of a supportive social structure has occurred, with each individual adapting his/her behaviour to optimise their personal contribution to the team (Sheard and Kakabadse 2001, p.133).

Scarr in Drach-Zahavy and Somech (2001, p.44) assert that there is a “...belief that teamwork offers the potential to achieve outcomes that could not be achieved by individuals working in isolation”. Togetherness is a key feature, according to Wallace and Hall (1994, p.53) “…if you are not together then you can’t pretend to be a team”. According to the Task Team Report (DoE 1999b, p.37), effectiveness of a team is “achieving the objectives of the school, institution or education system”. Perceived thus, the team strives for the accomplishment of the set goals.

For the teams to be effective, Mears and Voehl (1994, p.8) argue “among other things, a team requires a high level of trust, an open climate for communication, and shared decision making”. For Mears and Voehl it is advisable that team members must establish rapport amongst themselves. This idea is further discussed in the next section.

2.6.5 Openness, trust and participation in teams

Walker (1994, p.40) argues that for teamwork to be successful, the culture of the school must be based on the fundamental values of openness, trust, and participation. It would be a futile exercise to implement a team structure in a school that fostered secrecy and suspicion. The researcher fully agrees with Walker because in a team situation, one is expected to share his/her views and feelings with the rest of the team. One must feel that s/he is part of a team and that s/he is obliged to participate. The researcher also think that a team cannot be effective if some members are taking
a back seat or hiding valuable information that could take the team a step further. Moreover, if someone has been selected as a team member, his/her contribution is of the utmost importance.

On that score Mears and Voehl (1994, p.8) warn, “Amongst other things, a team requires a high level of trust, an open climate for communication, and shared decision making.” There is also a need for the organisation to foster teamwork and make it organisationally possible and desirable. According to Scott and Walker (1999, p.51) “If teamwork is to be encouraged, organisational strategies should support teamwork and should make individual endeavour - in certain circumstances - less welcome”. The notion of responsibility also emerges as a driving force for teamwork. Clearly if a team is formed, it has a responsibility to serve the organisation or a school. It becomes evident that the way in which one creates a team will influence the way they are going to operate. Therefore, the selection of management teams in our education system needs scrutiny.

2.6.6 Management of teams in education

The Education Human Resource Management and Development Manual (DoE 2000, p.15) argues that “in the past, many South African leaders, including educational leaders, have been authoritarian. In the past they made decisions without consultation and school level leaders did not allow staff and learners to openly disagree with them. As a result, members of the school community often did not feel that the school belonged to them; or they did not feel committed to the decisions that the leaders made.

The above view summarizes the apartheid management legacy in the South African education system. Its bureaucratic nature was designed to privilege some sectors of the community and disadvantage others. Moreover it made teachers see themselves as unfit to manage their own schools. This is because they did not have channels through which to communicate how they would like to manage their schools. This was
due to the fact that “Principals worked in an environment which was closely regulated and were used to receiving and giving instructions” (DoE 2000, p.1).

The concept of teamwork is a potentially powerful answer to the contexts in which most schools have found themselves over the past decade since the introduction of a Democratic government. In line with Hadderman’s (1998, p.31) assertion, it can be argued that management teams in general and SMTs in particular are some sort of an answer or an alternative to the kind of leadership and management problems the principals used to face in the past. In South Africa teamwork is more than simply sharing the load; or that the principals do “…not carry the burden of running the school alone” (DoE 2000, p.2). The notion of teams deliberately agitates against the politically and morally impoverished structures of the past, and is thus always also a social issue.

However, the argument for teamwork as a means to greater effectiveness cannot be ignored. Erickson and Gmelch (1997, p.189) argue that the team management concept is perhaps one of the most widely endorsed concepts in school administration today. Shifts in power, pressure on individual administrators, and the desire for organizational improvement have all led educational administrators to look to the management team as a means of solving their problems. The assumption is that team management can be relied upon in terms of improving the working relations and self-determination of both teachers and learners. Writers such as Wallace and Hall (1994) and Hayes (1997) see team management as a cornerstone for effective management in schools. The question of how teamwork manifests itself in schools is the point to which this discussion turns at this point.

**2.6.7 Limitations and shortcomings of teams**

It has been argued that teams are better than groups and that they are widely recommended. However, teams have their own limitations and shortcomings no matter how effectively and efficiently they operate. For leaders who want to influence team decisions, Hayes (1997, p.187) concludes that teams “are troublesome to
manage”. In this sense teams need to be autonomous. Ironically, teams who function well form a strong unit with specific objectives in mind and have also devised means and strategies to achieve them. Outsider influence – even a strong leader - might jeopardize their functioning.

Hayes also argues that teamwork is time-consuming in that much time is spent “in defining goals, discussing approaches, and looking at alternatives (Hayes 1997, p.187). Achieving teamwork is “largely a human-relations exercise ...” (Ibid, p.187). Hayes here suggests that teams need to work towards good relations amongst members, and in the process the level and the amount of work to be done can be sacrificed. The researcher has already alluded to a particular challenge inherent in making teamwork ‘work’ in contexts where members have been socialised into working independently of others, or where members are accustomed to responding to instructions from legal authorities. Thus the very particular education management context in South Africa – as described be the Task Team Report earlier – will pose a challenge to the successful implementation of team management.

2.7 Teamwork in the GET band schools

The team concept in South Africa has been enacted in government policy. The South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA) emphasizes collaboration and collective decision making between schools stakeholders (DoE 2000, p.1). The SASA promotes the notion of staff working as a team which constantly reflects on what it is doing (being a ‘learning network’) (Ibid, p.7). It also stipulates that it is crucial that staff start operating as a team – classroom teams, SMT, fundraising teams etc (Ibid, p.7).

From the above policy articulation it is evident that the team concept is seen to have the potential of uplifting the standard of work teachers undertake. The essence of the policy is togetherness in whatever activity the teachers embark on; be it managerial, teaching, or even extra-curricular. It is clear that the present government is seeing the need for the whole staff to unite in their endeavours to enhance the standard of education.
In trying to define teamwork DoE manual (2000, p.7) states that teamwork is the ‘thread’ through all systems in an effective school. It helps school stakeholders to work more closely. By ‘thread’ the researcher thinks that the manual means that there should be a ‘link’ among all stakeholders and that they must play a part in ensuring effective schooling. By ‘systems’ it likely means all the processes that take place in school, that is, teaching and learning, governance and management. It suggests that forming teams in all those spheres will facilitate the smooth running of the school.

When we look at the amount of work to be done, and the way in which it should be divided, Hayes (1997, p.2) argues that teamwork is all about passing the responsibility over to working teams, so that they can get on with what they have to do without continually having to refer to higher levels in their organizations. In essence, Hayes means that certain powers and responsibilities about the work to be done have to be delegated to the team in order to speed up the working process. Again it is unlikely that the team concept will be easily adapted in South African schools, and adapted to circumstances. Schools have many distinct areas of endeavour and interest, all of which add up to make a complex and challenging organisation.

When one considers aspects such as curriculum, finance, extra-mural activities, administration, marketing, examinations (and many others) all these need management and also need to blend into a whole coherent effort the appropriateness of teamwork becomes apparent. However, for delegation to be effective, the team needs to cooperate fully. Thus the researcher would like to distinguish between cooperation and competition in teams.

2.7.1 The educational roles of SMT

The Manuals on Education Management Development referred to above are also vocal about the roles of the SMT. One of the manuals stipulates that the roles of the SMTs are to organise activities that support teaching and learning as well as to administer teaching and learning (DoE 2000, p.3).
The above roles are concerned mainly with everyday activities of the school and are therefore educational. The manual continues the SMT is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school and for putting the school’s policies into practice, while the school governing body (SGB) determines the policies” (Ibid, p.2). The above point makes a clear distinction between the roles of an SMT and the responsibilities of an SGB. The day-to-day running of the school requires professionalism (which the teachers have) and the determining of school policies in ensuring quality education is inspirational and vision-led (this is the terrain of the SGB). Parents are seen to be in a better position to determine the future of their children and to dictate the ethos of the school.

Hence the teaching of learners and the way in which the school is run remains in the job description of the teachers. Sithole (1998, p.106) also emphasises this point when he states that school management is responsible for the management of the day-to-day administration of the school by ensuring effective teaching and learning, and the efficient use of the school’s human and material resources. This may be criticized as being an impoverished view of school management, since it is suggests that SMTs work only within the domain of internal school functioning.

However, Louis (in Blasé and Blasé 1999, p.130) argues that in recent years, the restructuring of schools to empower teachers and to implement school-based shared decision-making has resulted in a move away from bureaucratic control and toward professionalisation of teaching. Louis is of the opinion that the democratisation of the education system is the key to the transformation of the whole education fraternity.

Furthermore, it is envisaged that democracy is an instrument to restore the dignity and professionalism of teachers because it gives them (teachers) more power and control. By professionalisation, Louis acknowledged that teachers have specialised jobs to undertake. Moreover Blase and Blase (1999, p.130) argue that teachers are “professionals who provide academic and moral services to students”. They remind us here that apart from academic duties a teacher has to perform; they also instill moral
values in learners. In school management Blase and Blase also view teachers as parents and guardians.

Teachers are said to act in loco parentis. Wallace and Hall (1994, p.57) share the same sentiments and state that the basic aim of the management team is to maximise the potential of students and staff. First and foremost the SMT need to see to it that there is effective tuition in the school. However it is not enough for the SMTs to enhance one dimension of the students and staff, for example, feeding their minds only; they need to uplift them in their totality (i.e. mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally). To achieve that, school management need to change the ways in which they manage schools and be responsive and adaptive to the dynamics of education at present.

2.7.2 The managerial roles of the SMT

It has been argued that SMTs have more than one role to play in schools. Apart from ensuring ‘academic excellence’ they become the leaders of the school and initiate programmes that will enhance the standard of the entire school community. The SMT is expected to generate ideas and see to it that the school is vision-led. Thus the Education Human Resource Management and Development Manual (DoE 2000, p.10) argues that it is the role of the SMT to work out how the school can be organized best to bring about the vision of the school community.

