

**TOWARDS EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK FOR GOOD MANAGEMENT IN PRIMARY
SCHOOLS OF VHEMBE WEST DISTRICT, HLANGANANI CENTRAL CIRCUIT,
LIMPOPO**

By

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

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at the

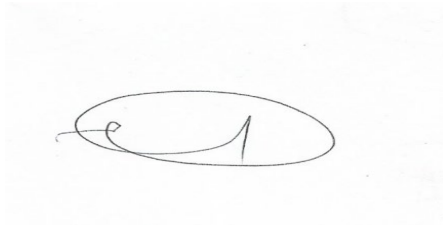
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DATE SUBMITTED: MAY 2025

DECLARATION

I, Confidence Annah Kubayi, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled, 'Towards effective teamwork for good management in primary schools of Vhembe West District, Hlanganani Central Circuit, Limpopo' is my own original work. All the sources quoted in this research paper are indicated and acknowledged in the comprehensive list of references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, enclosed within a hand-drawn oval border. The signature appears to be 'Confidence Annah Kubayi'.

Signed:

Date: May 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to God Almighty for what He has done for me. Without His presence, I wouldn't have made it. I would also like to thank my supervisor Prof F.M Teane for taking me along with her. You gave me strength, courage, wisdom, and understanding to fulfill my dreams. I would also like to thank my husband Joe for his motivation, support and for being a source of inspiration. My husband in your footsteps I found direction, I found courage to believe that all things are possible when you believe in yourself and work hard. You were there for me even when the journey looked tough. You are the reason that keeps me going. With gratitude beyond words I thank you my love. To my three sons, Fumani, Muondli and Rifuwo, you have been the greatest part of my life, the best part of my story, my greatest joy and my precious gifts. Thank you for being the pillar of my strength.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my late father Mzamani Samson Madirayi Hobyani, my late mother Lisbeth Mthavini Hobyani, and my two sisters Suzan Rhulani and Elsie.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to examine the use of teamwork for good management in primary schools of Vhembe West District, Hlanganani Central Circuit, Limpopo province. The study was motivated by my observation that in most schools, the principal is usually the leader and manager to the exclusion of his/her staff members. Such a situation creates problems because when he/she is not present, the school may become chaotic. In schools where there are committees, they usually exist in name only. The study was based on the qualitative approach, which enabled in-depth analysis of data. Phenomenology was used as the research design of the study, which allowed the analysis of lived experiences of teachers. Data was collected from both members of the SMT and teachers in five primary schools through a triangulation of three research methods, namely, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis. The data was analysed using thematic analysis, which allowed for the use of themes. The study found that overall, teamwork is taking place in the selected primary schools. However, there is room for improvement in areas such as the use of digital devices within the team membership. The study further revealed that the administrative and operational functions of the schools are largely done by SMT committees. Again, this can be improved if the SMT realises that they need the invaluable input of teachers in almost every area of the school. In addition, the data revealed factors that play a role in the effectiveness of teamwork, for consideration towards the efficient running of the schools. Lastly, the study identified team-building initiatives for the efficient management of schools. In conclusion, a number of recommendations are made for the department of education and for future research.

KEYWORDS

Teamwork, management, committee, school management team, teambuilding.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATP: Annual teaching plan

BOD: Business of the day

DP: Deputy principal

HOD: Head of Department

NSNP: National School Nutrition Programme

SACE: South African Council for Educators

SGB: School governing body

SMT: School management team

SMS: Small message sending

SP: School principal

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is about effective teamwork for good management in selected primary schools. This chapter begins with the background to the study in section 1.2. This is followed by the rationale of the study in section 1.3. Section 1.4 looks at the statement of the problem. Section 1.5 presents the research questions. In section 1.6, the aim and objectives of the study are provided. From there, section 1.7 discusses the theoretical framework of the study. In section 1.8, attention is paid to the preliminary literature review. This is followed by the research methodology and design in section 1.9. Section 1.10 presents the population and sampling of the study. In section 1.11 the data collection techniques are identified. This is followed by data analysis and interpretation in section 1.12, and the research ethics in section 1.13. Section 1.14 looks at credibility, trustworthiness, reliability and validity of the study. The remaining two sections present the delimitations and limitations of the study as well as the key definitions.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Like other organisations, for schools to function effectively, they must be managed. But management, by definitions, requires teamwork. A team is described as a group of people with complementary and overlapping skills who work together to achieve a common goal (Ediger, Rashid & Law, 2022:2). This means that a team is set up for specific tasks. In the context of the school, tasks may include the discipline of learners and their punctuality, among others. Other teams may focus on different departments, such as the department of economics and management sciences, the department of natural sciences, and the department of languages to ensure the achievement of issues relating to the curricula. Generally, the major premise of a team is for teachers to be productive, thereby working cooperatively with others towards the final outcome, which is the successful running of the school.

Teamwork makes all staff members feel that they are part of the school (Basson & Mestry, 2019:9). For this to happen, the school management team (SMT), which normally consists of the principal, deputy principal(s) and heads of department should instil a tradition of using consultants or short courses to develop effective teamwork,

whereby individual members follow agreed team objectives. Effective teamwork enhances better adaptability to changes and school improvement, especially in schools that focus on measurable student achievements (Benoliel, 2021:669). Polega, Neto, Brilowski and Baker (2019:13) hold that teamwork can be effective if members understand its purpose, work towards it, and are both independent of and dependent on other members to get the task done. Everard et al. (2004:168) write:

Teamwork depends on effective meetings, effective decision-taking, effective communication, the identification of team roles and effective delegation. Members of a team must be able to trust each other. The most important work of a team will be done by individuals between meetings. It is therefore vital to be clear on the three 'W's – Who must do What by When.

When talking about teamwork, Everard et al. (2004:4) argue that the educational system expects three things from the management: to integrate its resources in the effective pursuit of its goals; to be agents of effective change; and to maintain and develop its resources. As a manager, success depends on using the ideas and talents of a team, on arriving at decisions and actions to which the team members feel committed and on ensuring that they are put into effect.

From this perspective, it is clear that it is important to determine whether or not teamwork is happening in schools. I have worked in one high school and five primary schools. In all these schools, I have observed that there are hardly any teams in schools. Even the SMTs are not involved in the running of schools. Instead, principals work as lone figures. But when things go wrong, they attribute responsibility to teachers for a lack of team spirit. It is for this reason that a study of this nature is necessary to determine the need for teamwork in primary schools. I believe that the study will help principals to realise that for schools to function effectively, teamwork is the way to go. As far as I am concerned, a study of this nature has also not been done, especially one that focuses on teamwork in primary schools of Vhembe West District, Hlanganani, Limpopo Province.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Rationale refers to reasons why the study can be considered an important question or issue (Murray, 2009:62). A study of this nature, which looks at how to create effective teams that will bring about good management at primary schools is necessary because on face value, it appears that things are not going well in many schools. Principals seem to be working solo as if there are no SMTs. Of course, apart from SMTs, there appear to be no other teams in most schools. So the study will bring value to the entire education sector. It will sensitise the sector for the need for teamwork so that primary schools run smoothly for the benefit of learners. Such teamwork does not only apply to the SMT alone, but also to the entire teaching staff.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It can be argued that, despite the presence of SMTs, many primary schools do not function to their optimal levels. This is in part on account of lack of ineffective teamwork. The existence of SMTs themselves does not guarantee efficiency in schools. Rather than involving members of the SMTs as well as educators themselves in the running of schools through teams for various functional purposes, most principals work alone. This compromises the delivery of instruction to learners. For this reason, the issue relating to the creation of teamwork in primary schools is a gap in the literature that must be investigated. Such investigation goes a long way in establishing the truth about the need for effective teamwork for the good management of primary schools. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no study that has sought to address this question. Thus, this study adds to knowledge about the importance of teamwork in schools in general, and in primary schools in particular.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.5.1 MAIN QUESTION

The main question of the study is:

How can effective teamwork contribute to good management in selected primary schools?

1.5.2 SUB-QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions of the study:

- (1) What are the key elements of teamwork that influence the management of primary schools?
- (2) What roles and functions do teams serve within the schools?
- (3) What factors influence the effectiveness of teamwork in these schools?
- (4) How can team-building initiatives be implemented to enhance management efficiency in primary schools?

1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.6.1 Aim

The aim of the study is to examine the use of teamwork for good management in selected primary schools.

1.6.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- (1) To determine the key elements of teamwork that influence the management of primary schools.
- (2) To establish roles and functions that teams serve within the schools.
- (3) To find out factors that influence the effectiveness of teamwork in these schools.
- (4) To determine how team-building initiatives can be implemented to enhance management efficiency in primary schools.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is underpinned by the distributed leadership theory which, according to Copland (2003:376), can be traced to McGregor's organisational theory, which was developed in the 1960s. However, Timperley (2006:396) argues that the theory has its roots in the 1980s and early 1990s. According to Copland (2003:277), distributed leadership:

- is a collective activity, which focuses on collective goals, comprising a quality or energy that is greater than the sum of individual actions;
- involves the spanning of task, responsibility, and power boundaries between traditionally defined organisational roles; and

- rests on a base of expert rather than hierarchical authority in that numerous, distinct perspectives and capabilities can be found in individuals who are spread throughout the organisation.

There are at least three important organisational preconditions that must be met for distributed leadership to take place effectively (Copland, 2003:379). The school should develop a culture that embodies collaboration, trust, professional learning, and reciprocal accountability; there must be strong consensus regarding important problems facing the organisation; and there must be a rich expertise with approaches to improve teaching and learning among staff members in the school.

Bolden (2011:252) asserts that distributed leadership is a more systemic perspective which conceives leadership as a collective social process emerging through the interactions of multiple actors. In this sense, distributed leadership is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual actions. According to the author, this type of leadership involves two aspects. The 'leader-plus' aspect acknowledges and takes account of the work of all the individuals who have a hand in leadership and management practice rather than just those in formally designated leadership roles. The function of the practice aspect is to foreground leadership and management and to frame it as an outcome of the communication between the leaders, those who are led, and aspects of their contexts. Together, these aspects offer an analytical framework for investigating the daily leadership and management rather than dwell on leadership, its structures, functions and roles.

Three premises that seem to be shared by most authors on distributed leadership include the following (Bolden, 2011:257):

- Leadership is a property of a network of interacting individuals;
- Its boundaries are characterised by openness; and
- Expertise is distributed across everyone.

Distributed leadership is based on activities and interactions that are distributed across multiple people and situations, and involves role complementarities and network patterns of control (Timperley, 2006:395). It focuses on how school leaders promote and sustain conditions for successful schooling in interaction with others, rather than on the structures and programmes that are necessary for success. According to

Timperley (2006:397), leadership in schools is almost inevitably distributed. The issues to be considered are how the leadership activities are distributed and the ways in which this distribution is differentially effective. The distributed leadership theory is relevant to the study in that it focuses on leadership in schools, which talks to issues related to teamwork and management.

1.8 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the literature review of the study. The section is divided into three subheadings. These are the modalities of establishing teams, functions of teams and instilling a culture of teamwork in schools.

1.8.1 The key elements of teamwork that influence the management of primary schools

For a school to function effectively, it is important to establish teams such as the SMT, curriculum management, disciplinary, timetable, school uniform, sports and fundraising teams. As the overall overseer who must provide instructional leadership, the principal has a big role to play. Khuluse (2022:18) argues that in terms of the broad view, teamwork involves almost all stakeholders in education, mainly within the school community. In terms of this view, the establishment of teamwork promotes positive school culture, trust, collaboration and communication among all stakeholders.

The formation of groups of educators into effective working units or teams, and getting the teams to work together effectively to pursue the purpose and goals of the school is at the heart of management (Basson & Mestry, 2019). In other words, teams are the building blocks of the school, and can only be effective through decisive management by the SMT, which can be seen as the glue that holds these teams together.

Furthermore, Khuluse (2022) contends that teamwork can be used to achieve efficacy and improvement in a classroom setting because it can enhance instruction and learning. To this end, rather than being punished, ineffective teachers can be advised in terms of how they can improve themselves in a non-threatening, supportive environment. In addition, Khuluse (2022:18) asserts that teams may flourish in schools where they are structured in a way that allows teachers and managers to work together. The need for effective teams is not only to enable individuals to be more productive, but also to contribute more to the effectiveness of the school. Teamwork

enables every member of the team to contribute and work well with colleagues, resulting in the production of good results at the school. To function effectively, teams need a set of distinct values, such as commitment, integrity and mutual support (Khuluse, 2022:19).

1.8.2 Roles and functions of teams at schools

Teamwork plays an important role in the effectiveness and improvement of a school, particularly in terms of quality of teaching and learning (Sandhleni, 2021: Baloyi, 2011). This implies that staff should be empowered to create conditions that facilitate improvement, innovation and continuous professional growth of team members. Sandhleni (2021:31) posits that teamwork enables the sharing of the strengths of SMT members and the minimisation of their weaknesses. Working together as a team leads to the reduction of isolation, increased co-ordination and promotes the sharing of resources and ideas among members.

Khuluse (2022:18) is of the view that teamwork enhances communication between people, and offers staff more chances of a productive solution to problems because they bring together a wide range of abilities and talents; and assists the principal to find teachers with diverse skills that complement one another.

Baloyi (2011:2) argues that the function of teams in schools is to assist principals because they (teams) are expected to build relationships with all staff members and ensure efficient and effective delivery. He argues teams can only function effectively when they are given ample time, they are properly selected, they are empowered, and where they are trained in relevant school management skills and knowledge. Team building workshops, for example, can ensure that team members work together, share experiences and assist each other in order to produce required outcomes (Mandukwini, 2016:13).

1.8.3 Factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork in schools

Khuluse (2022:19) discusses several factors that can account for teamwork. First, she indicates that teamwork is built on trust, which is fundamental to collaboration among members. In turn, trust is founded on the concepts of integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty and openness. Secondly, teamwork flourishes where there are

supportive school leaders. Thirdly, she argues that the key to creating a culture of teamwork in the classroom is teacher motivation.

Effective communication is central in the strengthening of teamwork in schools (Kilindo, 2015:22). For good communication, staff members must be able to listen to and respect each other, and express ideas clearly. Communication can be described as the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another by means of meaningful symbols (Baloyi, 2011:32). It is a way of exchanging opinions, ideas, attitudes, values and facts within team membership.

According to Sabunkola (2021:99), effective communication helps build a good relationship among staff members, which has a huge impact on their academic performance. The author further argues that communication is a matter of trust and acceptance of others' feelings and ideas, and a positive attitude towards one another. Effective communication by the SMT helps the school to realise its goals. Furthermore, teamwork is likely to flourish where there is collaboration, transparency and accountability among staff members. Where people work together, there is a possibility of achieving meaningful results. To Khuluse (2022:20), teams must be supported through guidance, advice, and training for continual improvement.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Research methodology is the general approach taken by the researcher to carry out the research project which, to some extent, dictates the tools selected by the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:26). This section presents the research methodology and design of the study. The section comprises several subsections.

1.9.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm comprises a belief about the nature of knowledge, epistemology or ontology, a methodology as well as criteria for validity. It is divided into the positivist, constructivism, transformative, emancipatory, critical, pragmatism and deconstructivism, and interpretivist paradigms (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:2). This study is based on the interpretive research paradigm, which permits researchers to gain depth by seeking experiences and perceptions of a particular social context (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Pickard (2013) is of the view that interpretivists believe that realities are

multiple and cannot exist outside the social context that creates them. This entails that meanings are subjective. Thus, interpretivist researchers discover reality through participants' views, their own background and experiences (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:26). According to Maree (2016:23), interpretivism assumes that human life can only be understood from within or peoples' experiences; that social life is distinctly a human product – reality is socially constructed; human life is full of purposive; human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world; and that the world does not exist independently of human knowledge. Interpretivism is relevant to the study because it allows the researcher to arrive at multiple meanings of how to implement teamwork in the selected primary schools.

According to Thanh and Thanh (2015:24), researchers use the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods to seek experiences, understandings and perceptions of individuals for their data to uncover reality rather than rely on numbers or statistics. In this way, there is a close connection between interpretivism and qualitative research.

1.9. 2 Research approach

There are mainly two types of research approaches, namely, quantitative and qualitative approaches (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:101). The main differences between the two approaches are that the group studied in the former is larger and randomly selected, and the group studied in the latter is smaller and non-randomly selected (Apuke, 2017:42). To Neuman (2013:108), the qualitative research approach is not only flexible, but also encourages a slow focus on the topic throughout the study. This study used the qualitative research approach, leading to the understanding of the implementation of teamwork by investigating members of the SMTs and teachers in their own particular context in the selected primary schools.

1.9.3 Research method

Research method generally includes a set of commonly applied techniques whereby a single technique can be used differently in various research methods (Murray, 2009:40). According to Heigham and Croker (2009:321), a research method is a systematic and rigorous way of collecting and analysing data. Qualitative researchers can use multiple forms of data collection in any single study, including observations,

interviews, documents, archival records, interviews, physical artifacts and audiovisual materials (Thanh & Thanh, 2015; Leedy & Ormrod, 2015; Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark & Morales, 2007). This study used three research methods as data collection methods, namely, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis.

Also known as in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to ask predetermined questions and individually tailored follow-up questions for clarity regarding certain responses (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:389). The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with participants to establish rapport with them and to gain their cooperation. In addition, face-to-face interviews enable direct interactions with participants to elicit their feelings, views and perceptions about the research topic. Consequently, the data collection is subjective and detailed (Rahman, 2017:104).

The second data collection method used to collect data was focus groups. According to Cyr (2016:233), a focus group has to do with a group of people who are convened to deliberate on a set of questions about a specific topic. The main objective of a focus group is to create conversations that reveal opinions about a particular question. In this way, focus groups can result in a group consensus on the issue under discussion because they allow for the collection of a multiplicity of individual reactions at the same time. During focus groups, participants actively explore their views and opinions, and thus, their other strength is to provide insights into the sources of behaviours and motivations (Jayasekara, 2012).

The third data collection method used to collect data is document analysis, which can be described as a systematic process of reviewing and evaluating documents to gain meaningful insights relevant to the research questions (Bowen, 2020). In this way, document analysis strengthens the triangulation of data sources, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness and depth of the study findings (O'Leary, 2020). In this study, document analysis enabled the researcher to trace the consistency of teamwork initiatives, to understand formal procedures and communication used in teamwork engagements, and to identify patterns in collective problem-solving. The documents were accessed with permission from the school principals. The purpose of document analysis was to cross-reference verbal accounts from participants with documentary evidence of teamwork, participation, and decision-making within the schools. The

three data collection instruments ensured the richness and credibility of the data gathered, enabling a comprehensive understanding of teamwork dynamics in primary schools.

