

THE PROFESSIONAL PREPAREDNESS OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE OSHIKOTO REGION OF NORTHERN NAMIBIA TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY ON THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Education (M.Ed) in Educational Management, Administration and Planning, Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, RSA.

December 2007

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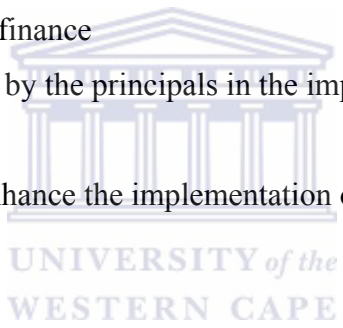
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TITLE AND KEY WORDS

THE PROFESSIONAL PREPAREDNESS OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE OSHIKOTO REGION OF NORTHERN NAMIBIA TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY ON THE NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership theories

Effective leadership

Effective management

Effective schools

School principals

Primary schools

Educational administration

Leadership development

Policy implementation

Educational standards

Oshikoto region

Namibian educational policies



DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis, *The professional preparedness of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region of Northern Namibia to implement the policy on the national standards for school leadership and management*, is the result of my own work. I also further declare that this thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university. The sources that I have used have also been acknowledged fully.



Signature:
Candidate

Date:

Signature:
Supervisor

Date:

DEDICATION

This piece of writing has been dedicated gratefully to the memories of my late dear parents Andreas Nangombe and Sara Namunyelu who, through the thick and thin moments of life, had not deprived me of the love and care that delicately nurtured me to what I am today. May their spirits cherish the greatness of their making.

This is also dedicated to my wife Kapau and all of our beloved children whose love and support I have always enjoyed. It is my wish they treasure the research done.



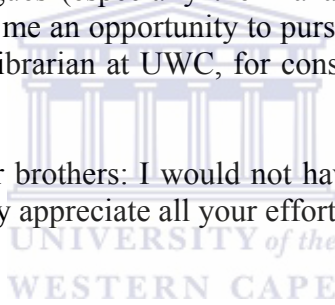
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Professor Harold D. Herman, I am indebted to you for what you have done. You took supervision responsibility of my research project with great seriousness. You invested time, advice and efforts worthy of acknowledgement in this research study. I have enjoyed your constant enriching and shaping of my academic debate and profession very much. In fact your professional maturity is beyond my description. I will always treasure your constant commitment and support. May God bless you.

To my wife Kapau and all my children, I owe you an unfathomable apology for having deprived you of love and care during my studies in South Africa. I know you often needed me so much close to you. Well, as Ngugi waThiong'o always says, there is no night so long that it does not end with dawn. Thank you very much for your love and support as well as your sincere encouragement for me to complete my studies. You were always there for me.

I am grateful to the USAID for the initial funding of my studies. Equally, I am extending my gratitude to all my colleagues (especially the Management Team) in the Oshikoto Education Region for allowing me an opportunity to pursue my studies. My warm thanks to Benita de Wet, the faculty librarian at UWC, for constantly assisting me in search of information.

To my two sisters and my four brothers: I would not have been what I am today if you were not there. I wholeheartedly appreciate all your efforts. This is due to you too.



LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BELMAS	British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
HED	Higher Education Diploma
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDAF	International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISCBF	Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building Facility
MEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoE	Ministry of Education
NIED	National Institute for Education Development
NSE	National Standards of Education
PQA	Programmes and Quality Assurance
SACMEQ	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SMT	School Management Team
STD	Standard
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

ABSTRACT

After seventeen years since the apartheid education system was abolished in Namibia, the education system remains stagnant. The government has been spending big budgets on education. The Ministry of Education introduced various educational policies and innovations aimed to change the education system. Yet, the quality of education remains poor. Although there are seemingly various reasons why the quality of education system is poor, education policies are not implemented effectively to bring about the desired quality of education and continuous improvement of schools. There is a lack of commitment and culture of learning, which are said to be the pre-conditions for educational change. And practitioners seem to lack the urgency required to implement policies.

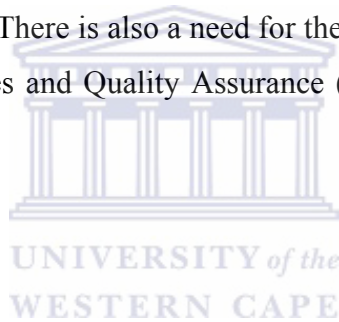
Notwithstanding this, there seems to be another reason why policies are not implemented effectively in schools. This research study argues that professional preparation of principals to implement educational policies is not done intensively and rigorously. Hence, such professional preparedness of the school leaders is not impacting effectively on their leadership and management of schools. In an attempt to answer the question **“How effectively has the training of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region on the national standards impacted on their management and leadership of schools?”** the study carried out an examination at five schools in the Oshikoto Region of Namibia.

The researcher used the design and the methods that are embedded in qualitative outline. Various participants were interviewed, *inter alia* five primary school principals, their Heads of Departments, School Management Team (SMT) and School Board members. Using interviews and questionnaires as the main research instruments, the study produced significant results.

While there is an agreement in the responses that the national standards for education are important for Namibia schools, the professional preparation for the primary school

principals to implement the national standards was not done rigorously and effectively. Thus, such professional preparedness of the primary school principals has not impacted effectively on their leadership and management of schools. There are however some pockets of success or change by some individual principals and teachers at some schools, but not so effective enough to enhance continuous improvement and subsequent quality education.

The study recommends that the five primary school principals, their Heads of Departments, the staff, the SMT and the School Boards members at the five schools should be trained intensively and rigorously on the national standards at their respective schools. The Region should also train principals who are administering schools that are contextually similar to the five schools that this study investigated, to implement the educational policy effectively. There is also a need for the Ministry of Education, through the Directorate for Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA), to review the policy on the national standards.



CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

1.1 Introduction

The Namibian government's expenditure on education is far higher than the quality that the education system produces. Considerable investment in education has been made, yet returns remain poor. The majority of learners leave school only functionally illiterate as most schools are "stuck" with learning. School management and leadership, which is a central factor for the quality of schools, are stagnant and need to make a "mind shift" towards change. There is a great need to fundamentally rethink the institutionalizing, and subsequently change, and turn schools into performing institutions.

With independence in 1990, the elected government of Namibia set about transforming education, paying specific attention to issues like teacher education reform programs and curriculum transformation. The government reduced the number of unqualified and under-qualified teachers, improved access to schooling, as well as implemented equitable distribution of educational resources. All these efforts were meant to change and improve quality in education. Despite all these efforts however, the performance of schools remains very poor. At some schools, policies are not implemented effectively and efficiently while at some schools, principals completely ignore the implementation thereof. At times, policy documents are just not available at schools.

While a deduction has been made that the legacy of poor and dysfunctional apartheid education system is at work, it is equally argued that the Namibian education system lacks a sense of urgency, responsibility and commitment to take decisions (The Presidential Commission on Education, 1999: 13, 22). Principals are inadequately trained and are unable to administer their schools effectively and efficiently (Kabajani, 2000: 103). Thus, there is a great need to thoroughly retrain school

management and leadership on policy implementation. Thorough training will help school management and leadership to develop a better sense of the importance of national policies and the urgency for the effective implementation thereof. Consequently, this will enhance effective management and leadership of schools and improve the quality of education.

As an effort to improve the quality of education, the Ministry of Education introduced the policy of national standards of education in 2006. The national standards are to be used by the schools to evaluate their own performances in order to improve the quality of teaching and management. External evaluators who want to assess the performance of a school can also make use of the national standards. A representative group of inspectors of education and advisory teachers received training on the national standards in 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2005a: 4-6). Thereafter, members of the representative group trained the regional teams that went out to train the principals and other school management members.

As a member of the regional team that was responsible for the professional development of principals and other members of the school management, I am of the view that school principals and school management in the Oshikoto Education Region were not thoroughly prepared for the implementation of the national standards of education. Hence, the school management and leadership seem to be ineffective and inefficient. Equally, I am also of the opinion that ineffective and inefficient school management and leadership is the major reason for poor school performance in Namibia and in particular, in the Oshikoto Region. Thus, these issues are worthy of examination and academic debate.

1.2 Statement of the research question and aims

This study, in the broader sense, is an attempt to contribute to a wider understanding of effective and efficient school management and leadership. The study hopes to

contribute to an understanding of the importance of primary school principalship in educational policy implementation and subsequent quality education.

The research recognizes the importance of the principal as a central factor in heading the school in the right direction in the improvement of the quality of the school. As the Commonwealth Secretariat (1993: 444) rightly states, principals are “in the front line battle to create an environment for quality education”. Hence, this study aims to examine the effective management and leadership of primary schools in the Oshikoto Region through the implementation of the national standards of education, as a policy in Namibia.

The national standards of education were introduced in 2006 as a national policy aimed at improving the quality of education through the school self-evaluation and external evaluation of school performance. The policy consists of 7 key areas, 30 performance indicators and 111 different themes (Ministry of Education, 2005a: 8) (See Appendix A). For the purpose of this research study, and due to the fact that the national standards policy document is lengthy, this study examines only the key area of ‘management and leadership of schools’ (key area 5), as an aspect of effective and efficient school management and leadership. The indicated key area includes hostel management. It is however not the purpose of this research to study hostel management. The five schools selected for the study do not have hostels. Furthermore, the study sets to critically assess the validity of the national standards policy document in its wider spectrum.

The research study is therefore posing the following question as a facet of the main problem: how effectively has the training of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region on the national standards of education impacted on their management and leadership of schools? The research presumes that good training in policy implementation enhances effective and efficient school management and leadership, which subsequently lead to quality education.

Accordingly, the research study sets out to answer the following sub-questions:

- Do the primary school principals consider the national standards of education important?
- Do the primary school principals consider their training on the national standards as effective?
- Were all the members of the School Management Teams at the five primary schools prepared for the implementation of the national standards of education?
- Are the primary school principals implementing the 'management and leadership of schools' as one of the seven key areas of the national standards of education as stated in the policy document?
- What are the challenges experienced by the primary school principals in implementing the national standards of education?
- What could be done to enhance the preparation of the primary school principals to be better able to implement the national standards of education?

The researcher, as an inspector of education with twelve years of experience, has observed that school principals who are well prepared to implement policies tend to be effective in managing and leading their schools and that this culminates in quality education. Supporting the importance of having the principals trained, Mestry and Grobler (2004: 2) state that it is essential for the authorities to develop training programmes for principals to be able to manage their schools effectively. According to Sibeya (2002: 169) the promotion of effective and efficient school leadership and management in Namibian schools could possibly be achieved through continuous staff development and in-service training of school managers to enable them to manage and lead their schools effectively and efficiently.

Thus, this research study will hopefully help the researcher to understand the effectiveness of the training of the principals as they implement the national standards of education.

1.3 Rationale and background of the study

1.3.1 Pre-independence education in Namibia

It has been argued in various literature that legacies of the apartheid education are still felt in Namibian education. That, even the goals [access, equity, quality, democracy and efficiency] that the Ministry of Education set to achieve after independence, have been hampered by such legacies. According to the Presidential Commission on Education (1999: 5), the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP, 2006: 17-18), the Government of the Republic of Namibia (2001c: 3) and Mutorwa (2004: 1), great strides have been made during the last 17 years of independence to achieve access, equity, quality and to redress the past imbalances. However, the ideal balances have not yet been achieved. It is argued that it is not easy to fully redress historical problems within a short period of time.

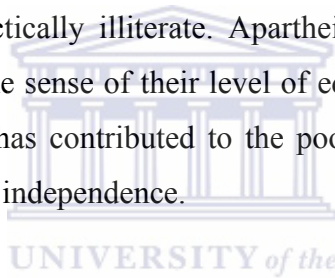
It is further argued that missionary education that was offered to the Blacks, only aimed to christen indigenes, and to impart western culture to them. Such education put emphasis on literacy, which was necessary for reading the Bible and the Hymn book, and only served the settlers and missionaries properly (Du Pisani, 1987: 15, Uugwanga, 1998: 3, Diescho, 1987: 153). Furthermore, the missionary schools for the Blacks were fully controlled by the German colonial government and such schools were poorly resourced, unlike schools for the Whites. Both the missionaries and the Germans failed to make education for the Blacks compulsory, to provide functional literacy to the indigenes and train them as teachers and administrators.

Equally, the South African apartheid policy of Bantu education that was imposed on Namibian schools (Gottschalk, 1987: 27-37), did not improve education for the Blacks. Native education was controlled to the extent that the indigenes were not prepared for challenges and development in life. Bantu education, as it is argued, was based on the principles of White trusteeship (Amukugo, 1993: 184 and Diescho, 1987:153-154). South Africa also failed to make education for Blacks in Namibia compulsory and trained only

very few Blacks as teachers. According to Du Pisani (1987: 20-21), education for the Blacks was poorly endowed and poor endowment was one of the reasons why most of the Blacks did not attend school. Poor endowment caused most secondary schools for the Blacks to lack educational facilities and resources. This legacy is still persistent.

The International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF) reports (1989: 47-49 and 1980: 19), Amukugo (1993: 194), and Du Pisani (1987: 20-21) discuss the privileges that were enjoyed by the White schools, the frustrating conditions of Bantu education and the drop out rates of Black pupils. Dropping out of school for Blacks has contributed to the problem of a high illiteracy rate among many Namibians today.

As a legacy of the apartheid education, illiteracy is still persistent. According to Amukugo (1993: 194-197) the majority of the Namibians who received Bantu education are either semi-skilled or practically illiterate. Apartheid education produced teachers who are unqualified, both in the sense of their level of education and being prepared for their task. Consequently, this has contributed to the poor quality of education that has been haunting the system since independence.



Even the Academy for Tertiary Education that was established as Namibia's university, did not solve the problems of teacher shortage and illiteracy. The Academy hosted a small number of students who studied at pre-university level and offered fragmented and disorganized teacher training programmes (IDAF, 1989: 49, Amukugo, 1993: 196). Hence, the Academy produced inadequate and semi-skilled teachers. This contributed to the problem of poorly prepared educators.

Thus, the past education legacies are considered by some scholars and practitioners as the fundamental contributing factor towards poor education in Namibia. The past systems failed to reduce the high illiteracy rate amongst the Blacks and kept the graduates minimal. The Blacks were denied professional training that would be highly needed for educational management and development in post-colonial Namibia. Therefore, when Namibia became independent, the education system was fragmented, full of teachers who

were lacking commitment and were unable to manage and administer the education system and produce the quality needed (Töttemeyer et al, 1987: 8).

However, the poor quality of the Namibia education cannot all be blamed on colonial and apartheid education systems alone. Though some apartheid education problems persisted in the education system post 1990, the Namibian government has, for the past 17 years, invested heavily in education in order to redress the past imbalances and improve the quality of education. Perhaps, poor performance of the Namibian education sector should be seen in the light of challenges that the education practitioners themselves have failed to meet.

1.3.2 Post-independence education in Namibia

The post -1990 education is compulsory for all Namibian children until they complete primary education or have attained the age of sixteen, whichever is the sooner. The government declared education as a basic constitutional right to all Namibians (Legal Assistance Centre, 1998: 14). Based also on the 1990-Jomtien declarations, the government set 'education for all' as a goal to achieve (MEC, 2003: 3-4).

The government embarked on various reforms to redress the past imbalances. Firstly, the government drafted and implemented an important policy document, namely '*Toward Education for All: A Development Brief for Education, Culture, and Training*', which translates the Namibian philosophy on education into an implementable government policy (The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), 2003: i, 22-24). This policy document clearly discusses the major goals for education (access, equity, quality and democracy). A unified system that merged all eleven ethnic administration authorities was introduced (Amukugo, 1993: 198) and English replaced Afrikaans as an official language. Thirteen regional offices were also created as an attempt to accelerate government service delivery. However, regional offices are still understaffed. They are not yet staffed as per proposed norms of regional staff members. This understaffing contributes to poor school monitoring.

The government also provided in-service development programmes for the practitioners with less preparation (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2003: 12). At the same time, the government set to develop three types of teacher education to run parallel with in-service training (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2003: 79).

It was for the purpose of in-service training, curriculum implementation and training of teachers that the government established the National Institute for Education Development (NIED). The institute also administers some programmes for in-service teacher qualifications (Uugwanga, 1998: 35). The curricula for all school levels have been reformed and are currently under revision. NIED has established the curricula that reflect a learner-centred philosophy. Although the government has committed itself to training for in-service teacher qualifications, there has been a scholarly criticism that the in-service professional training of teachers has not been that effective (Mushaandja, 2006: 3). Distance education is said to have produced teachers with poor skills.

Nevertheless, there has been significant growth on the side of practitioners, both in number, qualifications, as well in professional skills. The government has also introduced democratic disciplinary measures for the teachers and established the national university, polytechnic, and colleges of education (Presidential Commission on Education, 1999: 18-22). The Presidential Commission on Education (1999: 18), and the Education Management Information System (EMIS) report (2003: 67), discuss the significant increase of the number of teachers, including in the Oshikoto Region.

The change in the number of teachers has resulted in low teacher-pupil ratios, drop out and repetition rates, and subsequently created conducive teaching and learning environments. The EMIS report (2005: 53-67), and the Presidential Commission on Education (1999: 18-21), discuss these ratios and rates for both the national and the regional levels. The Government of the Republic of Namibia (2001a: 15-19) and Mutorwa (2004: 8), argue about the various policies and changes that were introduced to change the working conditions, and create conducive environments, that would lead to quality education.

Considerable investment in education contributed to a fast growth in access to schooling (the Presidential Commission on Education, 1999: 18). Both the EMIS (2005: 34-38) and the Presidential Commission on Education (1999: 18) agree that access to schooling has increased tremendously since independence. Accordingly, the enrollment rate has increased significantly. For instance, the enrollment of learners in the Oshikoto Region in 2002 was above ninety per cent. The government efforts to equitably distribute facilities and resources to facilitate access to schooling, includes the establishment of new schools and provision of classrooms, stationery and textbooks (EMIS, 2005: 83-93).

However, access to schooling in Namibia has been considered by some as ineffective. It has been argued that access is only on paper. Former elite schools, that are well resourced, charge high fees that only the African elites and the White capitalists can afford. Furthermore, access to schooling for the marginalized children has not yet been achieved. There are also some children who are not attending school due to the long distances or who are still in the streets. Despite these critical views however, access has been greatly addressed.



Access goes hand in hand with equity and quality. Equity for formerly disadvantaged groups or schools has been, to a certain extent, attained. Still, the performance of schools and the quality of education remain very poor. The school management does not facilitate effective learning, teaching and policy implementation. There is an urgent need for improvement. There is a lack of urgency and responsibility. More importantly, there is a failure to share information and trust subordinates, which has resulted in a failure to manage, lead, inspire and confront failure (the Presidential Commission on Education, 1999: 22, Mushaandja, 2006: 3, Sibeya, 2002: 165-169, Kabajani, 2000: 102-103). The Oshikoto Region has experienced similar problems and principals have been urged to change school performance and to improve the quality of education (Nghipondoka, 2006, 1-3, Inspectorate Reports, 2006: 2-3). Hence, there has been an urgency, at both the national and regional level, to change the quality of education.

1.3.3 Towards improvement of the quality of education in Namibia

The reformed education sector that takes up most of the national budget is not producing the desired results. Consequently, there has been an increasing demand to improve the quality of the educational outcomes (Nghipondoka, 2006: 2) and to realign the role of educators to fit the challenges of the day. It has been argued that improvement in the quality of education would help to address the economic inequity between the rich and the poor, and eventually to improve the quality of life of every Namibian. It was therefore, in the wake of these demands, that the government introduced a development plan, the 'Vision 2030' (Mutorwa, 2004: 9, 11, 13, Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 2001: 2). This development plan outlines the forecasted development changes that Namibia wants to achieve by the year 2030.

To achieve the objectives of the development plan requires the performance of the education sector. Performance of the education sector is vital because education directly influences how the government and the private sector will invest in development (Office of the President, 2001: 3-4). In line with the Vision 2030, quality of education implies enabling learners to achieve skills, knowledge and competencies that promote self-development and a meaningful life. The objectives of the Vision 2030 therefore, place new leadership challenges upon the Namibian headship because education in Namibia, as Marope (2005: xiv) argues, is considered as a central factor to knowledge, skilled labour and development.

It was for the improvement of the quality of education and training, that the Ministry of Education introduced the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP), and the national standards of education and its performance indicators (Ministry of Education, 2005a: 1, ETSIP, 2006: v). Both the ETSIP and the national standards of education were introduced to enhance the contribution of the education sector to the attainment of the Vision 2030 development objectives.

According to the ETSIP document, the following are some of the reasons that prompted its introduction: the need to integrate and use information and communication technology (ICT) in education, learners leaving school functionally illiterate, and serious school management ineffectiveness (ETSIP, 2006: v, 2, 17, 18). The ETSIP innovation therefore calls for, *inter alia*, the raising of the learning standards and the improvement of the performance of the school leadership.

The introduction of government innovations aimed at changing the Namibian society, and the increasing parental understanding of the importance of quality education, are changing the role of school leadership. The demand from parents for quality education, and the management of new curricula like ICT and various innovations, aimed at improving the quality of education, all place new responsibilities upon the school headship and call for the need to redefine the new roles of the headship.

Rightly, Fullan (1992: vii, x) points out that the school heads are in the midst of ever increasing demands, overload and imposition on schools by political forces at all levels of the society. The role of the school head is continually becoming more diverse and complex as the needs and demands of the society change. Subsequently, principals are either not coping with the changes or do not have the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to effectively manage and lead their schools (Mestry and Grobler, 2004: 2). This requires the establishment of and active participation in effective leadership development programmes to increase the competencies and skills that are critically required by the school leadership today.

1.3.4 Towards the implementation of the national standards of education

Like the ETSIP, the national standards call for the improvement of the quality of education, through school self-evaluation and external evaluation of school performance. Quoted by the Ministry of Education (2005a: I), the Minister of Education states:

It is therefore important that we develop means of assuring quality across the country. To do so we need standards for the work of schools [...]. Using such standards, schools can evaluate their own performance and identify aspects that need improvement.

The national standards make provision for the key areas and performance indicators, school self-evaluation, a school development plan, teacher self-evaluation, classroom observation and national professional standards for teachers. Previously, there were cascades of trainings conducted at the national, regional and circuit levels to train representative groups. A two-days training was conducted at the circuit level for principals. The focus of the training was mainly on the content of the national standards document.

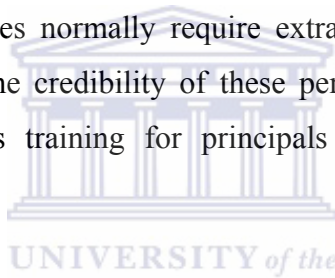
The implications of the training are that only the knowledge of the innovations was stressed as crucial. Furthermore, cascades of training for a few individuals from schools may not bring about the desired educational change, as Fullan and Miles (1992: 745) argue:

We do believe that knowing about the change process is crucial [...]. But we also believe that serious education reform will never be achieved until there is a significant increase in the number of people - leaders and other participants alike - who have come to internalize and habitually act on basic knowledge of how successful changes take place.