The above role of an SMT is managerial in that the SMT will constantly plan, implement and monitor the observance of and adherence to the school vision. If that happens, the SMT is said to have managed the whole process. Wallace and Hall (1994, p.57) argue that the management role of the teams is complex because it is in no sense exclusive. It is linked through individual SMT members’ responsibilities and through communication structures to staff with middle-management responsibilities (such as heads of faculty) and to the rest of the teaching and support staff.
Wallace and Hall (1994) here emphasizes the fact that educational and managerial roles of the SMT overlap and therefore are inseparable and that they operate side by side. Sergiovanni, et al (1999, p.72) elaborates this point and states that “management roles, though critically important, are not central. Indeed, they exist only to complement educational roles”.

2.8 SMT members are overloaded as a result of their multi-faceted roles

Increased workload, the literature shows, results in stress, burn-out and drop out among teachers generally. A report by Naylor (2001) examines international research and current educational publications about teacher workload and related stress. Workload issues have been a concern for Canadian teachers and teacher unions during recent years, with British Columbia’s teachers reporting the highest stress levels nationwide. SMTs must juggle diverse, intense types of interactions and respond to requests by colleagues, administrators, parents and community members. As such members of such structures are likely to be stressed by their work loads.

2.9 SMT members stressed about their work

Research on the SMTs points to the fact that the SMTs job comprises role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload. Some researchers highlight the complex nature of the SMTs job due to high stress, a wide variety of tasks to perform and diverse roles (Education labour relations council, 2003). An additional stress currently facing SMTs is the dilemma of how and to what extent to restructure learning environments with mounting pressure from traditionalists to move “back to basics” and simultaneous pressure from state legislatures and state school boards to implement higher standards for student performance. It must be pointed out that few research studies have dealt specifically with SMT burnout. Welch, Brownell, and Sheridan (1999) study is one of the few that examined causes of SMTs burnout and found that isolation inherent in the role tended to discourage ties of members of SMTs with teachers and students.
A second cause was the amount of time and effort expended by most SMTs on the job, and a final cause was related to the organizational structure of the school systems and frustrations inherent therein. For example, McPherson examined the relationship of SMT burnout to personal, situational, organizational, leisure time, and job stressor variables. That study revealed that autonomy, role ambiguity, boundary spanning, teacher supervision and opportunities for promotion showed a significant relationship to burnout.

2.10 Summary

This Chapter gave an overview of team management in school contexts according to reviewed literature and policy documents. The Chapter started by giving the definition of a team to narrow the scope down and avoid confusion. This was followed by drawing a distinction between a team and a group. The importance and appropriateness of teams in organisations and schools were then discussed. In exploring the viability of teams certain team dynamics emerged and special attention was given to the following: heterogeneity in teams, team effectiveness and rapport in teams.

Team management was presented as a response to the call for the effective unification of the school management teams in Circuit two in Centane. The Chapter then distinguished between cooperation and competition in teams, and discussed joint vision building as a cornerstone of organisations. Teams are expected to have a shared vision, which serves as a ‘compass’ that directs any organisation in its endeavours to becoming a better organisation.

As noted in this Chapter organizations today place multiple demands on leaders, requiring them to impart vision, initiate change, and make difficult decisions. To handle these demands, leaders must be flexible and adaptable.

This Chapter also reveals that legislation expects all schools to have SMTs, even though there is little agreement on the size of the body and the roles of its members.
This Chapter has also discussed democratic elements such as decentralised management, freedom and autonomy in schools and delegation. These have been described as urgently desired in our South African schools in the new dispensation.

Furthermore this Chapter acknowledges that today's business world is highly competitive. It also points out that the only way for an organization to survive is by reshaping to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world. Resistance to change may lead to a dead-end street for employees and for the organization. This being the case, this Chapter suggests in the light of literature reviewed, leaders need to emphasize action to make the change as quickly and smoothly as possible. It is clear from this Chapter that to handle these demands, leaders must be flexible and adaptable. Lastly this Chapter critiqued team management by highlighting shortcomings of teamwork. In the next Chapter the methodology used in this study will be discussed.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to provide a discussion of the research paradigm and methodology used in the study. The researcher also discusses the sample of his study, data collection tools, data analysis as well as validity and reliability of the instruments used and data so collected.

3.2 Research paradigm

There is no cut and dry definition of the term paradigm. Many writers define paradigms according to their specific context. According to Guba (1990, p.17) in Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.19) a paradigm is a “basic set of beliefs that guides action”. It is evident that a researcher does not work haphazardly or as s/he pleases; therefore, it is expected that s/he works systematically according to a certain frame of reference which will dictate the kind of methods s/he is to employ as well as the kind of data anticipated. Hence Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.36) argue, “Paradigms act as perspectives that provide a rationale for the research and commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation.”

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p.36) gives a more clear definition when he states “paradigms are systems of interrelated ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions.” A paradigm therefore is more than a worldview or philosophy, it also frames the approach and methodology of enquiry. A paradigm has an abstract (philosophic) reference as much as it may be a practical guide to the researcher. Some writers view a paradigm as an umbrella concept that embraces both the researcher and the research methods or methodologies. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.19) view a paradigm as “the net that contains the researcher’s
epistemological, ontological and methodological premises.” Kuhn in Mrazek (1993, p.20) defines a paradigm as “an overarching conceptual construct, an understanding of how the world or some segment of it operates”. Research texts generally distinguish four chief orientations to research: positivism, interpretivism, critical theory and post-structuralism of all these four orientations the interpretive approach is well suited to research in the social sciences because of its constructivist base – it seeks to uncover how actors make sense of their “reality”. This approach therefore suits this study, which is housed within the social sciences field of study.

3.2.1 The interpretive paradigm

This study is situated in the interpretive paradigm. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) suggest that the interpretive researcher’s purpose is to gain understanding of situations that are complex. This study is about schools. Schools by nature are complex networks in which staff members interact at various levels (Cheung and Cheng, 1996). Rubin and Rubin (1995) argue that interpretive social research emphasizes the complexity of human beings, and attempts to construct and understand their worlds. With specific reference to this study, working in this paradigm implies that the researcher has investigated people in this case teachers, within their contexts and attempted to make sense of their interpretation and experience of the phenomenon under study, in this case, SMTs. According to Cohen, et al (2000, p.22) “…the central endeavour in the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subject world of human experience.”

As it generally happens, the interpretive paradigm points to the use of qualitative research methods, both in collecting and analyzing data. In this study specifically, employing a qualitative orientation was well suited to conduct the research. Qualitative methods specifically enable the researcher to gain an understanding of the perceptions, values, actions and concerns of the educators under study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006).
The key words in this methodology are participation, involvement, collaboration and engagement. Through semi-structured interviews, rich descriptions of the role of educators as professionals in their unique circumstances would be generated. These descriptions provided substantial data from which perceptions regarding the challenges facing SMTs were identified as themes and categories. These themes were used to direct and inform the education authorities in assisting SMTs to face their challenges in some positive way. Thus, generalizing was applied, not as much from a sample to a specific population, but logically where the findings fitted, that is in the schools.

This paradigm has been appropriate to this study because it has afforded the researcher an opportunity to find out what the SMT members think of SMTs and how they understand the concept and its implications. According to Bassey (1999, p.43) “...reality is seen as a construct of the human mind.” It appeared that the qualitative method was appropriate for this research study because it is capable of accommodating and accounting for the myriad of differences and complexities that are involved in social settings such as schools. Hence, the researcher’s choice for this study.

Qualitative research does not ignore, but rather address the complexity of the various aspects of a school and it takes into account the different objective experiences and subjective perspectives available. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.19) agree with this view when they state, “Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.” In this study the researcher relied on what the respondents told him and subsequently tried to unearth reality from their responses.

The researcher also tried to make sense of what members of the SMTs understood about school management. “Interpretive researchers recognize that by asking questions or by observing their subjects/situation, they may change the situation which they are studying” (Bassey 1999, p.43). Since the researcher has been
interacting with many SMT members, his major role has been in some way simply to analyze the behaviour of his respondents. This is in line with Bassey’s (1999, p.43) view who argues that to the interpretive researcher the descriptions of human actions are based on social meanings. Holders of this view further argue that people living together interpret the meanings of each other and these meanings change through social intercourse.” It must be noted that social interaction of people is a cornerstone of individuals constructing meaning and reality of their surroundings.

Through that interaction people are then able to express their lived experiences. Also working within this paradigm the researcher had an opportunity to generate knowledge concerning the operation of SMTs in schools. Bassey (1999, p.44) acknowledges, “To the interpretive researcher the purpose of research is to advance knowledge by describing and interpreting the phenomena of the world in attempts to get shared meanings with each other.” The current researcher’s choice of this paradigm also enabled him to access members shared meanings, and how they view their practices.

3.3 Research sample

Before deciding on who the participants would be the researcher took careful consideration of Arksey and Knight’s (1999) precaution that sampling always needs to be done thoughtfully since the sample of respondents or informants affects the information that will be collected and determines the sort of claims that can be made about the meaning of the information. In this study, the researcher used convenience sampling in selecting the schools and the SMTs of schools that would participate in this research study. This is in line with what McMillan and Schumaker (2006, p.125) say: “In convenience sampling (also called available sampling) a group of subjects is selected on the basis of being accessible.”

Using convenience sampling, the researcher selected five (5) out of nineteen (19) schools in Circuit 2 of the Centane Sub-District of Education to participate in this research study. From each school three people were selected. These were: one
principal, one deputy principal and one HoD. Thus the total number of participants selected was fifteen. The sample therefore had: five principals, five deputy principals and five HODs. The SMT members of each school were not taken as an entity, they were interviewed as individuals. The list of participants is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: List of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
<th>School C</th>
<th>School D</th>
<th>School E</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of participants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the researcher is working in Circuit 2, ease of access and proximity to the researcher’s school were the factors that had been considered in the selection of schools that would participate in the study. The researcher’s sampling was therefore driven chiefly by convenience. Since the formalization of team management was a recent development in South Africa at the time of the study, it was the researcher’s interest to see how different schools were responding to this challenge. Most importantly, the researcher selected these schools with a specific purpose of finding the general understanding of the challenges facing SMTs in Circuit 2 in Centane Sub-District of education.