1.9.4 Research design

A research design is the general structure that guides data collection and analysis to address a research problem (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:389). The structure directs the execution of a research method and the analysis of the data (Bryman, 2012:45). There are many types of research designs, including narrative research design, case studies, grounded theory, participatory action research and phenomenology (Creswell et al., 2007:239). This study adopted the phenomenology research design, which describes the meanings that several individuals make from experiencing a single phenomenon (Croker, 2009:15), and which seeks to understand the world through the direct experiencing of phenomena (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:39). According to Creswell et al. (2007:254), phenomenology is based on the collection of views of several participants in order to describe what they have in common as they experience a phenomenon. In the context of this study, such a phenomenon was teamwork as experienced by educators in the selected primary schools. Phenomenologists work from the participants' specific statements and experiences rather than by abstracting from their statements to construct a model from the researcher's interpretations. The basic purpose of phenomenology, argues Cresswell et al. (2007:254), is to reduce the experiences of persons with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence.

1.10 Population and sampling

The researcher is expected to describe the characteristics of the entire population of the study (Hofstee, 2006:116). Population refers to the individuals, groups and communities, or the people from whom the data is collected (Kumar, 2011:46). In simple terms, a study population can be described as the total number of individuals, groups and communities that the researcher wishes to study and from whom information is collected to find answers to the research problem or questions. It goes without saying that it is from the study population that the researcher selects a sample of the study, which is usually a small fraction of the population. A sample refers to the people who actually take part in the study (Hofstee, 2006:132).

Five primary schools from Hlanganani Central Circuit, Vhembe West District, Limpopo Province, South Africa were chosen as part of the study. The research sites of the study included 19 primary schools. The population comprised all 19 principals in the primary schools, seven deputy principals, 31 heads of departments (HODs) and 178 teachers, making a total of 234. From the population, a sample size of 20 participants took part in the study. The sample size, which was conveniently selected in terms of their availability, comprised five principals, three deputy principals, four heads of department and eight teachers. Convenience or accidental sampling does not identify a representative sample of a population, but takes people or other units that are available (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:132).

1.11 Data collection techniques

It has already been noted that data was collected through three research methods: semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis. Each of these methods was coupled with its own data collection techniques or instruments. During both semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, a recorder was used to capture the participants' responses. By contrast, a checklist was used to identify noteworthy items in the process of analysing documents collected from the schools.

1.12 Data analysis and interpretation

According to Hood (2009:80), data analysis occurs throughout the data collection and coding process. It is a search for patterns (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:100). This entails that as one collects, codes and reviews the data, certain patterns, themes and issues begin to emerge. Qualitative research uses soft data in the form of impressions, words, sentences, symbols and so forth (Neuman, 2013:106). This means that data take the form of prose and not tables and graphs. In this study, thematic analysis was used to analyse and interpret the data. This entails that the data were analysed in terms of themes. According to Leedy and Ormrod, (2015:315), data analysis takes the form of a spiral beginning with organising, sorting, classifying or categorising the data. The second step involves perusing the entire data to get a general sense of the ideas expressed in them by the participants. The third involves the identification of general categories or themes. The next has to do with the integration and summary of data through inductive reasoning, which culminates into interpretation or understanding.

1.13 RESEARCH ETHICS

Besides meeting the general guidelines in the field for acceptable and competent practice, a study is expected to demonstrate sensitivity to ethical issues because an unethical study is not trustworthy (Murray, 2009:265). Ethics is about taking decisions about how to approach key gatekeepers; how to select your participants; what to do when participants are reluctant; and how to manage requests to help out when making observations, and so on (Rallis & Rossman, 2009: 270).

For this reason, the researcher applied for an ethical certificate from UNISA's ethics and research committee. It is equally important to respect participants' privacy, confidentiality and their right not to answer certain questions if they are of the view that the questions invade their privacy or are harmful to them psychologically. Thus, the participants were free to even withdraw from the study at their own free will at any time during the research process.

1.14 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Credibility is about whether the research findings represent plausible information from participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of their original views (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). To ensure the credibility of the study, the researcher probed the participants and made follow-up questions.

Trustworthiness refers to the extent to which other individuals perceive the findings of the study to be convincing and worth taking seriously (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:336). Trustworthiness can also be defined as a set of standards that demonstrate that a research study has been conducted competently and ethically (Murray, 2009:265). It is important to observe the standards of trustworthiness to convince the reader that the study has merit and that the results are credible. For this reason, the criteria of dependability, confirmability and transferability were adhered to. To achieve the dependability of the study, the researcher ensured that the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study were supported by the data collected from participants. Finally, to ensure that the data and interpretations of the findings are confirmable, that is, not the researcher's figments of imagination, the researcher based the findings of the study on the data as collected from the participants. In other words, the researcher worked hard to stay clear of her bias and subjectivity.

Reliability relates to the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable (Bryman, 2012:46). The term is mainly used in relation to the question of whether the measures that are devised for concepts are consistent. To ensure that the study is reliable or replication, the researcher spelt out the procedures used to conduct the study in detail. The validity of the study was ensured by spending as much time as possible with the participants analysing and revising examples, including contradictions, describing the situation in detail; acknowledging personal biases; engaging in respondent validation; and obtaining feedback (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:106).

1.15 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations are potential weaknesses or 'imposed' restrictions closely associated with the chosen research design, statistical model constraints, funding constraints, or other factors (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018:155). They are weaknesses that may cast doubt on the results, interpretations and findings of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:63). The major limitations of a study included time, costs, access to resources, approval by authorities, ethical considerations and expertise or background of the researcher (Neuman, 2013: 110). Resources can include the expertise of others, special equipment, or information. In terms of the researcher's background, for example, answering some research questions may involve the use of data collection techniques, statistical methods, knowledge of a foreign language, or special skills that he or she may not have. In other words, these are factors that are usually beyond the researcher's control, but that could possibly impact the results of the study.

The first major limitation of the study was time. When I arrived at the research site after making an appointment with some of the principals, some of them were absent. It was exam time, so they went to submit schedules at the circuit office. The second limitation was cost. The study was costly because the researcher had to travel 150km away to the research sites. She did not have enough resources to cover the travelling costs. This shortened the duration of interviews with the participants. The third limitation factor was poor connectivity due to loadshedding which happened frequently at the research sites and surrounding areas. For this reason, the schools were not able to print certain documents for the researcher, such as minutes of committee meetings.

Delimitations are boundaries or limits of the study as set out by the researcher himself or herself (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018:157). They are mainly concerned with the study's theoretical background, objectives, research questions, variables under study and study sample in the researcher's control. Similarly, to Leedy and Ormrod (2015:62), delimitations are issues, questions or data that lie beyond the boundary of the problem under investigation i.e what the researcher is not going to do or does not intend to do (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:62). The researcher did not intend to conduct the study in secondary schools, nor did she plan to conduct it with learners or other school stakeholders such as school governing bodies and the Department of Basic Education. In other words, the study was limited to members of the SMT and teachers in selected primary schools.

1.16 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

1.16.1 Teamwork

Teamwork occurs when a group of people with complementary and overlapping skills who work together to achieve a common goal (Ediger, Rashid & Law, 2022:2). This means that a team is set up for specific tasks. In the context of the school, tasks may include the discipline of learners and their punctuality, among others. It is the ability to work with others through cooperation and communication to accomplish a common goal (Polega et al., 2019:13). In this study, teamwork refers to a group of two to five educators who have been set up and therefore are tied together by a common purpose or objective to complete a school task in a medium or long-term goal.

1.16.2 Management

Management is about setting direction, aims and objectives; planning how progress will be made or goals achieved; organising available resources (people, time, materials) so that the goal can be economically achieved in a planned way; controlling the process (i.e. measuring achievement against plan and taking corrective action where appropriate); and setting and improving organisational standards (Everard et al., 2004:4). In this study, management can be described as the ability by the SMT to set up various teams to deal with various issues in the school environment.

1.16.3 Committee

A committee refers a group of people with a common objective (Ediger, Rashid & Law, 2022:2). In this study, a committee refers to a group of teachers who work together to achieve a common objective at the school, such as school management team, discipline committee, language committee and so on.

1.16.4 School management team

The school management team refers to teachers whose responsibility is to run the school. These include the principal, deputy principal and heads of department. The school management team may also include any teacher who has been co-opted into the committed to assist the principal in the day running of the school.

1.16.5 Teambuilding

Teambuilding can be described as a method of assisting a group to increase its effectiveness, satisfy the needs of members and improve the work conditions in order to develop a sense of group cohesion (Beauchamp, McEwan & Waldhauser, 2017: 114). In this study, teambuilding refers to a method of helping committees to enhance its effectiveness in order to the working conditions at school.

1.17 CHAPTER DIVISIONS

Chapter 1 presented the background to the study, which defined the concept of teamwork and the role of the SMT in schools. The chapter also focused on the statement of the research problem, the research questions, research objectives, definitions of key concepts and conclusion. The following are the research objectives of the study: to determine the key elements of teamwork that influence the management of primary schools; to establish roles and functions that teams serve within the schools; to find out factors that influence the effectiveness of teamwork in these schools; and to determine how team-building initiatives can be implemented to enhance management efficiency in primary schools. The chapter also discussed the theoretical framework of the study, the research problem, preliminary literature review and research methodology of the study.

Chapter 2 discussed the theoretical framework and the literature review of the study. The study is based on the distributed leadership theory. The literature review focused on several topics, including the key elements of teamwork that influence the management of primary schools; the roles and functions of teams at schools; factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork in schools; the enhancement of management efficiency through team-building initiatives in primary schools; and characteristics of teamwork.

Chapter 3 focused on the research methodology and design of the study. The chapter looked at the research paradigm, research approach and research design of the study. It also unpacked the population of the study and the sampling technique. Then, attention was paid to data collection, analysis and interpretation. The credibility and trustworthiness, and research ethics were also discussed. This culminated in the limitations and delimitations, definitions of key terms and conclusion of the study.

Chapter 4 presented data analysis and presentation of findings. The chapter began with the demographic information of the participants. Then the data analysis technique was recapped. This was followed by summary of research findings. Finally, data was analysed and presented in the form of themes. The researcher started by presenting data collected through semi-structured interviews and then focus group discussions. Lastly, data collected through document analysis was presented.

Chapter 5 brought together information from all the chapters in the form of summary of findings of the study, conclusions, recommendations and limitations.

1.18 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study is about the establishment of effective teamwork that will ensure stability in the management of selected primary schools in Vhembe West District, Hlanganani Central Circuit, Limpopo. Five primary schools were selected as research sites of the study. From these schools, 20 participants took part in the study. In terms of the research methodology, the qualitative research design has been adopted. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, focus groups and document analysis. The following chapter looks at the literature review of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 presented the introduction and orientation of the study. This chapter presents the theoretical framework and literature review of the study. The theoretical framework is discussed in section 2.2. The literature review is discussed in section 2.3. Literature review is the building block of all academic research activities because it enables the mapping and assessment of the research area, and it is useful in motivating the aim of the study and in justifying the research questions (Snyder, 2019:334). Section 2.4 concludes the chapter.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in the distributed leadership theory which, according to Copland (2003:376), can be traced to McGregor's organisational theory, which was developed in the 1960s. However, Timperley (2006:396) argues that the theory has its roots in the 1980s and early 1990s. In terms of the organisational theory (Fuhr, 2015:6), organisations exist to achieve production-related and economic goals; the best way to organise for production is a systematic and scientific inquiry; production can be maximised through specialisation and the division of labour; and People and organisations act in accordance with rational and economic principles.

According to Copland (2003:277), distributed leadership is a collective activity, which focuses on collective goals, comprising a quality or energy that is greater than the sum of individual actions; involves the spanning of tasks, responsibilities, and power boundaries among traditionally defined organisational roles; and rests on a base of expert rather than hierarchical authority in that numerous, distinct, germane perspectives and capabilities can be found in individuals who are spread throughout the organisation.

There are at least three important organisational preconditions that must be met for distributed leadership to take root and succeed in schools (Copland, 2003:379): the school should develop a culture that embodies collaboration, trust, professional learning, and reciprocal accountability; there must be strong consensus regarding the

important problems facing the organisation; and there must be a rich expertise with approaches to improving teaching and learning among staff members in the school.

Bolden (2011:252) asserts that distributed leadership is a more systemic perspective which conceives leadership as a collective social process emerging through the interactions of multiple actors, that is, a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual actions. To Bolden (2011:252), distributed leadership involves two aspects. The 'leader-plus' aspect, which acknowledges and takes account of the work of all the individuals who have a hand in leadership and management practices rather than just those in formally designated leadership roles. The practice aspect, which 'foregrounds the practice of leading and managing and frames it as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situation'. Together, these two aspects of distributed leadership offer an analytical framework for examining the daily practices of leadership and management rather than dwell on leaders and leadership structures, functions and roles.

Three premises that seem to be shared by most authors on distributed leadership include the following (Bolden, 2011:257) leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals; leadership is characterised by open boundaries; and expertise should be distributed across everyone.

Distributed leadership is based on activities and interactions that are distributed across a multiplicity of people and situations and involves not only role complementarities, but also network patterns of control (Timperley, 2006:395). It focuses on how school leaders promote and sustain conditions for successful schooling in interaction with others, rather than on what structures and programmes are necessary for success. According to Timperley (2006:397), leadership in schools is almost inevitably distributed, and the issues to be considered are how the leadership activities are distributed and the ways in which this distribution is differentially effective. The distributed leadership theory is relevant to the study in that it focuses on leadership in schools, which talks to issues related to teamwork and management.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.3.1 The key elements of teamwork that may influence the management of primary schools

As the overall overseer who must provide instructional leadership, the principal has an important role to play in the establishment of teams in schools. Khuluse (2022:18) argues that in terms of the broad view, teamwork involves almost all stakeholders in education, mainly within the school community. In terms of this view, the establishment of teamwork promotes positive school culture, trust, collaboration and communication among all stakeholders.

The formation of groups of educators into effective working units, and getting the teams to work together effectively to pursue the purpose and goals of the school is at the heart of management (Basson & Mestry, 2019). In other words, teams are the building blocks of the school. But teamwork can only be effective through decisive management by the SMT, which can be seen as the glue that holds these teams together.

Furthermore, Khuluse (2022) contends that teamwork can be used to achieve efficacy and improvement in a classroom setting because it enhances instruction and learning. To this end, rather than punishing them, it is important for team members to advise ineffective teachers how to improve themselves. This should be done in a non-threatening and supportive environment. In addition, Khuluse (2022:18) asserts that teams may flourish in schools where they are structured in a way that allows teachers and managers to work together. The purpose of having effective teams is not only to enable individuals to be more productive, but also to contribute more to the effectiveness of the school. Teamwork enables every member to contribute and work well with colleagues, resulting in the production of good results in the school. To function effectively, teams need a set of distinct values, such as commitment, integrity and mutual support (Khuluse, 2022:19).

Freedman and Somech (2021:118) have argued that collaboration is a critical issue in the success of teamwork because it leads to effective conflict management styles and higher level of team members' motivation. Ekimova and Kokurin (2015:848) identify four team-building elements that have an impact on the cognitive, effective, process, and performance outcomes of teamwork. Goal-setting implies that teamwork should

not be established for its own sake: it must serve a specific goal. Interpersonal relations entails that members of a team should learn to listen to each other and respect each other's point of view. Problem-solving has to do with the fact that team members should deal with issues that it has been established for. Lastly, role clarification implies that the function of each team should be clearly delineated.

2.3.2 Roles and functions of teams at schools

Angu (2019:13) states that team success does not happen organically in the workplace. The optimal functioning of any team depends on the teaching of teamwork skills, investment in team building exercises, and the incorporation of team-based learning in academic curricula. In addition to practical initiatives to promote efficiency in teamwork, Angu's (2019:13) study emphasises the importance of teamwork and task work knowledge as main determinants of productive teamwork. As team members, the expectation to understand the task specifications, skills set required to complete the task, and members' abilities to function together is essential.

Angu (2019:12) continues to argue that the efficacy of teamwork has created space for team-based learning (TBL) as an instructional approach in many higher education curricula. University students in most faculties are expected to demonstrate the ability to work in teams. In fact, teamwork is one of the core competencies for work readiness, especially in health sciences.

Teamwork is about the submission of the finished product (Angu, 2019:12). Staff need to be taught how to compose, manage, structure, measure and promote team performance. Teams can bring improvement in schools because they (teams) can aggregate, modify, combine and apply a greater amount and variety of knowledge to make decisions, solve problems, generate ideas, and execute tasks more effectively and efficiently than any individuals working alone. The study argues that team performance is not just about assembling a group of cognitively astute individuals to work together; it is also about ensuring that team members possess the social skills to collaborate and communicate openly in order to achieve team goals. Successful teamwork is built on the value of essential professional literacies such as interpersonal, self-management, conflict management and communication skills.

Teamwork plays an important role in the effectiveness and improvement of a school, particularly in terms of quality of teaching and learning (Sandhleni, 2021). This implies

that staff should be empowered to create conditions that facilitate improvement, innovation and continuous professional growth of team members. Sandhleni (2021:31) further posits that teamwork enables the sharing of the strengths of SMT members and the minimisation of their weaknesses. Furthermore, working together as a team leads to the reduction of isolation, increased co-ordination and the promotion of sharing resources and ideas among members. Khuluse (2022:18) is of the view that teamwork enhances communication within the membership, and offers staff more chances of a productive solution to problems because they bring together their wide range of abilities and talents; and assists the principal to find teachers with diverse skills that complement one another.

Baloyi (2011:2) argues that the function of teams in schools is to assist principals because they (teams) are expected to build relationships with all staff members and ensure efficient and effective delivery. He argues that for teams to function effectively requires time, proper selection of members, empowerment, and the provision of training in relevant school management skills and knowledge. Team building workshops, for example, can make members to work together, share experiences and assist each other in order to produce required outcomes (Mandukwini, 2016:13). According to Delawala (2020:81), the team leader plays a huge role in teamwork. Some of these roles include guiding the team to timeously achieve its goals; taking responsibility for others to participate; making certain of the responsibilities, awareness, satisfaction and contribution of each team member and the team as a whole; preparing the members to become resilient to stress so that the operations of a task are in line with the limitations of time; and recognising factors that are most likely to cause stress within teams or in the collaborative environment (Delawala, 2020:81).