Strong school leadership is very essential in order for school reforms to be effective and sustained. However, effective school leadership qualities are cultivated and sustained through effective development and support programmes. Michael Fullan underscores the essence of training for all stakeholders like teachers, administrators, parents, circuit staff members, school board members, teacher educators and possibly the pupils. The implication here is that since leadership or decision-making is a shared responsibility, all those involved should be prepared if improvement for quality education is to be realized:

[...] because it is essential for implementing serious improvements in any case, empowering others in the school has to form a major component of the agenda. It is becoming clearer in the research literature that complex changes in education may require external initiation, but if they are to go anywhere, there must be a good deal of shared control and decision-making during implementation. (Fullan, 1992: 41)

Theories of organizational change and effective leadership accentuate effective professional development as one of the best tools for successful implementation of innovations. The school leadership and all the stakeholders that are involved should be well prepared for the change (policy implementation). Fullan and Miles (1992: 748) observe that significant changes normally require extra efforts during the transitional stage. This study will attest the credibility of these perceptions when it examines the effectiveness of the two-days training for principals on the national standards of education.



Fullan and Miles (1992: 748) remark that as little attention is given to individuals who make up the organization where change is implemented, the achievement is only isolated pockets of success. However, innovations fail unless there is clear demonstration that pockets of success add up to new structures, procedures and school cultures that press for continuous school improvement. All the same, the rationale and background to this study are the commitment by Fullan and Miles (1992: 748):

“The failure to institutionalize an innovation and build it into the normal structures and practices of the organization, underlies the disappearance of many reforms”.

1.4 Significance of the study

It has been argued that some legacies of the past education system persisted after 1990 and that the ideal regional balances are not yet achieved (The Ministry of Education and

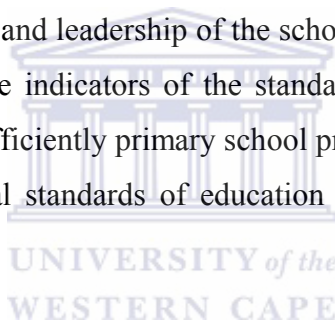
Culture 2003: 2, the Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2001b: 1). Though it takes decades, as Bush (2005) quoted in Botes (2006: 5) argues, to rectify the gross inequalities of the past, the Namibian government has significantly addressed such legacies. The Presidential Commission on Education (1999: 20), the ETSIP (2006: 21), Mutorwa (2004: 1) and the EMIS (2003: 70, 84-88) discuss the significant increase of practitioners with professional training and the provision of facilities to schools, including for the Oshikoto Region. The government expenditure on education, which includes up to thirty per cent of the national budget and nine per cent of the Gross Domestic Product, has subsequently addressed the past problems.

However, the quality of education in Namibia and the Oshikoto Region in particular, remains very poor. The pass rates in the Oshikoto Region are also very low (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2001c: 153). Some schools in the Region were reportedly found without the necessary policy documents like the Broad Curriculum for Basic Education, the Policy on Continuous Assessment, as well as the Language Policy. At some schools monitoring and observation of teaching and learning, lesson plans and daily preparations, as well as continuous assessment were not done. Some schools failed to offer non-examination subjects (Inspectorate Reports, 2005: 1-2, 2006: 1-3). These problems create a need to examine the effectiveness of the school leadership in the Oshikoto Region.

While the deduction is drawn that poor performance of the education sector is caused by apartheid legacies, it is equally important to recognize that the practitioners have failed to perform. Thus, the Presidential Commission on Education (1999: 13) states that if all practitioners in the education sector, every official and every principal, acted on the sense of urgency, many more of the Namibian children would have had a better education and wider choices. The implications are that both the teachers and the school leadership are not performing accordingly. There is therefore a need to investigate why the practitioners are not performing accordingly despite the fact that the government has invested in education so considerably.

Conversely, Namibia needs urgent action in terms of school leadership to improve the quality of education. There should be constant scrutiny and monitoring of educational policies to ensure that the best use is made of the available human resources like principals (the Presidential Commission on Education, 1999: 96). The Presidential Commission on Education (1999: 85) and Kabajani (2000: 109-110) rightly state that Inspectors of Education should be fully utilized in the professional development, support and empowering of principals to help them to administer their schools effectively and efficiently. It was therefore for the same purpose that principals were trained for two days for the implementation of the national standards of education.

Accordingly, this study sets out to examine how effectively the training of the primary school leadership in the Oshikoto Region on the national standards of education has impacted on their management and leadership of the schools. The study uses the fifth key area and its seven performance indicators of the standards, as a point of departure, to examine how effectively and efficiently primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region are making use of the national standards of education to help improve the quality of education.



This study therefore attempts to contribute to a better understanding of effective and efficient management and leadership of primary schools through policy implementation in Namibian schools. The study is an attempt to help address the paucity of research on policy implementation in Namibian schools. Furthermore, the study hopes to inform the policy makers and practitioners of the urgent need to thoroughly prepare principals in policy implementation in order to enhance educational quality.

1.5 Research design and methodology

This study seeks to construct an understanding of human action (Connole, 1998: 13), as it investigates how effectively and efficiently primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region are managing and leading their schools through the national standards to help

improve the quality of education. The study seeks to interpret and describe the understanding and experiences of principals and other management members. Therefore, the study is oriented in the descriptive and interpretive paradigms. The researcher chose the qualitative approach because it fits in well with his reason for conducting this examination.

The study concentrates on primary school management and leadership because primary schooling is basic and compulsory. It is also the level of educational experience that all children are legally expected to achieve, and therefore should encompass all the elements of knowledge needed for accessing other educational levels (Presidential Commission on Education, 1999: 96, UNESCO, 1998: 79). The researcher is of the opinion that the majority of the primary schools in the Oshikoto Region are led by principals who trained under the apartheid education system.

The researcher chose five primary schools from five different circuits in the Oshikoto Region as case studies. Only one school is chosen from each circuit. The reason why only five schools have been chosen is because there are no substantial differences between primary schools in the Region in terms of performance, commitment, and school leadership and management. The five schools represent the characteristics of the majority of schools in the Oshikoto Region. Moreover, the training received by the principals on the national standards was basically the same.

In collecting the data, I interviewed all the five principals, their heads of departments and two members of the school management teams, using structured dialogues. Structured dialogue enabled me to ask open-ended and probing questions and acquire data that I could not easily obtain in other ways. The other members of the school management teams, teachers and parents, who are members of the governing bodies, completed structured questionnaires. I also interviewed four researchers to solicit their views on the national standards of education. I analyzed the collected data, using related literature and reported on the findings.

1.6 Limitations of the study

There are a number of important limitations within this study. The five schools that are studied are case studies. Case studies may be subjective forms of enquiry and taking the interpretations out of the study case environment cannot be certain (Hendricks, 2001: 13, Coleman, 2001: 100). There could be some interpretations from the schools under investigation that cannot be generalized to all schools. Nevertheless, generalization as such should not be the objective of any investigation.

On the other hand, the study experiences paucity of literature on policy implementation in Namibian primary schools. The study has made use of materials that are not published and are therefore difficult to verify.

The study investigates schools that are all in formerly disadvantaged areas. The schools in the formerly disadvantaged areas represent the majority of schools in Namibia. The majority of these schools are headed by the leadership that is often ineffective and as such, these schools experience high failure rates.

The formerly advantaged White schools and the few other schools, which are attended by the children of the Black elites, are in the minority. Such schools are also headed by relatively effective leadership and have been producing better results. Though there is a need to examine how policies are implemented in such relatively effective schools, this study however only sets to examine the formerly disadvantaged schools.

The researcher interviewed only the principals, heads of departments, management team members, and teachers and parents who are members of the school governing bodies. It has been the wish of the researcher to have the views of all the teachers and the learners on the management and leadership of their schools.

1.7 Definitions of some concepts

It seems there is lack of consensus on definitions of various concepts. What have been established are working definitions. Thus, for the purpose of this research study and without degrading the general meaning of any concept, the following concepts are defined and used as follow:

Management and leadership: Management is a process of implementation of policies and the maintenance of school activities. Management is concerned with procedures to keep the school running, focuses on providing order and consistency, and is mostly associated with the immediate and the short-term (Earley and Weindling, 2004: 5, Dunford, Fawcett and Bennett, 2000: 2).

Leadership on the other hand, is a process of influence leading to achieve the desired purposes. It involves inspiring and supporting others towards the achievement of a vision for the school that is based on clear personal and professional values. Leadership is a relationship that is understood through experience and it is not located in the job descriptions but in the professionalism of working towards teaching and learning (Bush and Glover, 2003:10 in Earley and Weindling, 2004: 4, Gunter, 2001: vii).

Though management and leadership are often distinguished from each other (Macbeath, 1998: 3, Gunter, 2001: 32) and are associated with structure and culture respectively; they are both inseparable and necessary for any school to be effective (MacGilchrist, Myers and Reed, 2004: 41). The effective leader needs to be both a leader and a manager at the same time. Thus, any reference by this study to leadership shall include management and any reference to management shall include leadership.

Leadership effectiveness and school effectiveness: Effectiveness implies that there is a 'social construction' that ensures that the performance of an individual leader or school can make a difference to pupils' achievements or is producing the desired results (Riley and Macbeath, 1998: 143). Effectiveness is mostly associated with schools where pupils

achieve better results. This study is using school effectiveness and school improvement synonymously due to their consecrated and integrated relationship (Gunter, 2001: 36).

Professional development and training: Professional development is the improving, strengthening, building-up and advancement of the individuals' skills, competences, knowledge and attitudes for the improvement of performance and potential development. Professional development must lead to a higher level of intellectual and creative performance (Mestry and Grobler, 2004: 7-8). Training refers to the deliberate and purposeful effort to develop the specific skills and knowledge of school leaders and stakeholders, which are essential to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of policy implementation. This study is using development and training synonymously.

Policy and innovation: Based on Fataar's definition of policy (Fataar, 2002: 3), this study defines educational policy as an official statement of values, aims and ideals of prescriptive intent, aimed at changing and improving the quality of educational performance. Educational innovation refers to new educational programmes or directives aimed at improving school effectiveness. While the researcher refers to educational policies as innovations for change, it does not necessarily imply that all innovations are policies.

1.8 Ethics statement

The interviews were conducted in the school environment. Questionnaires were taken directly to the schools by the researcher. Hence, permission from both the Regional Director and the participants, to conduct and participate in the study, was sought. The study strove not to disturb learning and teaching.

The researcher protected and kept the identities of all participants confidential. The names of the participants were therefore not be publicised. The researcher also explained to the participants that their participation in the study was of a voluntary nature and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage of their participation if they so desired.

The researcher informed the participants that he was conducting the research as a student and not as an inspector. This hopefully encouraged the respondents to participate freely in the study and contributed to a fair and just interaction between the researcher and the respondents.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on school leadership and management, leadership development and training, and policy implementation. The researcher explores various international perspectives on effective school leadership and examines how the notion of effective school leadership changes from one situation to another. The researcher further examines the qualities that are associated with effective school leadership and the paradigm shifts in the role and definition thereof.

The chapter further sets to examine different aspects of professional development and training for the school leadership. The emphasis is on training for successful policy implementation so as to enhance continuous school improvement. Professional development and support enable school leadership to manage and lead effectively. The need to develop the headship and the management teams for effective school leadership is accentuated.

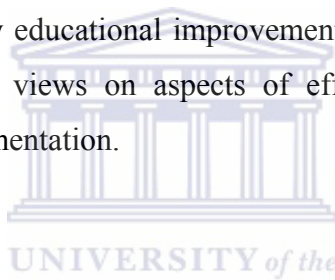
The researcher also inspects the notion of policy implementation as the study seeks to understand the reasons why policy implementation fails globally. There is an emphasis on the risks involved in externally initiated and top-down policies that attempt to improve the schools. Institutionalizing the policy into school structures and practices through training, is stressed.

Furthermore, this chapter seeks to understand school leadership in Africa. The researcher draws mostly from the literature on the professional development of head teachers in Africa. Literature seems to accentuate that the headship in Africa is facing a daunting challenge. Yet, there is less leadership development and training for the headship in

Africa. This understanding is relevant as the study attempts to depict the different circumstances surrounding the principals in Namibia.

An attempt is made to discuss issues of effective leadership in the Namibian context. The qualities expected of leadership in Namibia today seem to be changing. All the same, effective school leadership remains a key component of successful innovations for school improvement.

Additionally, the researcher discusses the challenges facing school leadership in Namibia, particularly in the Oshikoto Region. The implementation of the national standards is discussed as one of the major challenges facing the headship in Namibia today. Successful implementation of the policy on educational standards is presumed to be one of the major factors for quality educational improvement. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the central views on aspects of effective leadership, professional development and policy implementation.



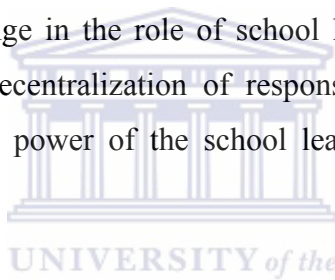
2.2 Global perspectives of effective school leadership

Numerous research studies consider the headship as a crucial factor in school effectiveness and the key to organizational success and improvement (Early and Weindling, 2004: 3). Bush et al (1999) and Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993) quoted in Botes (2006: 22) also accentuate the role of effective leadership in effective schooling. The stress however is on a firm, purposeful and participative approach and professionalism. Emphasizing the importance of effective school leadership in the quality of a school Dunford, Fawcett and Bennett (2000: 1) state:

Effective leadership is one of the most important factors in the success of a school. There is a very high degree of correlation between the behaviours of the head and progress and achievements of the people inside the school.

A number of studies on effective schools, effective leadership, school development and improvement show that schools classified as successful or effective possess competent and sound leadership. Such studies stress the school leader as the essential change agent who influences the school to develop into a learning organization (Huber, 2004: 670). Nevertheless, the role of the school leadership is so diverse that it has to be seen in relation to the broad context in which the school is operating.

According to Fullan (1992: viii), the culture and ethos of school leadership are different from one place to another and are becoming diversified. Fullan compares the leadership in North America, which is dependent on external administrative regulations, with the leadership in England, which is highly autonomous. The diversification of leadership roles is attributed to various reasons. In Australia for instance, new policy implementation created a change in the role of school leadership. The shift to school-based management and the decentralization of responsibilities to schools created an expansion of the management power of the school leadership (Dempster and Logan, 1998: 81-85).



Conversely, Kruchov, Macbeath and Riley (1998: xi) discuss how the school leadership in Australia, England, Denmark and Scotland shifted grounds due to new policy implementation. The emphasis on the development of performance indicators and parents as consumers brought new pressure to and expectations of school leadership, and created a need for development. Similarly, Fullan (1992: viii), Gunter (2001: 25) and Dunford, Fawcett and Bennett (2000: 4) stress that the implementation of the Education Reform Act of 1988 in England and Wales changed the role of the school leadership. The management power shifted from the Local Management of Schools to the school governors. Dunford, Fawcett and Bennett (2000: 4) also discuss the decentralization of decision-making to schools in the USA and New Zealand and the subsequent changes in school leadership roles and expectations.

Numerous studies on expectations of effective leadership (Dempster and Logan, 1998: 84-92, Reeves, Moos and Forrest, 1998: 52) emphasize the shift in expectations of

effective leadership due to new policies and the increase in the range of leadership tasks. Various stakeholders, including the heads, have diversified leadership expectations. In fact leadership expectations vary from one situation to another.

However, expected qualities of effective leadership often include *inter alia* the leader to have a vision, the ability to motivate and share leadership responsibilities with others, and to interact. Interaction enables the effective school leader to draw on a repertoire of styles and skills (Reeves, Moos and Forrest, 1998: 52). Moos, Mahony and Reeves (1998: 60-61), Macbeath (1998: 3, 12-17) and Reeves, Moos and Forrest (1998: 52) discuss other qualities expected from effective leadership. Senge (1990: 352) quoted by Macbeath (1998: 8) cites 'networking' as a distinguishing characteristic of effective leadership. The stress is on school leadership to build cooperation.

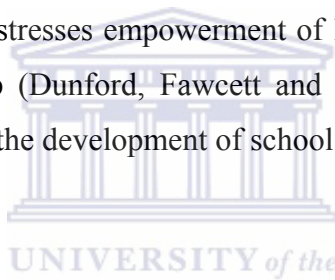
Accordingly, the conception and definition of effective school leadership changed. Macbeath (1998: 1-2) and Fullan (1992: 30) discuss some new concepts *inter alia* supervisory officer, human relations officer and leadership teams that emerged. Quoting Paterson et al (1986) and Block (1987), Fullan (1992: 20, 25) defines effective school leadership around the concepts of strategic planning, empowering others, and managing the organizational culture and attention through vision. It seems that the managing and leading tasks of school leadership are complex and interrelated, and that there is no clearly defined, specific role for effective leadership.

The current leadership is overloaded with a complex range of tasks and additional stress brought by the changed education system and globalization. Subsequently, this increases dependency and ineffectiveness and calls for redefinition of the leadership's role. According to Fullan (1992: 6), due to overload the role of headship in Ontario was redefined explicitly to state that the head is expected to lead school level implementation of policies and programmes. Huber (2004: 671) observes that besides decentralization, there are increasingly corresponding efforts to centralize and control. Huber refers to quality control through school inspection or external evaluation, and assessing the

implementation of the national curriculum with national standardized tests. All these overload the head.

In fact the roles and functions of school leadership have changed globally. Consequently, school leaders are confronted with various challenges and demands. The deduction drawn however is that school leadership has become so challenging that persons promoting the ‘traditional’ leadership concepts can hardly be effective school leaders. As our major concern is the learning and progress of the pupils, there seems to be a need that the headship should move from being a ‘gatekeeper’ to an instructional leader. This requires certain skills and competencies that a highly disturbing number of school leaders do not have.

As effective schools literature stresses empowerment of leadership and leadership teams for effective school leadership (Dunford, Fawcett and Bennett, 2000: 4), perhaps the central concern here should be the development of school leadership.



2.3 School leadership development and training for policy implementation

Modern school leadership theories stress management as a shared responsibility. Such theories also place the school leaders as managers of change in the first place (Moss and Demster, 1998: 105, Dunford, Fawcett and Bennett, 2000: 4). Studies on school improvement stress that strong leadership is essential in order for innovations to be effective and sustained. Whether innovations are initiated from outside the school or from within, they require the support and direction from the school leadership.

According to Fullan (1992: 12) there are very few cases where innovations were successfully implemented without the headship playing a leading role. Thus, there seems to be an international consensus about the important role of leadership in the implementation of any policy for the improvement of the quality of schools, and the need

for school leadership training. A few countries however have engaged in leadership development more rigorously than others (Huber, 2004: 676).

As stressed earlier on, literature emphasizes the change of the leadership from a gatekeeper to an instructional leader (Fullan, 1992: 12). Instructional leadership requires certain qualities that a seemingly high percentage of school leadership does not have, but that can be fostered through training and support. Thus, the successful implementation of any school policy as well as effective instructional leadership, call for intensive training of the school leader, the senior management teams, the governing bodies and all staff.

Gunter (2001: 87) also stresses the importance of preparing and training the leadership. According to Bush et al (1999) and Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993) quoted in Botes (2006: 22) qualities of effective leadership are inculcated and enhanced through the formal professional development and support of the headship.

It is argued in leadership development literature that taking part in effective leadership development programmes enhances skills, competencies and abilities needed to implement a policy successfully, and manage effectively. Both Early and Weindling (2004:183) and Reeves and Dempster (1998: 163) stress continuous support, capacity building and development of the leadership, and call for collective and integrated action at the national and regional levels. There is also an emphasis on the development of the management teams, as management is a distributed and shared responsibility.

Nonetheless, there are different international patterns and models for school leadership development and empowerment. Huber (2004: 676) refers to a research project on school leadership development in fifteen countries in Europe, Asia, Australia and North America to stress the emergence of a broad variety of school development approaches and models. Huber further discusses the current trends and paradigm shifts in qualifying school leaders and the aims of various development programmes. His emphasis seems to be on formal development programmes.

Conversely, collaborative research models emphasize professional development for school leadership through research interactions and interactive professionalism (Reeves and Dempster, 1998: 153-154, Fullan, 1992: viii). The implication of collaborative research is that professional development is adjusted to the individual needs and experiences in particular situations. Then again, the development of the school management teams is also accentuated. The argument here is that school management teams are in authoritative positions to manage educational change.

Indeed, research studies stress different leadership development models, patterns and strategies (Dempster and Morgan, 1998: 91-92). Gunter (2001: 36) discusses networking for support through training, and cites The British Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society (BELMAS) as a point of reference. There is an emphasis on postgraduate courses, research conferences and associations with leadership journals. Dunford, Fawcett and Bennett (2000: 6) stress the structured leadership programmes in England. Early and Weindling (2004: 174-179), Van Wieringen (1992: 1-21) and Solfronk (1992: 93-99) discuss various models, strategies and programmes for leadership development in Europe.



Certainly, school leadership requires professional preparation and empowerment to implement any educational reform or policy. More importantly, if such reforms or policies are initiated from outside of the school, leadership development should include the management teams, the governing bodies and the staff. And, as Huber (2004: 676) seems to stress, such development should be rigorously intensive.

However, while training for policy implementation is stressed as important, successful implementation of an educational policy like the national standards of education (NSE) may also require well-coordinated continuous development programmes. Implementing a policy for continuous school improvement is seemingly not as easy and prestigious as drafting one.

2.4 The notion of policy implementation

Gunter (2004: 40) observes that there seems to be a paradigm shift in the debate on policy development. There is apparently a move from narrating policy development to a more theoretically informed policy development. Whether such a shift in policy development impacts differently on policy implementation or not, that is another debate. However, for the purpose of this study's argument, policy implementation is not regarded as a merely rational and neutral administrative activity aimed at improving the quality of the educational system. Policies are normative in their nature and as such their implementation may be subjective. After all, are externally initiated policies the best tool to remove dysfunctionality out of the education system?

Nonetheless, successful implementation of an educational policy like the NSE requires the support of the school community (Fataar, 2002: 6) and extra commitment from the implementers. Accordingly, the support of and commitment to policy implementation call for good knowledge of the policy. This seems to be enhanced well through rigorous training. Washington and Hacker (2005: 400, 408) argue that the more managers or implementers of change understand the change, the more easily they will supervise and convince others to implement the proposed change.