Studying all five schools has produced a broad and varied picture of the implementation and nature of SMTs. However, the researcher must stress at the outset that the purpose of the study was not to compare schools (or types of schools) with each other, but simply to build a comprehensive picture of the challenges facing SMTs in Circuit 2 in Centane.
3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the researcher’s chief data collection tools. Leedy and Omrod (2001, p.196) say, “In semi-structured interview, the research may follow the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification or to probe a person’s response.” For Kvale (1996) an interview is an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest. It is a specific form of human interaction in which knowledge evolves through a dialogue. An interview as a research tool gave the respondents a chance of demonstrating what they know about SMTs, as well as exploring their attitudes and perceptions about the matter.

Cohen, et al (2000) suggests that interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express their views on how they regard situations from their own point of view. Interviews therefore are a way of sharing the experiences one has had in terms of his/her context.

Interviews are narrative and depict the respondents’ lived world. The researcher first ran a pilot interview. Piloting the interview helped the researcher to “come to grips with some of the practical aspects of establishing access, making contact, and conducting the interview” (Seidman, 1991 p.30). That gave the researcher an opportunity to re-organise and restructure his interviews based on what he had learnt from the pilot interview. Piloting the interviews minimized mistakes in the main interviews. The researcher conducted all the interviews in the respondents’ places of work in order to honour their personal comfort. The researcher held most of the interviews in their offices and some in convenient places such as in their school’s staff room. In one instance the researcher had to interview the principal at his home. The researcher interviewed 15 SMT members to find out what the researcher needed to know. This is in line with Kvale’s (1996) claims about interviews.
According to Robson (1993) the interview schedule can be simpler than the one for the structured interview and may include the following:

- Introductory comments (probably a verbatim script);
- List of topic headings and possibly key questions to ask under these headings;
- Set of associated prompts;
- Closing comments.

The interview schedule (See Appendix G, p.105) was very useful to the researcher because it served as a checklist of what the researcher needed to ask, and assisted him to work systematically. The researcher’s questions extended and built on the questions asked in the interview schedule. This was facilitated by the fact that an interview is a shared interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Adopting a semi-structured interview approach left the researcher free to probe beyond superficial answers (May, 1993), so that the researcher could be responsive to emerging issues (Schwandt, 1997).

All interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder. In using this digital voice recorder, it demonstrated to the informants that their responses were being treated seriously (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Generally, people with whom the researcher worked appeared not to be familiar with being recorded. According to Seidman (1991, p.87) “if something is not clear in a transcript, the researchers can return to the tape-recorder and check for accuracy.” Recorded information is original and one is unlikely to get a distorted version of the information.

The researcher used a digital voice recorder to record the interviews so as not to leave out any valuable information, and to get a true reflection of what the respondents told him. A digital voice recorder reduced the possibility of misinterpretation and hence the distortion of information was minimized. Seidman (1991, p.87) argues that participants feel inhibited by the tape recorder at first but “soon forget about the device”. This was true in the researcher’s study where one respondent initially refused to be recorded. She claimed that she was not aware that she was going to be recorded. The researcher pointed out that recording the
interview was about more than convenience, but also ethical issues which enables the researcher to verify what was said. She ultimately agreed, and the researcher recorded the interview. The researcher did not notice any sign of her being intimidated by the digital voice recorder.

3.4.2 Observation

“Observation is a direct firsthand eye-witness account of everyday social action...” (Schwandt 1997, p.106). Being an observer implied that the researcher was indirectly involved in SMTs meetings and was witnessing their behaviours firsthand. Before the researcher observed their meetings, he communicated with the principals and the rest of the team that he would need to observe one or more of their SMT meetings. The principals had to come back to the researcher and inform him of their next meetings. With informed consent the researcher undertook overt observation because the respondents knew that they were being observed (Cohen, et al., 2000).

By informed consent the researcher safeguarded their privacy and welfare, and gave them a choice about whether or not to take part in the study (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Their voluntary participation made things easier for everyone present because they participated freely as if the researcher was not there. Diener and Crandall in Cohen, et al., (2000 p.51) define informed consent as “the procedures in which individuals choose whether or not to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would likely to influence their decisions”.

In most cases the principals agreed on the SMT members’ behalf and just informed them of the researcher’s coming to their meetings, but that did not constitute any problems in as far as their cooperation and contributions were concerned. Observation revealed things that the respondents would not normally reveal to the researcher and information that may have been missed in an interview and other forms of data collection (Cohen, et al., 2000). The researcher used observation as a supportive or supplementary technique to collect data that may complement or set in perspective data obtained by interviews (Robson, 1993).
In observations what people think and do is seen in practice. The researcher was there (in their meetings) to observe the processes and procedures using an observation schedule (See Appendix H, p.106). The objective here was not to check for accuracy of data, but to help gain a picture of how participants lived what they believed. The researcher went into the schools knowing in advance what he was looking for this is what Cohen, et al. (2000) refers to as structured observation. According to Patton (1990) systematic and rigorous observation involves the researcher (observer) far more than just being present and looking around.

The drawback of this approach is that one may be too strongly focused on what one is looking for and thus miss the unexpected or more subtle forms of interaction. This happened in the researcher’s case to some extent. On reflection, a more open-ended schedule may have been more useful. As Robson (1993, p.206) puts it, structured observation “...is a way of quantifying behaviour... [and] tend to take a detached, ‘pure observer’ stance”. As both the researcher and a local teacher who happened to know something about the schools he as a researcher, was working with, the danger of bias and pre-judgment was ever present. Here Scott and Usher’s (1996, p.21) advice is invaluable: “...we must recognise our situatedness [and] we must also ‘bracket,’ i.e. temporarily set aside, our meanings, suspend our subjectivity and assume the attitude of a disinterested observer”.

3.5 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to ascertain the reliability and validity of the issues raised in respect of the instrument, i.e. the semi-structured interview, which was to be used in this research study. For the pilot study the researcher used ten (10) educators who were not part of the sample chosen for the research study from the school where he is working. The aims of the pilot study were:

- To test the suitability of the questions that were to be asked in the interviews.
- To find out whether the questions were clear for the interviewees to understand.
To ensure that the questions were objective and would not cause any embarrassment to the respondents.
To test whether the duration of the interviews was not too long.
To test whether interviewees would become bored during interviews.
To test whether the questions were structured in such a way that the outcomes of the research that were stated in Chapter one would be attained.

Results from the pilot study were the following:

- All respondents agreed that the questions were suitable to use in the interview schedule.
- The respondents indicated that there were questions that were duplicated. These questions were indicated by the respondents and the researcher removed them from the interview schedule.
- The respondents indicated that the questions were objective and did not embarrass them in any way.
- All the respondents indicated that the duration of the interview was too long. Suggestions were made that the questions that were duplicated should be removed from the interview schedule. This was done by the researcher.
- The respondents indicated that they were not bored during the interviews; in fact they said they enjoyed the interviews because the questions were addressing issues that really affected their every day life.
- In the analysis of the results of the respondents the researcher established that the outcomes intended for this research study were indeed attainable.
- Some of the respondents made some corrections on the interview schedule which assisted the researcher in the language editing of the interview schedule.

This pilot study, therefore, attested to the appropriateness (face validity) and believability of the research instrument that the researcher was going to use in this research study.
3.6 Ethical considerations

Schwandt (1997, p.106) defines ethics as “...moral dilemmas arising from issues of trust, confidentiality, harm, deception, consent, and so forth...” Ethical issues the researcher took into consideration were anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation of his respondents. According to Creswell (1994, p.165) the researcher needs to take the welfare of respondents into consideration. In his words: “First and foremost the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informant(s)”. Before the researcher did anything concerning the respondents he had to check with them first, that is he had to get their permission to involve them. Because there is no anonymity with face-to-face interview confidentiality was promised (Cohen, et al., 2000 p.61).

According to Arksey and Knight (1999, p.132), confidentiality is about not disclosing the identity of study participants, and not attributing comments to individuals in ways that can permit the individuals or institutions with which they are associated to be recognized, unless they have expressly consented to being identified. To that effect the researcher did not use the respondents’ names and institutions.

Douglas in Mouton (1996, p.157) argues “subjects tend to be reluctant or unwilling to participate because [they may] regard the investigation as an invasion of their privacy.” This unwillingness occurred with one of the respondents in this study, a principal who was sceptical about allowing the researcher to observe their meetings because of previous experience (See “Research realities” below). During the interviews, the researcher assured the respondents that the information they furnished would be made available to his supervisor and himself only.

Also the researcher reiterated the fact that his study was for academic purposes and nothing else. Prior agreement to his presence with prospective participants had been reached through negotiation with the District Office, the principals and the SMT members (See Appendices B; C and D, pp.100-102). Before commencing with his research, the researcher had to consult the prospective participants and get
permission to do so. The researcher distributed letters from his supervisor that requested permission to conduct research in their schools.

According to Creswell (1994, p.165), the research objectives [have to be] articulated verbally and in writing so that they are clearly understood by the informants. For Eisner and Peshkin (1990, p.243) ethical conduct is, however, a more complex and profound issue. It is the infinitely more complex challenge of doing good, a consideration that places researchers at odds with one another as they raise entirely different questions about the location of good in the conduct of research.

It is therefore very difficult to do justice to this expectation, because at some point one has to impinge on the rights of the subjects to get the research going. What the researcher viewed as ethically correct (that is asking for permission to observe their meetings) was regarded as intruding in their privacy (as one educator jokingly commented), and the question of whether the researcher was “doing well” may not have been a compelling argument.

3.7 Validity and reliability

Mouton (1996, p.109) defines validity as “...a quality of the elements (data, statements, theories and methods) of knowledge”. The quality of the data gathered can be achieved through the believability in the participants. In open-ended research (such as in this study) the likelihood of being lied to is possible and clear in the researchers’ mind, since respondents do not essentially ‘know’ what you want to hear. However, when the researcher went to one school to observe their SMT meeting, one SMT member remarked that that meeting was for him because they usually did not have SMT meetings. Was the school ‘lying’ in arranging a meeting for the researcher’s benefit?

Clearly, what the researcher was seeing was not normal practice, and in this sense data gathered there could be regarded as unreliable. Cohen, et al. (2000, p.105) argues that in qualitative data, validity might be addressed through the honesty of
both the researcher and the participants, as well as the depth, richness and scope of the data. Therefore validity is more than a simple ‘practice what you preach’ scenario. It is about more than checking whether what the respondents claim to be doing is actually what they are doing on the ground or not. Therefore the main focus of validity is perhaps not the ‘correctness’ of findings, but the more elusive quality of believability.