A study by Pitsoe and Isingoma (2014:144) in schools in Uganda acknowledges that teamwork is an essential tool to achieve success in any organisation, and that its absence may result in teams failing to perform to the best of their abilities. The study argues that teamwork plays a key role in the improvement of outcomes in that it influences the level of motivation and capacity of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment. It is likened to the glue that keeps the team together and a bond that promotes strength, unity, reliability and support. It is the lubricant that makes

the team work, enabling smoother movement towards targets, assists forward momentum, and helps teams to overcome obstacles. Working together as a team is an effective way of accomplishing important tasks. This means that teamwork is key in the efficient and effective management of schools, and a vital force in improving performance.

Furthermore, Lumpkin (2008:6) identifies three functions of teamwork: it involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies; it monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning; and contributes to the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.

2.3.3 Factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork in schools

According to Armstead, Bierman, Bradshaw and Martin (2016:180), effective teams maintain focus, outcomes and satisfaction, while at the same time encouraging feedback in order to improve their functioning. They share power, work jointly while still remaining autonomous. For a team to be effective, argue Armstead et al. (2016), there must be a culture of trust, where every member's contributions are valued, their consensus is nurtured and an interprofessional atmosphere is cultivated. There must also be appropriate procedures, proper communication systems and appropriate referral criteria. This should be coupled by proper balance skills, competencies, practitioner mix and personalities.

Cleary and Horsfall (2015:78) are of the view that teamwork is effective where there are a number of attributes. These are authentic and open communication, clear mutual understanding of professional roles of each team member, positive attitudes, collaboration and the achievement of pre-determined goals. The diversity of every member's point of view should equally be valued and appreciated. More importantly, argue Cleary and Horsfall (2015:78), teamwork is effective where members are allowed to think independently, to give feedback for appropriate decision-making, and where there is open and honest dialogue. Equally, effectiveness implies the giving of clear roles and the management of differences of opinion through mutual respect, negotiation and compromise. According to Ekimova and Kokurin (2015:854), team

effectiveness can be enhanced by having a mix of age, education level and sex of team members to the extent that positive attitudes by certain members can help soften negative, or less positive attitudes on the part of others.

Ballard and Mandhana (2019:293) delineate several functions of communication in teams. These are information processing, analytical processing, procedural functions, goal-oriented functions, synergistic functions, rhetorical, conflict management, control, and creation and maintenance of group cultures and climates. According to Reimer, Russell and Roland (2017:6), there is a link between team member communication, the development of coordination, and team performance effectiveness. In this view, the communication of task-relevant information by teams increases the capacity for coordination, which depends on the capacity by the members to anticipate other members' actions, leading to the development of shared mental models and transactive memory systems. To Santos, Caetano and Tavares (2015:474), team effectiveness is largely brought about by how well team members are able to clarify their situation and strategy, and coordinate their actions with regard to problem-solving and fostering team-task accomplishment.

Makewa, Ngussa, Arego and Kuboja (2016:26) discuss reasons why teamwork is important among school teams. It makes teaching more than a process experienced by teachers in their respective classrooms. It enables the professional growth process in which teachers work together and share knowledge and expertise. It is characterised by shared control, opportunities for participation based on knowledge, and enhanced autonomy that allows for better adaptability and continual adjustment. Finally, due to increasing complexity and sophistication, effective leadership requires collaboration of employees from different viewpoints.

Similarly, Gonzalez (2021:2001) identifies a number of reasons why teamwork is important in organisations. Teamwork stimulates the knowledge management process, and promotes a knowledge internal acquisition cycle through problem-solving and innovation activities. Knowledge generated by the teams is institutionalised by the organisation in an explicit way through databases, a set of organisational rules and

procedures, and skills developed by individuals. At the same time, the organisation then disseminates and transforms the knowledge into new knowledge.

Töremen and Karakufi (2007:640) examine factors that bring about effective teamwork in terms of four categories: administrative actions, the structural features of work group, individual characteristics, and interrelationship among individuals. The study showed that there were serious problems at every dimension examined except for the dimensions of different personal characteristics and applications. These problems, as reported by teachers, include the fact that communication among teachers is not healthy enough; insufficient emphatic thinking skills; sufficient time that is spent together; low commitment levels; lack of a strong common vision and mission; insufficient and ineffective collegiality norms; insufficient common actions; lack of teachers' propensity to cooperation; and teachers' lack of openness to criticisms and indifference to what is going on in the school.

Some of the causes of the problems include inefficiencies in the educational system, ineffective operations of the administrators, communication and orientation problems among teachers, low levels of job satisfaction, and attitudes relating to prejudices (Töremen & Karakufi, 2007:641). To resolve the problems, the following suggestions are made: experienced teachers should quickly be oriented; social and cultural activities must be arranged to resolve communication problems and to create a team spirit; team members should be appropriately rewarded; the number of permanent staff should be increased to equalise the unnecessary status conflicts among teachers; fast personnel changes should be prevented to stabilise the structure of the school; teachers should be given the necessary resources and outfits, and be encouraged to work as a collective; school leaders should exert effort to create a school culture with collegiality norms; and there should be a healthy communication among members.

According to Lumpkin (2008:5), one of the ways in which principals can foster teamwork is to work cooperatively and collaboratively with teachers on an equal footing. This entails consistently affirming or validating the contribution of every team member and its potential positive impact. They must be caring, loyal, sensitive,

respectful and responsible, and facilitate productive relationships among the members. There are three ways in which principals can nurture teamwork in teachers (Lumpkin, 2008:5). The first is to work collaboratively with them to design realistic and attainable learning outcomes for learners along with developmental and appropriate curricula in order to achieve learning outcomes. The second is to provide timely, relevant, and ongoing professional development in order to affirm, extend and reward teachers' instructional abilities and strategies. The third is for both principals and teachers to accept joint responsibility and accountability for the quality of teaching and learning given to learners.

Henkin, Dee and Singleton (2000:3) hold that for a team to be powerful cohorts, members must be competent, motivated, communicative and work in unison towards a common goal. Secondly, other essential elements for team success include trust and collaborative skills and the ability to function as mediators. In this regard, according to Henkin et al. (2000:3), trust is an important element in the collective action because it functions as a substitute for control, reflects individuals' attitudes about others' motives, and can broaden the bandwidth of functional interactions in collaborative relationships. To cultivate and maintain trust among team members is not easy, but requires never ending processes requiring strong, steady support from both members and leaders. It involves risk, dependency, confidence and expectation.

2.3.4 The enhancement of management efficiency through team-building initiatives in primary schools

Makewa et al. (2016:27) believe that perceptions of team culture may be expressed as the basic assumptions, norms, values, and cultural artifacts that are shared by team members, who influence their functioning and play a significant role in enhancing school effectiveness. The school vision, argue Makewa et al. (2016:27), must be shared by the team members as they participate in decision-making; teachers should plan their pedagogical activities according to the vision in professional teams; the team members must have an open attitude towards change; and the rules and regulations that mark the school's bureaucratic structure should make the team members more bureaucratic in their behaviours.

Khuluse (2022:19) discusses factors that can account for teamwork. First, she indicates that teamwork is built on trust, which is fundamental to collaboration among team members. In turn, trust is founded on the concepts of integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty and openness. Secondly, teamwork flourishes where there are supportive school leaders. Thirdly, she argues that the key to creating a culture of teamwork in the classroom is teacher motivation.

Effective communication is central in the strengthening of teamwork in schools (Kilindo, 2015:22). To have good communication, members of staff must listen to each other, respect each other and express ideas clearly. Communication can be described as the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another by means of meaningful symbols (Baloyi, 2011:32). It is a way of exchanging opinions, ideas, attitudes, values and facts within team membership.

According to Sabunkola (2021:99), effective communication builds a good relationship among staff members, which will have a huge impact on their academic performance. The author further argues that communication is a matter of trust and acceptance of others' ideas and feelings, as well as a positive attitude towards one another, and that communication can be described as effective when a team assists the school to achieve its goals. Furthermore, teamwork is likely to flourish where there is collaboration, transparency and accountability among staff members, because when people join hands, they are able to achieve results. To Khuluse (2022:20), teams must be supported through guidance, advice, and training for continual improvement.

Wallace (2001:158) argues that there must be a culture of teamwork among SMT members comprising shared beliefs, values and norms of behaviour about how they work together to run the school. A pivotal feature of the culture of teamwork is the interplay between the uses of power according to belief in the management hierarchy and in the entitlement of team members to make an equal contribution to the SMT. The uneasy coexistence of these beliefs may be a result of the flow of wider social and political forces for cultural change and continuity, which goes back to the headmaster tradition; and the subsequent rise in demands from teachers to share in leadership.

Henkin et al. (2000:12) make a few propositions in relation to trust among team members. The first is that trust with limited or no prior history will initially emerge on

the basis of individuals' proclivity to trust. Secondly, the level of mutual trust is conditioned by iterated patterns of interaction where common codes of cooperation develop through cooperative orientations and accumulated perceptions and memory of experiences involving reciprocity in exchange. Thirdly, teams can derive benefits of mutual trust relationships when members are afforded time and opportunities to establish sound, trust-based foundations that lead to effective cooperation. Fourthly, the composition of a team can mediate the establishment of trust, the development of working group relationships, and the quality of team performance. Fifthly, team members' predisposition to trust can be strengthened and maintained in organisations with mutually accepted guiding principles that encourage interpersonal trust and individual trustworthiness. The last proposition is that affective states and knowledge structures of members of a team involving thoughts and feelings, including those related to trust and trustworthiness can define the mode of interfaces in teams.

2.3.5 Characteristics of teamwork

The definitions of teamwork emphasise non-context specific factors such as the sharing of ideas, listening to others and time management (Kriek & Venter, 2009:104). It highlights universal values like respect, trust, and compromise as integral to effective teamwork. It emphasises behaviours, attitudes and values that enable effective team. It implies that a team must be capable of applying and combining the unique expertise of team members to maintain optimal performance. For teams to be effective, individual team members need to collaborate and engage in teamwork.

Teams must have several unique characteristics, including a dynamic social interaction among team members with meaningful interdependencies (Kriek & Venter, 2009:104). This means that teams must dynamically share information and resources among members and coordinate their activities in order to fulfil the task at hand. In other words, teams need to engage in teamwork. Other characteristics, which are influenced by various inputs such as team members' experience, task complexity and time pressure, include shared and valued goals; a discrete lifespan; distributed expertise; and clearly assigned roles and responsibilities.

Agarwal and Adjirackor's (2016:49) study examines the relationship between teamwork, esprit de corps, team trust, recognition and rewards, and employee performance. The study revealed that teamwork has a positive effect on employee

performance, and that organisations that focus more on teams show increased employee performance and greater productivity. The study further showed that esprit de corps or team spirit results in better employee performance and contributes to the achievement of the common goal of organisations. Thirdly, the study indicated that team trust has a positive effect on employee performance, and strongly correlates with teamwork in achieving organisational productivity. In conclusion, Agarwal and Adjirackor (2016:50) argue that there is a strong positive and significant relationship among teamwork, esprit de corps, team trust, recognition and rewards, and employee performance. In fact, teamwork was found to highly correlate with employee performance, and is beneficial in terms of higher productivity and better organisational performance. It is further concluded that employers may improve their performance by increasing the volume of teamwork and raising the performance level of individuals, thereby paying attention to the quantity and type of teamwork offered. This is because when an employee acquires adequate opportunities of teamwork, their performance automatically improves, and they will be satisfied with their job. This will ensure a better utilisation of skills, resulting in the reduction of the possibility of employees quitting their jobs.

Furthermore, Henkin et al. (2000:7) argue that teams are defined by certain distinguishing characteristics, including collaborative goals, collective work relationships, and integrative thinking; open communication; opportunities for learning while doing; and interpersonal trust. Teams are also strategic means for implementing delegated authority, and for processing more information at lower levels. They produce more ideas and synergy, boost morale, and serve the causes of efficient and effective learning.

2.3.6 Benefits of teamwork

Teamwork teaches team members to be cooperative with other people, and to listen to and understand other people's ideas and why they are important (Angu, 2019:18). It teaches them to learn that everyone has his/her own ideas, but we must choose the best one that will work for everyone and for the organisation. It calls on the team members to have composite and effective leadership skills that can help them manage the complexities of teamwork. It teaches them to be open and responsive to the project being undertaken. It enables them to have adaptive skills, which allowed them to be

flexible, tolerant and ready to take responsibility for the outcome of the project and to overcome the challenges before the team. It also improves social cohesion.

Other benefits of teamwork as discussed by Pitsoe and Isingoma (2014:141) include the following: it is an indispensable element in the success and profitability of any organisation; it allows for the distribution of the workload among team members; it benefits the individual, the team and the organisation in terms of improvement and effectiveness in the school environment; it can lead to the acquisition of teamwork skills, especially for the SMT as they advance and assume supervisory responsibilities; it is a tool that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning, resulting in improved quality of teaching and learning; it reinforces teachers' strengths, and remedies their weaknesses; underperforming teachers can be observed, critiqued and advised about how to improve in a non-threatening, supportive context; it reduces teacher isolation, increases collegiality, facilitates the sharing of resources and ideas, and capitalises on teachers' individual and shared strengths; it enables schools to achieve their goals within a predetermined timeframe by using their knowledge of administration and unite the physical power, willpower and the intellectual power of participants to be the same in teamwork; it can compel staff members to expand their skills and to learn from one another; it can encourage members to learn to respect and appreciate each other and promote a sense of belonging; it is essential for improving schools, and plays a key role in the achievement of better school outcomes because it has an impact on the motivation levels and capabilities of teachers, including the school climate and environment; and finally, it is likely to produce good results and can maximise learners' achievements in their schools.

Gallie, Zhou, Felstead and Green (2012:24) posit that teamwork improves worker productivity because it gives employees a sense of empowerment as increases the control that they can exercise over their immediate work environment. It is associated with higher levels of perceived discretion, employment security, satisfaction for workers, and is effective in improving objective performance measures. It reduces employee absenteeism rates while at the same time improves organisational performance. It has a positive effect on operational measures of organisational performance. It enables workers with higher control over their jobs to feel more

committed to the organisation and more satisfied with their jobs. This will make them be more willing to deploy discretionary effort, resulting in the enhancement of performance in the organisation. This will have an added advantage of high commitment and high performance management systems where teamwork is seen as one of a set of structural features enhancing the effectiveness of the organisation by raising employee motivation. Furthermore, argues Gallie et al. (2012:24), teamwork enhances performance through the increased scope it gives employees to use their knowledge, skills and abilities. In addition, it facilitates employee learning, skills acquisition and information sharing, and can encourage mutual and collective learning processes, thereby facilitating employees' accumulation of task-specific human capital.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the theoretical framework of the study. The distributed leadership theory has been chosen as the most suitable theory of the study. It has also presented the literature review of the study, thereby focusing on the establishment of teams in schools; their functions; the instilling of a culture of teamwork; the benefits of teamwork; its characteristics and finally, factors fostering (in)effective teamwork. The following chapter discusses the research methodology and design of the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research methodology and design of the study. Research methodology is the overall approach adopted by the researcher to execute the research study, which directs specific tools selected by the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:26). Section 3.2 presents the research paradigm. Section 3.3 looks at the research approach. In section 3.4, the research design is presented. Section 3.5 pays attention to the population and sampling. In section 3.6 data collection is discussed. This is followed by data analysis and interpretation in section 3.7. The credibility and trustworthiness of the study are presented in section 3.8. Then the research ethics is examined in section 3.9. In section 3.10, the limitations and delimitations of the study are presented. Section 3.11 concludes the study.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

In a research context, the term 'paradigm' describes a system of ideas, or worldview used by a community of researchers to generate knowledge (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson, 2022). It is a set of assumptions, research strategies and criteria for rigour that are shared by that community. In this way, a research paradigm represents different ways of looking at the world, which involve choosing different approaches to observe and measure the phenomena being studied (Fossey et al., 2022). It consists of the nature of knowledge, epistemology or ontology, a methodology and criteria for validity. There are eight research paradigms, namely, the positivist, emancipatory, transformative, critical theory, constructivist, deconstructivist, pragmatism and interpretivist research paradigms (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:2).

This study was based on the interpretive research paradigm, whose proponents, argue Creswell and Poth (2018:8), believe that realities are multiple, constructed by individuals through their social interactions and cannot be separated from the context in which they occur. This entails that meanings are subjective. Interpretivists seek to discover reality through views from participants, their own experiences and other contextual factors (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:26). According to Maree (2016:23), interpretivism is the view that:

- it is from within ourselves or others' experiences that we can begin to understand human life;
- that social life is a human product because reality is a social construction;
- that human life is full of purposive; and
- that the world is not independent of human knowledge.

Gichuru (2017:2) argues that interpretive research, which is also known as interpretivism accepts that the social world presents a better stage to study phenomena than the purely material world of technology. The authors state that interpretivists believe that knowledge is a social and historical product. Pervin and Mokhtar (2022:421) indicate that interpretive research is based on the premise that social reality is shaped by human experience and social backdrop, making it well suited to do research on human behaviours which are related in the context of its socio-cultural issues. The authors add that interpretivism emphasises the significance of people's personalities and participation in social and cultural life (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022:423). They reason that the researcher must take position that people's knowledge of reality is socially constructed. In this way, interpretivism typically focuses on meanings, and may use a variety of methodologies to reflect various facets of the research topic.

According to Thanh and Thanh (2015:24), the use of the interpretivist paradigm together with the qualitative methods relies on individuals' experiences, understandings and perceptions for their data in order to expose reality as opposed to reliance on statistics. Likewise, Fossey et al. (2022: 720) state that interpretive methodologies focus primarily on understanding and accounting for the meaning of human experiences and actions. In other words, interpretive approaches emphasise meanings inherent in human experience and action, regardless of their individual or collective origin. This is the reason why this study employs the interpretivist research approach. The researcher interpreted the data collected from participants.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

Research approaches are mainly of three types, namely, quantitative, qualitative and mixed method research approaches (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:101). The main differences between the three approaches are that the group studied in the quantitative research approach is larger and randomly selected, and the group studied in the qualitative research approach is smaller and non-randomly selected (Apuke, 2017:42). The mixed method research approach is a combination of both the qualitative and the quantitative research approaches. This means that the mixed method approach is based on both types of groups. This study was based on the qualitative research approach, which led to the understanding of the implementation of teamwork by investigating participants in their own particular context in the selected primary schools.