All the same, successful development and training require good planning and coordination. Most of the attempts made to improve the quality of education seem to be fragmented and poorly coordinated (Fullan and Miles, 1992: 745). Hence, such attempts fail. It seems the implementation of policies aimed at improving the schools does not prepare the implementers accordingly. And yet policies, as Fataar (2002: 8) argues, are not just received and implemented, but they are also interpreted, 'recreated' and possibly resisted. Thus, implementing any policy is likely to meet with resistance. Accordingly, training should also focus on other aspects of policy implementation like dealing with resistance. Scholars stress this as one of the major reasons why policy implementations fail (Washington and Hacker, 2005:400).

Fullan and Miles (1992: 745-749) and Washington and Hacker (2005: 402-3) discuss various reasons why innovations like policies to improve schools, fail. This includes for example being unclear about the innovation, hasty implementation, tackling large-scale improvements, and the failure to build a policy into the normal structures and practices of the school. Quoting Miller *et al* (1994) Washington and Hacker (2005: 402) note that the quality of information that people receive, impacts on their willingness to change. Justly, policies like the NSE are complex to understand and they involve a number of components which are quite staggering in their relationships to one another. To impart quality information on such policies requires proper intensive training.

The NSE are complex in the substance of their goals and in the capacity of some individual principals and teachers to carry out and coordinate a successful educational improvement. More importantly, because some of the practitioners have trained under the apartheid education system, they have been poorly prepared. Thus, the need for rigorous training that includes the leadership, the management teams, the teachers and the governing bodies. The implication therefore is that a two-days training for two representatives from each school may not be enough and appropriate to build the NSE into the normal structures and practices of the schools. This may create tension and overload for the principal and may even backfire in its purpose (Fullan, 1992: 16).

Above and beyond, policy implementation literature points out that there is a common misjudging of the ease of policy implementation (Dyer, 1999: 45). This results in poor implementation planning. Subsequently, effective management of change gives way to short-term strategies of coping and dilution of policy efficiency. Moreover, this may result in wasting of resources that a developing country like Namibia cannot afford. Quoting Verspoor (1992: 237) Dyer (1999: 45) refers to a review of nineteen developing countries that found almost a similar neglect of policy implementation issues. Dyer further notes that policymaking is considered as more prestigious than implementation.

Elmore (1980: 602-605) and Dyer (1999: 47-48) discuss two models of policy implementation namely, forward and backward mappings. Forward mapping is

associated with the top-down approach, statement of policy intent, specific sequences and steps to state an outcome, against which success or failure can be measured. In other words this model emphasizes authority and influence to respond to problems, and the establishment of clear lines of authority and control from the top, in policy implementation

Backward mapping refers to a bottom-top model and stresses the lowest level of the implementation process or the school as the level that informs the policy (Dyer, 1999: 48). As this approach works backward it makes every unit aware of the ability and resources required to affect the targeted behaviour. According to Elmore (1980: 605) backward mapping implies that being closer to the source of the problem creates greater ability to influence it. In addition, maximizing discretion at the school where the problem is most immediate solves the problem better than the hierarchical control.

In actual fact, the backward mapping approach seems to offer the best option to policymaking and implementation. Explicit policy directives, administrative responsibilities and stipulation of intended outcomes, as Elmore (1980: 603) rightly argues, do not necessarily ensure successful implementation. However, given the situation where policy makers may not viably opt for backward mapping, institutionalizing the policy into the normal practices and structures of the schools may be a better alternative for successful implementation.

As a researcher, I would perhaps argue that it seems that policies in Africa fail because policy outcomes do not fulfill the initial expectations, as policies are seemingly poorly implemented. Those who are to implement the policies are not adequately trained to thoroughly understand them and to be excited about the changes. Furthermore, policies seem to be based more on assumptions than the reality of the practice on the ground. Has Africa perhaps lost focus on the cause and effect?

2.5 Towards understanding school leadership in Africa

2.5.1 Perspectives on headship effectiveness in Africa

Africa is part of the seemingly growing global competitiveness and internationalization of education. Therefore, education as a whole in Africa has been influenced by global 'factors'. Gunter (2001: 28) observes that there is evidence in Africa of 'policy borrowing' that is influenced by global moves such as the operation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. However, it seems that education in Africa is faced with more problems than elsewhere in the world. But, it has been argued in literature that globalization of education is heightening the inequalities further, especially between Africa and the developed countries.

Literature on effective leadership in Africa recognizes successful leadership as a crucial factor to school effectiveness (Bush and Oduro, 2006: 359, Mestry and Grobler, 2004: 2). Nevertheless, such literature stresses that leadership in Africa should be understood in relationship to the daunting challenges facing principals in Africa. According to Bush and Oduro (2006: 359, 370) principals in Africa lead and manage their schools under very difficult circumstances. Often schools are poorly equipped with inadequately trained staff, and the learners may also be suffering the consequences of poverty and HIV and AIDS.

Bush and Oduro (2006: 370) note, "almost every country in Africa can be classified as 'developing', with severe economic, social, health and educational problems". Even South Africa, the most advanced country in Africa, has schools without power, water and sanitation. Quoting Kitavi and van der Westhuizen (1997) Bush and Oduro (2006: 359-360) refer to the problems experienced by the leadership in Kenya. The two authors discuss in detail various problems facing the African headship. The Commonwealth Secretariat (1996: 7) also discusses challenges faced by heads in Africa including lack of support for articulated policies.

Although the school heads in Africa have been expected to deliver better quality education, the daunting challenges faced by the headship bear direct influence on the qualities that are expected. Botes (2006: 31), referring to the leadership in South Africa, notes that too much is expected from the leadership. Botes emphasizes different expectations of effective leadership by the central authority and by the local communities. The Department of Education and Culture (Province of KwaZulu-Natal) (2002: 53) also discusses various expectations of school managers in South Africa.

However, expectations of effective leadership change due to new demands for quality education. Mestry and Grobler (2004: 2-3) stress the change in expectations. Quoting Kogoe (1986), Bush and Oduro (2006: 371) underscore different expectations of leadership in Africa. Using the example of Togo and Botswana the two authors stress that both the systems and teachers expect instructional leadership from the principals.

Research literature on leadership development in Africa notes that the school leadership in Africa is faced with various demands and challenges. Mestry and Grobler (2004: 3) discuss various demands and challenges that the South African principals face. This includes establishing a culture of learning and teaching, managing change and conflict, and coping with the limited resources. Such a range of demands and challenges complicates the scope of the role of the headship in Africa. Mestry and Grobler (2004: 3, 6) discuss further the external factors that complicate the principals' role. The pace of change and the need to be adaptable and responsive to local circumstances require new skills and competences that can only be fostered through training and development.

Despite that almost all heads in Africa operate under difficult circumstances, environments present diverse and unique demands and challenges. Thus there are significant differences within countries and from one country to another. The demographic, political, resources and cultural dimensions seem to be emphasized as some of the major factors for ineffective schooling in most African countries.

Notably, the numerous problems, challenges and demands create overload for the African headship. Subsequently, this creates tension and dependency and calls for a redefinition of the leadership role in Africa. Equally, this stresses an urgent need for training and development to enhance new skills and competences that the African heads need so badly, especially in implementing various innovations that are being introduced in Africa.

2.5.2 Leadership development and training in Africa

In spite of a complex range of problems facing heads and the growing realization that there is a need for training and development for the headship in Africa, there is less leadership development and training (The Commonwealth Secretariat, 1993: 1, Mestry and Grobler, 2004: 2). Consequently, the African leadership finds it difficult to cope due to lack of necessary skills, competences and attitudes needed to manage and lead schools effectively.

According to the Commonwealth Secretariat (1996: 5) little attention is given to the training and support of heads in Africa. As a result, many African heads manage their schools by a trial and error approach. Hence, the need for training in Africa is far stronger than in developed countries. The Commonwealth Secretariat (1996: 23-57) discusses and suggests various self-development, professional development and training programmes including professional associations, lectures and workshops.

Bush and Oduro (2006: 370) emphasize that principals in Africa are appointed without specific preparation and receive little or no induction. Even after appointment there is little or no access to suitable in-service training. The support from the regional bureaucracy is also little. Quoting the Commonwealth Secretariat (1996), Bush and Oduro (2006: 370) state that the need to train and develop the headship in Africa has been perceived, but to translate it into effective provision has been elusive. It is argued that many African countries see preparation of heads as a low priority. And those responsible for training and supporting head teachers lack the necessary capacity.

It seems evident that preparation and professional development for the school leadership is inadequate throughout Africa, but it is highly needed (Bush and Oduro, 2006: 371, Mestry and Grobler, 2004: 3). There is however an emerging consensus about the content of the school leadership development programmes. Quoted in Gunter (2001: 87), Coombe and White (1994) as well as Kitavi and Van der Westhuizen (1997) discuss various strategies of how leadership skills and the knowledge of heads in Africa can be developed to help improve the quality of education.

Mestry and Grobler (2004: 8) underscore the need for development and training and suggest the competence and competency development models. Bush and Oduro (2006: 371-372) emphasize training through coherent in-service programmes and certification in school leadership. There is a reference to an Advanced Certificate in Education Management, which is under consideration in South Africa.

Arguably, it seems research literature on school leadership and leadership training and development in Africa stress the unique and diverse circumstances of education in Africa. According to Bush and Oduro (2006: 370) Africa is so unique that even the policy prescriptions in Africa are not always fulfilled in practice. It is in the light of the international experience and the understanding of Africa's unique circumstances of school leadership development, that this study seeks to understand training and development of school leadership in Namibia.

2.6 The notion of effective school leadership in Namibia

Literature on school effectiveness and effective leadership in Namibia stresses leadership as the key constituent in improving the quality of education. Such literature accentuates the head teacher as more than just a manager and calls for instructional and transformational leadership (Ministry of Education, 2005b: 3-4, Sibeya, 2002: 166-7, Kantema, 2001: 112). There is an emphasis on professional and effective leadership for curriculum implementation, vision and mission and accountability towards the school communities.

Effective leadership in Namibia should also be understood in the contextual framework of the problems facing principals and schools. The Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ, 1997: 2) report stresses evidence of major shortcomings in the quality of primary education in many Namibian schools. Although the SACMEQ report does not specify the major shortcomings in the quality of primary education, the SACMEQ (1997: 3) report discusses some of the major issues in the education system that require attention. This includes teacher competencies and poor support services.

Principals are also facing unbecoming behaviour and conduct of learners and teachers. There are also problems of teachers' commitment, quality of their training, and the dynamics of the cultures under which schools operate. All these pose a threat to and create complications for the role of the headship. In fact there are more cultural, economic, demographic and other problems and challenges facing the Namibian headship that the researcher discusses under 2.7.

Nonetheless, too much is expected from the Namibian principals. According to the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2005b: 3-4) heads in Namibia are responsible for setting the school vision and mission and supervising the implementation of the curriculum. The principal is also expected to create and maintain a healthy team spirit among teachers, learners and parents and to provide inspirational leadership and effective administration. The MoE (2005b: 4-21, 143) discusses other leadership roles including the head being responsible for the implementation of policies.

There have also been seemingly rising demands from the parents and the educational authorities in Namibia that principals should be knowledgeable and effective to help improve school effectiveness. However, it seems there is less agreement on how best to cultivate the leadership qualities in the principals in Namibia. And there is no one package for effective leadership that can be applied in unrefined forms for all the schools because the influence of cultural contexts is also fundamental to effective leadership (Mushaandja, 2006: 22-26, Riley and Macbeath, 1998: 141). The rising demands and the

introduction of various policies seem to add to the need for a new conception and redefinition of the leaders' role and the need for development.

Thus, effective leadership in Namibia has been defined around the notions of instructional, transformational, inspirational, administrative and policy implementation roles. This creates a scary, heavy load and may repress the role of the headship "as we are seeking the leader as a saviour" (Fullan (1992: 32). Quoting Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) Fullan (1992: 7) refers to four levels of leadership effectiveness as the administrator, the humanitarian, the programme manager and the systematic problem solver. However, increased expectations seem to add another level of 'the chief agent of change and improvement' at the school.

Research studies on effective leadership in Namibia stress leadership as a shared responsibility and emphasize the establishment of management teams and the participatory role of teachers and pupils in school leadership and decision-making (Sibeya, 2002: 168-9, MoE, 2005b: 144). The involvement of parents, through the governing bodies, in decision-making and school leadership is also underscored. Unfortunately, there has been a tendency towards a bureaucratic approach from a seemingly high percentage of head teachers that exclude parents from participating in school decision-making and leadership. This tendency seems to be attributed to poor leadership training and development.

Yet in the wake of a range of problems, expectations, demands and a call for successful implementation of policies to help improve the quality of education there has been little or no leadership development and training. Subsequently, in the absence of leadership development and training to foster the skills and knowledge needed to run their schools, a number of principals find it difficult to cope. Some principals have reverted to contingency and trial and error styles of management.

Although according to Mutorwa (2004: 8) there have been school leadership development programmes conducted in Namibia, scholarly studies indicate a replication of research evidence of lack of school leadership development and training in Namibia

(Mushaandja, 2006: 189, Kantema, 2001: 112-3). There is a stress on prioritizing leadership development and training, and to put in place development programmes for school leadership (Mushaandja, 2006: 163-8, 208-10, Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2001d: 431-2). The SACMEQ report (1997: 3) stresses that the professional development and training that is provided by inspectors and advisory teachers in Namibia is essential but insufficient. Nevertheless, there has been a concern about the inspectors' and advisory teachers' level of capacity regarding leadership development.

Indeed, literature on effective management and leadership and leadership development in Namibia point to an urgent need to train and develop the school leaders. Literature stresses different models, patterns and strategies to train and develop the school leadership. Quoting Villet (1998: 195) Kantema (2001: 112) underscores formal leadership training and development. There is stress on leadership certification.

Mushaandja (2006: 208-10) seems to emphasize continuous and on-the-job leadership development and self-development. There is a focus on attitude modification and improving management and leadership styles. Mushaandja further discusses in detail various leadership development models available in Namibia.

In actual fact, effective school leadership goes hand in hand with leadership development and training. The latter, as it transpires from the literature, is a challenge facing education in developing countries, particularly Namibia where various policy innovations aimed at changing the education system are being introduced. Justifiably, the more innovations that are introduced, the higher the level of empowerment. On the contrary however there has been less empowerment of school leaders in Namibia. The heads are faced with many challenges without being properly prepared.

2.7 Challenges facing school leadership in the Oshikoto Region

2.7.1 The global challenges

The school leadership in this new millennium is faced with numerous international challenges. The principals in the Oshikoto Region face the challenge of helping teachers, pupils and parents to come to terms with the impact of globalization, transformation of education and the new meaning of leadership. Globalization, which includes mobility and network communication systems, places the demand upon the school leadership to ensure that pupils, teachers and even parents understand and make use of the new information and network systems (Macbeath, Moos and Riley, 1998: 21-22)

As Namibia becomes increasingly reliant on information and communication technology (ICT), the transformation of the education system seems to be increasing momentum. This refers to industries producing and distributing information knowledge and to a challenging call for the education practitioners to use and invest such knowledge in the pupils. The introduction of ICT in schools by the MoE poses a learning challenge for the school leadership (ETSIP, 2006: 65-70). The leadership should learn these new skills and knowledge so as to be able to manage and supervise the investment thereof.

As the development of technology creates an opportunity for the global exchange of knowledge and ideas, this challenges the school leadership in the Oshikoto Region to prepare pupils to be citizens of the international community. This requires new skills and knowledge that can only be fostered through development and training.

As argued earlier on, the introduction of any innovation aimed at the transformation of education requires change from all the stakeholders, more so, from the implementers. Change does not occur without conflict and criticism. Accordingly, the school leadership requires preparation and development to acquire skills and knowledge that enable them to deal with conflict, resistance and criticism. Furthermore, this may require collaboration

and interaction to learn from the practices of others cross-regionally, nationally and internationally, which does not seem to be facilitated as yet.

2.7.2 The national and regional challenges

The national and regional challenges facing the headship in the Oshikoto Region should be understood within the contextual framework of the Ministry of Education's goals of access, equity, quality and democratic participation. While, as argued in chapter one, access and democracy have been addressed significantly, and equitable distribution of resources has been attended to rather fairly, the quality of teaching and leadership remains a concern. Thus, principals in the Oshikoto Region are faced with the challenge to turn schools into learning institutions with continuous improvement.

Principals in the Oshikoto Region are faced with numerous challenges and demands some of which have been discussed under 2.6. Being a principal is challenging and requires patience and endurance. The bureaucracy of the education system at the regional and national levels could be frustrating. Principals seem to be frustrated by the bureaucratic procedures followed to appoint the staff and to order stationery, textbooks, teaching and learning materials, and equipment. Even disciplinary procedures that are followed take so long. Quoting Sarason (1982: 164), Fullan (1992: 10) points out that the characteristics of the system can have interfering effects on leadership performance and may result in inaction and ineffectiveness.

There are many other challenges facing the school leadership in the Oshikoto Region. Principals are running schools with limited financial and other resources. And again, the headship should account for the school funds. This includes facilitating the auditing of school finances and budget and expenditure issues. Principals are also supervising subordinates who are insubordinate, lazy and are involved in misconduct cases now and then. Sometimes some staff members often take deliberate decisions and actions that are contrary to policies just to complicate things for the leadership. Mushaandja (2006: 33) discusses challenges and changes facing the leadership in the Omusati Region that are

similar to the challenges facing the leadership in the Oshikoto Region. Mushaandja stresses that such many changes result in the confusion and frustration of the leadership.

Most importantly, the school leadership faces the challenge of implementing educational policies introduced by the central government, which are aimed at improving the education system. Both Mushaandja (2006: 193) and Sibeya (2002: 144) emphasize that there are too many changes and policies for the leadership to implement, manage and supervise. Even the introduction of the ETSIP (2006: 17-20) places new challenges upon the principals as it adds ICT to the curriculum and expands learner throughput. The ETSIP (2006: 5, 26) however promises school leadership training and development as it recognizes that there are fewer training and development programmes for the school leadership, which contributes to poor performance (ETSIP, 2006: 25).

Arguably, not all principals may be so confident to stand on their own and discharge all the duties entrusted to them without being trained. Being appointed to a particular post with a particular job description does not automatically confirm that the person has the capacity to exercise leadership within a particular context and time (Gunter, 2001: 83, 86). Principals find it difficult to understand the often-contradictory realities of the philosophy of school leadership and to create identities because there is pressure on the headship from within and from without. Thus, amidst the confusion, frustration and the challenge to implement educational policies and changes, the school leadership needs empowerment to help enhance confidence, accountability and effectiveness. It is therefore worthwhile to examine the professional preparation for the leadership in the Oshikoto Region in order to implement the NSE.

2.7.3 The national standards of education (NSE)

As discussed under 2.7.2 principals in the Oshikoto Region face the challenge to implement educational policies from the central government. One of such policies however is the policy of the national standards of education, which were implemented in

schools in 2006. The Ministry of Education developed the national standards of education between the years 2003 and 2005, with the assistance of a consultant from Scotland.

The policy identifies seven key areas of the work of a school: provision of resources for the school, curriculum and attainment, the teaching and learning process, the school as a social unit, management and leadership of school and hostel, links with parents and the community and links with other schools and the region (Ministry of Education, 2005a: 1). There are a number of performance indicators for every key area and every performance indicator deals with various aspects or themes.

This research focuses on the fifth key area (management and leadership of school and hostel) with its seven performance indicators. Such performance indicators include policy, planning and implementation, curriculum and attainment, administration, leadership, management of staff, management of physical resources and management of finance. In addition, these performance indicators deal with twenty-nine various themes (Ministry of Education, 2005a: 9-10). Please refer to appendix A for further information. As indicated in chapter one (1.2) this research project does not examine management and leadership of hostels because the selected five primary schools do not have hostels.

The policy on the national standards of education aims at improving the quality of teaching and management/leadership at schools. This is done through the school self-evaluation and evaluation by external evaluators using various evaluation instruments identified by the policy. Evaluation of the work of the school in a certain aspect is done on a four-point scale or grading using the performance indicators that are designed to reduce subjectivity.

The four-point scale or grading is as follow: Level 4: Excellent (Strong in all or almost all themes), level 3: Good (More strengths than weaknesses), level 2: Fair (More weaknesses than strengths) and level 1: Weak (Extensive weaknesses) (Ministry of Education, 2005: 2).

Nonetheless, there seems to be a growing feeling that the national standards of education policy draws heavily from the European education tradition and thus is not suitable for the Namibian education system. It seems that the policy of the national standards for education, like some other policies in developing countries, borrows from the developed countries. Even the initiative or the idea to introduce the national standards for education seems to have come from the consultant rather than from the Ministry:

The terms of reference in my contract were [...] to refine these standards, criteria and indicators as best applicable to Namibia. [...] In the course of these reports I had emphasized the need, particularly in a large country like Namibia with its dispersed population groups, for national standards of quality in the aspects of school education [...]

(McClelland, 2004: 3-4)

Unlike ETSIP the national standards policy does not address training of the school leadership, the SMT members or teachers. The national standards policy seems to follow the bureaucratic approach that excludes parents (especially School Board members) from taking an active role in school leadership and management, apart from appointment of staff and financial matters. And again, the policy does not give special consideration to ICT, which enjoys a high priority nationally. Moreover, critics of the national standards policy and the ETSIP seem to blame the two policies for not addressing curriculum change issues. Hopefully, the policy on the professional standards for teachers that the Ministry of Education introduced recently, may address such curriculum change issues in Namibia.

Another criticism leveled against the national standards of education policy is that during the consultation some stakeholders were not involved. Parents, religious and teacher organizations were not involved in focal groups for consultation. Poor policy implementation, as Delors (1996: 13) rightly argues, has been due to insufficient involvement of one or more of such partners. Attempts to impose educational reforms from the top down or from the outside without sufficient involvement, will obviously fail.

Whether the educational policy on the national standards of education, in its intents and purposes, will bring about the desired improvement of the quality of the education system or not, seems to be another debate.

2.8 Summary

Literature reveals that there are no generic attributes of effective leadership. Contextual factors are very essential to effective leadership. Hence the notion of effective leadership differs from one context to another. However, there is an agreement that leadership is contingent upon pedagogic outcomes.

There is a global awareness that effective school leadership requires empowerment and that there are various patterns and models of leadership development and training. But literature shows there is less school leadership training and development, especially in Africa and in particular, in Namibia.

Despite that there are seemingly many educational policies being introduced, there is less practical effort to change the quality of education. The innovations introduced by the central government have not been institutionalized in the schools and built into their normal structures and practices through training. Training and development help the school management and leadership to implement innovations effectively and to impact on whole school improvement.

Thus, in the light of the above discussion, there is the need to examine the professional preparedness of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region to implement the educational policy of the national standards so as to impact positively on their school leadership and management.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to explain how the researcher attempted to investigate the research problem. The chapter discusses in detail the design and the methods that the researcher employed to collect and analyze data. The design and the methods used were selected carefully to suit the aims of the research study. The purpose of this research study is to seek an understanding of how effectively the training of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region impacted on the management and leadership of their schools with regards to the national standards.