More importantly is the way in which the researcher might be misrepresenting ‘reality’. Maxwell (1996, p.7) argues “the key concept for validity is thus the validity threat: a way in which the researcher might be wrong in his conclusions”. The researcher’s strongest validity threat which he had to overcome was his bias. Fortunately here the purpose of the study kept him focused and the researcher soon realized that he was not there to test hypotheses or check up on people, but to find out how the SMT members mentally construct their own practices.

Wilkinson’s (2000) understanding of reliability refers to matters such as the consistency of a measure - for example, the likelihood of the same results being obtained if the procedures were repeated. This rather positivistic understanding of reliability seems inappropriate to this study, since it is understood that interpretive research does not produce ‘results’ at all, but findings, and these are rarely repeatable in the sense that an experiment may be. Bogdan and Biklen in Cohen (2000, p.119) argue that “in qualitative research reliability can be regarded as a fit between what the researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched … a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage”.

What this translates into, for this study, is the extent to which findings do indeed emerge from the data and nowhere else, and the extent to which the data capture and reflect the ‘reality’ projected by the research participants. Hence Schwandt (1997, p.137) concludes “reliability is an epistemic criterion thought to be necessary but not sufficient for establishing the truth of an account or interpretation of a social phenomenon”. The researcher in this study addressed this challenge by quoting from
the raw data wherever it seemed necessary, thereby strengthening the reader’s sense of the people behind the data.

3.8 Coding of schools and participants

3.8.1 Coding of schools

Schools were coded for purposes of hiding their identity in keeping with promises of anonymity of the participants and their institutions. The codes for the schools are as follows:
The first school interviewed is coded as school-A
The second school is coded as school-B
The third school is referred to as school-C
The forth school is referred to as school-D
The fifth school is referred to as school-E

3.8.2 Coding the participants

The codes of the participants are as follow:
P-A: is referring to the principal for school-A.
P-B: is referring to the principal for school-B.
P-C: is referring to the principal for school-C.
P-D: is referring to the principal for school-D.
P-E: is referring to the principal for school-E.
DP-A refers to the deputy-principal from school-A
DP-B refers to the deputy-principal from school-B
DP-C refers to the deputy-principal from school-C
DP-D refers to the deputy-principal from school-D
DP-E refers to the deputy-principal from school-E

HoD-A refers to the Head of Department for school-A
HoD-B refers to the Head of Department for school-B
3.9 Research realities

Research does not always proceed smoothly, and in this study the researcher became aware of the extent to which a researcher is at the mercy of his or her research participants. In another case the principal mandated the Head of Department to assist the researcher in whatever way possible and the Head of Department seemed very eager to lend a hand. The researcher made an appointment with her for interviews one day. On the researcher’s arrival, the researcher learned that the principal was away and the Head of Department was unavailable for some reason. So she (Head of Department) organised a teacher (male) for the researcher to interview. That teacher was keen to participate in the research. However, after asking him two questions the researcher realized that he was not part of the SMT.

The researcher immediately stopped the interview. He then called the Head of Department and used the vernacular in explaining to her that that was a “wrong” respondent. Then she approached another teacher, also male, who served on SMT and asked him to present himself for an interview with the researcher. He complied and the interview proceeded in his classroom. When it came to observations the researcher did not have problems because the schools were keen to help and had SMT meetings every week generally speaking. Even so in some schools it was a headache, there were all sorts of excuses.

3.10 Summary

In summary, it is not easy to conduct research. The researcher needs to be patient, persevere and stay focused. Teachers seem not to be keen on participating in educational research. This is perhaps because they are overwhelmed by their own work and do not have time to help in other people’s research. Or perhaps it is
because they lack intrinsic motivation. Whatever the reason, researchers need to face the sobering truth that one’s research project is not likely to be a priority in others’ lives, regardless of how important it may be to the researcher.

What these incidents reveal about schools’ level of professional maturity and functioning is another matter which the researcher will not pursue here. The researcher’s own understanding of the role of research is that it is likely to feed into the ideal of the learning network, or learning organization to which policy documents refer. Researchers should be welcomed with open arms, and there is much to be gained from school-university collaboration. In the next Chapter the researcher will present and discuss the data.
CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The main research question that this study sought to address was: “What are the challenges facing school management team members?” Since SMTs are a relatively new phenomenon in school management, the research set out to explore how SMTs experience the phenomenon, what role they think it plays or could play and what the challenges might be. This chapter presents the data gathered through interviews and observation. The interviews provide the chief data, and the responses from principals, deputy principals and HoDs will be presented separately. The code names of the schools and participants were displayed in Chapter 3 (See p.55). The overall data presented in chapter four comprises the views, opinions, experiences and suggestions of the principals, deputy-principals and heads of departments (HoDs).

Observation data are only reported where these are felt to be helpful in presenting a comprehensive portrayal of the phenomenon under investigation. For the sake of completeness the raw data emerging from this secondary source (i.e. observations) is included as Appendix H (See p.106). The general picture that emerges is overwhelmingly positive: School managers generally welcome the concept of team management, and believe that it has many positive consequences/attributes. However, the picture is complex, and frequently team management is characterized by conflicts, tensions, and other threats. These are presented separately where possible. Quite often threats emerge as points of tension. The data are presented in themes identified through careful listening to the audio digital voice recorded information and close reading of the interview transcripts.
4.2 Thematic analysis and presentation of SMTs responses

There were five schools that participated in the study. Each school comprised three categories of participants, namely; principal, deputy-principal and a head of department. The responses of school principals, deputy principals and HoDs interviewed (data), in the form of quotes, were analysed through extraction of themes which were then presented later in the Chapter as narratives. In the writing of emerging themes, both emic and etic categories were used. According to Freeman (1999), emic categories are the insider's views – such as terms, actions, and explanations- that are distinctive to the setting or people and etic categories are outsider’s views of the situation- such as the researcher’s concepts and scientific explanations. In instances where the researcher expresses an opinion about a theme, parentheses are used to indicate the researcher’s views or opinions about that theme.

4.2.1 Emerging themes from school principals

4.2.1.1 Terms of reference as guidelines for principals’ operations

The responses of principals interviewed varied in so far as the terms of operations for SMTs were concerned. One principal for example, indicated that the Departmental policies are the terms of reference. However, he acknowledged the need to adapt these policies to suit the specific needs of each individual school.

*You then have to adjust policies and have your own (guidelines) which you can use in a particular school [P-C].*

However, the opinions of other principals were different. For example, one of the principals mentioned that he uses his experience as a point of reference. In this regard, he indicated:

*We formulate guidelines from the experience that we have [P-D].*
A similar view was espoused by another principal who claimed that he uses people as references:

*Use people’s strengths and abilities and build upon them by providing other people opportunities to grow for them to do things* [P-E].

### 4.2.1.2 Principals’ involvement in curriculum, management and governance issues

The principals interviewed acknowledged the leadership role that SMTs ought to play in curriculum, management and governance issues. The principal from school A said:

*Leadership can be prompted by another member of the SMT responding to problems that have been collected from different members of staff* [P-A].

However, some principals expressed a different view. They felt that only principals of schools should play a leading role in curriculum management and governance issues. The following view expressed by the principal of school A illustrates this. He indicated:

*Whatever happens in the school the principal should take the lead and lead by example* [P-A].

This view is related to and explained by the leadership style of the principal which might determine whether the SMT members are afforded the opportunity to cooperate with the principal. The following view attests to this:

*There are decisions which you’ve got to take sometimes but it must not be your style of taking decisions alone all the time. On the other hand, principals are conscious that they are bureaucratically accountable to the authorities, and sometimes act individually* [P-C].
In the view of other principals, the extent of involvement of the SMT in curriculum management and governance hinges on the democratic leadership style of the principal and the devolution of responsibilities to other SMT members:

*When you give somebody responsibility, don’t interfere, wait for the end results. Delegation is a feature of democratic leadership* [P-D].

From the responses collected it came out clearly that members of the SMTs, especially principals, do need to be more conversant with management issues themselves. One of them said:

*...the leader should be ahead and if there is anything new you should know it first – lead from the front not the back... leaders emerge while managers are trained* [P-D].

### 4.2.1.3 Principals’ experience with their multi-faceted roles

Almost all the principals interviewed reported challenges with the multiplicity of roles entrusted upon the SMT. The dominant theme was accountability. The issue is that accountability is being shouldered by one person, the principal, the accounting officer of the school. This role of being an accounting officer undermines and threatens cooperation since management is a team effort but accountability is a one man show.

*Really you have to account as an individual. It’s not the whole SMT who accounts and subsequently feels embarrassed accounting on behalf of other people* [P-B].

The other factor mentioned by principals as a challenge and a test of cooperation amongst SMT involves crisis situations. One of the principals interviewed felt that the SMT does not want to be involved in crisis situations:

*Whatever happens at school comes back to the principal, you are almost like you are the guilty party – you are the guilty person as the principal because you couldn’t bring*
that person around or to change his problem........ when there is a problem like a crisis it [principalship] becomes a very lonely position [P-D].

4.2.1.4 Cooperation and/or lack thereof among SMT members

Principals interviewed indicated that cooperation is reflected when SMT members show willingness to work, accept duties delegated to them and also the execution of roles allocated to each of the SMT members. Volunteering on tasks also demonstrate that there is cooperation amongst the SMT. The value and importance of cooperation amongst the SMT as experienced and observed by the principals interviewed yields appropriation of each SMT member’s strength to the advantage of the school. These principals also alluded to opportunities for professional growth and development as a result of cooperation:

You’re providing other people opportunities to grow for them to do things, and the more a person can do, the more they are going to grow, the better teacher they’re going to become better managers or administrators.

Other views expressed suggest that cooperation affords the opportunity for the sharing of opinions and responsibilities. Some principals indicated that cooperation lightens the work load and is a key in empowering others for the smooth running of the school.

On the flip side of the coin, the principals suggested instances where lack of cooperation is manifested. They cited differences of opinion, different agendas, political issues and laziness as explaining lack of cooperation amongst the SMT. The following quote captures some of the aforementioned themes on the lack of cooperation:

Where people are involved there will always be difference of opinions and personality clashes. There might be problems emanating from staff to other staff, there might be
personal clashes which cannot be accommodated for properly and there might be different agendas [P-C].