3.3.1 Qualitative research approach

The question is why has the researcher chosen the qualitative research approach? According to Tracy (2020:17), the qualitative research approach is not only flexible but also encourages in-depth focus and adaptability to emerging themes during the study. Fossey et al. (2022:717) argue that qualitative research is a broad umbrella term for research methodologies that describe and explain persons' experiences, behaviours, interactions and social contexts using words rather than statistical procedures or quantification. The aim of qualitative research is to give freedom to the viewpoints of research participants and to encourage subjective meanings, actions and contexts of the study. It focuses on theory-building by determining patterns and connections within data, is flexible and responds to context, which is characterised as emergent. According to Hollstein (2022:405), the defining feature of the qualitative approach is the interpretation and understanding of meaning. Thus, the qualitative research approach allows researchers to advance and use their interpersonal and subjectivity skills in their study (Alase, 2017:9).

Muzari, Shava and Shonhiwa (2022:15) state that the qualitative approach depends on the individual's point of view. It enables the extraction and generation of detailed, rich and thick descriptions based on participants' views. From this perspective, qualitative research is more concerned with processes rather than products, since its

foundation lies in how understandings are formed and how meanings are made. It is humanistic, naturalistic and holistic in dynamic social realities. Qualitative research is also unique in the sense that physical human senses are employed to understand how issues are richly described and interpreted. The approach is also excellent in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours and norms of social contexts of a particular grouping.

The qualitative approach, contend Muzari et al. (2022:16), enables researchers to study things in their natural settings. The researchers try to make sense of and interpret the issues in terms of the meaning that people assign them. Thus, qualitative research empowers individuals' stories with the objective understanding of how meaning is made within their social world (Silverman, 2021:3). In this view, the social world is not independent of the perceptions of individuals; instead, it is the creation of social interactions among people in specific settings. This means that the qualitative approach is about multiple social realities where participants are regarded as experts in that it is their views of reality that are being interpreted. Furthermore, the approach empowers participants to communicate clearly, thereby promoting deep listening between the researcher and participants for genuine understanding of beliefs and values that come out through communication. In this sense, the qualitative approach nurtures an accurate description of viewpoints, and offers a multilayered view of social reality without privileging the interests of those in positions of authority and power. It remains open to new information (Silverman, 2021:4). According to Alase (2017:130), qualitative research focuses on the analysis of context, the exploration of the causes and sources of phenomena such as teamwork in schools.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design can be defined as the overall structure guiding the collection of data and its subsequent analysis with the sole objective of answering the research problem (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:389). Such a structure guides the carrying out of a research method and data analysis (Bryman, 2016:45). In a similar note, Cook and Cook (2016:1), a research design provides the blueprint for conducting a research study and shapes the kind of knowledge generated by the study. Maxwell (2021:121) explains that the primary aim of a research design is to anticipate and minimise threats to the

validity of the study. There are many types of research designs, including the narrative design, a case study, grounded theory, phenomenology, and participatory action research (Creswell & Poth, 2018:239). This study adopted the phenomenology research design.

3.4.1 Phenomenological research design

The question is: what is phenomenology and why has the researcher chosen it as the research design of the study? Phenomenological research design is about meanings made by individuals from their experiences of a single phenomenon (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:39). Phenomenology seeks to make sense of the world from direct experiences of the phenomenon (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019:91). According to Creswell and Poth (2018:254), phenomenology is based on the collection of views of participants in order to describe their common experiences of a phenomenon. In the context of this study, the phenomenon was teamwork as experienced by educators in the selected primary schools. Phenomenologists work from participants' specific experiences rather than abstractions from their accounts in order to construct a model for interpretations by the researcher. The fundamental purpose of phenomenology, as noted by Creswell and Poth (2018:254), is the reduction of people's lived experiences with the phenomenon to describe the essence of those experiences.

As explained by Finlay (2021), phenomenologists study the way that people experience or understand their world as real or meaningful because they believe that meaning is embedded in human existence. This means that people are naturally predisposed to experience their world as meaningful because they are associated with it in a dynamic way. The researcher is expected to interpret the world of experiences of participants.

There are four benefits of phenomenology (Wilson, 2015:40):

- It enables understanding of lived experiences;
- It seeks to uncover phenomena about personal and theoretical assumptions of participants;
- It helps to explain familiar but misunderstood experiences; and
- It empowers and promotes understanding amongst people.

According to Alase (2017:11), a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon because it is not only a description, but also an interpretive process in which the researcher decodes the meaning of the lived experiences. In this view, the purpose of the research design is to investigate all aspects of teamwork.

3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Population refers to the people in the form of individuals, groups, or communities from whom the data is collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018:148). In simple terms, a study population can be described as the total number of individuals, groups, and communities that the researcher wishes to study and from whom data is collected in order to respond to the research problem or research questions. According to Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016:1), population or universe refers to the total number of people, things, or cases which are the subject of research. It goes without saying that it is from the study population that the researcher selects the sample of the study, which is usually a small fraction of the population. The expectation is that the researcher should describe the features of the entire population (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019:274).

The research sites of the study are 19 primary schools in Hlanganani Central Circuit, Vhembe West District of Limpopo Province. The population of the study comprised all 19 principals in the primary schools, seven deputy principals, 31 heads of departments (HODs) and 178 teachers, making a total of 234. From the population, a sample was drawn. Muzari et al. (2022:15) define a sample as a subgroup of a population of relatively smaller number of people selected from a population for investigation purposes (Alvi, 2016:30). It is the people who take part in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018:150), or a portion of a population or universe (Etikan et al., 2016:1). The process through which a sample is extracted from the population is called sampling.

According to Taherdoost (2016:20), sampling involves selecting a subset of individuals from a population to estimate the characteristics of the whole population. The advantages of sampling are faster data collection and lower cost. The sample size was

drawn using the convenience sampling technique. Convenience or accidental sampling considers people or other available units (Saunders et al., 2019:297). Likewise, Etikan et al. (2016:2) hold that convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate. Shonhiwa (2022:17) argues that the convenience sampling method includes the selection of people who seem to be convenient or easy towards the researcher. Alvi (2016:30) states that in convenience sampling, only those participants who are easy or convenient to approach are included. The technique is useful because the target population is defined in terms of a wide category. From the population size of 234, a sample of 20 participants was selected. The sample size comprised five principals, three deputy principals, four heads of department and eight teachers.

Table 1: Demographic information of participants

The table below provides the demographic profile of the participants in terms of position, gender, experience and qualifications.

Category	Position	Gender	Teaching/management experience in years	Qualifications
Participant 1	Principal	Male	20-25	BED Honours
Participant 2	Principal	Female	5-10	Master's Degree
Participant 3	Principal	Male	20-25	BED Honours
Participant 4	Principal	Male	15-20	BED Honours
Participant 5	Principal	Male	20-25	Master's Degree
Participant 6	Deputy Principal	Male	10-15	BED Honours
Participant 7	Deputy Principal	Female	5-10	BED Honours/ postgraduate Diploma
Participant 8	Deputy Principal	Female	10-15	BED Honours
Participant 9	Head of Department	Male	20-25	BED Honours
Participant 10	Head of Department	Male	10-15	BED Honours
Participant 11	Head of Department	Female	10-15	BED /Postgraduate Diploma
Participant 12	Head of Department	Female	15-20	BED Honours
Participant 13	Teacher	Female	10-15	Teachers Diploma
Participant 14	Teacher	Female	15-20	Teachers Diploma
Participant 15	Teacher	Female	5-10	BED
Participant 16	Teacher	Female	5-10	BED
Participant 17	Teacher	Male	5-10	BED
Participant 18	Teacher	Male	15-20	Teachers Diploma
Participant 19	Teacher	Female	10-15	Teachers Diploma/ postgraduate certificate
Participant 20	Teacher	Female	10-15	BED

The table above depicts the demographic information of participants. It shows that 20 participants took part in the study. Specifically, the table indicates that five principals, three deputy principals, four heads of department and eight teachers participated in the study. It is clear from the table that of the 20 participants, nine were male and 11 were female participants. The lowest qualification of the participants was a teacher's diploma, and the highest was a master's degree in education. Two participants held a master's degree, nine Bachelor of Education honours degree, four the Bachelor of Education degree and another four a teacher's diploma.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative researchers can use numerous systems of data collection in any single study. These include objects, documents, archival records, direct observations, participant observations, observations of physical artefacts, audiovisual materials and interviews (Given, 2020; Flick, 2018). This study used semi-structured or in-depth interviews and document analysis as methods of data collection. Face-to-face interviews allow the researcher to ask and to make follow-up questions for clarity relating to some of the responses or to probe the reasoning behind the responses (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2019). They enable direct interaction with participants, resulting in detailed and subjective data, enabling the elicitation of the feelings, views and perceptions of the research topic (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). When using in-depth interviews, an interview guide and a recorder were used as data collection instruments. The guide contained questions that the researcher posed to the participants, from which follow-up questions were made.

Opdenakker (2018) discusses the advantages of face-to-face interviews. The first is that with interviews, the researcher can use social cues such as voice, tone and body language of participants, among others. This can provide the interviewer with a lot of additional information that can be added to the verbal answers. The importance of social signals also rests on what the interviewer desires to know from the participants. Secondly, face-to-face interviews are distinguished by synchronous communication in time and place. There is no time deferral between question and answer because the researcher and participants can directly respond to what the other is saying. This means that the answers from the participants are spontaneous, and the researcher can concentrate on the questions and the answers given.

Another advantage of face-to-face interview is that the researcher can tape-record the interview (Opdenakker, 2018). The tape recorder assists them to collect the correct data because he/she can play it again and again. It is important to use both a tape-recorder and note-taking because the former may malfunction. After tape recording, the researcher is expected to transcribe the data, which takes time. The synchronous communication of time and place in a face-to-face interview also has the advantage it is possible for the researcher to create a good interview atmosphere. In other words, he or she can standardise the situation. Face-to-face interviews are easy because

they assist with follow-up questions. Each interview session is expected not to take more than 45 minutes.

Apart from semi-structured interviews, data was also collected through focus groups. According to Cyr (2016), a focus group is a group of people who deliberate on a set of questions on a specific topic given to them by the researcher. The main objective is to create conversations that reveal opinions about a particular question such as, in the case of this study, teamwork. In this way, focus groups can result in a group consensus on the issue under discussion. In other words, focus groups allow for the collection of a multiplicity of individual reactions at the same time. During focus groups, participants actively explore their views and opinions (Jayasekara, 2012). Their real strength is to provide insights into the sources of behaviours and motivations. Focus groups can enable the disclosure of similarities and differences in terms of behaviours, attitudes, preferences and perspectives among the participants (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2017). In this study, focus groups were used to supplement semi-structured interviews to further interpret the data (Caillaud & Flick, 2017). In other words, they were used as a follow-up research method.

Data was also collected using document analysis, which was conducted to review school-based records such as minutes of SMT meetings, general staff meetings, and other documented resolutions or collaborative decision-making practices related to teamwork. Document analysis is a systematic process of reviewing and evaluating both printed and electronic documents to gain meaningful insights relevant to the research questions (Bowen, 2020). The documents were accessed with permission from the school principals and were handled with strict confidentiality. The purpose of this analysis was to cross-reference verbal accounts from participants with documentary evidence of teamwork, participation, and decision-making within the schools.

Document analysis added value by enabling the researcher to trace the consistency of teamwork initiatives, and to understand formal procedures and communication used in SMT engagements. The method also strengthened the triangulation of data sources, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness and depth of the study findings (Bowen, 2020; O'Leary, 2020). Relevant school documents such as staff meeting

minutes and management meeting minutes were reviewed to complement data collected through interviews and focus groups. This ensured the richness and credibility of the data gathered, enabling a comprehensive understanding of teamwork dynamics in primary schools.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis in qualitative research is fundamentally a search for patterns and meanings within textual data (Creswell & Poth, 2018:185). According to Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017:2), qualitative data analysis occurs concurrently with data collection and coding. This means that as the researcher collects, codes, and reviews the data, patterns, themes, and categories begin to emerge. Qualitative research deals with soft data, which typically take the form of words, phrases, and participant expressions rather than numerical figures. This type of data is presented in narrative prose rather than tables or graphs.

This study employed thematic analysis to interpret and understand the collected data. Thematic analysis allows for the identification, organisation, and interpretation of patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2019:594). According to Creswell and Poth (2018:186), the data analysis process in qualitative research resembles a spiral, starting with the organisation and preparation of the data, followed by reading through all the data to gain a general sense of it. The next step is to code the data and to develop themes or categories. Finally, the themes are integrated and interpreted inductively to derive meaning and understanding from the participants' perspectives.

3.8 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness refers to the extent to which other people are convinced by the findings and therefore find them worthy of consideration (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:336). It is the extent to which the study is conducted ethically, transparently, and with methodological rigour (Nowell et al., 2017:2; Amankwaa, 2016:122). It is important to observe the standards of trustworthiness in order to convince readers that the results of the study are credible and have merit. For this reason, the criteria of dependability, confirmability, credibility and transferability were adhered to.

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:336). The researcher ensured that the study is dependable by keeping a detailed audit trail that traces all steps in the data collection and analysis process. It was achieved by findings, interpretations and recommendations that are supported by the data as collected from participants. Confirmability has to do with the fact that the findings are based on the participants' responses and not the researcher's personal biases (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122). To maintain confirmability, the researcher used direct quotes, maintained a reflective journal, and presented evidence from the data to support interpretations. It was also important to base the findings of the study on the data as collected from the participants. In other words, the researcher worked hard to stay clear of bias and subjectivity.

Credibility in qualitative research refers to the confidence in the truth of the data and how well the findings reflect the participants' original views (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). To enhance credibility in the study, the researcher asked probing and follow-up questions, which sought to clarify participants' responses and ensure accurate understanding. Member checking was also considered to verify that participants' views were accurately captured. Transferability relates to the extent to which the findings of the study could be applied in other similar contexts (Anney, 2014:277). This was enhanced by providing thick descriptions of the research setting, participants and procedures, allowing readers to judge the relevance of the findings to their own settings.

3.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

The expectation is that a study should meet the general guidelines within its discipline that reflect acceptable and competent research practices, particularly in demonstrating sensitivity to ethical issues. A study that lacks ethical consideration is ultimately not trustworthy (Tracy, 2020:37). Ethics in qualitative research involves making thoughtful decisions about how gatekeepers are approached, how participants are selected, how to respond to reluctant participants, and how to manage requests for assistance during observations and interviews (Bhadari, 2020:89). Ethical issues in qualitative research can be considered under various dimensions, as discussed below.

3.9.1 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Anonymity means that the identities of participants are not linked to the information they provide, and they are not identifiable in the research report (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019:259). In this study, anonymity was maintained by assigning pseudonyms or codes to each participant instead of their real names. Any identifying details were omitted or altered during transcription and reporting.

Confidentiality refers to the obligation of the researcher to safeguard the information shared by participants and to ensure that it is not disclosed to unauthorised individuals (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018:112). To uphold confidentiality, all raw data was securely stored in a locked cupboard accessible only to the researcher, and digital files were protected by passwords. Additionally, the researcher avoided discussing individual responses with anyone outside the research process.

These principles were clearly communicated to participants in the consent form, and they were reminded of their rights before interviews began. By adhering to these measures, the study ensured ethical protection of participants' identities and personal information.

3.9.2 PROTECTION FROM HARM, RESPECT AND DIGNITY

It is possible for participants to be exposed to harm because of their participation in the study (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). It was, therefore, important to ensure that all participants were protected from any physical or psychological harm. One of the ways of doing this was to assure them that the answers that they gave were used for research purposes only.

3.9.3 INFORMED CONSENT AND VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participants must consent to take part in the study and to fully understand their right to voluntary participation. For this reason, they were provided with consent forms to complete and sign to ensure they were aware of the purpose of the study. The form clearly indicated that they were free to decline answering any questions they were uncomfortable with and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without facing any negative consequences.

3.9.4 ETHICAL CLEARANCE

The researcher applied for ethical clearance or a certificate from UNISA's ethics and research committee. The certificate was presented to the Department of Basic Education before the data collection process from the participants. A gatekeeper permission letter was also applied for from the department.

3.10 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations are described as potential drawbacks or 'imposed' restrictions closely related to factors such as the chosen research design, funding constraints, and so on (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018:155) that may cast doubt on the findings of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:63). The major limitation of this study was that the researcher was a teacher, who worked 150km away from the research sites. Thus, she did not have enough time and resources to travel to the research sites. Another limitation was that the phenomenological research design tends to leave out sensitive and contextual issues and focus more on the interpretation and understanding of participants' meanings and experiences (Rahman, 2017:104). In addition, the fact that it was not going to be possible to generalise the findings of the study to a larger population because non-probability sampling was used was also a limitation of the study.

Delimitations are boundaries or limits of the study as set out by the researcher himself or herself (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018:157). The researcher neither intended to conduct the study in secondary schools nor planned to do the study with learners or other school stakeholders such as school governing bodies and the Department of Basic Education. In other words, the study was limited to members of SMT and teachers in the selected primary schools.

3.11 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study was about the establishment of effective teamwork towards the management and smooth-running of primary schools of Vhembe West District, Hlanganani Central Circuit, Limpopo. This chapter discussed the research methodology and design, and focused on the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population and sampling, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, credibility and trustworthiness, research ethics, and limitations and delimitations. The following chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 looked at the research methodology of the study. The focus was on the research paradigm, the approach and research design of the study. The chapter also presented the population and sampling, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, credibility and trustworthiness and research ethics of the study. Also discussed were the limitations and delimitations of the study. This chapter presents the data analysis and the presentation of findings of the study. Section 4.2 presents the profile of the participants. Section 4.3 recaps the data analysis technique. Section 4.4 presents the summary of research findings. Section 4.5 deals with the discussion of themes, categories and subcategories. Section 4.6 looks at research findings obtained from document analysis. Finally, section 4.7 presents the summary of the entire chapter.

The study was based on the qualitative research approach, which enabled the examination of teamwork by participants in their own context in the selected primary schools. The aim of the study was to examine strategies that can be used to foster effective teamwork in primary schools of Vhembe West district, Hlanganani, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The following were the objectives of the study: to examine the key elements of teamwork that influence the management of primary schools; to determine the roles and functions of teams within the schools; to look at the factors that influence the effectiveness of teamwork in the schools; and find out the team-building initiatives that can be taken to enhance management efficiency.