In explaining in detail the design and the methods of the research study the chapter hopes to stress the need to know how data was collected and analyzed. Such knowledge may be helpful to a reader to evaluate the validity and reliability of the results and to understand the conclusions that have been drawn.

3.2 Research design

This research study is an enquiry into the management and leadership practices of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region. Thus, by inquiring how effectively and efficiently the principals are managing and leading their schools through the national standards of education, the study is seeking to construct a better understanding of human behaviours or actions. The qualitative research design purposively suits the research study better. The researcher purposefully chose the research design that is interpretive and embedded in qualitative outline. The context in which this study is undertaken, as well as the nature of the research question, all bear influence on the design of this research study.

Research design however, as various definitions seem to stress, is used to structure the research and to show how all the major parts of the research study work together to try to address the central research question. Mushaandja (2006: 80) quotes Durrheim (1999: 32) to emphasize a design as a plan that guides research activity towards sound conclusions. Quoting Babbie and Mouton (2002: 72) Botes (2006: 45) stresses design as addressing the planning of the enquiry and designing a strategy for answering a research question. A design specifies clearly what the researcher wishes to study in the best way possible.

However, there is a concern that defining research design as a pre-established plan for carrying out a study or as a sequence of steps to conduct a study may not be a compatible definition (Maxwell, 1996: 4). Maxwell offers a definition of research design that this study buys into:

[...] a research design is the underlying structure and interconnection of the components of the study and the implications of each component for the others (Maxwell, 1996: 4).

The implications here are that design in qualitative research is considered as an iterative process that involves ‘moving’ back and forth between the different components of the design and assessing the implications of the theory, research question and methods for one another. Thus a good design with compatible components, as Maxwell (1996: 8) seems to stress, helps the study ‘to safely and efficiently reach its destination’.

As I have argued earlier on in chapter one, leadership effectiveness is ‘socially constructed’. Thus, effective leadership is a social occurrence. Epistemologically, as Connole (1998: 13) emphasizes, the natural science is not an appropriate foundation for social science inquiry. Social science enquiries call for a qualitative research approach, because they involve human behaviours or actions that are preceded by intentions or have reasons and are sometimes accompanied by reflections. Moreover, qualitative research is inductive and derives interpretations from situations and responses (Warren, 2002: 83, Maxwell, 1996: 1996: 63).

Thus, given the nature of the research question of this project (how effectively has the training of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region on the NSE impacted on their management and leadership of schools?), it is only the qualitative research that can deliver a substantial and description of the principals' management and leadership behaviours. The researcher is therefore of the opinion that social occurrences are understood better through the use of qualitative research inquiry. Although qualitative and quantitative research are not opposing to each other, they are seemingly from different research traditions. The quality of this research design thus, is the descriptive and interpretive nature that is depicted in words rather than in numbers.

3.2.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is referred to as a generic term for a range of research approaches. Mason (1996) and Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004b: 893) define qualitative research as an “umbrella term for an array of attitudes toward and strategies for conducting inquiries that are aimed at discerning how human beings understand, experience, interpret and produce the social world”. Qualitative research is therefore an exploratory study of things in their natural settings, the interpretation and understanding of phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. Such research derives its data from *inter alia* observations, interviews, questionnaires, document analysis and triangulation, and focuses on the meanings and interpretations of the respondents or participants.

According to Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004b: 893) qualitative research is a term that tends to obscure difference and commonality. Furthermore, qualitative research is often misunderstood and misrepresented by simply contrasting it with quantitative research because that reduces its diversity and complexity. Equally, what is collectively referred to as qualitative research should be distinguished from other research that merely contain qualitative data, because the mere fact that words prevail over numbers in a project does not make such work a qualitative research.

Qualitative research however seems to be viewed as a home to a variety of scholars from sciences, humanities and practice disciplines that are committed to different philosophical and methodological positions. Ethnographic, interpretive or social enquiries like this study are often viewed as wholly defined by qualitative research. In fact qualitative research seems to be frequently more open in its approach to phenomena than other research strategies that work with large quantities and are strictly standardized. It seems therefore worth saying that what is collectively encompassed in the term qualitative research, may not qualify for a simple definition.

All that said however, it is worthwhile to discuss briefly the features of a qualitative research and the stages of such a process.

3.2.2 Features and stages of the process of qualitative research

Qualitative research, as Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004b: 893) rightly argue, should demonstrate efforts to produce richly and relevantly detailed descriptions and particular interpretations of people and the social practices and events that shape and are shaped by them. Qualitative research is discerning the perspectives and diversity of such people, but not limited to them.

On the other hand, qualitative research is case-oriented and is sensitive to cultural and historical contexts. Thus, there is the reflexivity of the researcher and the research. As a form of empirical enquiry, qualitative research entails purposive sampling for information-rich cases, open-ended interviews and techniques for analysis and interpretation of the data collected that call for penetrative understanding of phenomena. Qualitative research gives data meaning and make it understandable.

According to Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004b: 894) qualitative research aims for disciplined subjectivity and emphasizes naturalism (observing events as they unfold without manipulating any conditions). Conversely, there is an ongoing refining of the

research design after entering the field of research study. Of equal importance, however, is that qualitative research adheres to a diverse array of approaches and methods for maximizing the validity of study procedures and results. Even the findings are disseminated in a representational style.

Nevertheless, it can be deduced from what has been discussed earlier on, that qualitative research stresses the methods of observation and analysis. Equally, the qualitative research process, entails a number of stages. Botes (2006: 44) quotes LeCompte and Preisle (1993: 234) to emphasize the stages of qualitative research. This includes the formulation and consideration of research questions and the theoretical framework, the identification of who and what can be the sources of data, how cooperation can be forged with such data sources, as well as choosing the techniques for data collection and methods for data storage and retrieval. Then the data is collected and analyzed and conclusions are drawn and reported.

Qualitative research emphasizes that studies should be conducted in the natural contexts or settings of phenomena. In such natural settings the researcher is most likely to discover the practices and actions of the subjects under study.

3.3 Research methodology

This term (research methodology) refers to all the plans and strategies that the researcher used to collect and analyze the data for this research study. The questionnaires and the interviews were the key instruments that the researcher used to determine the similar or contradictory views of the respondents.

The researcher conducted interviews with the five principals and their Heads of Departments, and two members of the Management Teams of each school. In addition to the above-mentioned interviewees, four researchers that are experienced in policy

implementation were also interviewed. School Board members (both parents and teachers) at the five primary schools were given questionnaires to complete

3.3.1 Sampling

It has been the wish of the researcher to collect data from all the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the national standards of education. However, it is difficult to account for every subject or situation in the field of research (Botes, 2006: 47). It was therefore both impossible and unnecessary to study how the professional preparedness of the principals on the national standards, impacts on the school leadership and management in the whole of Oshikoto Region or Namibia. Hence, the researcher only sampled five primary schools from the Oshikoto Region. Sampling seems to be a concern as researchers seem to have difficulty in determining a representative or adequate size of the population to be studied.

The researcher selected a sample that is not too small or too large. Too small a sample may result in crucial characteristics of the population being undetected while a very large sample may call for a large number of researchers to obtain accurate data (Botes, 2006: 47). The researcher selected the five primary schools purposefully. As an inspector of education with twelve years of experience, the researcher knew which schools might have “information-rich” participants (Mushaandja, 2006: 83) that could help the study to have useful and relevant results. The researcher experienced that principals who are poorly trained or have been trained under the apartheid education system, mostly head the majority of the primary schools. Opportunistically, the researcher knew some of the principals that were studied.

Furthermore, the five schools that the researcher selected are representative of the majority of the schools in the Oshikoto Region. As the researcher indicated in chapter one (1.5) there are no substantial differences between primary schools in the Region in terms of performance, commitment, and leadership and management. Thus, the five

primary schools represent the characteristics of the majority of schools in the Oshikoto Region. The Region consists of five circuits from which one primary school was selected.

The inclusion of some respondents in the research was both purposeful and theoretical. Purposeful sampling in qualitative research is the deliberate seeking out of participants with particular characteristics. Theoretical sampling, on the other hand, refers to the deliberate seeking out of respondents according to the information required by the analysis (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2004b: 884). It is thus important to state that the sample size of this study was based on the purpose of the study.

3.3.2 Generalizability

In terms of generalizability however, some qualitative enquiry proponents reject generalization as a goal because every topic or subject should be seen as carrying its own logic and meaning, as Mushaandja (2006: 87) seems to accentuate. As the researcher argues in chapter one (1.6), the five schools studied are case studies and as such, they may be subjective forms of enquiry. Hence, taking the interpretations out of such environments cannot be certain.

Yet, with the understanding that there should be no intentions to produce laws that apply universally and that every phenomenon is context-bound in qualitative enquiry, findings can be generalized. This means that qualitative researchers can use findings of a study of one situation or subject to help make a meaning about other situations. This is only possible however, when a research study is detailed and descriptive like this one. Thus, the findings of this study can be used as working hypothesis to similar situations or contexts.

3.3.3 Data instruments and techniques

To collect data from the respondents for the research study, the following instruments were used:

1. An interview with each of the five principals
2. Interviews with the Heads of Departments at the five schools (except in the case of one school where there is no Head of Department and a member of the Management Team was interviewed in lieu of a Head of Department)
3. Interviews with two members of the Management Teams of each school.

The researcher also made some additional collection of data from the following respondents using the following instruments:

4. A questionnaire completed by the School Board members of every school
5. Interviews with four researchers.

The researcher used various instruments and procedures to ensure a good degree of accuracy, validity and confirmation and to avoid the possibility of misinterpretation in the research data. Thus the researcher used qualitative interviews to study the views, actions and intentions of the participants. Qualitative interviews are used in order to understand how the respondents interpret the meaning of the topic. This means that interviewing in qualitative enquiry helps to “obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the prescribed phenomena” (Kvale, 1996: 5-6 quoted by Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2004b: 521).

The interview questions were open-ended or formally structured (See appendix F). The researcher also asked unstructured questions. In doing so, the researcher used the interviewees and the data as a guide. The interviewees were all asked the same structured questions. Asking the interviewees the same questions in the same category helped the researcher to be consistent and to reduce subjectivity, which is one of the weaknesses of

interviews. Interviewees were encouraged to share their views and experiences with the researcher. This allowed the researcher to have in-depth responses from the respondents.

All interview schedules contained questions that were in the order in which they were asked. Questions were typed on paper and were administered verbatim, exactly as written. The purpose of the interview schedule, as Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004: 519) argue, is to provide protocol for interviewers to ask questions and to record answers in a consistent way across all respondents. Furthermore, this helps both the interviewee and the interviewer to get through the interview process smoothly.

The interview schedule for the principals (appendix F) included issues like biographical details, school profile, the importance of the national standards, the effectiveness of the training on the standards, training of other SMT members, implementation of the fifth key area, challenges and recommendations.

Equally, the interview schedule for the Heads of Departments and SMT members (appendix G) covered issues like biographical details, the importance and effectiveness of the training on standards, training of SMT members, implementation of the fifth key area, challenges to implement the policy, and recommendations.

The interview schedule for the researchers however included issues of biography, the importance of the national standards policy, effective preparation of both principals and SMT members, and the implementation of the policy in schools. The schedule further covered issues like the impact of the policy on leadership and management of schools, challenges facing principals in implementing the policy, recommendations to enhance good implementation, and alternatives to the national standards policy.

The questionnaires (appendix H), which the School Board members completed, were also translated into a local language that School Board members understood or spoke well (appendix I). Some of the Board members do not understand English while some of them

are illiterate. Subsequently, the researcher interviewed those Board members who could not write using the same instruments or questionnaires.

The questionnaires covered the following aspects: general information about the respondent, importance of the national standards, effectiveness of the training on the standards and training of the SMT members. In addition, the questionnaires entailed the implementation of the national standards, the challenges facing the leadership in the implementation of this educational policy, as well as recommendations to enhance better policy implementation.

School Board members were indeed given adequate time and space to respond to the questions. Conversely, questionnaires helped the researcher to easily collect large quantities of data within a relatively short period of time. Respondents were also informed and reminded of their right to be anonymous. All questionnaires were completed in the school environment, except in the case of a few Board members who could not come to school for valid reasons, asked to complete the questionnaires at places other than the school.



In terms of the techniques that the researcher employed during the process of data collection, the researcher solicited the cooperation of all the respondents. The researcher encouraged the respondents to substantiate their answers, to talk freely and to be honest in their responses. Qualitative research seems to stress that the researcher should behaved objectively, almost like a research instrument during the investigations.

3.3.4 Pilot test of the instruments and preliminary visits to schools

The interview schedules (instruments) for both the principals and the Heads of Departments and SMT members were pilot tested at one primary school other than the five schools identified for the study. The selection of such a school was based on the accessibility and distance from the Regional Office. The researcher preferred a pilot

school that was not far from the Regional Office. Pilot testing was done before the researcher embarked upon the collection of the data.

The two instruments were pilot tested in order to determine how comprehensive they were and also to assess their accuracy in the collection of data. One question was added to each interview schedule after the pilot testing.

After conducting the pilot testing, the researcher carried out preliminary visits to the five schools. Preliminary visits to the five primary schools were carried out after the researcher secured permission from the Regional Education Directorate to do research at such schools (appendix E). Due to the distances between the identified schools, such preliminary visits were not carried out within one day.

The purpose of these visits was to meet with the participants (principals, HODs, SMT and School Board Members) in order to explain to them the purpose of the study and to request that they participate in the study willingly. During such meetings with the participants, the researcher stressed the need for the participants to be honest. Apart from the few School Board members that were not available, all participants at all the five schools indicated their willingness to participate in the research study.

3.3.5 Data analysis

Before data is analyzed it needs to be suitably prepared and organized. Thus, data analysis refers to the process of organizing the collected pieces of information, identifying their key features or relationship systematically, and interpreting them meaningfully (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004: 266). The process of identifying important features in data is always informed by theory and is directly related to one's research question. Data analysis involves the selection, grouping and synthesizing of the collected information.

The data collected from the respondents for this research study has therefore been analyzed, grouped and interpreted in order to explain the leadership and management in terms of the actions and intentions at the five primary schools. The researcher has done this organization of data guided by the themes in the interview schedules and the questionnaires, as well as by the research question. The researcher has therefore transformed the data by extracting useful information and facilitating conclusions.

The respondents or participants have been coded or categorized according to their commonalities. Such categorization however is just conceptual and does not bear any relation to the summarization of the data. For the purpose of this research study the following codes have been used:

- **P₁, P₂, P₃, P₄ and P₅** for the five primary school principals
- **HOD₁, HOD₂, HOD₃, HOD₄ and HOD₅** for the five Heads of Departments
- **SMT₁, SMT₂, SMT₃, SMT₄, SMT₅, SMT₆, SMT₇, SMT₈, SMT₉, SMT₁₀** for the School Management Team members.

Although the School Board members also completed questionnaires, the researcher found that the data collected from the School Board members is a repetition of the data collected from the Heads of Departments and the SMT members. Thus, the School Board members have not been coded as respondents. For the same reason, the four researchers interviewed, have also not been coded as respondents. It is worthwhile to mention that the instruments used had basically the same focus. Conversely, the respondents' answers correlated.

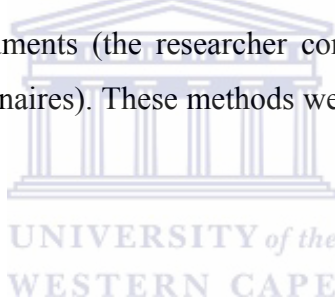
3.3.6 Triangulation

In order to secure objectivity in qualitative research, researchers should ensure that the data collected is both valid and reliable. In other words, the researcher should ensure that the findings of the study do make sense to the readers and to the study itself. According

to Miles and Huberman (1994: 278) quoted by Botes (2006: 54), the qualitative researcher should make sure that the findings portray authenticity or internal validity of what is studied. This is enhanced by means of triangulation.

According to Jacob (2000: 1) triangulation refers to the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Combining various methods or instruments helps the researcher to overcome biases and the problems that come from the use of a single method. Qualitative researchers seem to emphasize that the purpose of triangulation in a specific context is to obtain confirmation of findings through the convergence of different perspectives.

Although there are various kinds of triangulation, in this study the researcher used triangulation by data source, (the data was collected from different respondents), and also by different methods or instruments (the researcher conducted various interviews and collected data through questionnaires). These methods were determined in the light of the purpose of the study.



3.3.7 Ethical considerations

There are several ethical issues that must be considered when conducting an educational research. According to Callahan and Hobbs (1998: 1) the primary concern of a researcher should be the safety of the research participant. Privacy and confidentiality concerns should also be approached carefully. Furthermore, the investigator is under obligation to respect each participant as a person capable of making an informed decision regarding participation in the research study. Thus, the investigator should ensure that a full disclosure of the nature and purpose of the study, the procedures, the risks and the benefits, are well explained to the participant. The participant must be given a chance to ask questions and to give consent.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004: 101) explain clearly what educational research ethics entail when they state:

Within educational research, ethics is concerned with ensuring that the interests and well-being of people are not harmed as a result of the research being done [...]. Harm can range from people experiencing affronts to their dignity [...] having their reputation and credibility undermined publicly [...] as individuals, a group, a school or even an entire social group.

It is in the understanding of the above ethical considerations that the researcher, prior to conducting the investigations at the five schools, secured permission from the Oshikoto Regional Director (appendix E) to conduct such investigations. Consent to participate in the study was sought from the principals, the teachers, the parents who are members of the School Boards, and even from the researchers.

Although the researcher assured the participants of confidentiality and anonymity when the researcher met with the participants in groups during preliminary visits, the researcher re-explained such issues before the start of individual interviews. It is of vital importance to mention that the researcher upheld research ethics before, during and after the conducting of the investigations.

3.3.8 Summary

The research design and the methods used, fit the nature of the research problem and question well. However, qualitative research design (perhaps like any other designs) and instruments are limited to a certain degree of effectiveness. Also, the extent to which the research (findings) can be generalized or be considered rigorous, is limited to the factors of case studies.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents and analyses the collected data. It should be stressed that the process of data analysis already started in the field while the researcher was busy collecting the data.

This research study, **The professional preparedness of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region of Northern Namibia to implement the policy on the national standards for school leadership and management**, aims to contribute to a better understanding of professional training for primary school principals and how their leadership and management impacts on their implementation of educational policies. Thus, the study aimed to investigate critically how the training on the national standards of education enhances effective and efficient school management and leadership in the Oshikoto Region of Namibia. The study makes recommendations on possible solutions to enhance a better policy implementation in the Oshikoto Region and in Namibia.

The researcher aimed to have a clearer picture of how the primary school principals manage and lead their schools through the implementation of the national standards of education. Conversely, the researcher targeted various groups of respondents (as discussed under 3.3.3 in chapter three). The data collected thus, was of capacious volume and required a high degree of organization. Therefore, the researcher organized the data according to their commonalities. However, due to the repetitive nature of the data collected, the researcher discussed and analyzed the data from the principals, the HODs and the SMT members together.

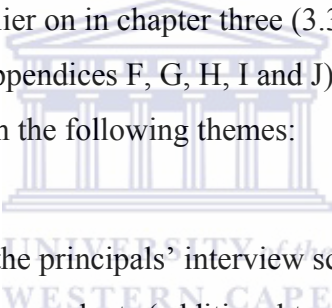
It should be stressed that due to the volume of the data collected, and in order to avoid repetition, the data collected from the School Board members and the researchers has not

been coded for presentation and analysis for this research study. However, some references are made to such data in the presentation and discussion of the findings.

The researcher, after having gone through the collected data several times, decided to only present and analyze the data collected from the main respondents (those who are directly involved in the implementation of the NSE). Thus, responses from twenty respondents' (five principals, five Heads of Departments and ten SMT members) have been presented and analyzed in this chapter.

4.2 Presentation and discussion of the data

As the researcher has stated earlier on in chapter three (3.3.5), the instruments used had basically the same focus (See appendices F, G, H, I and J). The questions in the instruments focused basically on the following themes:

- 
- School profile (this was on the principals' interview schedule only)
 - Biographical details of the respondents (additional to sub-questions of the study)
 - Importance of the national standards for education (NSE)
 - Effectiveness of the training on the NSE
 - Training of other SMT members
 - Implementation of the key area on management and leadership
 - Challenges experienced by the principals in implementing the NSE
 - Recommendations to enhance better implementation of the NSE

Accordingly, the above-mentioned themes were arranged around the six sub-questions of the research study, which are as follows:

- Do the primary school principals consider the national standards important?
- Do the primary school principals consider their training on the NSE as effective?
- Were all the members of the SMT at the five primary

- schools trained for the implementation of the NSE?
- Are the primary school principals implementing the management and leadership of schools as one of the seven key areas of the NSE as stated in the policy document?
 - What are the challenges experienced by the primary school principals in implementing the NSE?
 - What could be done to enhance the preparation of the primary school principals to be better able to implement the NSE?

The researcher thus presents, discusses and interprets the data collected from the five principals, five Heads of Departments (one school does not have a Head of Department, hence one SMT member who was trained on the NSE was interviewed in lieu of a Head of Department).



4.2.1 Profile details of the schools

Three of the principals interviewed are females while two are males. In terms of gender, the sample was representative. Three of the five schools have between seven and nine educators, including the principals. Two of the five schools however are big primary schools, with 23 educators each; this includes the principals.

The enrolments at the five schools differ from one school to another. While the lowest enrolment is 185 learners at one school, two schools have enrolments of 752 and 629 learners respectively. All five schools however, have a learner-to-teacher ratio that is below thirty-five learners to one teacher (35:1). The Ministry considers such a ratio as normal for primary schools in the Oshikoto Region.

While four schools have teachers, other than principals, who are in promotion posts (HODs), one school does not have any educator who is in a promotion post other than the principal. Heads of Departments are of great assistance to principals. Thus, a school

principal that leads a school without a Head of Department may be overloaded with responsibilities.

All five schools have members (parents and teachers) elected to serve on the School Boards. Two schools have the highest number of Board members, with thirteen members each. The other three schools' Board membership range is between eight and nine members. Such members include principals who are serving as ex-officio members. The quota of School Board members is determined by the number of learners at a particular school as set in the Education Act of 2001.

4.2.2 Biographical details of the respondents

The ages, and the academic and professional qualifications of the five principals, differ significantly from one principal to another. Even the years of experience in the teaching profession and in principalship differ. Three principals are over fifty years of age (54, 55 and 59 respectively) while two are in the forties (43 and 47). Except **P5** who has a BA as the highest academic qualification, all other four principals have Grade 12 (Std. 10) as their highest academic qualifications. All five principals however have professional qualifications that range between two to four years of teacher training.