4.2.1.5 Support from the District officials

The principals echoed the same complaint of not getting the enough and necessary support as expected from education development officers and curriculum specialists. One principal compared the District officials to tourists who come and go without giving feedback to the school:

When you talk of the district officials, you are actually reminding me of smart tourists who would just look around the school, after taking some notes they would go and not come back again [P-A].

This comment was further affirmed by another principal who said:

As schools we do not receive the attention we deserve as individual schools [P-C].

The interviewees were complaining about the District officials who come and go giving the schools no feedback, the support they get from the curriculum section is not enough.

4.2.2 Emerging themes from deputy principals

4.2.2.1 Terms of reference as guidelines for deputy principals’ operations

The majority of deputy principals from school A to school E seem to be knowledgeable about their terms of reference. This is reflected by the response of DP-A, who said:

The education and policy hand book has clearly stipulated my role, responsibilities and duties.
This response was once again echoed by both deputy principal of school B and C respectively, who said:

*My role is clearly explained in the school policy* [DP-B].

*The occupation specific dispensation (OSD) has explained my responsibilities clearly* [DP-C].

But what is prevalent in their responses is that the terms of reference are refined further by the individual school circumstances and the DP-D attests to that:

*The roles and responsibilities must be adapted to suit the needs of each institution and the circumstances may take you to the responsibilities of a HoD, a teacher or a principal and even to be a clerk at times* [DP-D].

Terms of reference are revised to suit the new developments in the Education Department like OSD (occupation specific dispensation); the DP-E explains:

*The occupation specific dispensation (OSD) has explained my responsibilities clearly* [DP-E].

The post of being the deputy-principal of a school is a challenge because deputy principals are faced with many tasks. Deputy-principal of school B explicates:

*The deputy principal’s role is quite a challenge because you may find yourself being an all-rounder and end up not knowing exactly what your role is* [DP-B].
4.2.2.2 Deputy principals’ involvement in curriculum, management and governance issues

The data illustrate that the deputy principals are fully hands-on with curriculum management issues. It has emerged from the data that the HoDs as section heads, are fully accountable to the deputy principal. DP-C attests:

*I am the chairperson of the curriculum committee and as such I am fully hands on in the curriculum matters and I must support the principal in the school governance, furthermore HoDs must come and report to me all curriculum related issues and we devise some means of resolving all the issues.*

DP-D says: *As the deputy principal of the school, I am the one who must see to it that HoDs and educators are delivering the curriculum.*

The participants also admitted that they assist the principal in governance issues. DP-A explains:

*I am the chairperson of the curriculum committee and as such I am fully hands on in the curriculum matters and I must support the principal in the school governance.*

DP-B echoed the same remark:

*I am the head of the curriculum section in my school and I must see to it that everything goes well and I am second principal because when ever there is an SGB meeting I am always there.*

4.2.2.3 Deputy principals’ experience with their multi-faceted roles

The participants’ responses to their experience with their multi-faceted roles were analogous. The data reflected that deputy-principals are busy just like school principals. Deputy principal of school B explains:
Even though I am not the principal, I am as busy like the school principal [DP-B].

DP-E confirms that deputy-principals’ roles are just equal to that of a school principal:

*When it comes to IQMS, our performance standards are the same.*

Most of the deputy principals’ responses reflected concerns about the nature of the job, dealing with teacher problems, student problems, and parent concerns. Completing several tasks at once in a fragmented fashion, constant interruptions, the number of night meetings, increased paperwork, budget cuts, and trying to be responsive to everyone, were cited as particular problems.

DP-C spell out:

*Thirty to forty percent of this job is preventing or dealing with conflict, the unexciting managerial, paper work and pushing stuff, all contributing factors to my stress.*

DP-D elucidates that:

*Many frustrations and stresses are related to sheer role overload, unable to accomplish the many tasks and responsibilities assigned to the role of deputy principal.*

**4.2.2.4 Deputy principals’ perception of cooperation and/or lack thereof among SMT members**

There was unanimity amongst the deputy principals’ comments about cooperation. One deputy principal explained that cooperation goes with consultation. This kind of thinking would lead to ownership of decisions. In actual fact cooperation amongst SMT members would lead to team-management which would then lightens the load of running a school.
This is the deputy principal of school C, articulated this notion:

*You can’t expect one individual to have a finger on everything and actually have a correct opinion on everything... many hands make light work, I can’t do the job on my own” and that I initiate the allocation of duties and encourage voluntarism, then task is less burdensome upon one man’s shoulders* [DP-C].

Deputy principals interviewed pointed out that cooperation is revealed when SMT members show keenness to toil, agree to carry out duties delegated to them and also help where they can with the execution of roles allocated to other SMT members.

**4.2.2.5 Deputy principals’ perception of the support from the District officials**

The deputy principals interviewed echoed the same complaint of not getting enough and necessary support expected from education development officers and curriculum specialists. The deputy principal of school A highlighted that when he said:

*If they happen to come, they would come once when the schools re-open in the first month of the year just to check the school readiness, thereafter they will vanish* [DP-A].

Complaining about the support of District officials, deputy principal of school C put it in plain words:

*As future principals we need their support and we expect them to be visible in our schools, it is not sufficient to provide managerial skills only to principals, as deputy principals we need more time for reflection and more opportunities to interact with other professionals and deputy principals and that will afford us time to share our problems and close the feeling of being isolated in a lonely world* [DP-C].
Deputy principal of school E restated by saying:

*With the perceived lack of District office backing and understanding felt by some deputy principals, networks are needed to provide deputy principals with systems of support [DP-E].*

### 4.2.3 Emerging themes from HoDs

#### 4.2.3.1 Terms of reference as guidelines for HoDs’ operations

The majority of the HoDs interviewed demonstrated that they know their terms of reference. One HoD said:

*Yes I Know, the education and policy hand book explains clearly all the terms of reference for the principal, deputy principal, HoDs and post level 1 educators.*

However, the data captured reflected different themes. One HoD for example, indicated that the departmental policies are the terms of reference. However, he acknowledges the need to adapt these policies to suit the needs of each particular school, he said:

*We have to adjust the prescribed terms of reference so as to suit the situation of our school [HoD-B].*

The school circumstances would at times make one go an extra mile. HoD of school C espoused that by saying:

*At times, depending to the staff establishment of the school, at times I would find myself operating as a class teacher at the same time I have to attend to management issues and curriculum related matters for the intermediate phase [HoD-C].*
HoD of school D, who at times would find herself working as a class teacher, echoed this same sentiment when she said:

*I mark a learner attendance register, prepare the class schedule and learner report cards while doing these tasks you would definitely fall behind in doing your work as a HoD* [HoD-D].

### 4.2.3.2 HoDs’ involvement in curriculum, management and governance issues

The data illustrate that the HoDs are fully hands-on with curriculum management issues. It has emerged from the data that the HoDs are section heads and are therefore fully responsible for their sections. HoD-A attests:

*Yes curriculum is my area of operation, I teach my learning area and I am also managing and supervise the other educators in the intermediate phase, I am not involved in the school governance because I am not a member of the SGB.*

HoD of school B echoed the same level of commitment when he said:

*By virtue of being a HoD for the senior phase, I am the curriculum manager* [HoD-B].

HoD of school C concurs with the other participants when she says:

*I am the supervisor for the foundation phase educators, and therefore I am involved in curriculum management* [HoD-C].

HoD of school D states:

*I am involved all those, because I teach English in grade 9, HoD in the senior phase and I am the SGB member* [HoD-D].
4.2.3.3 HoDs experience with their multi-faceted roles

The HoDs responses to the question on their experience with their multi-faceted roles were similar. The data reflect the need for support systems which will include resources. This idea was articulated by HoD of school C who said:

*The situation is even worse where there are no facilities such as photocopying machines and computers* [HoD-C]

Heavy workload was mentioned as another challenge facing heads of department(s). This was espoused by HoD of school D who said:

*Teachers teach more than one learning area, so it is difficult for them to cover all LO’s (learning outcomes) because of too much workload* [HoD-D].

HoD of school A echoed the same challenge but put it this way:

*Teachers need more time for planning on a weekly basis for what they need to teach in the class. More time is needed for assessment as well and that is a very negative part on the teachers’ workload* [HoD-A]

4.2.3.4 Cooperation and/or lack thereof among SMT members

Heads of departments interviewed indicated that the success of the school depends on the cooperation of SMT members. They view cooperation to be concerned mainly with agreement among the parties and point to the benefits that accrue. In her own words, one of the HoDs was captured explained this in this way:

*If you agree on what you are doing… and by agreeing, everybody agreeing on something... the school is more likely to be well-managed* [HoD-E].

The advantages of cooperation were also echoed by another HoD who said:
Our results have improved since the SMTs took full charge. Our results for the past two years ... in 2008 it was 63 percent and last year it was 83.9 percent, an increase of 20.9 percent, that to me is the most significant achievement and that starts with teamwork. It starts with good administration [HoD-B].

However, they also acknowledged that if the SMT members are as different units or individuals instead of as a team, then the schools’ objectives cannot be accomplished. Head of department of school B explicates:

*No one can expect cooperation amongst the staff if our SMT is not united.*

From these comments it is clear that team spirit and cooperation among SMT is a good thing and that is the weapon for the success of SMT.

**4.2.3.5 Support from the District officials**

The personnel from the local District office are there to confer development and support on HoDs. Heads of department are the departments’ source of reservoir for future school principals and as such they must be preserved. The observations made by HoDs in this regard confirm that. One of the HoDs complained about HoDs being or feeling sidelined by EDOs who claimed visit schools only to see or talk to principal and no one else. She put it this way:

*EDO’s only comes to school principal* [HoD-E].

The common theme that came out of the HoDs interviewed was the lack of support and development from the District office. HoD of school A reveals the situation when he/she says:

*The EDOs come to our school only when there is a conflict* [HoD-A].
The data show that the District office personnel are missing its main objective of developing the SMTs. School E’s head of department explains:

*It is this time of the year yet I have not seen even the subject advisors* [HoD-E].

Development is always directed at becoming better and can be viewed as offering equal opportunities.