The following research questions formed part of the study:

- What are the key elements of teamwork that influence the management of primary schools?
- What roles and functions do teams serve within the schools?
- What are the factors that influence the effectiveness of teamwork in these schools?
- What are the team-building initiatives that can be considered to enhance management efficiency in primary schools?

The participants were divided into two groups. Group 1 consisted of SMT members, including five principals, three deputy principals and four heads of department. Group 2 was made up of eight teachers, where two teachers were spread across the five primary schools. Data were collected by triangulating three research instruments. Individual semi-structured interviews enabled the collection of data at a face-to-face level with the participants and allowed for follow-up questions. Focus group discussions permitted the researcher to conduct an interview with teachers as a group. Document analysis made it possible for the researcher to collect data by analysing policy documents and minutes of meetings from the schools. In what follows, a breakdown in the profile of the participants is presented. As indicated, the participants were divided into groups of three.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

The following is a breakdown of the demographic information of the participants. The breakdown takes the form of occupational positions, their gender, teaching experience and qualifications.

Table 4.1: Occupational position of participants

Position	No. of participants	Percentage
Principals	5	25
Deputy principals	3	15
Heads of department	4	20
Teachers	8	40
Total	20	100

Table 4.1 above shows that principals constituted 25% of the participants, deputy principals 15%, heads of department 20% and teachers, who formed the majority of the participants, made up 40% of the participants.

Table 4.2: Gender of participants

Gender	No. of participants	Percentage
Male	9	45
Female	11	55
Total	20	100

Table 4.2 displays the gender division of the participants. It is clear that the majority of the participants were female at 55%. The male participants made up 45% of the study.

Table 4.3: Participants' teaching experience

Teaching experience	No. of participants	Percentage
5-10	5	25
10-15	7	35
15-20	4	20
20-25	4	20
Total	20	100

The table above shows the teaching experience of the participants. The table indicates that 25% of the participants had 5-10 years experience in teaching, 35% had 10-15 years, 20% 15-20 and 20-25 years teaching experience, respectively.

Table 4.4: Qualifications of participants

Qualification	No. of participants	Percentage
Teachers' diploma	4	20
Teachers' diploma + Cert.	1	5
Bachelor of Educ. Degree	4	20
BED Honours	9	45
Masters	2	10
Total	20	100

In Table 4.4 above, the participants' qualifications are depicted. The table shows that the majority of the participants at 45% held a BED Honours degree as their highest qualification, and 20% held teachers' diploma and Bachelor of Education degree, respectively. Of the 20 participants, one or 5% held a teacher's diploma and a certificate. Finally, two participants or 10% possessed master's degrees.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

Data was analysed using thematic analysis, which identifies data in terms of themes and patterns. In fact, thematic analysis is the search for themes and patterns as collected from participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015:100). It involves the identification, analysis and interpretation of patterns of meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006:1). It also involves the coding of data. It also means that data were analysed in the form of prose rather than mathematical formulas and graphs. The process starts by reading and rereading the data for a general sense of the ideas articulated by the participants in order to identify the general categories or themes of the data. It also follows the process of organising, sorting, classifying or categorising the data. Yet another step in thematic analysis is to integrate and summarise data using inductive reasoning in order to interpret or understand the data as a coherent whole. The following section presents the findings of the study.

4.4 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presents data and examines the findings of the study collected through various data collection instruments. The findings are categorised in terms of the emergent themes following the data collection instrument used. Firstly, findings from data collected using individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups are presented. Secondly, findings from data collected through document analysis are discussed.

THEME 1: THE KEY ELEMENTS OF TEAMWORK INFLUENCING THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

4.4.1 Research findings from individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups

Only teachers participated in focus group discussions. Members of the SMT – principals, deputy principals and heads of department participated in individual semi-structured interviews. Pseudonyms for principals are SP1-SP5, those for the deputy principals are DP1-DP3, and pseudonyms for heads of department are HOD1-HOD4. Teachers will be known by the pseudonyms Teacher 1 to Teacher 8. There was a total number of 20 participants. From the discussion, a number of themes, categories and subcategories emerged. The categories, subcategories and descriptions relating to the establishment of teamwork at primary schools are summarised in the tables below. This is in line with Objective 1 of the study.

Table 4.5: The establishment of teams at primary schools

Theme 1	Categories	Subcategories	Descriptions
The key elements of teamwork influencing the management of schools	The establishment of teamwork	Committees: quality learning and teaching, cultural, nutrition, cleaning, school safety, finance, timetable, SMT, finance, SGB, trip and tourism, tourism, Soul Buddyz, drama, debate, language. Trust, collaboration and constitution of committees.	<p><i>“We do have a safety committee in this school. Its function is to see to it that the learners are safe from bullies. When a learner bullies other learners, we identify him and then call his parents on a weekend. We use weekends because some parents are working on weekdays” (SP2).</i></p> <p><i>“Some learners who are members of this committee are given powers to write down the names of learners who bully others during</i></p>

	<p>Programmes and meeting scheduling</p>	<p>Regular meetings.</p>	<p><i>breaks, and bring the list to us. We then call the bullies to find out the problem. In most cases, we find that the problem comes from home” (Teacher 3).</i></p> <p><i>“Some of the committees are not effective because you find that a committee only has a chairperson and a secretary. In some cases, a teacher will be a member of different committees” (Teacher 6).</i></p> <p><i>“Every committee is expected to hold a meeting at least once per month and to report its activities to the SMT” (SP4).</i></p> <p><i>“We have an SMT committee where we meet once a month on a Tuesday afternoon” (DP1).</i></p> <p><i>“The SMT holds meetings when there is a need. We meet only in the afternoon when learners are gone. We only report to staff if</i></p>
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			<p><i>there is a need to do so” (SP3).</i></p> <p><i>To show commitment in the school, teachers volunteer to teach learners how to read and write in Foundation and InterSen phases early in the morning. The volunteers are given stipends from sponsorships. The learners who remain are also given food (DP1).</i></p>
	Dedication and commitment	Pre-planned programme	<p><i>“All Phases have their own committees which report to staff during staff meetings. All committees function well because all report, and do so to the SMT. Intermediate and Senior Phases have their own committees, which report to staff during staff meetings” (SP4).</i></p>
	Communication and feedback	<p>Making sacrifices.</p> <p>Integrity and mutual support.</p> <p>Exchange of opinions, ideas,</p>	<p><i>“After every meeting, we report our activities to the HOD. In this way, we follow the channels of</i></p>

		attitudes, values and facts. Reporting and channels of communication Social media	<i>communication” (Teacher 8).</i> <i>“We have WhatsApp groups where we share minutes of meetings” (Teacher 1).</i>
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The table below summarises the categories, subcategories and descriptions of the roles and functions of teams in schools according to the participants of the study. This is in line with Objective 2 of the study.

THEME 2: ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF TEAMS WITHIN THE SCHOOLS

Table 4.6: Roles and functions of teams in schools

Theme 2	Categories	Subcategories	Descriptions
Roles and functions of teams within the schools	Administrative and operational functions	SMT committee	<i>“The functions of SMT are to run the school in terms of handling finances and projects in the school. The SMT committee functions very well, 100%. We have also co-opted members based on their experience of teaching” (HOD2).</i>
		Identification of challenges.	<i>“The number of meetings that a committee should hold per year is governed</i>

	<p>Instructional support and curriculum development</p>	<p>Effective functioning of school.</p>	<p><i>by policy. The policy says that SMT should hold a meeting every quarter. But we do hold urgent meetings. We also deal with misconduct of learners as guided by policy (SP5).</i></p> <p><i>“I think the SMT is functioning well because we hold regular meetings. The challenge is that we have a low enrolment, making it impossible to have a fully functional SMT committee. We have only officially appointed SMT member. The others are co-opted members” (SP3).</i></p> <p><i>“Teamwork enables the identification of gaps in certain areas. It also enables us to allocate functions to different staff members in terms of their capabilities and expertise” (Teacher 2).</i></p> <p><i>“The SMT must have a management plan that it follows” (DP2).</i></p>
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	Learner support and well being	<p><i>Management plan</i></p> <p>Class visits</p> <p>Curriculum implementation</p> <p>Good health and safety.</p> <p>Quality food</p> <p>Community involvement</p> <p>Community involvement</p>	<p><i>“The main function of the SMT is to discuss the curriculum, which is the main issue at all schools. It must make sure that the curriculum is completed and that learners are ready to write the examination. The SMT must also do class visits in order to support teachers” (SP1).</i></p> <p><i>“Some of the functions of the nutrition committee is to manage the cooks, to count the amount of food that is brought to us, to workshop the cooks on how to handle food. We also deal with problems brought to us. We prepare food for learners who participate in sports. When the school runs out of food, we sit down and decide what to do” (Teacher 8).</i></p> <p><i>“I am a member of the cleaning committee. In the committee we also handle sanitary towels for girls. We also record everything that</i></p>
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			<p><i>comes to the school. The committee reports to the principal” (Teacher 7).</i></p> <p><i>“Some committees such as the safety committee sometimes addresses learners on issues related to their safety” (HOD1).</i></p> <p><i>“Learners do not only focus on education, but also on sports where they are able to discover their talents” (Teacher 1).</i></p> <p><i>“Some children excel in sporting and cultural activities to the extent that they develop love for the sports for their future careers” (Teacher 2).</i></p> <p><i>“Some of our learners take part in debate where they learn communication skills that they will use in future” (Teacher 6).</i></p>
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THEME 3: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEAMWORK IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The table below summarises the categories, subcategories and descriptions of factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork in schools. This is in line with Objective 3 of the study.

Table 4.7: Factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork in schools

Theme 3	Categories	Subcategories	Descriptions
Factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork in schools	Agenda and minute taking	Setting the agenda	<i>“Every committee has a secretary whose responsibility is to take down minutes in every meeting” (SP2).</i>
		Minute-recording	<i>“Minutes of meetings are taken to the principal for safe-keeping and then to staff for reading during the next meeting where they are first adopted before matters arising are discussed. The SMT implements the management plan” (DP3).</i>
	Leadership and management	Smooth-running of school. Leadership and listening skills.	<i>“My duty is to submit work done or to append my signature. My teachers are doing their best. No one is policing them. Even the issue of ushering learners</i>

		<p>Teams as effective working units</p>	<p><i>to classes does not give me a headache because my teachers make sure that the whole school is in order. They also advise one another well. There is always order even if I am not at work” (SP5).</i></p> <p><i>“Teamwork is a remedy for all problems at school. Our principal accommodates everyone and listens to all of us with respect. That is why I can say that our school is the best. We are all happy here” (HOD4).</i></p>
	<p>Reporting and implementation</p>	<p>Committee decisions.</p> <p>Implementation of decisions.</p> <p>Role of secretaries.</p>	<p><i>“All committees function well because all report to the SMT. The SMT then makes sure that the decisions are implemented. A teacher may be given the responsibility to implement the decision” (HOD2).</i></p>

	<p>Evaluation and monitoring</p>	<p>Assessment and observation of teachers.</p>	<p><i>“Once we have taken a resolution in a meeting, we report the discussions to the principal” (Teacher 6).</i></p> <p><i>“There are secretaries who report to the principal, to the SMT and then to staff” (HOD3).</i></p> <p><i>As a member of the SMT, we report our decisions to the staff during staff meetings. We meet once every quarter, but we also meet when there are urgent meetings to discuss. We also meet parents when we report their children’s results. However, 50% of parents do not involve themselves with their children’s education (HOD3).</i></p> <p><i>“To improve the way teams work, we to record everything that we doing to determine what are able to achieve and to find the way forward” (Teacher 5).</i></p> <p><i>“I can say that our SMT is effective because we</i></p>
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		Auditing learners' written work	<i>monitor all structures in the school. We also make follow-up on everything happening in the school, including absenteeism of learners” (Teacher 4).</i>
		Annual teaching plans (ATPs).	
		Provision of information for decision-making	<i>“We also make follow-ups in case of learners who bully others. We also want to know why a learner is absent on specific days of the week. We then take measures such as calling their parents” (Teacher 5).</i>

THEME 4: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEAM-BUILDING INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The table below outlines the categories, subcategories and descriptions of team-building initiatives for enhancing management efficiency in primary schools. This is in line with Objective 4 of the study.

Table 4.8: The implementation of team-building initiatives to enhance management efficiency in primary schools

Theme 4	Categories	Subcategories	Descriptions
The implementation of team-building initiatives to enhance management efficiency in primary schools	Delegation	Development of leadership potentials to subordinates	<i>“Any teacher can be chosen to attend any meeting anywhere any time. In that way, the school is able to build the spirit of teamwork” (Teacher 2).</i>
		Smooth-running of the school.	

		<p>Quality education</p> <p>Instilling culture of commitment and responsibility.</p>	<p><i>“Delegation and feedback are also important. But we are constrained by inadequate resources. For example, sometimes we don’t have money to buy a soccer ball for the learners. Sometimes we run out of cash to buy papers and other things. Many committees are there only in a name, but not functional at all. There is no capacity” (SP3).</i></p>
	<p>Frequency of meetings</p>	<p>Lack meeting schedules</p> <p>Properly constituted agenda</p> <p>Absence from meetings</p> <p>Achievement of team objectives</p>	<p><i>“In some of the committees, we only hold meetings when there are urgent issues depending on the committee concerned” (Teacher 1).</i></p> <p><i>“We don’t have scheduled meetings in our school. We only meet where there is a need to do so” (Teacher 7)</i></p> <p><i>“I think the best way of improving the functioning of our committees is to meet regularly on scheduled time. For example, once every month” (Teacher 7).</i></p>

		<p>Personal cleanliness</p> <p>Quality food</p> <p>Enough nutrition personnel</p>	<p><i>members in the nutrition committee is for the department to employ more workers and to employ them on a permanent basis” (Teacher 3).</i></p> <p><i>“We have a committee that we call Soul Buddyz. The committee deals with four things: school cleanliness, bullies by learners, gardening and absenteeism” (Teacher 6).</i></p> <p><i>“We use learners to do pick up papers all over the school yard. In other times, we send learners to grow vegetables in the garden” (Teacher 5).</i></p>
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4.5 DISCUSSION OF THEMES, CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES

4.5.1 Theme 1: The key elements of teamwork influencing the management of schools

Theme 1 relates to the question: What are the key elements of teamwork that influence the management of primary schools? In asking this question, the participants were required to outline features of teamwork that have an impact on the management of schools. Specifically, they were asked to share with the researcher what they think is happening in their own schools where they work in terms of teamwork. Under this theme, several categories and subcategories emerged from the data presented by participants. These categories are the establishment of teamwork, programmes and

meeting scheduling, dedication and commitment, and communication and feedback. Each of the categories is discussed in the subsections that follow.

4.5.1.1 Category 1: The establishment of teamwork

In terms of category 1, which looks at the establishment of teamwork in the schools, the study noted that there is some form of teamwork in the form of committees that assist in the smooth-running of the selected schools. However, some schools have more committees than others. According to data, the following committees could be found in all the schools: the SMT committee, school governing body, timetable committee, finance committee, subject committee, nutrition committee, cultural committee, cleaning and sports committee. According to one participant, in addition to these committees, School 1 has a school safety committee, which looks at the safety of learners in the schoolyard, and a quality learning and teaching committee, which makes sure that quality learning and teaching takes place at the school. The participant puts it as follows: *“We do have a safety committee in this school. Its function is to see to it that the learners are safe from bullies. When a learner bullies other learners, we identify him and then call his parents on a weekend. We use weekends because some parents are working on weekdays”* (SP2)

In School 4, they have a volleyball committee where they train and teach learners to play the game. In School 2, they also have rugby committee, exam committee, drama, debate and a committee dealing with the safety of learners known as Soul Buddyz. Soul Buddyz is a committee of learners who are given certain responsibilities in the school. One function of the committee is to deal with bullies, as follows: *“Some learners who are members of this committee are given powers to write down the names of learners who bully others during breaks, and bring the list to us. We then call the bullies to find out the problem. In most cases, we find that the problem comes from home”* (Teacher 3). The Soul Buddyz committee is consistent with Khuluse (2022:18), who argues that teamwork involves almost all stakeholders in education in the school community. Indeed, by isolating bullies in School 2, the committee promotes a positive school culture, trust, and collaboration in the school.

In terms of gender representation, the committees at the selected schools comprise both male and female teachers. This is in line with Freedman and Somech (2021:121), who assert that team composition is an important component that consistently

indicates significant and positive impact in teamwork and a basic requirement for collaboration. In this view, team composition, which refers to the extent to which the team is heterogeneous or homogeneous, is a crucial component which shapes the mode of interaction among team members.

In School 5, they have a language committee, a trip committee and tourism committee. In terms of constitution, it seems that some schools are well constituted, and others are not. In at least four of the schools, there are clear committees with a chairperson, a secretary and in some cases, a treasurer. However, some schools have no properly constituted committees. Take School 2 as an example: *“Some of the committees are not effective because you find that a committee only has a chairperson and a secretary. In some cases, a teacher will be a member of different committees”* (Teacher 6). This effectively means that there is no well-meaning teamwork, argues the participant.

4.5.1.2 Category 2: Programmes and meeting scheduling

In terms of category 2, which looks at the team activities or programmes, the study found that some schools have no clear programmes and therefore hold less meetings than others. In some instances, there is no schedule of meetings because the committees do not know what to discuss. Instead, meetings are held on an ad hoc basis. However, in some schools, there appears to be a schedule of meetings. For example, in School 1, the participant said: *“Every committee is expected to hold a meeting at least once per month and to report its activities to the SMT”* (SP4). This means that in this school, meetings are held on a regular basis. Everything is planned. The same situation occurs in School 2, where they hold their meetings every month with a clear programme. For example, DP1 puts it as follows: *“We have an SMT committee where we meet once a month on a Tuesday afternoon.”*

In some schools, meetings are held only when there is a need. In other words, the schools do not follow a pre-planned programme. For example, in School 3, one participant said the following: *“The SMT holds meetings when there is a need. We meet only in the afternoon when learners are gone. We only report to staff if there is a need to do so”* (SP3). It is clear that School 2 does not function to the best of its ability. When the researcher probed further, one participant indicated that the reason why they do not have a schedule of meetings is because they are understaffed. For this

reason, every staff member belongs to this or the other committee. In short, there is no well-functioning teamwork in the school. Kriek and Venter (2009:113) have argued that teambuilding consists of programmes focused not only on the improvement of interpersonal relations but also improved productivity. Examples of such programmes include assessment and problem-solving activities.