In terms of experience, two principals have been in the teaching profession for 31 and 35 years respectively and have all served for more than 20 years as principals. Three of the five principals have been in the teaching profession for a period ranging between 19 and 23 years and have been in the principalship for 9 to 10 years. Thus, each of the five principals has been in the teaching profession for a minimum period of 19 years and in the principalship for a minimum period of nine years. It can then be deduced from this data that all five principals have been trained under the apartheid education system and may have thus not been well trained. However, **P5** seems to have been well trained and has academic and professional qualifications from a university.

A significant number of principals (four of five) have not gone through any promotion stages. They were promoted from ordinary teachers to principals. Only **P₄** has gone through promotion stages of Head of Department and Acting Principal. Only two of the five principals were inducted after being promoted as principals, for a day and for a week respectively. Whether such inductions were effective or not, seems difficult to tell. However, the fact that some of the inductions lasted only for a day, may be ineffective as this is too short a time to assist a principal who has been promoted from the rank of an ordinary teacher and might have been poorly trained.

The responses indicate that some leadership and management workshops for primary school principals were conducted. Although two principals could not easily remember the last training that they attended, three principals had their last training between 2006 and 2007. Three of such leadership training programmes were on the NSE. On average such leadership training or workshops lasted only for a day.

Regarding the biographical details of the HODs and the SMT members, the responses showed that they are relatively of younger ages than the principals. Their ages range between 34 and 48 years of age. In terms of academic and professional qualifications, thirteen of them have Grade 12 (equivalent to Standard 10) as their highest academic qualifications. Only two of them have a BA and Grade 10 (equivalent to Standard 8) qualification respectively. While two SMT members and one Head of Department have two years of professional training each, a significant number (twelve) of the SMT members and HODs have professional training that ranges between three and five years of teacher training. Thus, a high percentage of the Heads of Departments and SMT members may not have been that poorly prepared.

All Heads of Departments have been in promotion posts for more than seven years, but not for longer than fifteen years. Two of the SMT members (**SMT₇** and **SMT₉**) have served in the management teams for ten years each, while others have only served between one and five years. Significantly, only one HOD (**HOD₃**) has been inducted after promotion to Head of Department. However, the responses indicate that there have been

some leadership training programmes for the Heads of Departments and SMT members recently, of which most of them were on the national standards. On average, the training lasted only for a day.

4.2.3 Importance of the national standards

In responding to the question “Which three recently introduced educational policies would you list as the most important?” three of the five principals listed the NSE as one of such policies. Two principals were not sure whether the NSE policy was one of them. The other policies listed as recently introduced and important include the Education Act, the ETSIP, and the HIV and AIDS policies.

Importantly, all the respondents (five principals, five HODs and ten SMT members) responded that they consider the NSE as important. The reasons why the respondents consider the national standards important vary from one respondent to another. A significant number of respondents however, commonly listed the following reasons for the importance of the national standards:

- The national standards policy aims to create uniformity among schools
- The national standards seek to improve the quality of education
- The national standards guide and direct teachers on issues of teaching and learning
- The NSE help schools to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to subsequently deal with such weaknesses.

Additional reasons cited by the respondents include the NSE policy as guiding principals on how to manage and lead schools, as well as how to implement other educational policies. All the responses seem to stress that effective implementation of the NSE results in the improvement of the quality of education.

Some respondents however seem to be pessimistic about the improvements that the national standards result in. According to **P5**: “[...] though the NSE are aimed at creating uniformity and improving the quality of education, this may not be possible when schools are not at the same level”. While some schools in Namibia (and a few in the Oshikoto Region) are well resourced, the majority of schools do not have enough resources. Thus, there is still a need to redistribute the resources equitably among the majority of schools.

Although all the respondents indicated that the national standards are important, the introduction thereof has not effectively changed their styles of leading and managing the schools. According to **P2**, **P3** and **P5** the introduction of the NSE only changed the styles of leading and managing very slightly. Only two principals responded that the introduction of the national standards has really changed their styles of management and leadership.

In responding to the question about the major changes that have taken place at their schools since the introduction of the national standards, the five principals cited some changes. According to **P2**, **P3** and **P5** more class observations are carried out than before the introduction of the NSE. According to **P3**: “I check and control teachers’ lesson plans every day unlike in the past when I did not do it everyday”.

Additionally, principals cited some other major changes that have taken place at their schools after the introduction of the NSE. Such major changes include writing annual and term reports and teachers asking for permission when they leave school during working hours, which was not happening before the introduction of the NSE. Teachers also give feedback to the principals after attending workshops.

According to **P2**, parents are now more involved in education than before the introduction of the national standards policy. On the question of whether the parents were aware of the national standards, the principal (**P2**) stated that they (parents) were not aware of the policy. **P2** could therefore not elaborate on why the improvement in parental involvement should be linked to the introduction of the NSE. Thus, there could be other factors which attributed to the improvement in parental involvement.

According to **P1** however the NSE taught him to focus on doing one thing at a time. **P4** has introduced subject meetings and an English club at the school and teachers plan their lessons together.

Significantly, while **P2**, **P4** and **P5** have cited between two to four major changes that have happened at their schools, **P2** and **P3** only indicated one major change each. Thus, there have been very few changes at schools after the introduction of the NSE according to the responses. And again, some of the changes may not necessarily be attributed to the introduction of the national standards as such.

The responses of the HODs and the SMT members to the question “How often do you discuss the national standards during your management or departmental meetings?” indicate that there have not been effective changes at schools. While seven of the HODs and SMT members responded that they have discussed the NSE at some of their meetings, eight of these respondents indicated that they have never discussed the national standards during their departmental or management meetings.

The issues that were discussed during such meetings (according to the seven respondents who responded that they have discussed the NSE during their meetings) include class observations, lesson plans, time management, time- table and evaluation forms. The responses therefore indicate that the discussions centred around the performance indicator of curriculum and attainment (5.1) of the key area number five. It seems that the other performance indicators of the key area were not given due attention.

As the researcher has argued in chapter one (1.3.4), there could be cases of success in individual schools in which the strong efforts of some teachers and principals have brought about significant changes in schools. However, such changes may not survive for a long time. According to Fullan and Miles (1992: 748) the durability of such successes may not survive if the conditions under which they developed are changed. Unless there is clear demonstration that such pockets of success or change add up to new structures,

procedures and school cultures that press for continuous school improvement, such achievements are short-lived.

4.2.4 The effectiveness of the leadership training on the national standards

The training on the NSE that prepared the principals, the HODs and other management team members to implement the national standards was planned for two days. A significant number of principals (four of five) responded that such training was conducted for two days in their respective circuits. **P2** could not remember very well how long the training was, but stated vividly that it was a one-day training programme.

Four of the five principals (including **P4** who did not attend the training on the NSE) stressed through their responses that they would have liked the training to be longer. Both **P4** and **P5** did not attend the training on the NSE. While **P4** has attended a follow-up workshop on the NSE, **P5** has never attended any training on the national standards. While **P4** did not attend the training due to illness, **P5** had other school commitments (preparing reports that are submitted at the end of the term). However, members of the management teams represented the two principals at the training.

Responding to the question why they (principals) would have liked the training to be longer, three principals (**P1**, **P2** and **P3**) stated that they did not understand the training that was done on the NSE. Furthermore, the facilitators were going through the NSE very fast, thus the principals could not follow very well. **P3** stressed: “I have a language problem and I could therefore not follow very well during the training”. **P1**, **P2** and **P3** suggested that the training could have been conducted for at least a week. According to **P1** the training should have been longer because what training was done was completely new to the principals. To implement the new things, when not fully trained, would not be easy.

In responding to the question of whether the principals felt confident enough to implement the NSE after the training, all five principals responded that they did not feel confident enough to implement the NSE. **P5** did not feel confident enough to implement the policy because she was not trained. **P4** stated that she did not feel confident to implement the NSE despite attending a follow-up training session. Three other principals responded that they did not feel confident enough to implement the NSE because there are still issues on the NSE that they do not understand well. According to **P3**: “I do not understand more than 30% of the NSE. I want to understand more than 90% of the NSE”.

While **P4** and **P5** did not attend the two-days training on the NSE and thus, their leadership training needs may not have been addressed by such training, **P2** and **P3** could not remember any of their leadership training needs that were addressed by the training on the NSE. Only **P1** had three leadership training needs that were addressed by the training on the NSE: the needs of how to manage school finances, school personnel and the administration of the office of the principal. Thus, **P1** rated the training on the NSE as partly effective while a significant number of principals, including **P4** and **P5** who had not attended the training, responded that the training on the NSE was not effective. According to **P4** and **P5** the fact that their middle managers who attended the training on the NSE did not understand the NSE very well, demonstrated that the training was not effective.

P5 further elaborated that the teacher who represented the school during the training could not even give proper feedback to the principal after the training. The teacher only informed the principal that the participants were given some case study activities to work on. **P5** referred to some materials that were used during the training. The deduction drawn from the response is that **P5** does not consider the training as effective.

The responses of the principals emphasize that an important number of principals left the training without understanding the national standards policy very well. According to **P3**, even after the training, there were still many issues in the NSE policy document that he did not understand. Even **P1** who rated the training as partly effective responded that

though there are some aspects of the NSE that are implemented at the school as stated in the NSE, there are still many issues on the NSE that he does not understand.

The responses of the Heads of Departments and the SMT members to the questions “Would you say that your principal considers the training on the NSE as effective?” and “Why would you say that the principal considers the training on the NSE as effective?” were of great significance too. While some respondents were in agreement, others disagreed. Two HODs and four SMT members responded that their heads consider their training as effective. Two HODs and one SMT member indicated that their heads do not consider the training on the NSE as effective. One HOD and five SMT members were not sure whether their heads consider the training on the NSE as effective or not.

The responses seem to stress that there are relatively few indications that the principals consider their training on the NSE as effective (only six respondents out of fifteen indicated that the principals consider their training as effective).

The reasons given by the Heads of Departments and the SMT members as to why they would say that their heads consider the training on the NSE as effective, varied. The following reasons were given by a significant number of respondents who responded that their principals considered the training on the NSE as effective: the principal said that the training was effective, teachers were given feedback, the principal encouraged teachers to do their work, and the principal has started to implement the NSE. A significant number of respondents who responded that their principals do not consider the training on the NSE as effective cited the following reasons: the principal said that he/she does not understand the NSE, the principal did not train the teachers, the principal was not trained, the principal did not give any feedback or training to the teachers and those who are trained do not understand the policy.

The responses of the HODs and SMT members who responded that their heads do not consider the training on the NSE as effective, seem to carry “more weight” than the responses of those who responded that their heads consider the training as effective.

This, confirms the principals' responses that they do not consider the training on the NSE as effective.

However, the training on the NSE seems to have brought about some changes at the schools. The training seems also to have enhanced changes in the principals and middle managers' styles of leading and managing schools. In responding to the question: "What changes have you experienced at your school that you think are the subsequent results of the training on the national standards?" the HODs' and SMT members' responses varied significantly. **SMT₆** and **SMT₉** responded that there has been no change at their schools since the introduction of the NSE. **HOD₅**, **SMT₇** and **SMT₁₀** stressed in their responses the term "few" (changes) and cited one change each. Such changes include the introduction of remedial teaching, improvement in learner discipline and principals encouraging teachers to work harder.

A significant number of HODs and SMT members (10 respondents) cited two to three changes that they have experienced at their schools. The changes cited by these respondents, include the following: improvement in the checking and controlling of lesson plans, improvement in learners coming to school late, regular class observation and teachers planning their lessons together. It is also said that the delegation of duties, continuous assessment and disciplinary procedures have improved.

Furthermore, an important number of HOD and SMT respondents (ten of fifteen) indicated through their responses that the training on the NSE has influenced their principals' as well as their own styles of leading and managing schools. While five HODs and SMT members responded that the training has not influenced their principals' styles of leading and managing schools, ten HODs and SMT members responded that the training on the NSE has influenced their heads' styles of leading and managing of schools. However, some of the respondents could not specifically say how the training has influenced their heads' styles of leadership and management.

On the other hand, seven HODs and SMT members responded that the training on the national standards has not influenced their styles of managing and leading schools and

their effectiveness. Eight HODs and SMT members however indicated that the training on the NSE has influenced their styles of management and leadership, as well as their effectiveness. While some of the respondents could not specifically elaborate on how the training on the NSE has influenced their styles of leadership and management and the effectiveness thereof, some of the respondents did elaborate on how the NSE training has influenced their leadership and management and their effectiveness.

Nevertheless, the deduction drawn from the respondents' responses is that the principals do not consider the training on the NSE as effective. Though there are some pockets of changes at some schools, the training on the national standards has not impacted effectively on the principals' styles of management and leadership, and has not enhanced effectiveness that subsequently brings about quality education and continuous improvement. As the researcher has argued in chapter two (2.5.2), training of school leadership in Africa has been elusive. While those who are responsible for training the school leadership lack the necessary skills and capacity (Bush and Oduro, 2006: 370), professional preparation of the school leadership in Africa, like policy implementation, has never been given the seriousness it deserves.

Thus, the training on the NSE did not prepare the primary school principals rigorously to enable them to implement the policy effectively. The information that the principals received (as P₅ stressed) impacted on the principals' willingness or resistance to change. If the school head did not understand the change then he/she would have wished that the change had never occurred. Subsequently, the principal may find it difficult to prepare other educators and to convince them to implement such change, as Washington and Hacker (2005: 408) emphasized.

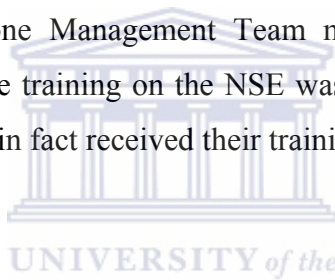
The researcher has stressed in chapter two that policy development in Africa is considered as more prestigious than implementation. Thus, the preparation for the implementers of the NSE was poor and ineffective and it did not make the principals excited about the change. Furthermore, the policy seems to be based more on the assumptions than on the practice on the ground. Subsequently, policy outcomes do not

fulfill the initial expectations due to elusive preparation and subsequent poor policy implementation.

4.2.5 Training of other management team members

There are Management Teams at all five schools, with an average of four teachers serving as members of such teams at each school. One school however seems to have a high number of teachers who are members of the Management Team. While there are seven teachers at the school, six of them are all members of the Management Team.

Two members of the Management Teams from four schools respectively attended the training on the NSE. Only one Management Team member from the other school attended the training. While the training on the NSE was held in 2005 in some circuits, some heads indicated that they in fact received their training in 2006 during the beginning of the year.



P₁ is the only principal who responded that there was training at the school after the training at the circuit office and that all SMT members at the school were trained. Even **HOD₁**, **SMT₁** and **SMT₂** (from the same school as **P₁**) confirmed that there was training conducted at the school for the other SMT members. Such training, as the responses indicate, was conducted for one day only. **P₁** informed the researcher that the training did not cover all aspects of the NSE, and that the Management Team members still need to be trained. Thus, **P₁** might not have trained the SMT members at his school effectively because he (**P₁**) responded that there are some aspects of the NSE that he does not understand and that he needs to be trained too.

P₂, **P₃**, **P₄** and **P₅** responded that no Management Team member was trained on the NSE at their respective schools after the initial training was conducted. However, **P₃** and **P₄** indicated that another Management Team member from each of the two schools was trained during the follow-up training on the NSE. According to **P₂** all Management Team

members at the school were trained only after the follow-up training. **HOD₂**, **SMT₃** and **SMT₄** (from the same school as **P₂**) confirmed through their responses that the principal and the HOD had only trained the SMT members at the school after the follow-up training.

While four principals could not remember if the training prepared the principals and the Management Team members to train other Management Team members or not, **P₂** responded that they were not prepared to train other members of the Management Teams. Hence, there are still Management Team members at the five schools that are not trained on the NSE. The responses thus indicate that out of a total number of twenty-eight SMT members that are at the five primary schools, twenty members have been trained on the NSE. Thus, eight SMT members have not been trained on the NSE.

The researcher has stressed in the literature review (chapter two, 2.3) that successful implementation of any educational policy calls for intensive and rigorous training of the school leaders, the SMT members, the staff, and members of the governing bodies. As the researcher indicated earlier on, this study collected data from the School Board members through questionnaires (See appendices H and I). These respondents (the School Board members), as the researcher explained in 4.2, were not coded and the data collected from them is not presented in the research findings. However, it is worthwhile to point out that the data collected from the School Board members helped the researcher to understand the views of the parents (who are School Board members), on the importance of the national standards.

Furthermore, the data collected from the School Board members contributed to the researcher's understanding of their (the School Board members) expectations of effective school leadership and policy implementation. The researcher has stressed through the literature review that the introduction of educational policies creates new expectations of effective school leadership. The School Board members listed various challenges facing the school leadership. This helped the researcher to understand that even the parents are aware of the numerous challenges that the school leaders are facing in the

implementation of the educational policy. This knowledge is important for the School Board members because they play a vital role in the management and leadership of schools.

It is very significant to note that, of all the School Board members (42) who completed the questionnaires at the five schools, only one Board member had been trained on the NSE. A relatively small number of Board members had been informed briefly about the NSE.

All the School Board members that completed the questionnaires, excluding the member who is trained, responded that they need to be trained on the national standards. It is therefore imperative that the rest of the SMT members (eight members) and the School Board members (forty-one members) who are not trained on the policy, should be trained. Such training will enhance effective policy implementation because institutionalizing the NSE policy into such school structures will save the NSE policy from disappearing, as Fullan and Miles (1992: 748) accentuate.



4.2.6 Implementation of the key area on management and leadership

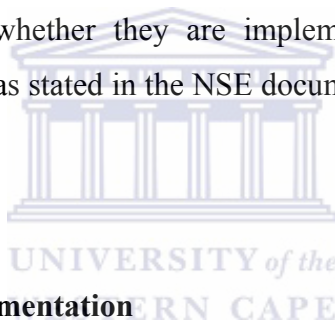
Respondents were required here to refer to the policy document. The researcher observed that most of the respondents were not familiar with the document. Some respondents did not even know where in the policy document they should look for certain issues.

The responses of the principals, the HODs and SMT members were significantly similar. In answering the questions “Would you say that your school is implementing the fifth key area of the NSE as stated in the policy document?” and “Why would you say so?” the responses were as follows: **HOD₄** and **SMT₉** responded that their schools are not implementing the fifth key area as stated in the policy document at all. **HOD₄** cited lack of understanding of the NSE as the reason why her school is not implementing the fifth key area as stated in the NSE document. According to **SMT₉** teachers received the NSE

policy document on the same day the SMT member was interviewed. Thus, **SMT9** saw the policy document for the first time on the day of the interview.

Thirteen HODs and SMT members however responded that their schools are implementing the fifth key area “partly” and not as stated in the policy document. A significant number of HODs and SMT members cited lack of training and overloadedness as the major reasons why their schools are not implementing the fifth key area as stated in the policy document. According to **HOD2**: “I am overloaded. I am a teacher and a manager at the same time. I cannot cope. And we were trained only for one day”. Other reasons added include teachers’ laziness and lack of parental and teacher support for school managers/leaders.

Responding to the question whether they are implementing the seven performance indicators of the fifth key area as stated in the NSE document, the respondents’ responses were as follows:



a) Policy, planning and implementation

This performance indicator (policy, planning and implementation) is concerned with four aspects. These are: goals, objectives and policies, self-evaluation, school development planning and implementation of plans. There is also a checklist provided for every aspect of the performance indicator.

All five principals responded that they are not implementing this performance indicator as stated in the policy document. All five principals gave different reasons why they are not implementing this aspect as stated in the policy document. According to **P1** the school has not even started with the implementation of this performance indicator. **P2** stated that she has not studied the performance indicator after the training. Furthermore, the aspect is not easy to understand. **P3** however cited language problems and poor sight as the major reasons why this aspect is not implemented as stated in the NSE.

P4 and **P5** stated more reasons why they are not implementing this aspect as stated in the NSE policy. According to **P5** “[...] it is difficult to plan and implement some of the policies like the School Development Plan at this school. The SMT members at our school are all teachers and they think that it is the responsibility of the principal alone to plan and implement all policies”. Thus, the principal is not getting the support from the SMT to implement this aspect of the policy.

On the other hand, **P4** responded that she does not understand this performance indicator very well. On top of that she is not getting the necessary resources from the Region/Ministry. **P4** responded:

“There are no adequate teaching and learning materials at the school. The classrooms are also not enough and some are very old. Even some other policy documents, like the Code of Conduct for teachers, are not provided for to help us in the implementation of the NSE”.

The HODs and the SMT members also stressed, through their responses, that this performance indicator is not implemented as stated in the policy document. A significant number of HOD and SMT respondents (in answering the question: “Which aspect of the fifth key area would you say your school is not implementing as stated in the NSE?”) indicated that the performance indicator on policy, planning and implementation (5.1) is not implemented as stated in the NSE.

While the deduction may be drawn that some principals do not consider the urgency to implement the policy, principals seem to have problems. Some principals do not understand the NSE because they were not trained on the policy, while others do not have the necessary policy documents that are needed in the implementation of the NSE. And again, the Regional Office does not make sure that all necessary documents required in the implementation of the NSE are provided to schools. The principals are also supposed to approach the higher offices to acquire the necessary documents.

b) Curriculum and attainment

This performance indicator, curriculum and attainment, is concerned with the following aspects: provision of relevant information to teachers, effectiveness of time-tabling, curricular breadth, choice and equity, and action to promote attainment. There is also a checklist for every aspect of the performance indicator. There is however no provision made in the policy for how to deal with curriculum change issues at the school level.

The responses of the principals on the question about the implementation of this performance indicator seem to indicate that this performance indicator is not implemented as stated in the NSE. **P2** and **P4** responded that they are not implementing the performance indicator, curriculum and attainment, as stated in the NSE policy. The reasons given by the two principals as to why they are not implementing this aspect as stated in the NSE policy include the following: lack of understanding of some issues of the aspect, failure to read the policy and lack of important resources like textbooks and curriculum guides at school. **HOD4**, **SMT4** and **SMT8** from the same schools as **P2** and **P4**, also cited curriculum and attainment (5.2) as one of the performance indicators that their schools are not implementing as stated in the NSE policy.

P1 and **P3** indicated that they are implementing this aspect 'partly' and not as stated in the NSE policy. A significant number of HODs and SMT members confirmed the responses of the three principals that this aspect is 'partly' implemented (and not precisely as stated in the policy document) at their schools. **P5** rated the implementation of this aspect as extensive. **HOD5** (from the same school as **P5**) however, disagreed with **P5** and stated that this performance indicator is implemented poorly at his school.