*The principal at times delegate an HoD to attend the principal’s meeting it is only then that I receive the development* [HoD-D].

### 4.3 Summary of themes/categories of SMT responses

The themes/categories of SMT responses are given below in Table 3 for easy reference for the reader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Deputy principals</th>
<th>Heads of Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Terms of reference | • Departmental policies are the terms of reference but must be adjusted to suit the needs of a particular school.  
                          • The experience of principal may assist to interpret | • Knowledgeable - Education policy handbook; OSD and school policy.  
                          • Policies must be adaptable to suit the needs of each school. | • Departmental policies are the terms of reference.  
                          • Adapt these policies to suit the needs of a particular school. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Curriculum, management and governance issues</th>
<th>3. Multi-faceted roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Acknowledge leadership of SMT.</td>
<td>* Accountability – only principal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Only principals - leading role - bureaucratically accountable to the authorities.</td>
<td>* Threatens cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Democratic leadership style - delegation.</td>
<td>* Crisis situation – only principal responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* SMT needs training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
problems, (See p.69)
- Stress due to role overload.

| 4. Cooperation | • In favour of this:
|                | a) Lightens the workload.
|                | b) Shows responsibility and opinions
|                | c) Empowering others in the smooth running of the school.
|                | • Lack of cooperation also expressed due to
|                | a) Differences of opinion.
|                | b) Personal clashes
|                | c) Different agendas
|                | d) Political issues.
|                | e) Laziness.
|                | • Consultation (See p.60)
|                | • Selling ones idea.
|                | • Ownership of decisions.
|                | • Teamwork.
|                | • Devolution of powers-
|                | suggests that there is cooperation.
|                | • Competition spirit negates cooperation.
|                | • Rivalry and opposition disrupts cooperation.

| 5. Support from District officials | • Not getting enough and necessary support.
|                                   | • Visiting schools without giving feedback.
|                                   | • Their support is not enough.
|                                   | • Lack of District office backing and understanding.
|                                   | • Networks are
|                                   | • EDOs only come to our school when there is a conflict.
|                                   | • EDOs only come to
| 6. Workload of SMT members | • Seen as an all-rounder.  
• Their versatility is reflected.  
• Principal as a motivating person to learners.  
• Principal as a motivating person to teachers.  
• Multifaceted work results in stress.  
• Principals are sick because of their work.  
| needed to provide deputy principals with systems of support (See p.69). | school principal. |
| Work-load is just the same as that of a school principal.  
• Compensation is not proportional to the roles.  
• Stresses are related to sheer role overload.  
• Unable to accomplish the many tasks. | Heavy workload - unable to plan their work.  
• There are no resources.  
• Rehabilitation - their second home lately so as to deal with their stresses. |

**4.4 Discussion of findings**

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges facing School Management Team members in the GET band. The researcher analysed the data and discusses his analysis and impressions in this section. The format of the discussion is such that the main findings are presented first and these findings are directly linked to the research questions.
4.4.1 SMTs understanding of terms of reference

This study has shown that the terms of reference and or roles are duties and responsibilities are allocated to each SMT member. The data collected from the five (5) GET schools of Circuit two (2) have shown that even though SMT members claim to be knowledgeable about their terms of reference, most SMT members are not sure of their roles. This is reflected by their varied responses during the interviews in so far as the terms of operations for SMTs are concerned.

The majority of SMT members from school A to school E indicated that the education and policy hand book is used as a guide book to the terms of reference. However, what is prevalent in their responses is that the terms of reference are refined further by the individual school circumstances.

It has emerged from the data that lack of in-service training for team members before or after assuming promotion posts is quoted as one glaring short-coming. For example, the deputy-principal of school B confirmed that when he said:

*The deputy principal’s role is quite a challenge because you may find yourself being an all-rounder and end up not knowing exactly what your role is* [DP-B].

From the responses given, one can deduce that the District education officials seem to focus attention on school principals. It is clear that participants in this study are of the view that District officials must not only concentrate on school principals but must as well take other SMT members seriously. This will afford the SMTs an opportunity of getting a thorough training in various aspects of their complicated work that will perhaps include the terms of reference. Lukhwareni (1995) agrees to this view when he emphasizes the fact that SMT members are not familiar with their roles and he provides an answer for the malfunctioning of the SMTs in managing schools.

Lukhwareni (1995) argues that school management teams must be made aware of their roles and that they are responsible for the destiny of their respective schools and
the people associated with them. It becomes evident to the researcher that SMTs need intensive training in school management. The data have shown that terms of reference for the SMTs operation is one of the challenges facing SMTs. Being aware of their roles; they will bravely accept the commitment to take the lead in performing them with dedication.

4.4.2 SMTs involvement in curriculum, management and governance issues

In the view of principals, the extent of involvement of the SMT in curriculum management and governance hinges on the democratic leadership style of the principal and the devolution of responsibilities to other SMT members. In order for the SMT to play a meaningful role in curriculum management and governance issues, there is a need for members to be conversant of issues and kept abreast of developments. It is therefore important that SMTs be exposed to continuing professional training and development in the aforementioned areas.

The data illustrate that the deputy principals are fully hands-on with curriculum management issues. It has emerged from the data that the HoDs as section heads, are fully accountable to the deputy principal. When one considers aspects such as curriculum, finance, extra-mural activities, administration, marketing, examinations (and many others) all these need management and also need to blend into a whole coherent effort, then the appropriateness of teamwork becomes apparent. Nevertheless, for delegation to be effective, the team members need to cooperate fully with one another. However, accountability becomes a challenge facing the SMT members. Accountability becomes a one man show as if members of the SMT are not working as a team.

4.4.3 Cooperation among SMTs

Respondents seemed to suggest that SMT’s members’ volunteering to do certain tasks also demonstrate that there is cooperation amongst the SMT. The value and importance of cooperation amongst the SMT as experienced and observed by the
principals interviewed yields appropriation of each SMT member’s strength to the advantage of the school. These principals also alluded to opportunities for professional growth and development as a result of cooperation.

On the flip side of the coin, some of the principals interviewed suggested instances where lack of cooperation is manifested. They cited differences of opinion, different agendas, political issues and laziness as explaining lack of cooperation amongst the SMT. One deputy-principal explained that cooperation goes with consultation. This kind of thinking would lead to ownership of decisions. In actual fact cooperation amongst SMT members would lead to team-management which would then lightens the load of running a school.

Heads of department interviewed indicated that the success of the school depends on the cooperation of SMT members. They view cooperation to be concerned mainly about agreement among the parties and point to the benefits that accrue.

### 4.4.4 Sources of support for SMTs

The interviewees were complaining about the District officials who come and go giving the schools no feedback; the support they get from the curriculum section is not enough. The personnel from the local District office are there to confer development and support to HoDs. Heads of Department are the departments’ source of reservoir for future school principals and as such they must be preserved. Sidelining the HoDs and putting more emphasis only on school principals was raised as an issue of concern to HoDs and it was viewed as a practice that must be changed. The common theme that came out of the HoDs interviewed was the lack of support and development from the District office. The data show that the District office personnel are missing its main objective of developing the SMTs. Head of department of school A attests that SMTs are faced with that kind of challenge when she said:

*The EDOs come to our school only when there is a conflict* [HoD-A].
The researcher is of the view that the Departmental officials must continuously give full support to SMTs. The sporadic kind of support of SMTs by the Departmental officials will endlessly put the majority of schools on a downbeat side. Lukhwareni (1995) claims that the absence of proper support from the Department of Education (DoE) is a key factor for the oblivion the SMTs find themselves in. It becomes evident to the researcher that SMTs need intensive training in school management. The DoE needs to conduct regular workshops and seminars for the SMT members to keep SMTs abreast of their roles and functions. Furthermore, he points out that without guidance and support from the DoE, the SMT members are lost.

**4.4.5 Workload of SMT members**

Almost all the principals interviewed reported challenges with the multiplicity of roles entrusted upon the SMT. The dominant theme is accountability. The issue is that, accountability being shouldered by one person, the principal, as the accounting officer of the school. This role of being an accounting officer undermines and threatens cooperation since management is team effort but accountability is a one man show.

The participants’ responses to the question on their experience with their multi-faceted roles were analogous. The data reflect that deputy principals are busy just like school principals. The HoDs responses to the question on their experience with their multi-faceted roles were similar. The data reflect the need for support systems which will include resources.

Heavy workloads were mentioned as another challenge facing SMTs. Increased paperwork, trying to be responsive to everyone, was cited as particular by stressful to SMTs. Most of the SMT responses reflected concerns about the nature of the job, dealing with teacher problems, student problems, and parent concerns. Completing several tasks at once in a fragmented fashion and constant interruptions are confusing. SMT members booked off due to stress were identified as having a negative impact on the progress of the school. The negative impact cited in reviewed
literature was confirmed in the findings of this study. Overworked teachers tend to be less productive. SMT members if overworked do not perform well either.

4.5 Summary

This Chapter has focused on data presentation where in all the participants’ views, opinions and ideas were displayed. Most participants were very keen to share their experiences with the researcher, sometimes without being probed to do so. It has also emerged from the data that some of the SMT members were not as clear and certain about their terms of reference as expected. One of the overall findings is that principals and other members of the SMT are not working as a team so as to successfully manage their respective schools. In the next Chapter the summary, conclusion and recommendations will be presented.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1, the researcher identified the objectives of the study as follows:

- To determine the extent to which SMT members’ operations are guided by their terms of reference.
- To determine if there is cooperation among SMTs.
- To determine if there are any sources of support for SMTs.
- To determine if SMTs are not overloaded.
- To determine if SMTs are stressed about their work.
- To determine if SMTs understand their job description.

The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges facing school management team members in the GET band schools of Circuit 2 in Centane. Flowing from this, it is now appropriate to consider to what extent these objectives have been met.

5.2 Summary and conclusions

In general the picture that emerged from this study was that SMTs are facing many challenges. Their responses pointed to several challenges ranging from the SMTs terms of reference, cooperation, sources of support and SMT members stressed as a result of the work overload involved. Notwithstanding the challenges alluded to above the findings of this study strongly suggest that SMTs have brought the phenomenon of cooperation to the fore, and cooperation was perceived by nearly all participants in the study to have many advantages for school management. In order for the SMT to play a meaningful role in curriculum management and governance issues, however, there is a need for them to be conversant of issues and abreast of developments.
Development is fundamental for HoDs so as to enable them to meet any new challenges, especially those related to curriculum matters.