4.5.1.3 Category 3: Dedication and commitment

Another key element of teamwork is dedication and commitment among staff members. One of the strategies of showing dedication and commitment in schools is to make sacrifices by going beyond the call of duty. Teachers should, for example, teach learners in the morning before school, after school or even where possible, on weekends. This is what one participant said in School 1: *To show commitment in the school, teachers volunteer to teach learners how to read and write in Foundation and InterSen phases early in the morning. The volunteers are given stipends from sponsorships. The learners who remain are also given food (DP1).* In this school, some teachers volunteer to teach learners who struggle with reading and writing after school. This goes a long way in assisting the learners to catch up with their classmates in terms of reading and writing. A study by Khuluse (2022:19) found that to function effectively, teams need a set of distinct values, such as commitment, integrity and mutual support. Yet another study by Töremen and Karakufi (2007:640) mentions commitment is a factor that brings about effective teamwork.

4.5.1.4 Category 4: Communication and feedback

Baloyi (2011:32) defines communication as the transfer of information and understanding from one individual to another through meaningful signals. In this way, communication allows the exchange of opinions, ideas, attitudes, values and facts by members of a team. Teamwork implies that committee members must not only hold meetings on a regular basis but also communicate their activities and give feedback to the school community. This has to do with how they report and where the reports are sent once the committee has taken decisions. In this respect, a participant from School 1 had the following to say: *“We have WhatsApp groups where we share minutes of meetings”* (Teacher 1). This means that it is important for members of a

team to use digital technology to interact with one another. Other digital social media platforms include Facebook, emails, SMSs, telegram and Instagram. These should be used to the maximum.

Another participant from the same school said: *“all Phases have their own committees which report to staff during staff meetings. All committees function well because all report and do so to the SMT”*. *Intermediate and Senior Phases have their own committees, which report to staff during staff meetings”* (SP4). Again, another participant had the following to say: *“After every meeting, we report our activities to the HOD. In this way, we follow the channels of communication”* (Teacher 8). This is supported by the literature. Kilindo (2015:22), for example, is of the view that effective communication, which occurs when members of staff listen each other, respect each other and express ideas clearly, strengthens teamwork in schools. To Sabunkola (2021:99), effective communication builds a good relationship among the members of staff, which impacts on their academic performance. It is a matter of trust and acceptance of others’ ideas and includes a positive attitude towards one another. In this way, communication becomes effective when teams assist the school to achieve its goals.

4.5. 2 Theme 2: Roles and functions of teams in schools

Theme 2 responded to the question: What roles and functions do teams serve within the schools? In asking this question, the participants were requested to indicate the roles and functions of teams or committees in schools. In this theme, the following categories were noted: administrative and operational functions, instructional support and curriculum development, and learner support and well-being.

4.5.2.1 Category 1: Administrative and operational functions of teams

In terms of the administrative and operational functions of teams, all the five schools had an SMT committee. The role of the committee is to run the schools and to make sure that it functions effectively. One participant argued as follows: *“The functions of SMT is to run the school in terms of handling finances and projects in the school. The SMT committee functions very well, 100%. We have also co-opted members based on their experience of teaching”* (HOD2). According to Teacher 2, *“Teamwork enables the identification of gaps in certain areas. It also enables us to allocate functions to different staff members in terms of their capabilities and expertise.”* This means that

teams assist educators to identify challenges and problems for intervention purposes. Another participant had the following to say: *“The number of meetings that a committee should hold per year is governed by policy. The policy says that SMT should hold a meeting every quarter. But we do hold urgent meetings. We also deal with misconduct of learners as guided by policy (SP5).*

But in one school, there appeared to be problems with the overall function of the SMT. This was attributed to understaffing. *“I think the SMT is functioning well because we hold regular meetings. The challenge is that we have a low enrolment, making it impossible to have a fully functional SMT committee. We have only officially appointed SMT member. The others are co-opted members” (SP3).* In line with the above assertion, Pitsoe and Isingoma (2014:141) are of the view that teamwork enables schools to achieve their goals within a predetermined timeframe by using their knowledge of administration and uniting the physical willpower and intellectual power of members to be the same in teamwork. Likewise, Töremen and Karakufi (2007:641) contend that effective operations of administrators bring about efficiencies in the educational system. Thus, without an effective administrative and operational functioning of teams, particularly the SMT, the school becomes dysfunctional. This was probably the case in School 3.

4.5.2.2 Category 2: Instructional support and curriculum development

The main function of teams in schools, according to the participants, is to ensure that the curriculum is followed during teaching and learning. This means that teachers must follow the annual teaching plans (ATPs) because if they do not do this, they will be teaching randomly. One participant said the following: *“The SMT must have a management plan that it follows” (DP2).* The plan ensures that the school runs according to decisions taken in meetings. *“The main function of the SMT is to discuss the curriculum, which is the main issue at all schools. It must make sure that the curriculum is completed and that learners are ready to write the examination. The SMT must also do class visits in order to support teachers” (SP1).* Class visits are meant to check teachers’ work in relation to the ATPs. In support, one of the important functions of teamwork as identified by Lumpkin (2008:6) relates to the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices. In the same vein, Angu (2019:13) argues that the optimal functioning of any team is dependent on the

incorporation of team-based learning in academic curricula, amongst other functions. Teamwork is crucial in stabilising programmes and enables new leaders to build on the work of their predecessors so that all members of staff are well informed and involved in their learners' education (Epstein, 2010:29).

4.5.2.3 Category 3: Learner support and well-being

This category talks to how learners are supported through teams in terms of their well-being. The schools have nutrition, and cultural and cleaning committees which support learners' welfare, good health and safety. According to the participants, the role of the nutrition committee is to ensure that learners receive quality food every school day.

Some of the functions of the nutrition committee is to manage the cooks, to count the amount of food that is brought to us, to workshop the cooks on how to handle food. We also deal with problems brought to us. We prepare food for learners who participate in sports. When the school runs out of food, we sit down and decide what to do.

(Teacher 8).

Another committee that caters for the well-being of the learners is the cleaning committee. *"I am a member of the cleaning committee. In the committee we also handle sanitary towels for girls. We also record everything that comes to the school. The committee reports to the principal"* (Teacher 7). In terms of safety in schools, participants put it as follows: *"Some committees such as the safety committee sometimes addresses learners on issues related to their safety"* (HOD1). For example, when they identify learners who bully other learners, the committee deals with the bullies. In School, when a learner is uncooperative, they call his parents. If this fails, then the learner is referred to the local tribal authority. The tribal office comprises different structures such as religious, chieftaincy, indunas and civic structures.

Learners are also supported in terms of their athletic ability. One of the ways of doing this is through sports and cultural committees. *"Learners do not only focus on education, but also on sports where they are able to discover their talents"* (Teacher 1). This makes them to become well-rounded individuals with well-developed mental capacities and physique. Learners are also able to discover their God-given talents. *"Some children excel in sporting and cultural activities to the extent that they develop*

love for the sports for their future careers” (Teacher 2). Others develop speaking and communication skills by taking part in debates. One participant indicated this point as follows: *“Some of our learners take part in debate where they learn communication skills that they will use in future”* (Teacher 6). According to Kriek and Venter (2009:113), the well-being of individual team members, as well as learners is one of the four outcomes of teambuilding, which consists of programmes focused on the improvement of interpersonal relations, improved productivity or better alignment with organisational goals. Some of these programmes include fun and enjoyment, simulation of workplace dynamics, assessment and problem-solving activities. Töremen and Karakufi (2007:640) include the welfare of employees, increased meaningfulness and involvement, higher levels of efficiency, self-reliance and job satisfaction as some of the benefits of effective teamwork.

4.5.3 Theme 3: Factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork in schools

Theme 3 is in response to the question: What are the factors that influence the effectiveness of teamwork in schools? The question required the participants to demonstrate issues that impact the effective functioning of schools in the context of their workplaces. The following categories were observed: agenda and minute-taking, leadership and management, reporting and implementation, and evaluation and monitoring.

4.5.3.1 Category 1: Agenda and minute-taking

Every team is expected to hold regular meetings. Such meetings should be preceded by an agenda and be recorded. According to Jennings (2007:9), a quality meeting agenda should include the following items:

- The purpose of the meeting;
- A note on who is required to attend;
- The projected timespan of the meeting;
- The location of the meeting;
- Any special resources that participants should bring;
- Any advance preparation required; and
- The name of the recorder and timekeeper for the meeting.

One of the participants argued as follows: *“Every committee has a secretary whose responsibility is to take down minutes in every meeting”* (SP2). Another participant had the following to say: *“Minutes of meetings are taken to the principal for safe-keeping and then to staff for reading during the next meeting where they are first adopted before matters arising are discussed. The SMT implements the management plan”* (DP3). Jennings (2007:25) argues that minutes of meetings serve as a record of the issues addressed, discussions arrived at, and responsibilities assigned to individual members at the meeting. Minutes are also helpful to staff members who were unable to attend the meeting. This means that without the recording of minutes, meetings cannot achieve the school objectives.

4.5.3.2 Category 2: Leadership and management

According to the participants, leadership and management plays a critical role in the effective management of teamwork in schools. One participant in School 5 had the following to say about his leadership style: *“My duty is to submit work done or to append my signature. My teachers are doing their best. No one is policing them. Even the issue of ushering learners to classes does not give me a headache because my teachers make sure that the whole school is in order. They also advise one another well. There is always order even if I am not at work”* (SP5). It is clear that, according to the participant, teamwork is working well in his school. Teachers work together to ensure the smooth-running of the school.

In School 4, the principal’s leadership is described as one who listens to his staff and take their ideas seriously. *“Teamwork is a remedy for all problems at school. Our principal accommodates everyone and listens to all of us with respect. That is why I can say that our school is the best. We are all happy here”* (HOD4). This is supported by studies by Basson and Mestry (2019) and Everard et al. (2004), which found that good management can be seen by the formation of groups of educators into effective working units or teams, and getting the teams to work together effectively to pursue the purpose and goals of the school. In addition, Makewa et al. (2016:26) argue that leadership has become increasingly complex and sophisticated to the extent that effective leadership requires a collaboration of employees from different viewpoints. School 3 is characterised by staff shortage to the extent that there appears be a

problem in leading the school. Staff is overworked and hardly concentrate on the work on hand.

4.5.3.3 Category 3: Reporting and implementation

Yet, another factor influencing a teamwork approach in the functioning of schools is reporting and implementation of decisions. When committees take resolutions in meetings, these decisions must be reported to other structures in the school. This will ensure that every stakeholder in the school is aware of what is going to be done. No one must be taken by surprise when the decisions are implemented. *“All committees function well because all report to the SMT. The SMT then makes sure that the decisions are implemented. A teacher may be given the responsibility to implement the decision”* (HOD2). The reports are normally delivered by secretaries of committees. In some schools, instead of the SMT, reports are sent directly to the principal. This could be noted in Schools 3 and 5. *“Once we have taken a resolution in a meeting, we report the discussions to the principal”* (Teacher 6). *“There are secretaries who report to the principal, to the SMT and then to staff”* (HOD3). Once the SMT is satisfied that certain resolutions must be implemented, in some schools, they then report the decision to the staff. Consider the following:

As a member of the SMT, we report our decisions to the staff during staff meetings. We meet once every quarter, but we also meet when there are urgent meetings to discuss. We also meet parents when we report their children’s results. However, 50% of parents do not involve themselves with their children’s education (HOD3).

According to Teacher 5, *“To improve the way teams work, we record everything that we are doing to determine what are able to achieve and to find the way forward”*. This means that no matter how urgent or short a meeting is, minutes must be recorded and the resolutions implemented. This is consistent with Lumpkin (2008:6), who posits that teamwork involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies; and contributes to the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices. Furthermore, Henkin et al. (2000:7) argue that teams are also strategic means for implementing delegated authority, and for

processing more information at lower levels. Effective implementation leads to successful schools and successful learners (Epstein, 2010:29).

4.5.3.4 Category 4: Evaluation and monitoring

Another factor that influences teamwork is evaluation and monitoring. SMT is normally assigned the task of assessing and observing teachers every now and then. This includes auditing learners' written work, making sure that teachers attend their classes, examining their portfolios and ensuring that their lesson plans follow ATPs. It also includes doing class visits and moderating assessment tasks. DP3 argues as follows: *"I can say that our SMT is effective because we monitor all structures in the school. We also make follow-up on everything happening in the school, including absenteeism of learners"* (Teacher 4). Another participant echoed Teacher 4 as follows: *"We make follow-ups in case of learners who bully others. We also want to know why a learner is absent on specific days of the week. We then take measures such as calling their parents"* (Teacher 6).

This line of thinking is supported by Lumpkin (2008:6), whose view is that teamwork enables the monitoring of effective school practices and their impact on student learning. Monitoring and evaluation are also good in managing projects in that it ensures successful planning and implementation, which leads to the success of the projects in terms of goals and objectives set, and encourages effective decision-making for better performance of teamwork (Kathongo, 2018:155). Rodríguez, Nussbaum, López and Sepúlveda (2010:166) submit that monitoring and evaluation support the intervention process through the provision of real-time information for decision-making by applying assessment instruments according to the monitoring plan and facilitates understanding of what is going on in the school.

4.5.4 Theme 4: The team-building initiatives to enhance management efficiency in primary schools

Participants were asked to reflect on team-building initiatives of enhancing management efficiency in their schools. The question was: How can team-building initiatives be implemented to enhance management efficiency in your schools? From this question, several initiatives emerged. These include the use of delegation,

frequency of meetings, stakeholder collaboration, dedication and commitment, and the last one was nutrition, cleanliness and safety.

4.5.4.1 Category 1: Delegation

Kongnyuy (2020:271) defines delegation as “the managerial process by which an individual manager or supervisor (principal) transfers part of his legitimate authority to a subordinate (a teacher) but without passing on the ultimate responsibility which has been entrusted to him/her by his own superior (minister)”. The aim of delegation is to develop the leadership potentials of subordinates by giving them power to take leadership positions. Delegation enhances the credibility of the principal because teachers are allowed the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities and to contribute to the school activities. In this way, the principal gets respect and loyalty from the teachers. In this study, the participants argued that delegation is one of the best strategies of enhancing management efficiency in schools. A participant from School 1 argued: “*Any teacher can be chosen to attend any meeting anywhere any time. In that way, the school is able to build the spirit of teamwork*” (Teacher 2). According to the participant, a school functions optimally when every teacher realises that he or she is valued; and that he or she can be assigned to do any task for the smooth-running of the school. Delegation is one such strategy that makes teachers feel that they are part of the school. If it is used effectively, it can go a long way in instilling a culture of commitment and responsibility. It is mostly effective in schools with many teachers such as School 1, School 2 and School 4. But in School 3 and School 5, which are characterised by fewer teachers, there appears to be a problem with delegation. In School 3, SP3 makes the following point:

Delegation and feedback are also important. But we are constrained by inadequate resources. For example, sometimes we don't have money to buy a soccer ball for the learners. Sometimes we run out of cash to buy papers and other things. Many committees are there only in a name, but not functional at all. There is no capacity.

As can be seen above, one of the problems in School 3 is the small size of the staff membership, which makes delegation difficult, challenging or even absent. But

scholars agree that if done properly, delegation brings about quality of education in schools. For example, Kongnyuy (2020:271) found that delegation of authority has an important impact on the provision of quality education in schools, and that there is a positive relationship between delegation and quality education. Delegation enables the development of high-quality staff (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022:32). In this view, by delegating work, principals can coach, train, and develop competent staff, making them more valuable to the school.

4.5.4.2 Category 2: Frequency of meetings

The participants mentioned that one of the problems that hinder the efficient management of schools is lack of schedules for meetings, where there are no regular or pre-planned meetings. For example, Teacher 1 argued as follows: *“In some of the committees, we only hold meetings when there are urgent issues depending on the committee concerned”*. Equally, Teacher 7 had the following to say: *“We don’t have scheduled meetings in our school. We only meet where there is a need to do so”*. This leads to random meetings that often do not yield the desired results. *“I think the best way of improving the functioning of our committees is to meet regularly on scheduled time. For example, once every month”* (Teacher 8). The participants are of the view that if meetings are held regularly, then all staff members will prepare themselves and be ready mentally for such meetings. This will also mean that there will be a properly constituted agenda for the meeting. This will lead to a routine which fosters an efficient running of the school. In some schools, such as School 3, due to small size of the teaching component, some members absent themselves from meetings: *“I can say that our school is not functioning optimally because some members do not attend meetings”* (SP3).

According to Freedman and Somech (2021:121), the frequency of team meetings is one of the three areas that consistently show a significant and positive impact in schools. It is identified as a basic prerequisite for smooth-running of schools because the more team members meet, the more committed and motivated they are to work together towards achieving team objectives. Similarly, Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2007:308) are of the view that frequency of meetings is an essential component for promoting teamwork. They believe that the more regularly they hold meetings, the

more teammates are motivated and committed to the mission of the team, and the more they contribute to the success of the team to achieve its goals.

4.5.4.3 Category 3: Stakeholder collaboration

The participants argued that one of the best strategies of enhancing teamwork spirit is for stakeholders to collaborate and to build relationships. *“Some teams involve stakeholder collaboration for the benefit of our learners in all areas of their lives”* (Teacher 2). In terms of this view, stakeholder collaboration does not just mean teacher collaboration but also creating an environment where all stakeholders realise that they need to work together. Stakeholders include education officials such as district managers, circuit managers and curriculum advisors. Closer to the school, they include SGBs, teachers and learners. A relationship of mutual trust needs to be built between all these stakeholders, and if they can work together, schools will benefit greatly in terms of learner improvement. This is in line with Grove’s (2008:v) argument that we are living in an environment of collaboration and consultation through teams and team leadership, which leads to the achievement of good results. Strong teams assist management and make organisations solid. Further, Freedman and Somech (2021:118) believe that collaboration is key to success because it leads to effective conflict management styles and higher level of team members' motivation.

Avison (2010:20) argues that stakeholder involvement is critical throughout the policy process in schools. In agreement, Gichohi (2015:13) asserts that quality education also depend on stakeholder involvement in schools and the ability of the SMT to influence the stakeholders and to use both the human and material resources available in the schools. In this view, stakeholder involvement means working with others, using the resources and helping them to work together to realise the goals of the school.

The participants noted that most parents do not attend school meetings. This is a serious problem experienced in the five schools selected for the study. But teachers are of the view that they have no option but to call the same parents when a learner misbehaves. Consider the following:

Some of the initiatives that we take as SGB to deal with learners who misbehave is to involve their parents. When this fails, we then involve

the tribal office for assistance. The tribal office is made up of members from different sectors such as the church, civic structures and the chieftaincy. We also refer some of the learners, especially those in Grade 6 & 7 to social workers for their intervention (Teacher 4).

School 2 is the only school that uses the tribal office to seek for help with learners who do not cooperate with either teachers or parents. This is possibly because the school is a stone's throw from the tribal office.

4.5.4.4 Category 4: Nutrition, cleanliness and safety

Panoyo, Riyanto, Handayani and Hartono (2019:43) write that people need a clean environment to remain healthy and odourless. They should not spread dirt or transmit germs to others. This means that personal cleanliness such as bathing, brushing, hand washing, and wearing clean clothes is important. One of the most effective ways of ensuring that learners pay attention to teachers is to ensure that they are well-fed. Learners will not listen to teachers on an empty stomach. In this way, the nutrition committee plays a major role in ensuring that they are given quality food. Consequently, it is important that every school has enough nutrition personnel. Avison (2010:21) is of the view that school nutrition personnel play an important role in the promotion of school-based health initiatives. In particular, food service staff should implement acceptable nutrition standards when ordering, preparing and displaying food and beverages to learners. In School 1, for example, a participant argued as follows: *“One way of bringing improvements in team members in the nutrition committee is for the department to employ more workers and to employ them on a permanent basis”* (Teacher 3). In her view, the school does not have enough kitchen personnel for the learners and make sure that they are properly fed. This has far-reaching effects on their level of concentration. In support, another participant from School 3 also raised a similar issue, arguing that lack of enough time for learners to eat due to shortage of the kitchen personnel has a detrimental effect on teachers. Secondly, participants indicated that there is a need to improve the cleanliness and safety of schools. Teacher 6 argued as follows: *“We have a committee that we call Soul Buddyz. The committee deals with four things: school cleanliness, bullies by learners, gardening and absenteeism.”* The participant above is of the view that there

is a committee comprising mainly children in their school, which deals not only with cleanliness, but also with safety issues, among others. In terms of cleanliness, another participant said: *'We use learners to do pick up papers all over the school yard. In other times, we send learners to grow vegetables in the garden'* (Teacher 6). When asked why the school decided to form a committee of this nature, the participant indicated that the whole idea was to empower the learners and to instil a sense of responsibility even at young age.

Is the committee not interfering with learner participation? The participant argued that this is not the case as the committee is active only during breaks. The committee also makes sure that no learner litters in the school yard because they are aware that they are being monitored by fellow learners. According to Booren, Handy and Power (2011:172), a safer school environment leads to better student academic performance and increased parental involvement, and that when learners feel safe, they are more protected from harmful effects and are prepared to take good decisions about their academic success and personal welfare.

4.6 RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Apart from individual semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, data were collected through document analysis. In this section, findings obtained through document analysis are presented and discussed. Two types of documents were used to collect data, namely, policy documents and minutes of meetings.

4.6.1 Policy documents

Several Department of Basic Education policy documents were scrutinised. The first is the Employment of Educators Act 76 (1996). According to the Act, every school is expected to establish a staff development team (SDT) consisting of the principal and elected staff members. Its function is to initiate, co-ordinate and monitor the appraisal of teachers in terms of the school's management plan. Unfortunately, none of the selected schools in the study mentioned the existence of the SDT. This raises questions about whether or not the schools have an appraisal plan for the growth of staff members and subsequent upward mobility. According to Leithwood, Jantzi, Silins and Dart (1993), appropriate forms of leadership appraisal are a useful means to assist those in a key role to renew themselves.

The second policy document is the South African Schools Act (1996), which talks about what must be done in the event of learner misbehaviour. The Act states that learners who disrupt other learners' rights must be taken to the principal, who then must inform the parents or guardians. It is only after the learner refuses to change that he/she must be referred to the governing body. In other words, the Act does not say anything about the role of the SMT as a committee supposed to ensure the smooth running of the school. It must be noted that learner misbehaviour is not only rife in schools but has also a negative impact on teaching and learning (Leefon, Jacobs, Le Roux & De Wet, 2013).

The Employment Equity Act 55 (1998) states that participation in extramural activities develops learners' health skills because sport makes them stay healthy. A healthy body is helpful to a healthy mind and spirit and contributes to the general health of a school. Other benefits of extra-mural activities, according to the Act, include better communication skills; an increased ability to use energy purposefully; reduced abusive and disruptive behaviour; better interaction with peers and others; increased independence and self-direction; improved creativity and imagination; and better emotional expression and adjustment. As indicated above, this explains why every school has a sports and cultural committee.

Basch (2011) identifies seven health problems that influence learners' motivation and ability to learn. These are vision, asthma, teen pregnancy, aggression and violence, physical activity, lack of breakfast, and inattention and hyperactivity. It is for this reason that the National Policy Education Act (1996) states that each school should establish its own Health Advisory Committee as a subcommittee of the governing body. The Health Advisory Committee may be led by health workers such as a nurse but must consist of educators, representatives of the parents of learners at the school, representatives of the learners and representatives from the medical or health care professions. It should be noted that although there are nutrition, cleanliness and safety committees, none of the schools in the study mentioned the existence of a Health Advisory Committee. This means that teachers may not be aware of the need to establish a committee of this nature. Apart from policy documents, document analysis took the form of minutes of various committees at the schools.

4.6.2 Minutes of meetings

The researcher requested all forms of documents that have to do with teamwork at the selected schools. Only minutes of meetings were available. The table below summarises the results of analysis of the minutes.

Table 4.9: A summary of results from minutes of meetings

Nature of documents analysed	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5
SMT committee	Minutes available	Minutes available	No evidence of teamwork	Minutes available	Minutes available
Finance committee	Minutes available	No evidence of teamwork	No evidence of teamwork	Minutes available	No evidence of teamwork
Nutrition committee	Minutes available	No evidence of teamwork	Minutes available	No evidence of teamwork	Minutes available
Sports and cultural committee	No evidence of teamwork	Minutes available	No evidence of teamwork	No evidence of teamwork	No evidence of teamwork
Disciplinary committee	No evidence of teamwork	No evidence of teamwork	Minutes available	No evidence of teamwork	No evidence of teamwork

In the table above, it is clear that the documents that pertain to teamwork as collected from the participating schools are largely minutes of meetings. This was because the schools defined teamwork mainly in terms of committees that existed within the schools. No other documents were available. However, it is clear from the table that some committees only exist in name as there is no written evidence of their existence. In what follows, the analysis of minutes is based on different committees that exist at the schools.

(a) SMT teamwork

Document analysis revealed that all the selected schools had an SMT committee. The main function of the committee is to run the schools. Naicker, Chikoko and Mathiyane (2013) are of the view that the role of the SMT committee is one of instructional leadership in order to influence the quality of education, and enhance learner achievement, and pedagogic and curriculum management. In School 1, there was evidence that meetings were held at 10h00 am. One of the minutes indicated that the meeting could go ahead in the absence of the principal, which shows that the school is able to function without the head of the school. The minutes had a clear agenda, and were organised as follows: 'opening', 'welcome', 'closure' and 'vote of thanks'. The roll call was clearly circulated and signed. It was typed and included the name of the attendees, gender, contact number and their signature. The weakness is that the minutes were written in handwriting rather than a typed format.

In School 2, it was indicated that meetings were held at 14h30 to 16h00. The roll call was divided into names of attendees and their role or designation as principal, or secretary, for example. The minutes were typed, and the agenda was embedded in the minutes themselves. In each item, the minutes were divided into description of agreed action, person responsible, start date and completion date. Two interesting items in the agenda were 'reading of the minutes' and 'matters arising' from the minutes. At the end of the minutes, there was an item for 'date of the next meeting', which was clearly indicated.

In School 4, the agenda was typed in Limpopo Provincial Government and Department of Education logos with the name of the school beneath. The nature of the meeting such as 'ordinary SMT meeting' was indicated. The date, venue and time of the meeting were clearly indicated at the top of the agenda. One set of minutes was held in the morning at 08h30 and another at 12h10pm. The agenda was typed and separated from the minutes. The agenda was neatly numbered and divided into two columns where one indicated the items to be discussed and the other the person responsible for the item. At the bottom of the agenda, the vision statement of the school was clearly stated. The attendance register indicated the participant's name and surname, identity number, SACE registration number, contact number and signature of attendees. Then the principal's signature and school stamp. This was

followed by handwritten detailed minutes, including items such as minutes of previous meetings, matters arising from minutes and new matters.

In School 5, the sample of minutes showed that minutes were handwritten together with the agenda on pieces of paper. The date of the meeting was indicated on top. Although the agenda was numbered, the items on the minutes were not. Items on the agenda included 'opening', 'welcome and remarks', and finally 'closure'. The last item on the minutes was named 'attendance' where the attendees wrote down their names, their designation and signatures. Midha (2022) holds the view that there are three reasons why meetings are empirically and theoretically significant. Firstly, meetings take crucial time and attention in planning, debriefing, and reflection. Secondly, they are an interconnected system of sensemaking within the school. Lastly, meetings reflect and constitute a phenomenon, and therefore, symbolise both the medium and the outcomes of educational leadership.

(b) Finance teamwork

How schools should manage funds is prescribed by the Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Mestry, 2004). The Act also stipulates guidelines for the SGB and the principal in terms of their roles and responsibilities in managing school finances. Mestry (2004), however, argues that there are SGBs and principals that have limited knowledge of the provision of the Act or unable to interpret it correctly, leading to many schools becoming victims of mismanagement or misappropriation of funds through embezzlement, fraud and theft. According to Sebidi (2023), schools should establish finance committees whose conduct and role is regulated by the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996).

The present study revealed that finance committee members lacked skills in financial management. It is for this reason that the researcher requested documents from finance committees of the selected schools to find out how finance committees function. It is the duty of the finance officer, argues Sebidi (2023), to implement the financial policy and procedures and processes of financial transactions in schools. The function of the treasurer is to direct meetings, govern the financial operations and make recommendations on decisions relating to school finance, whereas the secretary informs members about the meetings and records minutes. Requests for documents from finance committees was based on the need to find out whether or not

teamwork was taking place in the schools in terms of everything to do with funding. Minutes of finance committee meetings from School 2, School 3 and School 5 were not available. It is therefore questionable whether there is teamwork going on in these schools. In other words, it stands to reason that the committees may be dysfunctional.

Firstly, there was evidence of finance committee minutes in School 1. The minutes had no roll call, so it was difficult to know the people who constitute the committee. But it had the signature of the principal on the last page. The minutes were handwritten on a plain sheet of paper and started with the agenda of the day. The numbered agenda reflected common items such as 'opening', 'welcome and remarks', 'roll call' and 'apologies', 'reading of the previous minutes' and 'business of the day'. The only sign showing the ownership of minutes was a school stamp on the first and last page of the minutes. The minutes were written in vernacular, which is one of the 12 official languages of South Africa in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996. However, it should be noted that the problem with the use of indigenous languages was that some education stakeholders may not understand the language. Secondly, English is the medium of instruction in public schools in South Africa.

Evidence of minutes in School 3 suggested that meetings were held in the first language, which happens to be an African language. This could be evidenced by the minutes, which were written in the indigenous language. It must be pointed out that although it is not a medium of instruction, the indigenous language used is one of the official languages of South Africa. Secondly, the minutes followed the normal items such as 'opening' and 'welcome', as well as 'business of the day' (BOD) like in other schools.

In School 4, the minutes began with an agenda, which started with an item known as 'opening', then 'welcome', which was followed by 'roll call', which was circulated to members. The next item was 'minutes of previous meeting', then 'matters arising from the previous minutes', and this was followed by 'business of the day'. After the items on business of the day were those about 'announcement' and then 'closure'. Then, the roll call of names and signatures indicated that the finance committee consisted of four members with the principal at the helm. Like in School 1, the minutes were

handwritten. However, the principal indicated that minutes were also available in a typed format and stamped.

If finance committees in schools do not have efficient teamwork, it will lead to problems in the smooth running of the schools. Sebidi's (2023) study found that poor financial management leads to financial maladministration, which deprives schools of the ability to acquire the necessary resources to enhance teaching and learning.

(c) Nutrition teamwork

The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) comprises three pillars with associated objectives. These are feeding, which involves providing nutritious meals to learners; nutrition education, which involves promoting nutritional knowledge and healthy food choices; and food gardens, which involves improving food production knowledge and skills, natural resource protection and school meals (Devereux, Hochfeld, Karriem, Mensah, Morahanye, Msimango, Mukubonda, Naicker, Nkomo, Sanders & Sanousi, 2018). Mawela and van den Berg (2020) argue that school nutrition programmes contribute to a healthy learning environment. However, they contend that some of the biggest challenges include the work overload of nutrition coordinators, a lack of training and inadequate food delivery. For this reason, the role of nutrition committees cannot be overemphasised. Nutrition committees are a product of the Department of Basic Education's NSNP, which came into effect in 1994. In terms of this programme, schools that qualify for the programme include Quintile 1–3 primary, secondary and special public schools. Quintile 1 schools are the poorest schools, quintile 2 are still poor but slightly better off than quintile 1; and quintile 3 are also considered disadvantaged schools. Learners in quintile 1-3 do not pay school fees, and the schools receive more government support, including nutrition meals.

Minutes of nutrition committees from School 2 and School 4 were not available. In School 1, minutes were written in a typed format with the school logo clearly visible at the top. Apart from the logo, other details such as the address of the school, contact details of the principal, such as his cell number and email address and reference number were clearly visible. What was missing were details about the nature of the minutes. This was followed by the date and venue of the meeting. Instead of the

agenda, the next item was written “Agenda as it is”. The minutes were then numbered starting with ‘opening’ and the last item was ‘closure’.

The minutes in School 3 began with the date and the nature of the committee ‘nutrition’. This was followed by the agenda, which contained normal items such as ‘opening’, ‘welcome’, ‘roll call’ and ‘apology’ and ‘BOD’. The minutes were written in handwriting and in vernacular. The committee was clearly laid out in the minutes, and included the secretary, chairperson, deputy and SMT members. However, there was also the abbreviation NSNP, whose full form was not clearly explained. The minutes had no school stamp and no list of attendees or absentees, or those who gave an apology.

The minutes in School 5 began with the date at the top, which was followed by the agenda, which carried normal items such as ‘opening’, ‘welcome’ and ‘roll call’. The minutes were also handwritten, but in English. The problem with handwritten minutes is that some of the items were unreadable. The minutes were not stamped, and names of the attendees were missing.

(d) Sports and cultural teamwork

Burnett (2020) is of the opinion that the United Nations sees sport and physical education as focal areas for addressing basic human rights. This means that the need for a committee on sport and physical education for learners cannot be overemphasised in schools. Maluleke and Bushe (2023) are of the view that a sports committee is at the centre of planning sports events. Its goal is to plan and implement sports events, allocate time for sports activities and ensure that there is a viable and well-maintained sports ground for sports and cultural activities at the school by working together with the school community. The committee should also ensure that there are sports resources in order to achieve the objective of the school.

In all the five selected schools, only School 2 submitted evidence of teamwork in sports and cultural committees in the form of minutes of meetings that were held recently. There was no evidence of teamwork in the form of written documents in the other four schools that formed part of the study. On the outer page of the minutes in School 2, the logo, the postal address, cell number, Emis number and email address of the school were clearly visible. Beneath these details was the roll call whose subitems

were name and surname, designation, contacts and signature of the attendees. All these were in a typed format. On the second page of the minutes was the agenda of the meeting, also in a typed format. Apart from the normal items, two other interesting items were 'training and activities' and 'date of competition'. The main minutes, which appeared on the following page of the minutes, were handwritten.

(e) Disciplinary teamwork

Mathebula and Runhare's (2012) study found inefficiencies and discrepancies regarding the functions of disciplinary committees in the selected schools as a result of policy misunderstanding. The study further found that disciplinary committees had little knowledge of policy directives in terms of learner disciplinary code at the schools. There was a gap between the basic knowledge and the implementation of the school codes. There was also a lack of policy-in-action at the schools. Similarly, a study by Mathebula, Runhare and Marishane (2021) revealed that the discharge of the disciplinary committee responsibilities in most schools is undemocratic in both composition and functioning, and therefore unjust in disciplining learners who act outside school rules.

In the current study, written evidence of the existence of disciplinary teamwork could not be found in all the five schools selected. This is despite the fact that participants indicated that there were disciplinary committees in their schools. Such committees dealt with learners who flaunted school rules and regulations. However, attempts to obtain such documents were not successful.

In School 3, they spoke about a crime journal in which the school recorded learners who disobeyed the regulations and then called the parents to a hearing. In the journal, names of culprits were written down daily as well as their offences. For instance, in one entry of the journal, a learner who was found bullying another child was suspended for a certain period of time. Another child who was found playing outside the classroom was given a verbal warning. In School 2, names of learners who bully others were written down and their parents were invited to a hearing. When this failed to correct the learner, then he or she was referred to a tribal office. Again, evidence of the existence of teamwork could not be provided by the participants. In School 4, follow-ups were made with learners who bullied other learners. But again, no written evidence of teamwork about this was provided.

4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter analysed the data and presented the findings of the study. The aim of the study was to examine strategies that can be used to foster effective teamwork in primary schools of Hlanganani Central Circuit, Vhembe West district, Limpopo. The study was an attempt to answer the following objectives: to identify the general dynamics of effective teamwork in a school context; to determine the dynamics of teamwork; and to establish a culture of teamwork in the schools. The study was conducted in five primary schools. Data was collected through a triangulation of three research instruments: focus group discussions, individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis. It was analysed using thematic analysis, or in terms of themes, categories and subcategories.

Theme 1 looked at the key elements of teamwork influencing the management of schools. Under this theme, the following categories emerged: the establishment of teamwork, programmes and meeting scheduling, dedication and commitment, and communication and feedback. Theme 2 examined the roles and functions of teams in schools. Under this theme, the following categories developed: administrative and operational functions of teams, instructional support and curriculum development, learner support and well-being. Theme 3 focused on factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork in schools. Under this theme, the categories that emerged included: agenda and minute taking, leadership and management, reporting and implementation, evaluation and monitoring. Theme 4 paid attention to the team-building initiatives that enhance management efficiency in primary schools. Under this theme, the following categories were instructive: delegation, frequency of meetings, stakeholder collaboration, and the last one was nutrition, cleanliness and safety. Data collected through document analysis revealed various teamwork, including the SMT teamwork, finance teamwork, nutrition teamwork, sports and cultural teamwork and disciplinary teamwork. The following chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on data analysis and presentation of findings. Firstly, the chapter presented the demographic information of the participants. Then, the data analysis technique of the study was reviewed. Thirdly, a summary of research findings was discussed. The research findings were divided in terms of individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis. The findings were presented in terms of themes, categories and subcategories. This chapter presents the findings, conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study. Section 5.2 provides the overview of the study. Section 5.3 presents the summary of findings of the study. Section 5.4 looks at the conclusions. In section 5.5, the recommendations of the study are drawn. Lastly, the limitations of the study are presented in section 5.6.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 presented the background to the study, where the concept of teamwork and the role of the SMT in schools were discussed. The chapter also focused on the statement of the research problem. This was followed by the presentation of the research questions and research objectives of the study. Then, definitions of key concepts and conclusion were given. The aim of the study was to look at the use of teamwork to ensure the smooth running of selected primary schools.

Chapter 2 discussed the theoretical framework and the literature review of the study. The study is based on the distributed leadership theory. The literature review focused on diverse topics, including the key elements of teamwork; the roles and functions of teams; factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork; team-building initiatives; and characteristics of teamwork.

Chapter 3 focused on the research methodology and design of the study. The chapter looked at the research paradigm, research approach and research design of the study. It also unpacked the population of the study and the sampling technique. Then, attention was paid to data collection, analysis and interpretation. The credibility and trustworthiness, and research ethics were also discussed. This culminated in the limitations and delimitations of the study, definitions of key terms and a conclusion.

Chapter 4 analysed the data and presented the findings. The chapter began with the demographic information of the participants. Then the data analysis technique was recapped. This was followed by a summary of research findings. Finally, data was analysed and presented in the form of themes and categories. The researcher started by presenting data collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Lastly, data collected through document analysis was presented.

Chapter 5 brings together information from all the chapters in the form of summary of findings of the study, conclusions, recommendations and limitations.

5.3 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to examine the use of teamwork towards the good management of selected primary schools of Vhembe West District, Hlanganani Central Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis. The data was then analysed through thematic analysis. Several themes emerged from the data. The themes were based on the research objectives and the research questions. Equally, the main findings followed the same subheadings, namely, key elements of teamwork influencing the management of schools; roles and functions of teams; factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork; and the implementation of team-building initiatives to enhance management efficiency in primary schools.

5.3.1 The key elements of teamwork influencing the management of schools

The first major finding of the study relates to main elements of teamwork influencing the management of primary schools. The study found that there are at least four elements of teamwork. The first has to do with the establishment of teamwork. Overall, the study noted that teamwork is going on in schools. In terms of membership, there is gender representation in teams in the schools. This is supported by Freedman and Somech (2021:121), who see a team that is well represented in terms of gender as an essential element indicating a positive impact in teamwork and a basic requirement for collaboration. However, there appears to be no effective teamwork, particularly in one school. This is attributed to low enrolment, which reduces the number of teachers in the school, which affects the functionality of committees.

Another element of teamwork is programming and meeting scheduling. The study found that some schools lack clear programmes and schedules of meetings. This means that they have no clear plans about when meetings should be held. The other problem is that some schools hold less meetings than expected. They also hold meetings randomly and on an ad hoc basis, or when the chairperson believes that there is a need to do so. One of the reasons given is that they are understaffed. But the reality seems to be that they are not understaffed because the small number of teachers is based on the low enrolment. In this school, there is no well-functioning teamwork. This situation reminds us of Kriek and Venter (2009:113), who argue that teambuilding requires programmes focused on the improvement of interpersonal relations and improved productivity.

In relation to dedication and commitment among staff members, the study found that teachers are expected to sacrifice their time beyond normal working hours. For example, in one of the schools, some teachers arrange catch-up classes with learners where they teach them reading and writing. This is supported by Khuluse (2022:19), who asserts that great teachers show commitment, integrity and mutual support to the school project. In relation to communication and feedback, the study found that it is important for teams or committees to communicate their activities and to give feedback to the school community. They must report their decisions using every means at their disposal, including digital communication devices such as mobile phones and the internet. The study found that digital devices are not being used maximally in the schools, particularly through the WhatsApp online platform. In the words of Kilindo (2015:22), effective communication is a recipe for effective teamwork in schools.

5.3.2 Roles and functions of teamwork in schools

The second major finding of the study relates to the roles and functions of teams. In terms of administrative and operational functions, the study found that the schools are largely run by the SMT committee, which oversees the administrative and operational functions of schools. In other words, the SMT makes sure that the schools function effectively. However, the study also found that in one school, there are problems with the overall functioning of the SMT because of the small number of teachers, which is

caused by the low enrolment. In this school, there is actually no meaningful SMT because there is only one head of department who forms part of the SMT. As a result, a member of the staff component has been co-opted into the SMT to make it three members, including the principal. Otherwise, the principal works by delegating anybody at any time. In this way, the goals of the school are not properly achieved. Teamwork enables schools to achieve their goals within a predetermined timeframe by using team members' knowledge of administration and uniting the physical willpower and intellectual power of members to be the same in teamwork (Pitsoe & Isingoma, 2014:141).

Another function of teamwork is instructional support and curriculum development. Here, the SMT committee must ensure that teachers follow the curriculum during teaching and learning, which takes the form of annual teaching plans (ATPs). In addition, the SMT must conduct class visits to monitor teachers' work in relation to these ATPs. In the words of Epstein (2010:29), teamwork stabilises programmes and enables new leaders to build on the work of others to ensure that all teachers are well informed and involved in the education of learners.

The third function is learner support and well-being, where schools are expected to form nutrition, cultural and cleaning committees which support learners' welfare, good health and safety. This is because for learners to concentrate in class, they must eat quality food every school day. The school environment must also be clean because this fosters good health and hygiene. This is the role of cleaning committees. The study found that it is also important to have committees that deal with learners who bully others. Otherwise, victims may stop coming to school because of fear of being bullied. Learners are also supported in terms of their athletic ability through sports and cultural committees. This is good for both their mental and physical development. There are also other skills to be developed, such as speaking and communication skills, which can only be nurtured when learners take part in activities such as debates. The welfare of employees, increased meaningfulness and involvement, higher levels of efficiency, self-reliance and job satisfaction as some of the benefits of effective teamwork (Töremen & Karakufi, 2007:640).

5.3.3 Factors influencing the effectiveness of teamwork

The third major finding of the study has to do with factors that have an impact on the effectiveness of teamwork in schools. The study found that there are at least four such factors. The first is agenda and minute-taking, which plays an important role in preserving discussions in meetings for future use and implementation. Minutes of meetings are records of issues addressed and discussed at the meeting (Jennings, 2007:25).

The second is the leadership and management factor. The study revealed that this aspect is at the centre of effective management of teamwork in schools. It emerged that in some schools, the principal listens to his/her staff and takes their inputs seriously. However, in one of the schools, teachers complained about work overload, of which again, understaffing was blamed. This led to them finding themselves teaching many subjects to the extent that they had no time to contribute meaningfully to teamwork. They were overworked and hardly concentrated on their work. Effective leadership requires a collaboration of teachers in schools from different viewpoints (Makewa et al., 2016:26).

The study further found that teamwork is influenced by the reporting and implementation of decisions. The purpose of reporting and implementation is to ensure that everybody is updated on activities of the schools. It was found that in some schools, reports are sent to the principal for implementation. In other schools, the SMT has a larger role to play. Indeed, Henkin et al. (2000:7) have argued that teams are important in ensuring delegated authority.

Another factor is evaluation and monitoring. In this respect, the SMT has the responsibility of assessing and observing teachers, including auditing learners' written activities. They also monitor teachers' activities, including tests, assignments, projects and investigations, among others. They also make sure that teachers attend their classes, examine their portfolios and ensure that their lesson plans follow ATPs. Monitoring and evaluation support the intervention process by providing real-time information for decision-making (Rodríguez et al., 2010:166).

5.3.4 The team-building initiatives to enhance management efficiency

The last major finding of the study looks at team-building initiatives that can improve the efficient management of schools. The study found that there are at least five such initiatives. The first initiative is delegation, which develops the leadership potential of staff members because it empowers them to accept leadership positions. It enables teachers the opportunity to showcase their capabilities and to contribute to the school activities. It can also instil a culture of commitment and accountability. But in one of the selected schools, the study found that there is hardly meaningful delegation. Therefore, the school suffers as a result because the principal cannot do everything alone. The lack of delegation can be accounted for by the fact that the school has few teachers who find themselves often engaged in the teaching of learners. If delegation is properly done, it leads to quality of education in schools (Kongnyuy, 2020:271).

The study further found that management efficiency can be enhanced by holding meetings as regularly as possible. This means that meetings must be pre-planned at the beginning of the year. The meeting schedule should be sent to every teacher in the school for filing. However, the study revealed that in all the schools that formed part of the study, there are no schedules of meetings. Principals randomly decided when to hold a staff meeting, for example. This means that teachers do not participate in the formulation of the agenda and come to the meetings unprepared. Freedman and Somech (2021:121) are of the view that regular meetings are a cornerstone for the smooth running of schools.

The third initiative of enhancing teamwork is stakeholder collaboration, including line managers, the SGB, teachers and learners. In other words, school stakeholders are expected to collaborate and build good relationships among themselves. This will lead to a beneficial environment of togetherness. Stakeholders must be able to work well together in an atmosphere free from tension. In support, Gichohi (2015:13) makes the point that quality education is dependent on stakeholder involvement.

The last initiative of boosting management efficiency is to ensure that the school has proper nutrition, and a clean and safe environment. This will promote a spirit of teaching and learning. Learners must also eat healthy food for their well-being and for

concentration in class. This is why there is a need for a well-functioning safety and nutrition committee. Only learners who feel safe and protected from harm are prepared to learn (Booren et al., 2011:172). In a nutshell, the findings of the study are supported by the distributed leadership theory, which states that leadership should not be placed in the hands of one individual such as the principal, but should be dispersed across all staff members.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the study was to look at teamwork as a strategy of ensuring good management in primary schools of Vhembe West District, Hlanganani Central Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The study was based on the distributed leadership theory, which supported the study. The literature also supported the view that schools should establish functional teamwork. The study followed the qualitative research approach and the phenomenological research design. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis, and analysed using thematic analysis. From the study, several themes emerged.

From the themes, several findings relating to how to ensure an effective teamwork approach for good management of the selected primary schools can be noted. The study noted that in general, primary schools are functional in that there are committees that are doing their best to do their work. However, one of the five schools appeared to be dysfunctional because there are virtually no functional committees there. The findings further indicate that the SMT is the heart of the school because it plays a central role in directing the functions of the other committees, which play a supporting role. With respect to the effectiveness of teamwork, the findings indicated that committees should not be established for their own sake. Instead, they must add value by bringing about meaningful changes in the schools. In relation to team-building initiatives, the findings showed that teams should constantly formulate initiatives whose sole aim is to improve the overall functioning of the schools so that they become effective instruments of teaching and learning to the benefit of all stakeholders in education, particularly learners.

It is clear from the study that four of the selected schools in the study represent success stories. This emanates from the fact that they have functional teamwork. Instead of working solo, the principals of these schools encourage teamwork, where teachers collaborate with others in almost every area of the school. This ranges from issues connected with the curricula to sports administration. In addition, these schools show effective school management where every teacher has a role to play in the smooth-running of the school. All this makes every teacher feel valued and appreciated for their efforts. Ultimately, it is learners who stand to benefit from teamwork.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the conclusions of the study, certain recommendations can be made.

- One of the findings of the study is that the majority of the selected primary schools of Vhembe West District, Hlanganani Central Circuit, Limpopo Province have functional committees. From this finding, it can be recommended that other studies should pay attention to secondary schools in the same district to find out if similar results will be obtained. Whatever the results of the study, the Department of Basic Education can come up with intervention measures.
- The second recommendation relates to the dysfunctional primary school, which has few teachers due to low enrolment. The outcome of this arrangement is that every teacher belongs to the other committee. In this respect, it is recommended that the department employs additional teachers to schools with low enrolment to support the existing staff complement. Understandably, the number of teachers at a school is determined by learner enrolment. But the problem with this setup is that these fewer teachers end up belonging to every committee in the school, resulting in ineffective teamwork.
- The third recommendation talks to the SMT as the heart of the school. For this reason, it is recommended that these SMTs should be strengthened to play a more meaningful role in running schools. This can be done by employing more SMT members in every school.
- In the fourth finding, which talks about ensuring that teamwork is effective, it is reasonable to recommend that committees be empowered in schools. This can

be done through workshops and seminars. Such workshops and seminars should be designed to teach new skills for improving the functioning of schools.

- The study was grounded in the distributed leadership theory. Future studies may be based on other theories. This will enhance the understanding of teamwork in schools.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first major limitation of the study was time. When I arrived at the research site after making an appointment with principals, some of them were absent because it was exam time, and they had gone to submit schedules at the circuit office. The second limitation was cost. The study cost the researcher a lot of money because she had to travel 150km away to the research sites, and she did not have enough resources to do so. This shortened the duration of interviews with the participants. The third limitation factor was poor connectivity due to load reduction, which happened frequently at the research sites and surrounding areas. For this reason, the schools could not print the documents needed by the researcher such as minutes of committee meetings.

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Appendix A: Ethical clearance certificate



College of Education _ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 08/05/2025

Dear: Mrs CONFIDENCE ANNAH KUBAYI

**Decision: Ethics Approval from
08/05/2025 to 08/05/2028**

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)

Ref #: 7240

Name: Mrs CONFIDENCE ANNAH KUBAYI

Student #: 43046029

Staff #:

Researcher: Mrs CONFIDENCE ANNAH KUBAYI

EDUCATOR

POLOKWANE

43046029@mylife.unisa.ac.za 0659374347

Supervisor: Professor Florah Teane teanef@unisa.ac.za

TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK APPROACH FOR GOOD MANAGEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF SOUTH AFRICA

Qualification: Med

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education _ERC for the above mentioned research study. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by College of Education _ERC on **9 April 2025** in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College of Education _ERC.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (08/05/2028). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal, for Ethics Research Committee approval.

Additional Conditions

1. Disclosure of data to third parties is prohibited without explicit consent from Unisa.
2. De-identified data must be safely stored on password protected PCs.
3. Care should be taken by the researcher when publishing the results to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the university.
4. Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication practices, principle 7 referring to Social awareness, must be ensured: "Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible." Unisa will not be liable for any failure to comply with this principle.
5. Kindly note that the College of Education _ERC requires the submission of regular progress reports to be submitted **annually**. Inline with section 7.2 of the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics (2024).

Note

The reference number 7240 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,



Prof Justin Oswin August
Chair of College of Education _ERC
E-mail: augusjo@unisa.ac.za



Prof Mpine Makoe
Executive Dean College of Education
E-mail: qakisme@unisa.ac.za, magolmc@unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX B: Permission letter from department of education



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/2/2

Enq: Makola MC

Tel No: 015 290 9448

E-mail: MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za

KUBAYI CA
House 31A Paragon Street
Ivydale
POLOKWANE
0699

43046029@mylife.unisa.ac.za [065 937 4347]

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.

1. The above bear's reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to undertake research titled: **"TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK APPROACH FOR GOOD MANAGEMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF SOUTH AFRICA"** has been approved
3. The following conditions should be considered:
 - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
 - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the School concerned.
 - 3.3 The conduct of research should not in any how disrupt the academic programmes at the school(s).
 - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations, especially in the fourth term.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: KUBAYI CA Page 1

Cnr 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X 9489, Polokwane, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600/ 7702 Fax 086 218 0560


The heartland of Southern Africa-development is about people

- 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected and treated with dignity).
- 3.6 Upon completion of the research, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.
- 4 Additionally, you are expected to produce this letter at School(s)/Office(s) where you intend to conduct your research as evidence that permission has been granted for access to the research site(s).
- 5 The Department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



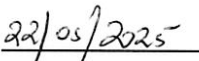
MC Makola PhD



Date



Molope NM



Date

Acting DDG: CORPORATE SERVICES

APPENDIX C: Request for permission to conduct research at school

Request for permission to conduct research at _____ (insert name of organisation or institution).

Title of the title of my research is: Towards effective teamwork for good management in primary schools of Vhembe West District, Hlanganani Central Circuit, Limpopo Province.

Date

Name of the person to who you address the request

Department of the person

Contact details of the person (Tel and email address)

Dear _____ (insert contact person's title and name),

I, Confidence Annah Kubayi am doing research under supervision of Prof F.M Teane, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management towards a M Ed at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled Towards effective teamwork for good management in primary schools of Vhembe West District, Hlanganani Central Circuit, Limpopo Province.

The aim of the study is to examine the use of teamwork for good management in selected primary schools.

Your company/school/department (select one) has been selected because it is located in Hlanganani Central Circuit.

The study will entail an investigation of the role of teamwork in bringing about the smooth-running of schools. The study is qualitative in nature and will be informed by the phenomenological research design.

The benefits of this study are: it will assist the SMTs to note the role of teamwork in the running of schools, in particularly primary schools.

Potential risks are: this is a low-risk study.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail the compilation of a research report in the form of a dissertation.

Yours sincerely

_____ (insert signature of researcher)

_____ (insert name of the above signatory)

_____ (insert above signatory's position)

Appendix D: Interview Guide

- (1) What is the status of teamwork in schools?
- (2) How would you describe the overall culture of teamwork in schools?
- (3) Do you think that teamwork is valued and supported in schools?
- (4) What are the key elements of teamwork that influence the management of schools?
- (5) What strategies can be taken to encourage teamwork in schools?
- (6) What roles and functions do teams serve within the schools?
- (7) What factors influence the effectiveness of teamwork in schools?
- (8) What are the teamwork initiatives that members can take in schools?
- (9) How can team-building initiatives be implemented to enhance management efficiency in primary schools?
- (10) What challenges do you think team members encounter in schools?

APPENDIX E: Editorial certificate



11 Jameson Avenue, Rhodesdene,

Kimberley 0831

+27(0) 65 660 3839

pmayimele1@gmail.com

Date: 25/11/2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves as proof that the dissertation titled 'Towards effective teamwork for good management in primary schools of Vhembe West District, Hlanganani Central Circuit, Limpopo' has been edited.

Regards,

APPENDIX F: Turnitin report

Dissertation for CA KUBAYI.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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