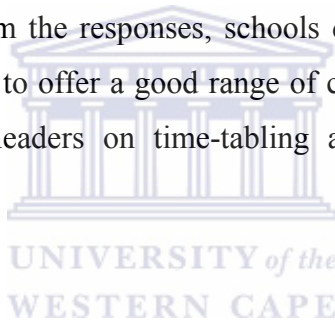
On the question on why the principals were implementing this performance indicator partly and not as stated in the policy document, only **P1** could explain:

Although this performance indicator is the one that the school started implementing, it is not implemented precisely as stated in the NSE. The

school has come up with some plans to check on the curriculum and attainment implementation but such plans are still not implemented. There are also some aspects of this performance indicator that I do not understand like action to promote curriculum attainment”.

Significantly, nine of the HODs and SMT members responded that curriculum and attainment (5.2) is one of the performance indicators of the key area number five which is not implemented as stated in the NSE policy at their respective schools.

While principals are expected through the NSE policy to have effective time-tables at their schools, some principals were never trained on how to draft time-tables. On the other hand, curricular breadth, choice and equity are determined by the availability of resources. As it transpired from the responses, schools do not have adequate resources that are necessary for a school to offer a good range of curricular choices. This calls for both training of the school leaders on time-tabling and the provision of adequate resources to schools.



c) Administration

This performance indicator deals with the following four aspects: lines of delegation and responsibility, storage and retrieval of information, compliance with government requirements and management of absenteeism. There is a checklist for every aspect of this performance indicator.

According to **P₁** this performance indicator is implemented as stated in the NSE policy. The principal has even established a committee at the school to check on administrative issues. However, according to **HOD₁** and **SMT₁** (from the same school as **P₁**) the aspect on administration is implemented ‘partly’ and not as stated in the policy document.

P₂, P₃ and P₄ responded that they are implementing this aspect just partly. P₂, P₃ and P₄ did not indicate the level of implementation of this performance indicator. However, P₅ stated that she is implementing at least eighty percent of this performance indicator, without elaborating as to why the other twenty percent is not implemented. The responses by most of the HODs and the SMT members from the four schools indicate significantly that this aspect is not implemented as stated in the policy document.

In stating the reasons why they are only implementing this performance indicator partly and not as stated in the NSE, P₂, P₃ and P₄ commonly stressed through their responses the following reasons: there are still some aspects of this performance indicator that the principals do not know how to implement. However, all three principals could not specify the aspects that they do not understand on this performance indicator. The researcher could not investigate why the principals did not seek assistance from their supervisors or facilitators of the NSE training to explain such aspects to them. Nevertheless, the responses of the principals, HODs and SMT members seem to stress that schools are not administered effectively as stated in the NSE policy.

There are still some schools in the Oshikoto Region where there are no necessary ministerial policy documents available. In the absence of the necessary policy documents, principals experience difficulties with drawing the lines of delegation and responsibility. Principals are also not trained on how to draw effective lines of delegation. Hence, they often draw lines of responsibilities that are not in line with the ministerial guidelines and they end up in disagreement with their SMT members. While the training on the national standards was supposed to train the principals on these issues, the training failed to prepare the principals on most of the important practical issues that are stated in the policy document.

d) Leadership

The performance indicator on leadership is concerned with three aspects only. This includes professional competence, commitment and perceived quality, ability to direct,

inspire and motivate and inter-personal relationships and teamwork. Again, there is a checklist for every aspect of this performance indicator.

Although this performance indicator is concerned with leadership, it does not address leadership development and training (especially for middle managers) at the school level. Furthermore, there is too much emphasis on 'top-down' leadership and management, which is considered as ineffective. There is also no provision made for leadership training for the School Board members who are considered as important in the management and leadership of schools. Moreover, this performance indicator should have included an aspect on the identification of leadership needs and how such needs would be attended to.

The responses of the respondents on the question about the implementation of this performance indicator however suggest that a significant number of the principals are not leading their schools effectively. I have indicated earlier on that thirteen of the fifteen HODs and SMT members responded that all performance indicators of the fifth key area are only implemented 'partly' and not as stated in the policy document. The responses of the principals were also important. **P4** indicated that she is only 'trying to implement' this performance indicator. She stressed that there are still some aspects that she does not understand how they should be implemented. Thus, **P4** is not implementing the performance indicator on leadership as stated in the NSE document.

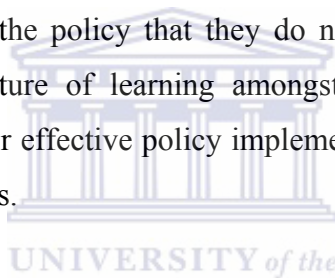
According to **HOD4**, **SMT7** and **SMT8** (from the same school as **P4**), not any of the performance indicators of the fifth key area is implemented as stated in the policy document. Hence, their responses confirm the responses of the principal that this aspect is not implemented as stated in the NSE.

P1, **P2** and **P3** responded that they are implementing this performance indicator better. All three principals (**P1**, **P2** and **P3**) responded that they do not understand this performance indicator very well. There are still aspects like professional competence and instructional leadership that they need clarification on, and guidance on how to implement them. A significant number of HODs and SMT members from the three schools (of **P1**, **P2** and **P3**)

confirmed through their responses, the views of the five principals that they are not implementing this performance indicator as stated in the NSE document.

P5 however responded that she is implementing this performance indicator as stated in the NSE policy. **HOD5**, **SMT9** and **SMT10** from the same school as **P5**, responded that this performance indicator is not implemented as stated in the policy document. The three respondents stressed the lack of training on the NSE at the school as the reason why this performance indicator is not implemented as stated in the policy document. Thus, the responses of the principal and the SMT members to the question about the implementation of this performance indicator (leadership) do not agree.

It seems that **P1**, **P2**, **P3** and **P4** do not see the urgency to seek assistance from their supervisors on the aspects of the policy that they do not understand very well. There seems to be a lack of a culture of learning amongst the school leaders, which is considered as a precondition for effective policy implementation and educational reform, as Malcolm (2001: 207) stresses.



On the other hand, the researcher has emphasized through the literature review that professional competence, commitment, ability to communicate the school vision and other leadership qualities are fostered through training and support. While the principals are expected, through the implementation of the NSE, to have the said leadership qualities, there have been very few leadership training programmes to foster such qualities. Yet, successful implementation of any educational policy and effective instructional leadership call for intensive training of school leaders, the SMT members, the staff and the School Board members.

The researcher has argued in chapter two that qualities of effective leadership are inculcated and enhanced through formal professional development and support of the headship. The performance indicator on leadership however, does not stress leadership development of the school leaders, the SMT members, the staff or the School Board members.

e) Management of staff

This performance indicator (management of staff) is concerned with various aspects. This includes the precise definition of the school's staffing needs, optimum allocation of staff to duties, definition of the duties of all staff, ensuring compliance, monitoring of performance and identification of the staff's needs, staff development and grievance procedures.

While **P5** responded that the performance indicator on management of staff is implemented strongly, **P4** responded that this performance indicator is not implemented as stated in the NSE document. According to **P4** there are aspects of this performance indicator that she does not know how to implement. Though she has read the NSE policy and seems to understand it, she does not know how to implement some of the aspects. Thus, **P4** responded that she is not implementing the performance indicator on management of staff as stated in the policy document.

Responding to the question "Which aspect of the fifth key area would you say your school is not implementing as stated in the NSE document?" **HOD4** and **SMT7** (all from the same school as **P4**) responded that the aspect on management of staff is not implemented as stated in the NSE document. Their responses thus confirmed the answers of the principal. On the other hand, the responses of **SMT9** and **SMT10** (from the same school as **P5**) indicate that the aspect on management of staff is not implemented as stated in the NSE (despite the fact that the principal responded that the performance indicator is implemented extensively). **HOD5** indicated that all performance indicators of the fifth key area are not implemented at the school as stated in the NSE.

A significant number of principals (**P1**, **P2** and **P3**) responded that they are only implementing some aspects of this performance indicator. This means that all three principals are only implementing the performance indicator on management of staff partly and not as stated in the policy document.

P1 and **P3** stressed through their responses that they need assistance on how to implement the following aspects: staff development and precise definition of the school's staffing needs. While some aspects of management of staff are implemented as stated in the NSE, there are also other aspects that are not implemented at all because the principals do not understand how to implement them. Hence, **P3** had not even drafted the staff development plan for the school due to lack of proper understanding of how it should be done.

In addition to the above responses of **P1**, **P2** and **P3**, a substantial number of HODs and SMT members from the three respective schools, confirmed that this performance indicator is not implemented as stated in the NSE document. Four of the five principals therefore suggested intervention in a form of training, to enable them to implement the NSE policy better.

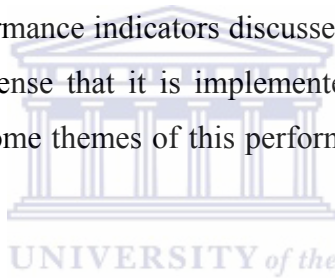
While some principals may easily understand the terminology that is used in the policy document, some principals may find it difficult to understand some of this terminology (for instance "precise definition of the school's staffing needs"). Hence, some respondents suggested that the NSE policy should be translated into local languages. Thus, the principal needs assistance to be able to understand what is expected from him/her. These are some of the issues that the training on the NSE should have focused on. However, this could not have been done effectively within the time period of two days in which the training took place.

f) Management of physical resources

The performance indicator on management of physical resources is concerned with four aspects. This includes utilization of resources, maintenance, inventory control and management of resources for teaching and learning. There is also a checklist for every aspect of this performance indicator.

The responses of the five school principals to the question about the implementation of this performance indicator were important. It seems, from the responses, that a high number of principals are not implementing this performance indicator as stated in the policy document due to a lack of understanding of how to implement some aspects of this performance indicator.

P3 seems to be pessimistic about effective implementation of this performance indicator and the national standards in general when he responded: “There is a will to do better but there are too many activities for the principal and for the teachers that prevent them from implementing the policy effectively”. **P3** added that he does not understand the inventory control aspect of this performance indicator, but he rated the implementation of this aspect as strong. This means that the implementation of this performance indicator is better than the other five performance indicators discussed earlier on. However, this does not mean it is strong in the sense that it is implemented as stated in the NSE policy document, because there are some themes of this performance indicator that he does not understand well.



P1 responded that he does not understand some aspects of this performance indicator. He (**P1**) referred to maintenance of physical facilities as one of the aspects that he does not understand. So, like **P3**, **P1** is not implementing this performance indicator (management of physical resources) as stated in the policy. The training facilitators did not go through all the aspects (and their checklists) of all the performance indicators to enable the principals to understand the NSE thoroughly. Instead, the facilitators only concentrated on case study activities, as the responses indicated.

P5 seems to understand all the themes of this performance indicator but she is not implementing them as stated in the NSE. Hence, she rated the implementation of this performance indicator at eighty percent (80%). She could however not explain why the other twenty percent is not implemented. Significantly though, **HODs** and all the SMT members from the same school as **P5**, responded that this performance indicator is not implemented as stated in the NSE.

Added to the above responses, **P₂** and **P₃** responded that they do not understand how to implement some of the aspects of this performance indicator. Apart from a lack of understanding on how to implement some of the aspects, **P₂** directly responded: “I have also not read the national standards policy since the training”. A highly significant number of HODs and SMT respondents from the same schools (of **P₂** and **P₃**) confirmed the responses of the two principals that this performance indicator is not implemented at the two schools as stated in the national standards policy.

It transpired from the responses that principals are overloaded with various responsibilities as the researcher indicated in chapter two. Consequently, there is not sufficient time to read or study policy documents, particularly if such policy documents are substantially voluminous like the national standards policy document. Furthermore, principals are discouraged to read the policy, which they were not effectively prepared on. The preparation of the principals on the national standards did not enable them to understand the policy better. Thus, this backfires on the implementation of the educational policy and may not bring about the desired quality of education.

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g) Management of finance

Management of finance, as a performance indicator, is concerned with the following themes: utilization of funds received, School Board involvement and budgeting and accounting. The policy on the national standards of education makes provision for a checklist for every aspect of the performance indicator.

Nevertheless, a significant number of respondents indicated through their answers that there is an improvement in the management of finances at schools. Four of the five principals responded that they are implementing this performance indicator as stated in the policy document. Principals are seemingly committed to attend to financial matters. **P₁** responded:

“When it comes to financial matters like school budget, expenditure and the amount that the learners contribute to the school development fund, these are all done as stated in the NSE. The School Board authorizes all financial matters and I report and coordinate them to all responsible authorities as stated in the policy document”. **P1** rated the implementation of this performance indicator at ninety percent (90%).

P5 rated the implementation of this aspect as being implemented extensively. **P2** and **P3** also responded that they are implementing this performance indicator as stated in the policy document.

In addition to the principals’ responses, an important number of HODs and SMT respondents indicated through their responses that management of finance at schools has significantly improved. Although the responses indicate that there is an improvement in the implementation of this performance indicator, the researcher is skeptical that there are still some important aspects of this indicator that the principals are not implementing accordingly. The responses could also entail “success stories”

However, the researcher, as an inspector of education, has observed that the management of finances at schools has improved significantly during the last five years or so. With the introduction of the Education Act of 2001 schools were legally obliged to appoint external auditors to audit school finances. Inspectors of education are required to supervise the appointments of external auditors through the School Boards and to submit the auditors’ reports to the Office of the Regional Directorate. Thus, the improvement in the management of finance may be attributed to the introduction of the Education Act of 2001.

To the question “Which aspects of the key area number five of the NSE do you not understand well?” all five principals responded that they do not understand the performance indicator on policy, planning and implementation (5.1). Additionally, principals added that they do not understand the aspects on curriculum and attainment

(5.2), management of staff (5.5) and management of physical facilities (5.6) very well. Although the responses stressed that these are the only aspects that the principals do not understand very well, it seems that the principals do not understand the other performance indicators of the fifth key area very well. Thus, there is a need for intervention in the form of training to institutionalize the policy into the school practices, as various responses from the principals also suggested.

Even the responses of the HODs and the SMT members seem to emphasize the need for such an institutionalization of the policy into the school structures and practices. In responding to the question “How do you expect the principal to implement the NSE?” a great number of HOD and SMT respondents stressed training the staff and knowledge of the national standards policy as vital.

Four of the five HODs responded that they expect the principals to train the SMT members, the staff, and the School Board members on the national standards. Furthermore, their responses suggested that the principals should study and know the policy thoroughly. Seven of the ten SMT members responded that they expect the principals to know the policy and to subsequently train the SMT members and the staff. However, **SMT4** added: “The principal should also share the information about the policy with all the parents”. According to **SMT7**, the inspector of education and the cluster center head, should strictly evaluate how the principal is implementing the policy and they should also give training and assistance to the principals.

In total, the responses demonstrated that the practical consequences of the implementation of the policy are not designed to be in favour of change and improvement of the quality of education. If the policy on the national standards was not introduced for what Jansen (2001: 288) referred to as the symbolic role of the policy, then there is a need for immediate intervention. I should note however that this does not discount the possibility of positive change results within the education system. The educational policy seems to leave traces of change in the practices of a few educators. Arguably, the introduction of the national standards may only benefit the well-resourced schools that

are already privileged with well-qualified teachers and effective leadership and not the majority of schools where change is mostly needed.

4.2.7 Challenges experienced by the principals in the implementation of the NSE

The researcher rightly argued in chapter two that the school heads are faced with numerous challenges globally. More so, principals in Africa lead and manage schools under daunting circumstances. Academics say that being a principal in Africa is in itself challenging and stressful. Accordingly, the principals, the HODs and the SMT members that the researcher interviewed, listed various challenges that they and teachers are faced with in implementing the national standards.

In responding to the question “What are the major challenges you are experiencing in the implementation of the NSE?” the five principals listed the following challenges that face them: a lack of an understanding of the policy, and poor English language communication. Additionally, the principals stressed lack of or inadequate resources (both human and physical resources). In their responses they emphasized that there is a lack of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials. There is also no equipment or facilities like computers and photocopiers to help with the teaching and management of schools. According to **P2**, even classrooms are not enough.

P5 who seems to be frustrated by the lack of human resources responded:

“Provision of human resources is a very serious challenge. For instance our school is a cluster center and qualifies for a secretary but this is not provided. I am assisted by the secretary at the circuit office or by one at a neighboring school. At times such secretaries are too busy with their work and thus unable to render any assistance”.

Principals have cited lack of basic services like electricity and water as one of the major challenges. Even the risograph machine that **P5**'s school bought is kept at the circuit

office, which is 40 kilometers away from the school. And the regional office is even further, 132 kilometers away from the school. Both P₃ and P₅ travel long distances to get services from the respective circuit offices and the regional office.

Added to the above major challenges that principals are experiencing in implementing the national standards, are the challenges to bring the parents on board. According to P₁ the attitude of the parents is a challenge. In order to implement an educational policy very well, the principal needs time to explain and discuss the policy with all stakeholders (parents and teachers). Principals have too many other commitments and some parents may not even be available while others may come up with excuses for not attending meetings.

There are also some other challenges that the principals listed, like learners coming late to school and lack of cooperation and communication among the staff members. Some staff members would attend meetings and they would deliberately not participate. At times such staff members would make things difficult for the principal unnecessarily, but deliberately, just to see the principal failing in carrying out duties. When the principal needs parental support for instance, some staff members would influence the parents not to give their support to the principal. Without parental support, the principal would experience difficulties in implementing the policy and carrying out any other duties

The HODs and SMT members confirmed through their responses that there are numerous challenges facing the principals in implementing the national standards.

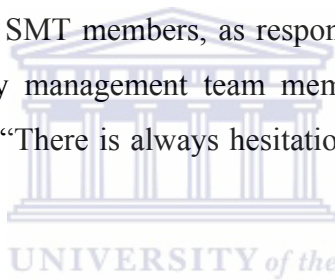
Most of the challenges listed by the HODs and the SMT members are however similar to those that the principals listed. The following additional challenges were listed by a significant number of the HOD and the SMT respondents:

There is a lack of parental involvement, some schools are too big, principals are overloaded with responsibilities, there is no financial support to help implement the policy, principals lack the necessary skills required to implement an educational policy, there is no culture of reading and learning, there is resistance from teachers to implement

the policy and the challenge to create an environment that is conducive to implementing an educational policy.

The responses to the question “What would you say are the challenges that the management team members experience in the implementation of the NSE?” were significant to this study. The respondents stressed through their responses that, like the principals, the management team members are faced with various challenges.

The responses stressed that SMT members need training or retraining on the national standards. Some members of the school management teams were not even informed of the policy. Hence, this calls for training. Even P₁ who has trained SMT members at his school, stressed the need to retrain the SMT members. Apparently the first training was hastily done for one day only. SMT members, as responses stressed, do not understand the policy. Furthermore, many management team members lack the initiative to put things into practice. P₁ added: “There is always hesitation to implement the policy from the side of the SMT members”.



Another major challenge for the SMT members that the principals stressed in their responses is that the schemes of work and the syllabi change occasionally and only teachers are trained when changes are introduced. This creates confusion among the SMT members and makes it very difficult for them to supervise the teachers because they, (SMT members), lack the necessary skills.

At times however, SMT members face the challenge to get support and cooperation from the parents, teachers and even from other members of the management teams. Stressing this point, P_s stated:

“[...] and sometimes there is no support for the learners at home and this results in learners not doing their homework [...] and the management team members are challenged to bring the staff members together to work like a team because they are not getting cooperation and support from the

staff members. There is also a lack of cooperation among management team members”.

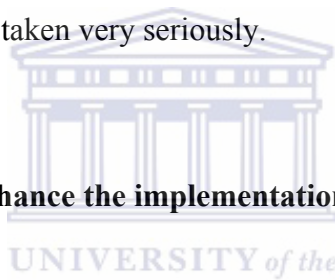
In addition to the above challenges, HODs and SMT members indicated that learners’ behaviour is a challenge. There is a lack of discipline among the learners. The SMT members are also faced with the challenge of under-qualified teachers. While some of them are members of the management teams, it is said that such teachers find it difficult to supervise others and to perform their duties. According to **SMT₃** and **SMT₆** the SMT members are also faced with the challenges of working with ineffective principals and a lack of urgency by both principals and teachers. According to them the policy is not taken very seriously. The responses of the principals, HODs and SMT members thus confirm that there are numerous challenges facing the SMT members in implementing the national standards.

Equally, teachers at the five schools are also faced with challenges in implementing the national standards. In responding to the question regarding the major challenges faced by the teachers in implementing the national standards, the respondents mentioned several challenges. Many of the major challenges listed are similar to the challenges faced by the principals and the SMT members. Amongst the major challenges faced by the teachers that were listed are the following: poor understanding of the policy that resulted from lack of training, lack of commitment, too many tasks, a poor culture of reading, lack of adequate financial resources, and inadequate teaching and learning resources. According to **SMT₁** teachers also lack the professional skills required to implement a policy.

P₃, **P₄** and **P₅** stressed that teachers do not understand the policy because they were not trained. Some teachers were only briefed about the policy. While teachers who trained recently at the colleges/universities may understand the national standards policy without being trained, those who trained in the olden days may not be able to understand the policy. The responses stressed that some teachers are also under-qualified and they are therefore unable to present their lessons in the medium of instruction (English) effectively. There is therefore a need for intensive training of teachers on the NSE policy.

Other challenges facing the teachers that the respondents highlighted are poor parental involvement in education and lack of vision and competence. Teachers do not even know how to respond to the SMT members' call for proper policy implementation (**P1**). According to **P4** the policy is “not elaborative on some aspects and may not be applicable to schools that do not have enough resources”.

It has to be said therefore that while the principals, the SMT members and the teachers do not seem to take the implementation of the national standards policy very seriously, they are also faced with various daunting challenges. The researcher has stressed in chapter two that both head teachers and teachers are overloaded. And again, as Fullan (1992: viii) seems to emphasize, they are undervalued and the system does not usually treat them any better. Some of the challenges facing the principals could have been solved if leadership development and training were taken very seriously.



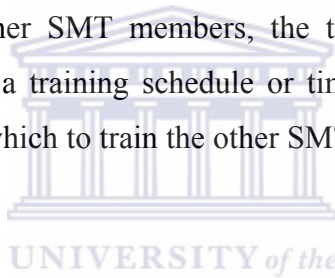
4.2.8 Recommendations to enhance the implementation of the national standards

Some significant responses by the principals to the question: “What do you think could have been done to enhance the preparation of the principals to implement the NSE better?” were similar. Three principals (**P2**, **P3**, and **P4**) all responded by saying that the two-days training was short. The training should have been at least for one month. **P2** added that after such training principals should have been mandated to inform the parents and train the teachers on the NSE policy. Inspectors of Education should have also monitored whether the principals had informed the parents and trained the teachers.

P5 emphasized the need for follow-up visits to schools after the two-days training. In her response, she (**P5**) stated that the Ministry of Education spends much money on training people but it fails or takes too long to do follow-up visits. On the other hand, some schools have problems that require special attention in implementing a policy and that should have been considered if the policy was to be implemented effectively.