Another point that came out very clearly in this study was poor support from the District officials. Many participants felt that although support from District offices of education is needed for effective functioning of SMTs, the latter presently receive very little of that if any at all.

SMTs are supposed to work as a unit, but there are indications that this seems not to be so in the SMTs presently. Even so, participants in this study saw that team spirit as a unifying factor that instills confidence in team members. More importantly, principals need to ‘guarantee’ team building. In general, the responses confirmed some of the views discussed in Chapter 2 regarding the advantages of teamwork. However, underlying these positive response were sets of tensions, challenges and needs which made the actual practice of cooperation potentially problematic. Nonetheless, the principle of having SMTs appeared to be acceptable and desired by respondents. Indeed this must be encouraged and of course be refined so that it works better.

There were also tensions with regard to leadership, arising from the dual nature of education leadership. On the one hand, principals are expected to work in teams with democratic principles and develop shared visioning and management, but on the other hand they saw themselves as the ones who were ultimately accountable. This tension resulted in principals’ reluctance to delegate and ‘trust’ the team, since failure on the part of the team would lead to personal loss and embarrassment of the school principal.

This role of being an accounting officer undermines and threatens cooperation since management is a team effort but accountability is a one man show. Principals said they were accountable to the District office, deputy principals claim to be accountable to the principals and HoDs said they were accountable to the deputy principals. This kind of accountability is problematic. This vertical kind of accountability is in contrast to what Gunter (2001, p.142) believes it should be like. According to Gunter for
example, accountability is a “two-way process”. In Gunter’s view accountability is reciprocal, that is, if A is accountable to B then B is also accountable to A. Interestingly enough, with accountability there is no equality. As things are at present, principals to some extent are forced to agree to the issue first, before endorsing it because they are the ones who need to account for all action at the end of the day.

Principals interviewed reported challenges with the multiplicity of roles heaped on the SMT. As school leaders, principals are expected to encourage both staff and learners. The ability of a leader to encourage other members is a characteristic of good team building. In addition to that they need also to mentor the staff and encourage staff members to study. Principals need to inspire their staff and lead by example. Principals need to ensure that they come up with challenging activities because it might happen that underperforming SMT members are bored with their daily routines. It is also expected of the principal to, where possible, empower teachers. This should take the form of delegating certain duties to the teachers. Above all principals need to undertake pastoral work at schools so as to understand staff better because teachers are also faced with many problems too.

From the findings it transpired that the principal needs to be a good listener – s/he must learn to listen to his/her staff and learners before making any significant decision. Interpersonal problems also emerged as a potential threat to cooperation. The diversity of personalities can be harmful to the SMT members if not managed properly. These include personal agendas of individual SMT members which may result in infighting amongst themselves, thereby working against the well-being of the team. Policy implementation was also perceived as a potential threat, since it may restrict the scope of the SMTs’ ways of managing the school. However, some principals have acknowledged and admitted that they simply adjust policies and have their own guidelines.

Another challenge that was strongly expressed was the need for SMT members to be informed, and to know exactly what their roles are. This cry suggests a weakness in the area of communication and work allocation. Communication was also stressed as
one of the needs expressed. It was felt that there was a need for school leaders to be open to their SMTs and for other members of the SMTs to know their leaders’ intentions. The school vision has the potential of transforming a school. A school vision is like a compass that shows the direction. For it to be fully legitimate, all the school’s stakeholders must formulate it. If all people concerned are involved they will adopt ownership of that vision.

According to Senge (1990, p.340) “people with a sense of their own vision and commitment would naturally, reject efforts of a leader to ‘get them committed’”. A vision acts as a source of motivation and people working according to their vision do not need any form of external motivation. The fact that this was given so little attention points to a deeper problem of ownership and the philosophy of teamwork. Training emerges as a great need. The participants felt that they were not well equipped to assume managerial positions and that, it must be pointed out that it renders them ineffective. Exposing them to new developments in education would place them in a better position to tackle current problems. Management and leadership training is a prominent feature in most countries, including South Africa, but the perception is that the programmes on offer have accomplished little. Perhaps the over-reliance on training to solve problems and bring about empowerment was another factor of the problem revealed in the respondents’ narrow understanding of accountability.

5.3 Recommendations for future research

Although some work, including this study, has been done on SMTs, the researcher strongly feels that the practice of team management needs further investigation. In this study there were a number of research areas that came to light, but were outside the scope of this study. The researcher would like to refer future researchers to the following: This study did not focus exactly on the causes of SMTs’ conflicts and not working as a team. It would be of value if a study could be undertaken to look at how the conflicts amongst SMTs impact on school development.
In order for the SMTs to play a meaningful role in curriculum management and governance issues, there is a need for members to be conversant with issues and be kept abreast of developments. It is therefore important that SMTs be exposed to continuing professional training and development in the identified aspects.

The deputy principals as a source of pool for future principals, it is imperative that the District office should not leave them in the dark. As deputy principals they need to be invited to workshops similar to those of principals so as to develop leadership skills so that future principals have a strong foundation and belief systems on which to base their difficult decisions. There are important changes that take place in education. Changing management is one of them. It is therefore important that principals, as well as deputy principals be trained in these new developments.

It would be important to track the actual impact SMTs have on school development, for example, are decisions taken at meetings acted upon? How, and when? The most urgent and serious need for research is the underlying cause of the impoverished and narrow understanding of cooperation that emerged in this study.

5.4 Recommendations for practice

It is now appropriate that the researcher make recommendations to the District office, principals and SMTs respectively.

5.4.1 Recommendations to the District office

District office’s role is clearly to provide support, chiefly in the shape of development programmes that develop people in their totality. Programmes that expose and develop SMTs’ sense of reliance on each other and joint management would go a long way towards addressing needs expressed in this study. District office also needs to provide on-going support in the form of experts who visit schools to mentor principals, deputy principals and HoDs respectively. In order for the SMTs to play a meaningful
role in curriculum management and governance issues, there is a need for members to be conversant with issues and be abreast of developments.

**5.4.2 Recommendations to the SMTs**

SMT members need clarity on their roles beyond the mere description of duties. Principals need to accept that empowering staff members is their responsibility, and therefore should delegate without fear of failure or embarrassment. The notion that one learns through making mistakes needs to be embraced. Openness is crucial for trust and real teamwork to develop. If there is no team work amongst SMT members it will have negative effects to the whole school. In the light of these findings, it is recommended that SMT members be exposed to continuing professional training and development in the aforementioned areas.

Principals also need to encourage teamwork to acknowledge the democratic nature of the school and most importantly to have a broad base of inputs. It is their role as a team-member that needs to be developed by the principal.

**5.5 Limitations of the study**

This study did not set out to observe team management in practice, and was therefore heavily reliant on views expressed by respondents and some few observations that the researcher was able to conduct. The study is therefore open to the same validity threat most qualitative case studies suffered from. The researcher trusts that his use of more than one data source, as well as the rigor of his data reporting and discussion addresses this threat sufficiently. The researcher used the qualitative approach and therefore the study is of course not statistically generalisable. However, it is the researcher’s view that the picture painted here would probably be found to be true of many areas in South Africa.
5.6 Summary

There is no doubt that there is a strong need to develop SMTs so as to enable them to withstand the challenges they are facing. However, in the light of what this study has found, it is evident that educational management in South Africa needs more attention. SMT members appear to have a narrow understanding of their roles in school management for the many reasons discussed above.

Until this understanding matures there will be no true ‘team management’ in South African education. This study can hopefully play its role in highlighting problem areas, which could lead to programmes and interventions which develop SMTs who still lack the confidence to lead in their respective schools. SMT challenges warrant attention since the professional management of a school is not the sole responsibility of the principal.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: Ethical clearance Approval from the WSU

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that Mr. B.Z. Mapisa is a registered student in the programme M.Ed in Educational Management. I am acting as his supervisor and wish to request your esteem office to grant him the opportunity to use the schools he had indicated in his Research proposal to collect his data.

Your positive response and cooperation in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Professor R. A. Sohn

Walter Sisulu University for Technology and Science, Eastern Cape
THE CIRCUIT MANAGER
Butterworth District
4960

Dear Sir

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby apply for permission to conduct research in schools at your circuit. I am a student at the Walter Sisulu University currently doing a Master Degree in Education Management and Policy.

My research topic is: CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND SCHOOLS IN CIRCUIT TWO IN CENTANE: A collective case study.

A sample of 5 schools at the circuit will be involved in the research. The five schools will be selected using convenient sampling method. The research procedures, inter alia, involve:

- applying for permission from principals and SGB’s of the five schools that will be selected
- Obtaining informed consent from the selected SMT members that will participate
- applying for permission from principals of the five schools that will be selected
- Obtaining informed consent from the selected SMT members that will participate in the research process
- Interviews will be conducted after school hours.
I intend to conduct interviews from the 03 November to 04 December 2008. Interviews will last one –three days per school. Please find an attached confirmation letter from my main supervisor, Professor Sonn, R.A.
I would be thankful if you could grant this permission.

Yours faithfully
Mapisa BZ Student No. 1926 187 84
APPENDIX C: Letter of permission from the Department of Education to conduct research

Mr. B.Z. Mapisa
Gcina J.S.S.
P.O. Box 1115
BUTTERWORTH

Sir

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH- YOURSELF

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 2008/10/23.

I wish to inform you that permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research at the schools of your choice.

It is also the wish of this office that when your study is complete you will supply it with your findings/results/recommendations.

We wish you every best of luck with your studies.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

Madubela, V.
Circuit Manager
Appendix D: Letter of permission to school principals

2042 Cuba
Butteworth
4960
01 August 2009

The Principal
............................J.S.S.
Circuit 02

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby apply for permission to conduct research in your school. I am a student at the Walter Sisulu University, currently doing a Master’s Degree in Education Management and Policy.

My research topic is: CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND SCHOOLS IN CIRCUIT TWO IN CENTANE: A collective case study.