In their responses **P1** and **P5** recommended that the Ministry of Education should have attended to equitable distribution of resources to all schools before the implementation of the NSE. There are some things referred to in the NSE that some schools do not have. It is also suggested that the Ministry of Education should have solicited the views of the principals and teachers before the implementation of the national standards. The responses suggested that the flow of information on the NSE should have targeted or focused on all stakeholders, not just on the principals. This means that the training should have included all the SMT members, the teachers and the parents.

The responses of the HODs and SMT members to this question were important too. Some of their suggestions were significantly similar to those of the principals especially in terms of the length of the training, the follow-up visits to schools and the mandating of the principals to train the other SMT members, the teachers and the School Board members. It is suggested that a training schedule or time framework could have been given to the principals within which to train the other SMT members, the teachers and the School Board members.



In addition to the above suggestions to enhance the preparation of the principals to implement the NSE better, the HODs and SMT members responded that:

The training of the principals on the national standards of education could have considered the size of the schools. Some schools are big and may require a bigger representation than just two representatives. Secondly, the seven key areas of the national standards could have been implemented gradually (for instance two key areas per year). In such a case then, the training would be conducted every year. It is said that some of the school leaders lack the necessary management capacity to implement all the seven key areas at once. Thirdly, the responses suggested that the Regional Director could have written a circular to schools to highlight what is expected from the principals, the SMT members, the staff and the School Board members regarding the implementation of the NSE. This could have helped the SMT members and the teachers by reminding their principals to train them.

When the principals responded to the question “What would you recommend be done to help the principals with improvements in their implementation of the NSE?” all five principals recommended training/retraining. While only two principals recommended training for principals only, three of the principals suggested training for the principals, the SMT members, teachers and parents. There should be follow-up visits to schools after such training. Principals suggested the training be at least one week long. Significantly, some principals responded that they should make sure that they and other stakeholders understand the NSE. The Ministry of Education should also provide basic services like water and electricity to schools.

Responding to the same question (What do you think should be done to help principals to improve the implementation of the NSE?) ten HODs and SMT members recommended training/retraining. Such training should include all the SMT members, the staff and the School Board members and should last for one week. Some other important recommendations that a great number of respondents (HOD and SMT) cited, include the following: assessment on whether the principals understand the NSE policy and how they are to implement it, follow-up visits to schools, principals to read and discuss the policy at their schools, a comprehensive plan to implement the NSE and adequate provision of resources to schools. According to **SMT6** however, effective implementation of the national standards would require the Ministry and the Region to “remove principals that are dead wood from schools and to replace them with competent ones”.

In addition to the above recommendations, the principals added two different issues that they consider relevant and important. This includes a request to conduct a special separate training for the principals whose English communication is poor and the inspectors to carry out school visits regularly in order to monitor whether the policy is implemented effectively.

Additional recommendations by the HODs and SMT members include the following: the need to translate the NSE policy into local languages, equitable redistribution of resources, drafting of lines of duties for the Heads of Departments and an urgent need to

assist the principals, the middle managers and teachers in the implementation of the national standards of education.

It should be stressed that the respondents made important recommendations that could enhance a better implementation of the NSE policy. The researcher indicated in chapter three that he interviewed four experienced researchers in policy implementation in Namibia. The researcher has learnt significantly from interviewing the four researchers. The data collected from the four researchers contributed to a better understanding of the importance of the national standards and the expectations of those who are experienced in the implementation of policies, and on the professional preparation of primary school principals to implement the policy. This has also helped the researcher to understand what needs to be done to implement the national standards better.

The four researchers that the researcher interviewed made significant recommendations. While all four researchers considered the national standards very important, they acknowledged through their responses that the school leadership is faced with various challenges in implementing the NSE policy. Hence, the researchers recommended that, apart from rigorous training, proper monitoring of policy implementation at school level is needed. Equally, adequate resources should be provided to schools.

The four researchers also recommended that there is a need to “modify the attitudes” of principals and teachers towards commitment and a better work ethic, and to cultivate a culture of reading and learning in educators. This, they said, will not only help principals and teachers to implement the NSE better but it will also help them to cope with the various challenges of the day. And then again, it is recommended that principals should have reflective skills to help them identify the areas where they need assistance. Cooperation should be enhanced between the schools and the institutions of high learning like the University and the Polytechnic of Namibia. This will encourage the schools to seek for curriculum and leadership assistance and support from the said institutions. This cooperation, they said, may contribute to effectiveness in teaching, school management and policy implementation.

4.2.9 Summary

The respondents' responses were very significant. Although the responses ranged from agreements to disagreements, such responses greatly confirmed that the training of the primary school principals on the national standards has not effectively impacted on their leadership and management of schools. Hence, principals are not implementing the national standards as stated in the policy document because they received elusive and ineffective professional preparation.

Although there are success stories by some individual principals and SMT members at some schools, such traces of change may not make continuous impact on the quality of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of the education system.

The responses also confirmed the view expressed by Sayed and Jansen (2001: 5) that human resource training is crucial for successful policy implementation and any educational change. The findings of this research study thus cause the researcher to question the extent to which educational policies are implemented and institutionalized in the Namibian schools. It goes without saying then, that the responses confirmed that the professional preparedness of the five primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region has not impacted effectively on their leadership and management of schools. Thus, there is a need to retrain the principals on the national standards for successful implementation thereof.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This research study made important findings that helped the researcher to draw significant conclusions and to make recommendations. This chapter therefore presents the major conclusions that the researcher has drawn from such findings. Furthermore, the research study proposes possible steps that can be taken to help the principals to implement the NSE policy effectively.

This study recognizes the role and the importance that the school leadership plays in keeping the school heading in the right direction. The study recognizes also the relationship between effective leadership and school effectiveness as well as quality education. Even the Ministry of Education in Namibia acknowledges and associates school effectiveness with successful school headship. It goes without saying then, that there is a growing awareness and recognition that effective school headship contributes to quality education.

While there is a growing recognition that effective school leadership contributes to school effectiveness and quality education, there has been little professional preparation and development for the school leadership in the Oshikoto Region of Namibia. I have stressed in the literature review that effective professional preparedness of school leadership enhances successful implementation of educational policies.

It should be stressed that the Ministry of Education introduced many innovative policies aimed at changing and improving the education system. While the introduction of such policies aimed for change and improvement, and has been given the highest priority, the implementation thereof has been very poor and ineffective. I

have stressed in chapter two that policy implementation issues in developing countries, like Namibia, are neglected because policy-making seems to be more prestigious than the implementation (Dyer, 1999: 45). This results in principals and teachers, including those that are seemingly poorly prepared by the apartheid education system, implementing educational policies without being well prepared. Conversely, the implementation of the educational policies in Namibia, particularly in the Oshikoto Region, has been a trial-and-error experience for the education practitioners.

This study however, helped the researcher to understand that in spite of the poor and ineffective professional training for the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region, there are a few principals that are trying their best to implement the educational policy as recommended in the policy document. Yet, they are faced with many daunting challenges.



5.2 Conclusions

This research study made conclusions in relation to the research question (How effectively has the training of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region on the national standards for education, impacted on their leadership and management of schools?). The conclusions were drawn around the six sub-questions of the main question.

The six sub-questions are: Do the primary school principals consider the NSE important? Do the principals consider their training on the NSE as effective? Were all the members of the SMTs at the five primary schools trained for the implementation of the NSE? Are the primary school principals implementing the ‘management and leadership of school’ as one of the seven key areas of the NSE as stated in the policy document? What are the challenges experienced by the primary school principals in

implementing the NSE? What could be done to enhance the preparation of the primary school principals to be better able to implement the NSE?

This study found that the training of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region on the national standards has not impacted effectively on their leadership and management of schools. Hence, the principals need to be trained more effectively in order to implement the national standards policy better and to subsequently improve teaching and learning at their schools. In recognition of the paucity of research on policy implementation in Namibia, this study hopes to contribute to a better understanding of policy implementation in schools in Namibia.

It is worthwhile to state that in terms of gender, there is no difference in policy implementation and leadership effectiveness. Even the size of the school did not seem to be a determining factor for effective leadership and management. Although some principals are heading schools with more educators and higher enrolments than others, this cannot be put down as the reason for not implementing management and leadership as stated in the policy document. There are also some principals that lead schools without Heads of Departments and seem to be overloaded with greater responsibilities than those who lead schools with Heads of Departments. However, this study did not find any significant difference between these principals in terms of the effectiveness of their management and leadership.

Even the ages as well as the years of experience of the principals made no significant difference in the implementation of the NSE. However, high academic qualifications enabled the principals to understand the policy better than those who were poorly qualified. While principals who trained under the apartheid education system and have no university qualifications experienced difficulties in understanding the NSE policy, the principal with the highest qualifications (BA and HED) understood the policy well. Yet, high qualifications did not make any difference in terms of the implementation of the NSE policy.

A closer look at the promotion and appointment of the principals and Heads of Departments revealed that school leaders are promoted and appointed without the necessary leadership and management skills. Thus, teachers are promoted to principalship without having gone through promotion stages. Furthermore, there are no proper induction programmes that prepare and enable them to cope with the leadership and management demands of the day. Then again, there have been few leadership development programmes to address their leadership needs.

Importantly, all school leaders recognize the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as of management and leadership of their schools. Thus, they raised broader reasons for the importance of the national standards. This demonstrates also the leaders' great measure of concern. Although there is a degree of pessimism as to whether the national standards would bring about the desired improvements amidst inequitable distribution of resources, the school leadership stressed that effective implementation of the NSE will result in quality education.

However, there have been pockets and traces of changes at some schools since the introduction of the national standards. The researcher is of the opinion that these pockets and traces of changes are not effective enough to bring about the desired continuous improvements in the schools. Furthermore, such changes may disappear if the conditions under which they developed are not further enhanced. The researcher, as an inspector of education with twelve years experience, has observed that efforts by individual principals and teachers to change conditions, 'wither away' if these changes are not institutionalized into the whole school's structures and practices.

This study has gathered evidence to show that the principals' training on the national standards has not prepared them effectively to enable them to implement the NSE accordingly. While the training on the NSE that prepared the principals and members of the school management teams, was planned for two days, it seems that it was conducted for one day only in some circuits. Representation differed from one school to the other. The training was not taken very seriously. Hence, some principals did

not even attend the training on the NSE. It seems it was left to the principals to decide whether to attend or not. There was also no 'mandate' to give feedback to the other members of the management teams and to train them.

Although members of the SMTs or middle managers share authority and power with principals, there is evidence that the majority of them were not trained on the NSE. This study revealed that while some of them were trained after the follow up training on the NSE, there are still a number of them that are not yet trained. It was also strongly indicated through the responses that they need training. Furthermore, this study revealed that the policy on the national standards does not stress leadership development and training of the members of the SMT and School Boards, which is considered as crucial in the implementation of educational policies.

While one principal has made significant strides to train the SMT members at his school, the other principals did not train their SMT members. Principals were trained for two days only about a substantial policy document. Hence, they did not understand the training around the policy. The principals have stressed that their leadership training needs were not addressed and that they do not feel confident enough to implement the policy. I have argued earlier on that when the principal did not understand the change, then he/she wished that the change had never occurred and could not even prepare other staff members.

In this study the researcher has stressed that any training on the educational policies should include all SMT members, the staff and the School Board members. Institutionalizing new educational policies in all such school structures may impact effectively on the principals' leadership and management of schools and bring about the desired improvement and change:

We also believe that serious education reform will never be achieved until there is a significant increase in the number of people - leaders and other participants alike - who have come to internalize and habitually act on

basic knowledge of how successful change takes place (Fullan and Miles, 1992: 745).

The evidence gathered by this study revealed that the principals are not implementing the fifth key area of the NSE (management and leadership of schools) as stated in the policy document because they do not understand the NSE very well. Furthermore, principals do not know how to implement some aspects of the key area. While some principals were not trained at all, there was also no any attempt made to read the policy document. Some principals did not even distribute the policy documents to their SMT members and teachers on time.

Although the responses seem to stress, *inter alia*, a lack of understanding of the policy due to poor training and inadequate resources and equipment, there seems to be resistance and skepticism from some principals. Thus, policies such as the national standards for education, are criticized, in that they borrow from the developed countries and are developed for political symbolic roles only. Subsequently, they are not implemented effectively.

Furthermore, some principals do not consider the policy on the national standards as addressing their needs. Principals have leadership needs that they would like to be solved. The policy on the national standards does not address the leadership needs of the principals and their management team members. Also, principals indicated that there was not sufficient involvement as they were not consulted on the national standards. This may lead to resistance by some principals and they may not even consider the policy as legitimate.

All that said however, a look at the implementation of the key area on management and leadership revealed that the principals lack a culture of reading and learning. There is also a lack of urgency and seriousness among the principals. While the Oshikoto Regional Directorate has failed to ensure that important documents (that are

necessary for the implementation of the NSE) are available at the schools, the principals have also failed to secure such necessary documents for their schools.

The Directorate for Programme and Quality Assurance (PQA, 2007a: 15 - 20 and 2007b: 22 - 27) revealed in their reports that there are other principals that are not implementing the key area on management and leadership of schools as stated in the policy document. Furthermore, the Directorate for PQA indicated in their reports that important documents like, *inter alia*, the Education Act, the Public Service Act and the Code of Conduct for the Teachers were not available at the schools that were visited.

Although the Directorate failed to state in their reports the reasons why the performance indicators of the key area on management and leadership of schools are not implemented as stated in the policy document (an indication also that the reports are poor), the deduction drawn is that principals do not understand the NSE. Equally, principals are overloaded with responsibilities, as the researcher will discuss later.

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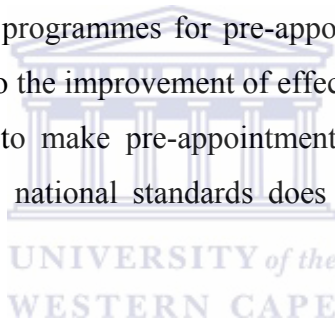
While there are a few "success stories" about the implementation of some aspects of the performance indicators (of the key area on management and leadership of schools), policy implementation literature reveals that isolated pockets of success do not survive long, but they atrophy over time. Thus, while the principals are challenged to improve the quality of teaching, learning and leadership of schools through the implementation of the policy, they are also caught in a situation where, because of poor professional preparedness, they are struggling to implement the educational policy. The Oshikoto Regional Directorate should therefore ensure that the principals are retrained intensively and that they understand the policy very well.

This study further found that apart from ineffective training and failure to train the other SMT members and the staff, there are various other challenges facing the principals in the implementation of the NSE policy. Some of these challenges however, are the results of the principals' inactions and could be solved. On the other

hand, schools seem to be overloaded with problems for which principals and the Region do not have solutions. Thus, things get worse rather than better.

Apart from being faced with various challenges and being promoted to principalship without the necessary leadership experience, principals are left on their own to lead and manage their schools. Principals have to rely on the trial-and-error experience and common sense in leading and managing their schools. Given the leadership challenges and demands of the day, however, leadership and management cannot be left to trial-and-error experience and common sense alone. The school leadership needs to be prepared and developed.

It goes without saying however that there is a growing recognition in Namibia that there is a need to develop programmes for pre-appointment leadership training and development so as to lead to the improvement of effective leadership. The Ministry of Education does not seem to make pre-appointment leadership training a priority. Equally, the policy on the national standards does not give priority to leadership development and training.



The performance indicator on leadership should have included leadership development and training aspects. This will help to facilitate leadership development for the SMT and School Board members at the school level, and to identify the principals' leadership needs. While the policy on the national standards makes no provision for leadership development and training, the Ministry has also failed to develop a training programme for the policy implementers, especially for those that are struggling with the implementation of the policy. Consequently, support services and training of the policy implementers have been left to the discretion of the Regional Directorates and Inspectors of Education.

5.3 Recommendations

This is not the first study conducted in Namibia that makes recommendations for possible improvements and changes of the education system. There have been various other studies that recommended possible steps for improvements and changes. Yet, such recommendations do not seem to have contributed to influencing any change. Education authorities need to read and implement the recommendations from academic investigations.

On top of the above, it is essential to stress that the problem or the cause of poor quality education in Namibia is not really a lack of formulation of educational policies. Educational innovations that have been introduced since 1990 are essentially adequate. Importantly, the problem is that the education system has enormously overloaded the principals, the SMT members and teachers with fragmented and uncoordinated innovations that make attempts at change, without training them.

Although some practical problems encountered in the implementation of the educational policy could have been anticipated, there have never been clear implementation strategies for educational innovations in Namibia. Consequently, our good goals and attempts to change or reform, fail, because goals, in the absence of a theory of how to achieve them, are mere wishful thinking (Fullan and Miles, 1992: 746).

In addition to the failure of attempts to implement educational innovations effectively, principals end up confused by being overloaded with such fragmented and ephemeral innovations that are never institutionalized effectively into the normal structures of the schools. Thus, schools become hotbeds for such innovations in the absence of effective training. The Oshikoto Regional Directorate should therefore make the schools the priority areas for support service and training for the principals. Hence, this study recommends that intensive training on the policy be conducted at their respective schools for the five primary school principals, their Heads of

Departments, the staff and the School Board members in order to improve the implementation thereof.

The Oshikoto Regional Directorate should also, in consultation with the Directorate for PQA, identify the schools whose contexts are similar to the five schools that this study investigated (not implementing the NSE policy successfully). Thus, the Region should train the principals, their SMT and School Board members and the staff at their schools. The policy implementers should also be given the necessary support services. It is recommendable for the Region to assign as many teams as possible to such schools because this may take a long time.

All that said then, it is worthwhile to state that the implementation of any important innovation like the national standards requires commitment, motivation, reading and learning cultures and skills from the side of the implementers. Literature on policy implementation and professional development suggest that the skills of the implementers about the policy and self-development are very important and effective. Thus, the principals, the SMT members and the teachers should make extra commitments to study the NSE policy.

The Regional Directors, the Inspectors of Education and the Advisory Teachers should motivate and encourage the principals, the SMT members and the teachers to read and acquire skills on the policy and inculcate in them the culture of reading and learning. The Regional Directorate should initiate and coordinate establishments of policy debate forums and an award system on successful policy implementation at regional and circuit levels. The inspectors should also introduce policy debate and discussion during the principals' monthly meetings. Furthermore, the Oshikoto Regional Director should introduce a policy debate at the Oshikoto Regional Education Forum.

In addition to the above, the Regional Directors and the inspectors, should ensure that all necessary policy documents are available at schools. The Inspectors of Education

should put in place a system whereby they check annually that necessary ministerial policy documents are safely secured at schools. An annual 'documents review' day should be included in the regional and the circuit calendars of annual activities. Inspectors should also encourage principals to maintain a proper filing system at their schools to avoid losing important documents.

Additionally, there should be a clear implementation strategy on the NSE and regular visits to the schools by the Inspectors of Education and the Advisory Teachers. I have stressed earlier on that there is a need to make schools our priority areas. Therefore, the number of schools that are visited per term should be increased. Furthermore, the duration of regional team visits to schools should be increased from two days to five days. This will not only help to ensure proper monitoring of the implementation of the policy, but it will also help to give the necessary support to principals when they experience problems in the implementation of the policy. A distinction should be made however, between the school visits that are carried out by the regional teams or staff members and the visits that are carried out by the external evaluators.

It is worthwhile to state that in most cases visits to schools have not been effective because visits were carried out within a very short time. This resulted in a lot of information and advice being shared hurriedly with the heads, the SMT members and teachers. Consequently, visits to schools have not been helpful to the principals but added to confusion and work overload. There is therefore a need to increase the number of inspection days per school to enhance the effective monitoring of policy implementation.

Inspectors of Education and Advisory Teachers are also overloaded with various administrative and leadership responsibilities. Hence, they do not spend adequate time at schools to advise and assist principals and their SMT members. It is therefore recommended that Inspectors of Education should be relieved from some of their administrative responsibilities like handling of leave and duty assumption forms, ordering of stationery and equipment, checking of promotion schedules and

interviewing of candidates for school promotion posts. This will help the inspectors to pay more attention to the development of school leadership and effectively monitor policy implementation.

The Region should also appoint enough advisory teachers and inspectors. For instance, there are only five inspectors that are responsible for five circuits in the Oshikoto Region. According to the EMIS (2005: 17) education statistics reports, there are 171 schools in the Region. Thus, the school-to-inspector ratio is thirty-four to one (34: 1). This leads to ineffectiveness because the inspectors will not be able to monitor all the schools effectively. It is also said that there are very few advisory teachers in the Oshikoto Region. The Director of Education should therefore see to it that all regional vacancies for advisory teachers are filled and new vacancies for advisory teachers and inspectors are budgeted for, in accordance with the regional staff establishment.

It is significant to emphasize that any implementation of educational innovation is resource-hungry. The NSE policy requires additional resources for training and implementation. The Ministry of Education is therefore challenged to provide additional resources to schools and to be efficient in the management of resources. Efficiency here refers to equal distribution of resources to all schools and equalizing leadership and management capacities across the system (Sayed, 2001: 263).

The Namibian government spends the bulk of its education budget on teacher salaries. For instance, about twenty percent of the Namibian budget goes for basic education only. However, about ninety percent of the basic education budget is spent on personnel cost, leaving only ten percent for other services and school resources (The SACMEQ II reports, 2004: 10). Thus, the government spends very little on resources like textbooks and equipment.

The government should therefore, through the Ministry of Education, manage down teacher costs and increase expenditure on resources and equipment for schools.

Alternatively, because it is likely that the teacher salaries will continue to take up much of the education budget, the Ministry of Education should increase teacher productivity. This may even require the Ministry to increase pupil-to-teacher ratios in order to provide adequate resources to schools.

In addition, there is a need to lay a stronger foundation at primary level. It is said that teachers who are not highly skilled or competent are placed to teach at the primary level, while those who are highly skilled and competent are placed at the secondary phase. Consequently, learners leave primary school without having achieved the necessary basic competencies. Teachers and principals who are highly skilled and competent should be appointed in the vacancies that occur at the primary schools or phase. Moreover, all teachers that are promoted and appointed as principals and Heads of Departments should be inducted effectively. There should also be an in-service support and training for the newly appointed principals and Heads of Departments.

The Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training (1999: 88) recommended that school managers should be appointed for a five-year period. At the conclusion of the period of tenure, the School Board should recommend whether or not to extend the appointment. The Ministry should implement this recommendation.

The Ministry should also establish leadership development centers in the Regions. The four colleges of education (Rundu, Caprivi, Windhoek and Ongwediva) can be the appropriate venues for leadership development and training centers. The Ministry should provide the necessary leadership development and training resources and equipment for the centers. Inspectors of Education can play a leading role in providing the principals with the opportunity to share their feelings, problems and frustrations with other school leaders at these centers. This may help principals to talk freely about common challenges and to seek collective solutions.

While experts on leadership issues can be invited to the said centers to address the school leaders on specific management and leadership issues, this also offers a great opportunity for the school leaders to debate policy implementation issues. The Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building Facility (ISCBF), which was established by the government to support capacity building in the education sector and is funded by The European Commission and Sida (the ETSIP, 2007: 81), can also develop the principals' leadership capacity at these centers.

The University of Namibia offers a post-appointment training programme for serving principals and Heads of Departments. The duration of the course ranges between one year (for full-time students) and two years (for part-time students). This course has not been widely 'marketed', thus only a few people are aware of this programme. There is therefore a need to inform the principals and Heads of Departments of this post-appointment training programme. The Ministry of Education should also make provision for leave for study purposes for principals that aspire to study for the programme full-time. Proper arrangements should be made with the School Boards to ensure that the school copes while the principal is on study leave.

The Minister of Education optimistically stated that the NSE would improve the quality of education:

The quality of the education currently on offer varies from school to school and indeed from class to class. It is therefore important that we develop means of assuring quality across the country. To do so we need standards [...]. The quality of the educational dialogue amongst the various stakeholders in the educational process should therefore be greatly improved (Ministry of Education, 2005a: I).

People seem to take policy implementation as a simple thing. I have stressed through literature review that policy implementation literature stresses that there is misjudging

of the ease of policy implementation that results in poor implementation planning. Subsequently, effective management of change gives way to short-term strategies of coping and dilution of policy efficiency. While the Minister's words are brave words that many people would like to believe, they also raise skepticism and doubt. Although the national standards are expected to improve the quality of the education, the words of the Minister do not seem to take into consideration the ineffectiveness of the principals and other educators in the implementation of the NSE policy. Neither do such words take into account what Hartshorne (1999: 123) referred to, as the inability (of the Ministry) to provide adequate needed resources and assistance to schools. Thus, the Ministry of Education should increase the provision of resources to schools and develop in-service training programmes that enhance leadership effectiveness.

Furthermore, the effectiveness and successfulness of the NSE policy depends on how the principals and the teachers consider its legitimacy, especially in terms of addressing their leadership, management and resources needs. Hence, there is an urgent need for the Ministry of Education to revise the policy on the national standards to include more aspects of leadership and management. More importantly, to include aspects of leadership development and training for the SMT and School Board members. SMT members are in authoritative positions to manage educational change. Furthermore, an educational policy that is aimed at changing and improving the quality of education and management of schools, and not just introduced for symbolic roles, should indicate clearly how the skills and the capacity of the implementers are to be developed.

Successful policy implementation requires well-coordinated continuous support, training and development programmes. The national standards policy needs to include professional training and development of the principals, the SMT members, the staff and the School Board members. In addition to this, the policy needs to be translated into local languages, as the respondents suggested. Teachers that are teaching at lower primary phase are using materials that are translated into the local

languages. This enhances better understanding and leads to successful implementation.

The Ministry of Education, in relationship with the Office of the Prime Minister, needs to provide a professional training and development programme for the school leadership to enhance effectiveness. The programme should be developed within the training framework of ETSIP, and should give emphasis to developing the principals' skills in terms of policy implementation, budgeting, management of ICT and other leadership issues. The programme should further indicate how school leaders are to be trained and developed every year because leadership problems and challenges haunt school leaders continuously.

5.4 Suggestions for further investigations

This research project has focused on the investigations into the professional preparedness of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region in implementing the national standards for education. The research project has drawn conclusions and recommended possible steps for the improvement of the professional preparation and development of primary school principals, so as to better equip them to implement the educational policy. As this academic debate is continual, this study suggests areas of possible further investigations:

- To investigate the correlation between policy implementation and school performance or results and
- To investigate how the professional training on the national standards has impacted on the principals' management and leadership of schools in formerly advantaged (White) schools.

5.5 Summary

Indeed, this research study has shown that professional preparedness and development of principals has become one of the focal points in leadership and management literature globally. The study has also shown that school leadership training and development in Africa, and Namibia in particular, is not considered as a priority.

Yet, the demands and challenges of the day are calling for intensive and rigorous leadership development and training. While it is expected that the primary school principals would be effectively and rigorously prepared to enable them to implement the NSE policy successfully, the professional preparedness of the principals has been elusive and ineffective.

Hypothetically, this research study assumed that primary school principals are not administering and leading their schools effectively and efficiently through policy implementation because their preparation and development have been poor.

It is the researcher's wish however, that this study will contribute to the debate on effective school management and leadership. Furthermore, the study hopes to contribute to enhancing better understanding of the need and urgency to prepare primary school principals to implement educational policies effectively. They say that part of the challenge of reaching the Jomtien goals of 1990 and 2000 lies in the way educational policies are implemented in our schools.

In conclusion, my experience as an inspector of education leads me to say that the concerns of this research study are seemingly shared by the majority of the schools in the Oshikoto Region, as well as in other regions of Namibia. However, the concerns of this study remain specific and particular to the contexts of the five schools that this study investigated.

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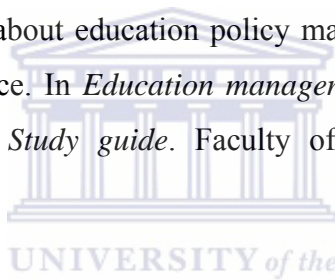
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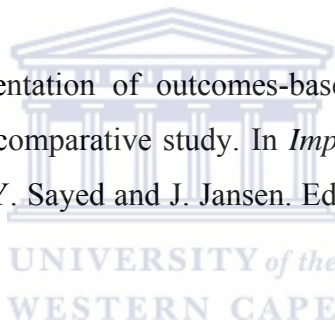
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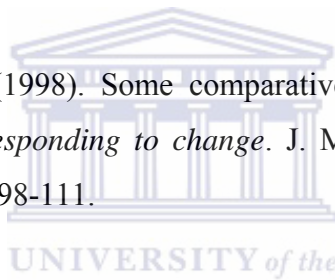
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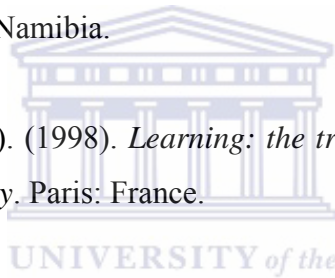
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Appendix B

From: Uugwanga N. N. (nickynatangwe@yahoo.co.uk)
Cell #: 0739889505
Res #: 45
Bellville
RSA

21st June, 2007

To: The Regional Director of Education
Oshikoto Region
P/Bag x 2028
Ondangwa

Attention: Mrs E. A. Nghipondoka

REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN OSHIKOTO REGION

I am writing this letter to your good office to request for authorization to conduct a practical research at five primary schools (grades 1-7) in your region. I am intending to collect the information during the months of July and early August 2007. I am currently an M. Ed student at UWC. My mini-thesis title is: *Understanding effective school management and leadership in Namibia: an investigation into the professional preparedness of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region to implement the national standards.*

During such research I will interview the principals, the heads of departments and two members each from the management teams and school governing bodies. Selection of schools will be done in liaison with the inspectors of the four/five respective circuits. I need however to stress that participation in the research study is of voluntary nature. Also, no one will be identifiable in any way from the results of the study. Nevertheless, I rely heavily on the good cooperation from the side of the schools.

May I please suggest to your good office to post the requested letter to me at P. O. Box 303, Ondangwa and to fax a copy of the letter to my supervisor, Prof. Harold Herman at the UWC, fax number + 27-21-8555577.

While I am looking forward to your response, I express my warm and sincere appreciation for your effort to assist me.

Sincerely

.....

N. N. Uugwanga

Appendix C

From: Uugwanga N. N. (nickynatangwe@yahoo.co.uk)
Student #: 9037151
Cell #: 0739889505
Bellville
RSA

21st June, 2007

To: The Supervisor
Education Faculty
University of the Western Cape
7530
Bellville

Attention: Prof. H. D. Herman

RE: REQUEST FOR A LETTER TO CONFIRM MY RESEARCH STATUS AND INTENTION

I am writing this letter to inform your good office of my intention to conduct a practical research at five primary schools in the Oshikoto region of Namibia. I am intending to collect the information during the months of July and early August 2007. I am collecting information for my mini-thesis title: *Understanding effective school management and leadership in Namibia: an investigation into the professional preparedness of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region to implement the national standards.*

As I am intending to interview the principals, the heads of departments and two members each from the management teams and the school governing bodies, I need a letter of authorization from the Oshikoto Regional Director. The Director will only write me such a letter once she has received confirmation of my status as a research student from my supervisor. It is for this purpose that I am requesting a letter from your good office.

I am thanking you very much in anticipation.

Sincerely

.....
N. N. Uugwanga

Appendix F

Interview Schedule for Principals

A. School profile details

1. How many educators/practitioners are at your school?
2. How many learners are enrolled at your school?
3. What is the learner-to-teacher ratio?
4. How many School Board Members are elected to serve on the Board of your school?
5. How many practitioners are in promotional posts at your school?

B. Biographical details of the principal

1. How old are you this year?
2. What is your highest academic qualification?
3. What is your highest professional qualification?
4. How many years have you been in the teaching profession?
5. How many years have you been a principal?
6. What are the promotion stages that you have gone through before you were promoted to principal?
7. Were you inducted when you were promoted as a principal?
8. How long was your induction?
9. When last did you attend a leadership training course/programme?
10. What was the training course/programme about?

C. Importance of the national standards of education (NSE)

1. Which three recently introduced educational policies would you list as the most important?/Would you say the NSE are important?
2. Why would you say that they are important?

3. Would you say that the introduction of the NSE has changed your style of managing and leading the school?
4. What would you say are the major changes that have taken place at your school since the introduction of the NSE?

D. The effectiveness of the leadership training on the NSE

1. How long was your training on the NSE? Would you have liked it to be longer than that?
2. Do you feel confident enough to implement the NSE after the training that was conducted last year?
3. What leadership training needs did you have that were addressed by the training on NSE?
4. Would you say that the training on the NSE was effective?
5. Why would you say that the training was effective?

E. Other management team members trained

1. How many members of the management team are at your school?
2. How many management team members attended the training on the NSE?
3. Were you trained to train the other members of the management teams?
4. Are all the management team members at your school trained on the NSE?

F. Implementation of the key area on 'management and leadership'

Would you say that you are implementing the following aspects of the fifth key area as stated in the NSE:

1. policy, planning and implementation (5.1)?
2. curriculum and attainment (5.2)?
3. administration (5.3)?
4. leadership (5.4)?
5. management of staff (5.5)?
6. management of physical resources (5.6)?

7. management of finance (5.7)?

Why would you say so? (This would apply to all the questions posed under this section).

8. Which aspects of the key area number five of the NSE you do not understand well?

G. Challenges experienced by the principal in implementing the NSE

1. What are the major challenges/problems you are experiencing in the implementation of the NSE?
2. What are the major challenges faced by your management team members in the implementation of the NSE?
3. What are the major challenges faced by your teachers to implement the NSE?

H. Recommendations to enhance the implementation of the NSE

1. What do you think could have been done to enhance the preparation of the principals to implement the NSE better?
2. What would you recommend to be done to help the principals to improve their implementation of the NSE?
3. Are there any other relevant issues you wish to raise with me on the topics discussed?

Thank you very much for participating in this research project.

Appendix G

Interview Schedule for the Heads of Departments (HODs) and Members of the Management Teams (SMTs)

1. Biographical details of the HOD/SMT members

How old are you this year?

What is your highest academic qualification?

What is your highest professional qualification?

How many years have you been HOD/SMT member?

Were you inducted when you were promoted as HOD/When last did you attend a training course/workshop on leadership and management?

2. Importance of the training on the national standards of education (NSE)

2.1 Would you say that you consider the NSE as important?

2.2 Why would you say that you consider the NSE as important?

2.3 How often do you discuss the NSE during your management/departmental meetings?

2.4 What are the specific issues of the NSE that you discuss during meetings?

3. The effectiveness of the training

Would you say that your principal considers the training on the NSE as effective?

Why would you say that the principal considers such training as effective?

What changes have you experienced at your school that you think are the subsequent results of the training on the NSE?

Would you say that the training on the NSE has influenced your principal's management and leadership style?

Would you say that the training on the NSE has influenced your own management and leadership style and effectiveness?

4. Training of other members of the management team

How many members of your management team have attended the training on NSE last year (2006) at the Circuit Office?

Was there any training on the NSE conducted at your school after the training at the Circuit Office?

Are all the members of the school management team trained on the NSE?

Who trained the other members of the management team?

5. Implementation of the key area on ‘management and leadership’

Would you say that your school is implementing the fifth key area of the NSE as stated in the NSE document? Why would you say so?

Which aspects of the fifth key area would you say your school is not implementing as stated in the NSE?

How do you expect the principal to implement the NSE?

6. Challenges experienced by the principals

What would you say are the challenges facing your principal in implementing the NSE?

What would you say are the challenges/problems that the school management team members experience in implementing the NSE?

What would you say are the problems/ challenges facing teachers in the implementation of the NSE?

7. Recommendations to enhance the implementation of the NSE

What do you think could have been done to enhance the preparation of the principal(s) to be able to implement the NSE better?

What do you think should be done to help the principals to improve the implementation of the NSE?

Are there any other relevant issues that you wish to raise with me on the topic discussed?

Thank you very much for participating in this research project.

Appendix H

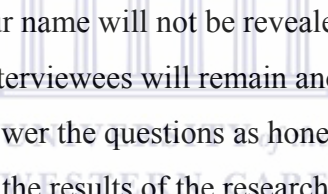
COLLECTION OF DATA FOR THE MINI-THESIS RESEARCH

Questionnaire for the School Board Members

I am a student at the University of the Western Cape and I am currently doing the research for a Masters in Education mini-thesis. The title for my mini-thesis is: **Understanding effective school management and leadership in Namibia: an investigation into the professional preparedness of the primary school principals in the Oshikoto Region to implement the national standards.**

I am therefore appealing to the School Board Members to assist me with my research by completing this questionnaire as honest as possible. I appreciate your assistance very much.

.....

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- NB:** 1. Please take note that your name will not be revealed in the results of this research project as all interviewees will remain anonymous.
2. You are requested to answer the questions as honest as possible because your responses will influence the results of the research study.
3. Please answer all the questions.

Questions:

1. General information

How old are you this year?

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How many years have you served on the School Board?

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How many School Board meetings have you attended since last year?

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How many times have you been trained as a Board member to take part in decision-making and leadership of your school and when was the last training?
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2. Importance of the national standards of education (NSE)

Has the school principal ever informed you of the NSE?

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How were you informed of the NSE?

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When were you informed of the NSE?

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2.4 Does the principal inform you about important educational policies?

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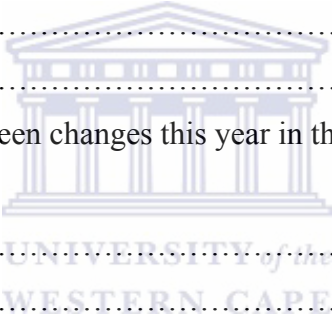
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3. Effectiveness of the leadership training on the NSE

Have you ever discussed the NSE in any of your Board meetings?

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Would you say there have been changes this year in the way the principal manages/leads the school?



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What would you have expected the principal to do to be successful when attending a training course on educational policy?

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4. Training of management team members

Were you trained as a Board member on the NSE? When were you trained?

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How many members of the Board were trained on the NSE and who conducted the training?

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How long was your training?

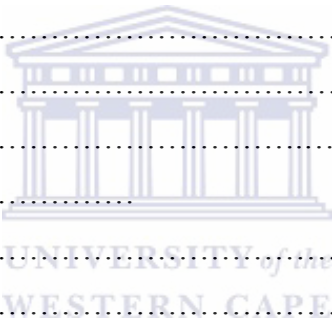
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Would you say that there is a need to train Board members on the NSE? Why would you say so?

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Would you say that the educational policy on the NSE is well implemented at your school?

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Why would you say so?

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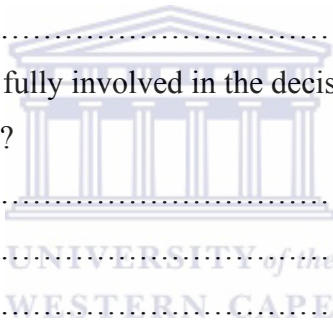
Are you aware of the Development Plan of your school?

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Who developed the Development Plan of your school?

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Would you say that you are fully involved in the decision-making and leadership of your school as a Board member?



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6. Challenges facing the principals in the implementation of the NSE

What challenges would you list that are facing the principal in implementing the NSE?

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7. Recommendations to enhance the implementation of the NSE

7.1 What do you think could have been done to enhance the preparation of the principal to implement the NSE better?

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The end

Thank you for participating in this research project



Appendix I
EGONGELO LYOMAUYELELE GOMAPEKAAPEKO
GEILONGO

Omapulo giilyo yetonatonongelo

Ngame ondi li omwiilongi moshiputudhilo shopombanda shaWestern Cape nondi li tandi ningi omapekaapeko shi na sha noshinyolwa shandje shonkatu yoMasters melongo. Oshipalanyolo shoshinyolwa shandje osho: **Okuuvako elelo newiliko lyoosikola li li nawa moNamibia: ekonakono lyomuule lyedheulo-longekidho lyaakuluntusikola yoosikola dhopevi moshitopolwa shaShikoto okutula miilonga omulandu gwoondondo dhelongo dhopashigwana.**

Otandi indile nesimaneko enene opo iilyo yetonatonongelo yi kwathe ndje okuudhitha ombapila ndjika yomapulo taye shi ningi paushili. Otandi tumbaleke unene ekwathelo lyeni.

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- Koneka:** 1. Edhina lyye itali ka hololwa puuyelee. Omadhina agehe gaakuthimbinga otaga ka kala ga holekwa.
2. Oto indilwa nesimaneko enene opo wu yamukule omapulo paushili oshoka omayamukulo goye ogo taga utha oshizemo shomakonakono.
3. Yamukula omapulo agehe.

Omapulo:

1. **Uuyeleele wa mbwalangandja**

Owu na oomvula ngapi?

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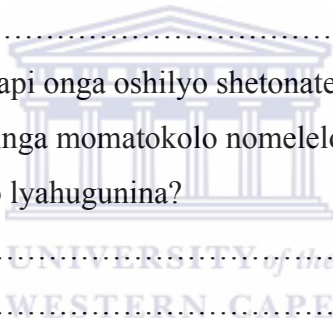
Owa kala oshilyo shetonatelonongelo uule wethimbo li thike peni?

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Owa holoka kiigongi ingapi okuza omvula ya zi ko?

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Owa mona omadheulo lungapi onga oshilyo shetonatelonongelo opo wu
vule okukutha ombinga momatokolo nomelelo lyosikola yoye na uunake
wa kalele medheulo lyahugunina?



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2. Esimano lyoondondo dhelongo dhopashigwana (NSE)

Omukuluntusikola okwe mu tseyithilile ngaa omulandu gwoondondo
dhopashigwana?

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Owa tseyithilwa nomukalo guni oondondo ndhono dha tumbulwa
metetekelo?

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Uunake wa tseyithililwe omulandu ngono gwoondondo dhelongo
dhopashigwana?



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Omukuluntusikola ohe mu tseyithile ngaa omilandu dhelongo ndhi dha simana?

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3. Ongushu yedheulo lyaakuluntusikola ya vule okutula omulandu gwoondondo dhelongo dhopashigwana miilonga

Omwa kundathana tuu omulandu ngono miigongi yeni yetonatonongelo?

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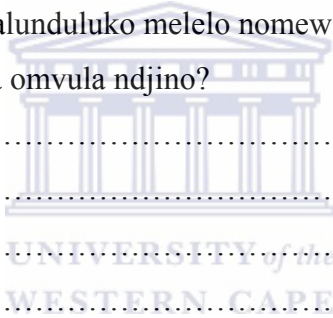
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Oto vulu okutya ope na omalunduluko melelo nomewiliko lyomukuluntusikola omvula ndjino?



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Owa tegelela omukuluntusikola a ninge shike opo a kale a longa nawa uuna a mono edheulo kombinga yomulandu gwelongo?

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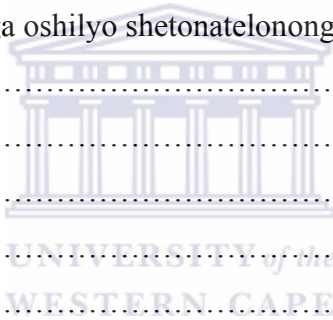
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4. Edheulo lyiilyo yongundumutima yosikola

Owa mona edheulo kombinga yomulandu gwoondondo dhelongo
dhopashigwana onga oshilyo shetonatelonongelo? Uunake wa dheuililwe?



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Iilyo ingapi yetonatelonongelo ya dheuililwa omulandu ngononoya
dheuililwe kulye?

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Edheulo olya li lyuule wethimbo li thike peni?

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Oto dhiladhila kutya oho kutha ombinga sha gwana momatokolo nomelelo lyosikola yeni onga oshilyo shetonatelonongelo?



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- 6. **Omashongo ga taalela aakuluntusikola okutula miilonga omulandu gwoondondo dhelongo dhopashigwana**
- 6.1 Omashongo ogeni/uupyakadhi owuni mbono to dhiladhila wa taalela aakuluntusikola mokutula miilonga omulandu ngono gwa tumbulwa metetekelo?

Appendix J
COLLECTION OF DATA FOR THE MINI-THESIS
RESEARCH

SCHEDULE FOR THE RESEARCHERS

A. Biographical details of the researcher

1. What are you currently occupied with?
2. What topic did you research on for your Masters/Doctoral thesis?
3. What are some of the major findings of your research?

B. The national standards of education (NSE) policy

The Ministry of Education has introduced a policy of national standards of education that was implemented in all Namibian schools in 2006. Such policy aims at creating uniformity and improving the quality of education in schools through evaluation of school performances. In 2005 the Ministry of Education conducted cascades of workshops for the regional staff members, school principals and some members of the School Management Teams to prepare such members for the implementation of the NSE policy.

As a researcher I would like to solicit your views on the policy of the NSE through the following questions:

1. Would you say the national standards of education are important? Why would you say so?
2. What do you think could have been done to enhance effective preparation for the principals to implement the NSE better?
3. How do you think the School Management Team members could have been prepared to implement the NSE better?
4. Would you say that the national standards of education are implemented in schools as stated in the policy document? Why would you say so?

5. Would you say that the national standards of education policy will have a positive impact on the primary school principals' management and leadership to bring about the desired quality improvement in the education system? Why would you say so?
6. What would you say are the challenges facing the principals in the implementation of the NSE policy?
7. What would you recommend as a researcher to be done to assist the primary school principals to implement the NSE policy better?
8. Would you recommend an alternative policy to the NSE that would bring about improvement of the quality of education? Why?
9. Are there any other relevant issues related to the topic that we have discussed that you would like to raise with me?

Thank you very much for participating in this project!