A sample of 5 schools at the circuit will be involved in the research. Your school is one of the 5 schools that have been selected using convenient sampling method. The research procedures, inter alia, involve:

- Obtaining permission from principals of the five schools that have been selected.
- Obtaining informed consent from the selected SMT members that will participate in the research process.
- Interviewing the selected SMT members.
- Interviewing the SMT during working hours but preferable during their free periods; and
- In cases where the selected SMT members do not have free periods, I will then arrange to interview them at their convenient times.

I intend to conduct interviews from the 03 August 2009 to 03 September 2009. I have also asked permission to conduct this research from the Circuit manager. Interviews will last one –three days per school. Please find an attached confirmation letter from
my main supervisor and Circuit manager. I would be thankful if you could grant this permission.

Yours faithfully
Mapisa BZ (Student No. 1926 187 84)
APPENDIX E: Invitation for interviews

2042 Cuba
Butterworth
4960
01 August 2009

Dear Colleagues

Invitation for interviews

I hereby wish to extend an invitation to you to assist me with interviews. I am an M.Ed student doing research towards the completion of the requirements of the degree, Master in Education. My topic of research is: “Challenges facing school management teams in the general education and training band schools in Circuit two at Centane.”

I kindly seek your permission to participate in the interviews. Please circle the yes response if you agree to participate. Also, circle the yes response if you agree that I may use an audio voice recorder.

Yes for interview: ................................................
No for interview: ................................................
Yes for audio voice recorder: ..............................
No for audio voice recorder: ..............................

Your anticipated participation is gratefully appreciated.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Mapisa BZ (Mr)
APPENDIX F: Letter of consent from the SMTs (Sample)

WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH AND HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEE (FERHDC)

INFORMED CONSENT

Title of study:

CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND SCHOOLS IN CIRCUIT TWO AT CENTANE.

Conducted by: B.Z. Mapisa
Name of the Main Supervisor: RA Sonn

The purpose of the study and the extent to which I will be involved was explained to me in a language which I understood. I have understood the purpose of the study and the extent to which I will be involved in the study. I unreservedly agree to take part in it voluntarily.

Signed at (Place) NGGWARA J.S.S on (date) 23-08-09 by
(Full name) Shakwuma MATILOSHE (address) NGGWARA Prim Acre

Witness: Name: B. NYINGENI Signature:  
Date 23-08-09

Principal: Name: S. MATILOSHE

School Stamp:

NGGWARA J.S.S.
P.O. BOX 123
BUTTERWORTH 4900

PRINCIPAL
APPENDIX G: Interview schedule for the SMT members

Interview Protocol

Introduction: Good morning; or afternoon [Mentions name of respondent]. Thanks for having granted me permission to interview you.

1. As an SMT member, do you know and understand your terms of reference, that is, the guidelines for your operations?

2. To what extent are you involved as an SMT member in curriculum, management and governance issues in your own school?

3. What are your experiences with this multi-faceted role as an SMT member in your own school?

4. In your experience and personal view, what can you say about cooperation and / or lack thereof among SMT members in your school?

5. Could you relate an experience that suggests that there is cooperation among SMT members in your school?

6. Could you relate an experience that suggests that there is lack of cooperation among SMT members in your school?

7. Are you getting the necessary support from the district office that is, education development officers (EDO’s) and curriculum specialist?

8. Can you share your experiences with regard to work-load as a result of the multi-faceted role as a SMT.

9. Are you experiencing stress or symptoms of stress as a result of the challenges you are faced with as an SMT?
APPENDIX H: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE (SMT-MEETINGS)

School: ------------------------------- Date: -------------------------------
When is the meeting taking place? ------------------------------------------------------
Where is the meeting taking place? ------------------------------------------------------
How many SMT members present? ----------------------------------------------------------
Any apologies-----------------------------------------------------------------------------
Who chairs the meeting? ---------------------------------------------------------------------
Are members present taken? ---------------------------------------------------------------
Is there a secretary? ------------------------------------------------------------------------
Is there an attendance register? -----------------------------------------------------------
Are the previous minutes read? -------------------------------------------------------------
Are matters arising from those minutes dealt with? ------------------------------------------
Do they entertain A.O.B (any other business)? -----------------------------------------------
If the chairperson is the principal, does s/he dictate the meeting? -------------------------
How long does the meeting last? -----------------------------------------------------------
What is the agenda? --------------------------------------------------------------------------
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
How do they start their meeting? (e.g. with a short prayer)-------------------------------------
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Do they finish the agenda? ---------------------------------------------------------------------
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Is there a post level 1 educator, leaner, parent or any other non-SMT member present? ------------
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Does everyone have a chance to speak? ------------------------------------------------------
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Does the chairperson dominate the discussion? -----------------------------------------------
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Are SMT members not intimidated / feeling shy to speak? --------------------------------------
How are they seated? --------------------------------------------------------------------------
Do the members contribute? ------------------------------------------

Is the members’ contribution welcome and appreciated? -----------------

How are decisions reached? ---------------------------------------

If they do not agree on a particular issue what do they do? ----------
APPENDIX I: OBSERVATION DATA

Observations

Out of the five schools I was supposed to be observing, only three schools fulfilled their promise. In all the schools I observed, I used an observation schedule. I observed one SMT meeting from each school.

Summary of the observations

Data are presented according to the observation schedule. Some of the SMT meetings took place during school hours and others after school hours. The attendance was 100% in all the schools I observed. The principals declared the meetings open in all cases and in one case the principal opened with a short prayer.

The meetings ended by the principal thanking everybody but in the case where the meeting was opened with a prayer, he closed it with a short benediction. The SMT members were seated randomly in a circular fashion with the principals among them but in one case the principal was sitting at his desk. In all cases the principals chaired the meetings. Out of the three schools, two had a SMT secretary, and in other school SMT members were taking notes for themselves. No attendance register was taken.

In one school, no previous minutes were read and in the other two schools each SMT member had typed minutes from the previous meeting, and one member read them. In two schools copies of the departmental circulars were distributed among SMT members. There were no matters arising in the meeting of one school because no minutes were read from the previous meeting. In two of the schools there were matters arising. When the meetings were in progress, the principals were not dictatorial whatsoever in all the cases. There were no ‘A.O.B.’ items in all three schools.
The duration of the meetings varied according to the different agendas the schools had. Meetings lasted between 20 and 90 minutes. In one of the schools I could not stay to the end of the meeting because there was a susceptible issue to be discussed that concerned a learner and her parents. I had to be excused and observe confidentiality. However, the principal said I could come back later (when the parents had gone). The agendas of the schools I observed did not differ significantly in the sense that most of the items discussed were administrative issues. These were issues such as examinations (exam papers, dates and timetables), admission of learners, fees, educational administration, subject statistics and assessment.

Other matters were sport oriented, theft, children’s safety and fundraising. In the cases where I observed the meetings to the end, the agendas were completed. There were no learners or parents at any of the meetings.

In all the three schools I observed, all SMT members were post level two and above. Everyone had a chance to voice his/her views freely. There were no signs of the SMT members feeling intimidated and reserved. In two cases the principals dominated the discussions but the members contributed positively too – all of them. The members’ contributions were very much welcomed and appreciated. To reach decisions, the SMT members gave their views and agreed on a particular issue. Each member had a say on whatever issue was being discussed and decisions were reached through consensus. If they did not agree on a particular issue they weighed the facts and found the most effective solution. In one case their meeting led to action because members reported back on specific tasks they had to do.
"DECLARATION TO ACCOMPANY EACH AND EVERY WRITTEN ACADEMIC OR RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT/OUTPUT AS PER THE RESOLUTION 4 OF THE MINUTES OF THE HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THE 21ST OF OCTOBER, 2010"

DECLARATION ON PLAGIARISM

(i) I am aware that plagiarism is defined at Walter Sisulu University (WSU) as the inclusion of another's or others' ideas, writings, works, discoveries and inventions from any source in an assignment or research output without the due, correct and appropriate acknowledgement to the author(s) or source(s) in breach of the values, conventions, ethics and norms of the different professional, academic and research disciplines and includes unacknowledged copying from intra- and internet and peers/fellow students.

(ii) I have duly and appropriately acknowledged all references and conformed to avoid plagiarism as defined by WSU.

(iii) I have made use of the citation and referencing style stipulated by my lecturer/supervisor.

(iv) This submitted work is my own.

(v) I did not and will not allow anyone to copy my work and present it as his/hers own.

(vi) I am committed to uphold academic and professional integrity in the academic/research activity.

(vii) I am aware of the consequences of engaging in plagiarism.

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 06/05/2011
APPENDIX K

WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY
DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
MANDATORY CONSENT FORM: ELECTRONIC THESIS & DISSERTATIONS (ETD) AND PLAGIARISM REQUIREMENT (For postgraduate research outputs from 2009 September)

TEMPLATE FOR THE STUDENT AND SUPERVISOR CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION OF ELECTRONIC RESEARCH OUTPUT ON INTERNET AND WSU INTRANET

FACULTY: EDUCATION

QUALIFICATION NAME: MASTER OF EDUCATION ABBREVIATION: M.Ed YEAR: 2011

STUDENT'S FULL NAME: BAFUNUI REALOUS MAPIA STUDENT NUMBER: 192618784

TYPE OF RESEARCH OUTPUT: RESEARCH PAPER/ MINI-DISSERTATION/ DISSERTATION/ THESIS (TICK ONE)

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH OUTPUT: "CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN THE Soweto SCHOOLS"

CONSENT: I HEREBY GIVE MY CONSENT TO WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY TO PUBLISH MY RESEARCH OUTPUT FOR THE QUALIFICATION ABOVE ON THE WSU INTRANET AND INTERNET. I CERTIFY THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THERE IS NO PLAGIARISM IN THE RESEARCH OUTPUT AS SUBMITTED. I HAVE TAKEN REASONABLE CARE TO ENSURE THAT THE RESEARCH OUTPUT MEETS THE QUALITY LEVEL EXPECTED FOR THE PRESENT QUALIFICATION LEVEL. I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS OF THIS DECLARATION.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT: ____________________________ DATE: 07/05/2011

ENDORSEMENTS BY:

SUPERVISOR:

FULL NAME: REYNOLD ABRAHAM SONN SIGNATURE: ____________________________ DATE: 07/05/2011

CO-SUPERVISOR(S):

1. FULL NAME: N/A SIGNATURE: N/A DATE:

2. FULL NAME: N/A SIGNATURE: N/A DATE: