

CHALLENGES IN SUPPORTING NOVICE EDUCATORS: A CASE OF SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO

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ABSTRACT

The effective induction of novice educators is crucial for promoting professional growth, enhancing instructional quality, and ensuring the overall success of educational institutions. In the Seshego Circuit of Limpopo's secondary schools, school management teams (SMTs) face numerous challenges in onboarding new teachers. This qualitative study examines the specific barriers encountered during the induction process, drawing on interviews and focus group discussions conducted with principals, department heads, and recently appointed educators. Key findings reveal that SMTs often struggle with inadequate resources, including insufficient orientation materials and limited time allocated for mentoring. Additionally, high workloads and large class sizes detract from experienced teachers' capacity to provide ongoing support to novices. The lack of formalised induction programmes and clear guidelines further exacerbates the difficulties, resulting in inconsistent and fragmented support structures. Novice educators often report feeling overwhelmed by administrative demands and classroom management issues, citing a lack of guidance and feedback as major concerns. Moreover, cultural and linguistic diversity within the educator cohort poses additional challenges for adaptation, while insufficient professional development opportunities hinder the growth and confidence of new teachers. The study also highlights the impact of broader systemic issues, such as policy constraints and budgetary limitations, on the effectiveness of induction practices. To address these challenges, the research recommends developing structured induction frameworks, increasing the allocation of resources for mentoring, and establishing collaborative professional learning communities. Enhanced communication and ongoing evaluation of induction practices are also advocated to ensure continuous improvement. By addressing these challenges, SMTs in Seshego Circuit can better support novice educators, thereby promoting teacher retention, professional satisfaction, and improved learner outcomes within Limpopo's secondary schools.

Keywords: induction, novice educators, school management teams, secondary schools, Seshego Circuit, Limpopo.

ACRONYMS

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teachers' Development.
DH	Departmental Head
ELRC	Education Labour Relation Council
LDOE	Limpopo Department Of Education
LTSM	Learner, Teacher Support Material
NTIP	New Teacher Induction Programme
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures.
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate In Education
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
QMS	Quality Management System
SACE	South African Council Of Educators
SASA	South African School Act
SMT	School Management Teams

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CHAPTER 1.

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The importance of induction programmes for educators has increasingly been acknowledged as a crucial element in the training and development of teaching professionals in the dynamic field of education. These programmes are intentionally designed to provide novice educators with a solid foundation, facilitating their effective onboarding and preparing them to manage the dynamic challenges encountered in the teaching profession.

Induction programmes not only assist novice educators but also benefit current teaching staff by offering essential refresher training and immersion in the growing culture of their schools (Antonsen et al, 2024). According to Sky (2022), induction programmes are essential to the thorough training of educators, facilitating the effective onboarding of novices and allowing seasoned educators to participate in refresher training in areas such as workplace dynamics, classroom management, and the distinct school culture.

Roberts (2020) highlights the significance of teacher induction programmes, emphasising their role in equipping new educators with a solid foundation for professional development. These programmes are designed to support novice educators in adapting to their roles and to enhance their pedagogical methods, ultimately improving their ability to effectively support their students.

The broader educational community can benefit from the implementation of induction programmes, as they enhance the teaching profession and provide a more supportive and conducive learning environment (Bijl, 2020).

These initiatives can enhance teacher retention rates by fostering an environment that promotes the professional development and accomplishments of novice educators, hence facilitating their integration into the educational system Akiri (2021). Nonetheless, despite the clear advantages and worldwide acknowledgement of the significance of induction programmes (Alam et al,2023) the successful implementation of these initiatives, especially regarding the retention of novice instructors, continues to pose a

considerable difficulty in South Africa (Bijl, 2020). In this setting, teacher induction programmes play a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape. (Alam&Mohanty, 2023).

They promote the seamless integration of new educators into their responsibilities while promoting continual growth and development among existing personnel, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education in schools (Antonsen, 2024). These activities transcend individual instructors, serving as catalysts for the overall enhancement of the teaching profession and the establishment of a more nurturing and supportive learning environment (Alam & Mohanty, 2023).

The implementation of effective teacher induction programmes in South Africa, like those in many regions globally, presents both opportunities and obstacles. The South African Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998, in conjunction with the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM, 1998), outlines specific obligations for School Management Teams (SMTs) regarding the mentoring, induction, coaching, and support of novice educators. These responsibilities include both mentoring novice educators and orchestrating teaching methodologies and professional development (Orland & Wang, 2020). Unfortunately, the practical implementation frequently diverges from these directives. (Grand-Clément. & Pauphilet, 2022).

Research indicates a significant deficiency in SMTs' comprehension of their responsibilities in training new educators, resulting in a disjunction between policy and implementation (Abeledo, et al. 2020). As a result, the induction process, designed to be supportive and stimulating, often faces problems that cause stress and dissatisfaction for both new instructors and their mentors. Moreover, studies demonstrate that inadequate assistance from the School Management Team is a critical factor in the early departure of novice instructors, resulting in elevated attrition rates that negatively impact educational quality (Arnold& Rahimi, 2025).

This study aims to investigate the issues faced by SMTs in delivering effective teacher induction in secondary schools, specifically within the Seshego Circuit in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

This research aims to analyse the challenges faced by SMTs in delivering high-quality induction programmes, thereby elucidating the difficulties of teacher induction in this region and suggesting possible options for improvement.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study examines the significant problems encountered by School Management Teams (SMTs) in the effective induction of novice educators in the Seshego Circuit of secondary schools in Limpopo Province, South Africa. This research aims to illuminate the significance of these difficulties and their substantial impact on the education system.

Pretorius (2021) noted that novice educators exit the teaching profession within three years due to inadequate induction by School Management Teams (SMTs). This phenomenon of premature departures has significant repercussions, as it disrupts educational continuity and undermines the quality of student learning (Gundlach, 2025). Understanding the challenges faced by SMTs during the induction process is crucial for addressing this issue and potentially improving teacher retention (Hassan, 2024).

The calibre of education is fundamentally connected to the proficiency and readiness of instructors. Inexperienced educators necessitate robust induction to enhance their pedagogical skills, classroom management, and understanding of the school's culture. (Geletu, 2023).

Msuva and Mwila (2023) demonstrated that an effective induction program can improve the practices of novice educators, deepen their comprehension of professional responsibilities, and ultimately boost learners' outcomes. When SMTs face difficulties in delivering this crucial support, it can compromise the overall quality of instruction in schools (Ewing, 2021). This study aims to investigate the impact of these issues on the educational environment. South Africa has instituted explicit regulations and procedures, including the South African Employment of Educators Act and the Personnel Administrative Measures, which delineate the roles of School Management Teams, particularly in mentoring and inducting new educators (Msuva & Mwila, 2023).

The execution of these policies frequently proves inadequate in comparison with the policy expectations and results in a disparity between policy objectives and the practical obstacles that arise from policy implementation (Msuva & Mwila, 2023).

Examining this gap is crucial for comprehending the fundamental reasons of induction-related problems. The COVID-19 pandemic expedited the transition to technology-based schooling. Inexperienced educators and School Management Teams encountered novel problems in adjusting to online instruction and learning. (Lee, et al. 2021). The study will examine additional problems arising from the induction process, including those caused by technological advancements and the pandemic.

The difficulties encountered by SMTs in successfully onboarding novice educators might directly affect the morale and job satisfaction of all educators in the institution. Low morale and unhappiness can lead to burnout, affecting both the personal and professional lives of educators and, consequently, the quality of education they deliver (Pakdee, et al. 2025). This study seeks to elucidate the obstacles faced by School Management Teams in inducting novice educators throughout the Seshego Circuit of Limpopo Province. This research aims to provide significant insights and recommendations to address challenges, bridge the gap between policy and practice, enhance the induction process, promote teacher retention, and ultimately improve the quality of education in South Africa.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Seshego Circuit in Limpopo Province faces the significant problem of ensuring that newly appointed secondary school teachers receive effective training and development programmes facilitated by their School Management Team. These challenges undoubtedly provide significant obstacles to student learning by hindering the effective acclimatisation of new teachers to their roles.

A significant issue is the shortage of financial resources and lack of essential supplies. This undoubtedly engenders significant obstacles to advancement. Indeed, a constrained budget and resources pose significant challenges to the execution of comprehensive orientation programmes (Fang, et al. 2021). . These financial limitations hinder the execution of effective training sessions. Financial constraints undoubtedly hinder the SMT from providing essential training programmes such as workshops, seminars, and mentoring for new educators. (Fang, et al. 2021).

Furthermore, these funding constraints hinder the provision of adequate professional development opportunities. (Fang, et al. 2021). Additionally, current observations suggest that SMT members are experiencing issues related to time and energy. Concerning their workload, they are overexerting themselves and experiencing fatigue. Teachers undertake numerous essential responsibilities in schools, encompassing administrative management and curriculum development; they also oversee other educators and manage many school duties.

The management of numerous responsibilities undeniably diminishes their capacity to provide adequate instruction to novice educators (Rahadian, 2023). Furthermore, they are constrained by time and energy for adequately supporting new educators. (Rahadian, 2023). The implication of not receiving adequate attention and direction during their initial phase, results in novice educators struggling to grasp the intricate aspects of effective teaching.

Current observations indicate that SMTs are being overwhelmed by the substantial workload in schools. Teachers are tasked with numerous responsibilities, including instructing subjects, supervising classrooms, developing lesson plans, evaluating student work, and participating in extracurricular activities. (Rahadian, 2023). Educators manage administrative responsibilities and school management chores without compensation for the additional time taken for these duties (Rahadian, 2023). These extra responsibilities take place in addition to their standard teaching duties.

Concerns are emerging over the SMT's capacity to effectively balance management and teaching responsibilities, as both domains may be adversely affected by the substantial workload alone (Gan, et al. 2025). In smaller schools, the principal is often the sole member of the senior management team, which can complicate the implementation of effective induction programmes.

In relation to this topic, educational institutions face significant challenges in efficiently training new personnel. The principal may struggle to fulfil the responsibilities of training new teachers due to a small workforce.

The teaching profession has a significant issue of high teacher attrition rates within the initial three years, which negatively affects the quality of instruction in schools (Donna, & Roehrig, 2024). Research, such as Bachelet (2022), suggests that novice educators are leaving their positions primarily due to inadequate support from school administration or the Department of Basic Education.

Teachers frequently change positions, disrupting the continuity of the learning environment, particularly in underprivileged regions such as the Seshego Circuit, where most educators are new and lack expertise. SMTs encounter numerous challenges in developing effective and appropriate induction programmes, an imperative function though very challenging. (Donna, & Roehrig, 2024). Considering current employment market conditions, some novice educators are selecting teaching positions based on the ease of job availability rather than a real passion for education (White, et al. 2024). There are also numerous individuals who enter the teaching profession after gaining experience in other sectors (White, et al. 2024). In this case, they obtain their PGCE degree to attain qualified teacher status. (Allison, 2023).

The South African government offers bursaries, such as the Fundza Lushaka, to prospective educators. These grants undoubtedly attract individuals who pursue teaching for pragmatic reasons rather than genuine enthusiasm. These individuals often fail to recognise the importance of induction, which results in their limited participation due to the belief that their university education is sufficient.

According to Moosa (2020), educators motivated by extrinsic factors prioritise job benefits such as pay, extended vacations, status, and other external rewards. These educators are primarily motivated by external advantages associated with their teaching profession. Research indicates that extrinsic professional motivations may diminish teachers' long-term commitment to the profession when confronted with the realities of teaching responsibilities (Moosa, 2020).

SMTs undoubtedly encounter difficulties with novice educators who frequently experience discouragement and a lack of motivation (Akiri, 2021).

This issue is challenging to address as numerous factors contributing to low morale are beyond the control of school administration teams (Rahadian, 2023).

Russells (2022) emphasised that diminished teacher morale unequivocally results in stress, work discontent, and burnout. These issues have an adverse impact on teachers' professional and personal lives. Such educators are unlikely to deliver optimal performance, hence impacting the quality of education for children (Russells, 2022). Furthermore, this inadequate performance has a significant impact on the quality of education received by learners (Brunetti, et al. 2023).

The initial years of teaching in public schools are exceedingly challenging (Donna & Roehrig, 2024). New educators encounter numerous challenges during this period. Those educators who come from universities encounter financial and physical obstacles, in addition to grappling with moral and ethical dilemmas (Donna & Roehrig, 2024)... The teaching profession presents numerous challenges for recent graduates. (Castulo et al., 2025). They do not encounter significant learning curves in their intellectual talents. Moreover, their learning procedure is uncomplicated and devoid of significant challenges. (Castulo, et al. 2025).

School management teams perceive the issues of integrating new teachers from a distinct perspective (Donna & Roehrig, 2024). Furthermore, their (SMT) perspective on these challenges diverges markedly from alternative opinions (Donna & Roehrig, 2024).

The Department of Education has the task of enhancing the calibre of instructors entering their service. The COVID-19 epidemic introduced novel obstacles for novice educators and school administration teams (White, et al. 2024). This condition further subjected these educators to unprecedented challenges, complicating the educational process itself. According to the new standards, educators were compelled to rapidly transition from traditional classroom instruction to online teaching. (Carrillo&Flores, 2020). . Considering this transition, educators experienced significant pressure to acquire new skills, such as utilising computers for instruction, effectively managing time, discovering innovative teaching methods, and addressing student issues. (Carrillo & Flores, 2020).

Essentially, educators could persist in their instruction during the pandemic solely if they possessed proficiency in technology, which therefore posed significant challenges for school management teams lacking technological expertise (Winter et al., 2021). To facilitate the success and development of new educators, it is imperative to address these issues.

To facilitate the development and integration of new educators, it is imperative that we address these issues. Furthermore, eliminating these impediments will significantly simplify the path of new educators. School Management Teams can enhance educational quality in the Seshego Circuit by providing adequate resources and alleviating excessive workloads. They must unarguably offer adequate training and facilitate improved collaboration among educators. (Benoliel, 2021)

1.3.1 Research Questions

The central research question guiding this narrative inquiry is:

How do School Management Teams (SMTs) experience and make sense of the challenges involved in inducting novice educators within secondary schools in the Seshego Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa?

Sub-questions:

- a. What are the primary challenges faced by School Management Teams in the induction of novice educators?
- b. How do these challenges affect the professional development, job satisfaction, and retention of novice educators within the circuit?
- c. What are the disparities between existing education policies and the practical realities encountered by School Management Teams in the induction process?

1.3.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore and interpret the narratives of School Management Teams regarding the challenges they face in inducting novice educators within the Seshego Circuit. By foregrounding their lived experiences, the study seeks to generate insights that can inform the enhancement of induction practices and support the retention of novice educators.

1.3.3 Objectives

The study seeks to:

- Explore and document the narratives of School Management Teams concerning the induction of novice educators in the Seshego Circuit.
- Interpret how these challenges are experienced and understood, and how they influence the professional development, job satisfaction, and retention of novice educators.
- Examine how the stories of School Management Teams reveal the disparities between policy frameworks and the realities of induction practice.
- Generate recommendations grounded in these narratives to strengthen induction practices, thereby contributing to improved support for novice educators and the broader development of the education system in the Seshego Circuit and beyond.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Makhananese and Sepeng (2022), induction is a means to support teachers' professional development in alignment with the National Teacher Development Policy Framework. The Department of Education (DoE, 2008) also described induction as the process of passing on knowledge, skills, and certain experiences to another person in an organisation to help them grow professionally and become more efficient and productive. School Management Teams (SMTs) help new teachers and students by helping them feel more confident and capable. They also help new teachers discover tactics and best practices that are tailored to their needs (Pajares, 2020). However, research indicates that new teachers often lack the necessary skills to teach effectively (Bergmark, 2020). Many individuals struggle to translate their theoretical understanding into the practical requirements of modern classrooms (Botha & Rens, 2018). This mismatch between theory and reality highlights the necessity for interventions by seasoned educators, especially those belonging to SMTs. New teachers also struggle with tasks such as knowing how to teach, managing their time, and fulfilling their administrative duties (Botha & Rens, 2018).

Multiple studies indicate that novice instructors often perceive themselves as unprepared for their inaugural year of teaching, experiencing a subsequent "reality shock" associated with school life, a phenomenon well-documented worldwide. (Strom et al., 2019). Recent research by Carol (2023) indicates that novice educators frequently feel overwhelmed by administrative and grading responsibilities; they encounter difficulties in managing the diverse and continuous demands on their time, they face challenges in implementing pedagogical strategies learnt in university, and they feel disconcerted by the power dynamics and micro-politics within educational institutions.

These problems highlight the importance of SMTs in facilitating a smooth transition from college to work for students (Tahir et al., 2021). Still, SMTs face numerous challenges of their own, including inadequate training during induction, poor communication, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a lack of clear procedures.

Schwartz (2022) emphasises that the pandemic continues to exert significant pressure on SMTs, with the ongoing demands of post-pandemic education leading to burnout and fatigue among school leaders. One major problem is that SMT members don't receive sufficient training on how to lead instruction and how to effectively onboard new teachers (Borko et al., 2021). Many administrators and senior staff members lack the necessary skills to develop and implement effective orientation programmes for new teachers. This lack of information could hinder the professional growth of new teachers, potentially leading to an increase in teacher turnover (Lin et al., 2025). Therefore, the topic of who should provide SMTs with the right training and advice remains open. Naidoo (2019) states that the Department of Basic Education's lack of training has hindered SMT members' ability to create a supportive environment conducive to learning and teaching. This lack of professional supervision affects both new teachers and SMTs, making the induction process less effective. Another significant challenge is getting SMT members, veteran teachers, and new teachers to collaborate effectively and communicate well (Lin et al., 2025). To coordinate resources, share information, and develop community in schools, there must be strong communication channels and ways for people to work together. But poorly planned support systems and broken communication mechanisms often make it hard for new employees to get started (Frenzel et al., 2021).

Chiwamba and Kigobe (2022) found that ineffective communication between supervisors and teachers constitutes a significant barrier to effective instructional oversight. Additionally, inexperienced teachers, especially those new to the field, may not always know when to seek help (Mwadzaangati, 2024). SMTs may find it time-consuming to seek alternative ways to support starting teachers, as they, the novice teachers, have different needs (Ewing 2021). Another newly encountered problem is that new teachers frequently use their smartphones during the induction phase, showing a blatant disregard for the teaching.

According to Adoozy Power (2022), young people in South Africa between the ages of 18 and 26 check their phones 30 to 40 times each hour. This tendency to always be online may make it harder for SMTs to run induction programmes well, especially when new teachers are always distracted by social media.

In the Seshego Circuit, SMTs seem to lack a clear guideline on how teachers can utilise digital devices, which makes the induction process even harder.

1.5. KNOWLEDGE GAP.

The existing research regarding challenges encountered by SMTs in inducting novice educators is insufficient, numerous studies focus on the role of SMTs in inducting novice educators leaving the research gap focussed on the challenges unencountered. Novice educators play a crucial role in shaping the future of students. Understanding the challenges faced by SMTs can pave the way for more effective professional development strategies, enabling new teachers to excel in their roles; therefore, more research is needed (Zhou et al., 2023).

There are contradictory findings in the existing research regarding most novice educators leaving the profession within three years of teaching due to ineffective induction programmes. Numerous studies show that the workload, a general lack of respect, and the absence of a "living wage" were the main reasons teachers left the profession, not ineffective induction programmes, and these leaving are educators who joined the teaching profession attracted by extrinsic factors (Arnold & Rahimi 2025).

Research findings from numerous studies also show that of the teachers who reported quitting, 70 per cent were in the secondary school sector and 30 per cent of teachers in primary school; therefore, further research is needed on why high percentages of high school teachers quit their jobs, and it is not clear whether the challenges of induction are encountered by secondary school educators only (Arnold & Rahimi, 2025)

Numerous research shows that the intervention and evidence used to attract and improve the level of teacher recruitment and retention in the profession to the effectiveness of induction programmes is not sufficiently clear, and among the promising interventions were induction programmes, such as early professional support and continuing professional development for teachers, in order to retain them in the profession, but there is no evidence of the success or effectiveness, although there is increasing interest in related strategies and policies (See et al, ,2020). The reasons for this are a lack of a basic and clear evidence base, in addition to the lack of studies related to this.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

McCombes (2023) describes the research methodology as the strategic framework that outlines the systematic process researchers use to collect, interpret and analyse data. It acts as a roadmap, providing a structured path for investigators to follow, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings. In essence, it is the blueprint that governs the entire research journey.

1.6.1 Qualitative Research Approach

To gain a deep and nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in inducting novice educators in the Seshego Circuit of secondary schools in Limpopo Province, a qualitative research approach will be employed. This approach aims to explore the complex and multifaceted nature of the issue through in-depth interviews and content analysis.

1.6.2 Population and Sampling

Participant Selection

A purposive sampling method was employed to select participants for the semi-structured interviews. This sample included SMT members, novice educators. Participants included secondary school principals, department heads and first-year teachers, all of whom were part of the School Management Teams. A total of twelve people participated in this study: Four (4) department heads, four (4) principals, and Four (4) first-year educators. The aim was to capture diverse perspectives and experiences.

Interview Protocol: Semi-structured interviews conducted with selected participants. An interview protocol developed, consisting of open-ended questions and prompts. This approach allowed participants to share their experiences, perceptions, and insights related to educator induction in an exploratory and conversational manner.

1.6.3 Instrumentation and Data Collection

Techniques Interviews was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Detailed field notes were also taken during interviews to capture non-verbal cues and contextual information.

1.6.4 Thematic Analysis

Data Coding: Transcribed interview data, along with field notes, was analysed using thematic analysis. This involved systematically coding the data to identify recurring themes, patterns, and meaningful categories related to the challenges faced by SMTs in educator induction.

Theme Development: Themes and sub-themes was developed based on the coded data. These themes represented key aspects of the challenges and experiences described by participants. (Naeem, et al. 2023)

1.6.5 Data Interpretation and Reporting

- **Findings Interpretation:** Qualitative findings was interpreted to provide a rich narrative of the challenges faced by SMTs in educator induction within the Seshego Circuit.
- **Report Writing:** The research findings was presented in a comprehensive qualitative research report, including detailed descriptions of themes, participant quotes, and insights. (Busetto, &Gumbinger, 2020). The report contributed to a deeper understanding of the challenges in educator induction and may inform potential solutions and recommendations. By adopting this qualitative research approach, the study aimed to capture the voices and experiences of key stakeholders, shedding light on the complexities of educator induction challenges within the specific context of the Seshego Circuit, Limpopo Province.

1.7 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Credibility and trustworthiness are paramount in any research objectives, particularly when exploring sensitive and complex topics, such as the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in inducting novice educators in the Seshego Circuit of secondary schools in Limpopo Province, South Africa. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of this research, several strategies were implemented. The researcher involved in this study would possess qualifications and experience in the education fraternity, research methods, and qualitative research.

Their familiarity with the context and issues related to educator induction in South Africa would enhance the quality of the research. Transparency in participant selection enhanced the credibility of the research. (Kekecs, et al. 2023).

Member Checking: Member checking, also known as respondent validation, was conducted by sharing key findings with participants and seeking their feedback. This process enabled participants to verify the accuracy and authenticity of their contributions, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the data. (Lloyd, et al, 2024). The research adhered to ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring participant confidentiality, and handling sensitive information with care. Ethical conduct promotes trustworthiness. (Xu, et al. 2020).

Credibility involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible from the participants' perspective in the investigation.

The purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand phenomena of interest from the participants' eyes. Participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results (Consultores, 2020).

Contextual Understanding: Researchers demonstrated a deep understanding of the cultural, social, and educational context of the Seshego Circuit. This understanding allows for a more nuanced and contextually relevant interpretation of the findings. Credibility and trustworthiness are fundamental to this research on the challenges faced by SMTs in inducting novice educators. By employing rigorous research methods, transparent data collection and analysis, and adhering to ethical considerations, the study aims to produce findings that are credible, reliable, and trustworthy, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the topic and its implications for educator induction in the Seshego Circuit and beyond.

1.8 RESEARCH ETHICS

Informed Consent: All participants were provided with informed consent forms that clearly outlined the study's purpose, the research procedures involved, and the measures taken to ensure confidentiality. Participants were informed of their right to voluntarily consent to or decline participation without any negative consequences.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: The identities of all participants was protected through strict confidentiality protocols. Data collected during the study was anonymised to prevent the identification of individual participants, thereby safeguarding their privacy throughout the research process. (Tanchuk & Taylor, 2025).

1.9 DELIMITATION

This study is delimited to secondary schools within the Seshego Circuit of Limpopo Province, South Africa. The findings and conclusions drawn are therefore specific to this geographic area and may not be applicable to secondary schools in other circuits, provinces, or national contexts. As a result, direct comparisons or generalisations to other regions are not pursued within the scope of this research.

The research is guided by a qualitative methodology, focusing on the lived experiences and perceptions of School Management Team (SMT) members and novice educators. This approach inherently limits the study to an in-depth exploration of subjective experiences rather than be subject to quantitative measurement or statistical generalisation.

The study specifically considers the perspectives of SMT members, novice educators, and individuals directly engaged in the induction process. It does not include the voices of external stakeholders such as parents, community members, or education department officials, thus narrowing the range of viewpoints examined. Furthermore, the scope of this study is limited to the challenges encountered during the induction phase of novice educators.

The research does not extend to issues related to long-term professional development, retention, or the experiences of teachers beyond their initial years of service (Donaldson, et al 2025).

Data collection was conducted primarily in English, which may have created language barriers for participants who are more comfortable in indigenous languages. This linguistic limitation could affect the depth and richness of data gathered, potentially excluding nuanced perspectives. These delimitations establish clear boundaries for the study, ensuring focused inquiry while also clarifying the contexts and populations to which the findings pertain. Recognising these boundaries is crucial for accurately interpreting the study's results and understanding their relevance to broader educational settings.

1.10. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research examines the challenges experienced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in inducting novice educators within the Seshego Circuit's secondary schools, located in Limpopo Province, South Africa. The study holds substantial value at multiple levels, particularly in its effort to illuminate the complexities surrounding teacher induction, a cornerstone of effective educational systems. Understanding the challenges and implications of teacher induction can directly inform the enhancement of educational practices and policies, ultimately benefiting both students and educators.

Within the South African context, educational policies explicitly emphasise the integral role that SMTs play in supporting and guiding novice teachers through the induction process. By providing context-specific insights, this research may help policymakers refine existing frameworks or develop new policies to better support the professional growth of novice educators.

The high attrition rate among novice teachers is a concern globally, and South Africa is no exception. Addressing the induction challenges faced by SMTs could lead to improved teacher retention rates, ensuring that new educators remain committed and thereby contribute to the long-term stability and quality of the education system (Wang & Seifert, 2024).

The study's findings will be particularly relevant for educators and administrators operating within the Seshego Circuit, as they offer insights tailored to the unique context of this region. At the same time, by contributing to the academic literature on teacher induction, the study enriches the broader discourse on teacher development in South Africa and beyond.

Employing a qualitative approach enables a thorough examination of the lived experiences of SMT members and novice educators, yielding empirical insights that can substantiate existing theories and inform the creation of new knowledge. Furthermore, the study's identification of areas where SMTs require additional support or training can inform the design of targeted capacity-building initiatives. Globally, research indicates that first-year teachers encounter significant challenges as they transition into their new roles. Many struggle to integrate with peers who may only be slightly more experienced, while also managing large classes and mastering a broad curriculum, especially in primary and secondary education. Social and community-related issues can further compound these difficulties.

To ensure novice educators acquire competence, confidence, and sustained motivation, education systems must provide adequate support (Akiri. 2021). Induction programmes offering structured mentorship and guidance from SMTs have been shown to be effective in various countries, including Switzerland, France, China, New Zealand, and Japan (Akiri, 2021).

These successes suggest that similar approaches could be beneficial in the South African context, provided that the unique challenges facing SMTs are addressed. Key obstacles include time constraints, as SMTs often struggle to find opportunities during busy school days to engage in meaningful discussions about induction strategies, challenges, and potential improvements (Santibañez et al, .2021). Administrative duties and full teaching schedules frequently hinder sustained, reflective dialogue.

Another significant challenge is the lack of specific training in mentorship for SMT members.

Administrative expertise does not necessarily equate to effective mentoring skills, and there is often ambiguity regarding who is responsible for providing such training to SMTs (Jamison et al, .2020). Additionally, the heavy workload of SMT members further limits their capacity to design and implement robust induction programmes, which can sometimes result in insufficient support for novice teachers (Jamison et al, 2020). In striving to maintain school operations, administrators may inadvertently neglect their responsibilities in guiding and supporting less experienced educators. Addressing these issues and devising comprehensive, evidence-based support strategies for novice teachers could significantly reduce the pressure on SMTs and improve induction outcomes.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This section clarifies key terms and concepts integral to this research, ensuring a precise and consistent understanding for the reader:

a. School Management Team (SMT): The School Management Team (SMT) comprises individuals within a school who provide leadership and support for the instructional process (Conway & Thompson 2022). Typically, the SMT includes the principal, deputy principals, heads of department, and senior teachers, all of whom hold formal positions within the school's organisational hierarchy. According to the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM), as established by the Employment of Educators Act (Act No. 76 of 1998), mentoring and supporting novice educators are explicit responsibilities of SMT members.

b. Induction: Induction refers to a structured process of professional support and training designed for new educators during the early stages of their teaching careers. The aim of induction extends beyond mere orientation to the curriculum; it encompasses acclimatisation to the school's systems, policies, procedures, and professional expectations, thereby fostering confidence and competence among novice teachers.

c. Novice Educators: Novice educators are generally defined as teachers with fewer than five years of classroom experience.

This designation recognises their limited exposure to the profession and the unique challenges they face as they develop their expertise (Makoa et al. 2021).

d. South African Council of Educators (SACE): The South African Council of Educators (SACE) is a statutory body tasked with upholding the standards of the teaching profession in South Africa. SACE oversees educator registration, promotes professional development, and enforces a code of ethics to ensure the integrity of the profession.

e. Funza Lushaka: The Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme is a national initiative aimed at enhancing the quality of public education by providing financial support to eligible students pursuing teaching qualifications in priority subject areas. The bursary covers tuition, accommodation, and other essential costs, with the goal of attracting and retaining skilled educators in the public sector.

f. Personnel Administration Measures (PAM): Personnel Administration Measures (PAM) are a set of regulations issued by the Minister of Basic Education governing the employment conditions and professional responsibilities of public-school teachers. These measures outline standards for working conditions, duties, and rights of educators in South Africa's public education system

1.12. OUTLINE AND STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The following table outlines the structure of this dissertation.

Table 1: Outline and Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 Introduction Chapter: The introductory chapter of this research provides an overview of the problem statements, the rationale for conducting the study, the research aims and the purpose statement. The research questions and the research methodology are articulated. It also highlights the value and significance of the research.
Chapter 2 Literature Review: The literature review chapter critically examines the existing literature on the topic of study, encompassing both international and national scholars. It examines the perspectives, theories, and findings presented by other researchers in the field, offering a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge and the research gaps in the area.
Chapter 3 Research Design and Methodology Chapter: The research design and methodology chapter outlines the chosen research design and methodology, including details on data collection strategies and data analysis methods. It explains how the research was conducted, highlighting the steps taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings
Chapter 4 Data Analysis and Interpretation Chapter: The data analysis and interpretation chapter presents the collected data and provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of the findings. It utilises appropriate analytical techniques to examine the data, identify patterns and draw meaningful conclusions

Chapter 5

Conclusion Chapter: The conclusion chapter summarises the key findings of the research and offers recommendations and suggestions for further studies in the field. It highlights the implications of the findings and provides insights for future research direction. Additionally, it emphasises the values of the research and its potential impact on the field of study

1.13 DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PLAN AND TIMELINE

Below is a table showing the research plan and timeline.

Table 2: Description and timeline

Description	Timeline
Chapter 1: Introduction	November 2023
Chapter 2: Literature Review	15 March – 31 August 2024
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology	1 September - 10 Dec 2024
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation	1 Feb 2025 - 30 June 2025
Chapter 5: Conclusion & Recommendations	1 July-30 - November 2025

1.14 CONCLUSION

This introductory chapter has laid the groundwork for an in-depth exploration of the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in inducting novice educators within secondary schools of the Seshego Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa. By establishing the study's context, rationale, research problem, objectives, and significance, this chapter highlights the pivotal role of teacher induction and the critical responsibilities assigned to SMTs, as outlined in the South African Employment of Educators Act of 1998 and the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM). We have introduced the key concepts and set out the structure of the research, providing a clear roadmap for the chapters that follow.

This foundation enables a focused inquiry into the complexities of teacher induction in this unique educational setting. As we transition into Chapter 2, the literature review will critically examine both international and national scholarship on teacher induction. This comprehensive review will not only enrich our understanding of the topic but also help identify existing gaps in research, thereby positioning our study within the broader academic discourse. The literature review will connect the initial groundwork established in this chapter with the empirical investigation that follows, offering essential theoretical context for our research. Ultimately, this chapter serves as the cornerstone of the study, ensuring that our inquiry is firmly grounded in both policy and scholarly knowledge. Moving forward, we will draw upon the insights from previous research to inform and contextualise our findings, thereby contributing valuable perspectives to the ongoing discussion on the induction of novice educators and the support provided by SMTs in South Africa's educational landscape.

1.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 1 introduced the study, which focuses on the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in inducting novice educators in secondary schools within the Seshego Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The chapter established the background and context of the research, highlighting the critical role of teacher induction in supporting new educators and the responsibilities of SMTs as stipulated by education policies such as the Employment of Educators Act and the Personnel Administrative

Measures (PAM). The chapter presented the research problem, articulated the purpose and objectives of the study, and explained its significance at local and broader educational levels. It outlined the delimitations and limitations of the research, specifying the geographic and methodological boundaries, and clarified the definitions of key concepts to ensure a shared understanding. Additionally, ethical considerations related to informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were discussed to emphasise the study's commitment to ethical research practices. The structure of the dissertation was outlined, providing a clear roadmap for subsequent chapters. In anticipation of Chapter 2, the chapter concluded by emphasising the importance of the forthcoming literature review, which will critically examine both international and national perspectives on teacher induction and the role of SMTs, thereby setting the stage for the empirical investigation to follow.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an overview and introduction to the study. This chapter offers a summary of the literature pertinent to the goals and objectives of the study. This chapter will discuss firstly the significance of effective induction processes for novice educators and the role of SMT in the Seshego circuit. Secondly, the challenges in induction, as well as the experiences and perspectives of SMT members, the impact on educators, particularly on the professional development of novice educators. (Akiri, 2021). Finally, the disparities between educational policies and the practical realities faced by SMT (Donaldson, 2025).

This chapter further examines the existing literature relevant to the study's aims and objectives, with a focus on the induction of novice educators and the role of School Management Teams. The study carried out by Elyashiv et al. (2019) highlighted various challenges faced by novice educators as they transition from teacher training programmes to the realities of the classroom. The practical and technical difficulties that arise from a dearth of skills and techniques related to various aspects of teaching practice, as well as a lack of routines and habits (Labadze et al, 2023). These obstacles include discipline problems, problems concerning class administration, problems connected to diversity, the evaluation of assignments and exams, and communication with parents, issues with study materials, understanding of certain subjects, and students' personal concerns (Alam, & Mohanty, 2023). Novice teachers encounter some of these issues during their training, but often without overall responsibility, so they must learn about them while working in the field of teaching and education.

Furthermore, various studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between comprehensive induction programmes and increased teacher retention rates, as well as improved teaching practices. Tanchuk (2025) suggests that teachers have greater confidence in their capacity to favourably influence students' progress if they receive the proper assistance and training. This raises teacher retention rates by boosting their chances of continuing in the field.

Quality programmes for all beginning teachers are crucial, and research indicates that novice teachers who participate in induction programmes are nearly twice as likely to

remain in the profession as those who don't (Ewing, 2021). Novice educators are often required to carry out the same activities, in and out of the classroom, as more experienced teachers. This section will delve into the specific elements that contribute to successful induction programmes, such as mentoring, peer support, professional development opportunities, and structured guidance from experienced educators (Ewing, 2021).

Newkirk (2024) states that SMT should conduct weekly classroom visits to ensure teaching is taking place and to provide feedback that eases novice nervousness. SMT can ease new teachers' nervousness and help prepare them for their first exciting weeks in school by offering a relevant work orientation. Orientation is an opportunity for new teachers to establish relationships with key support personnel (e.g., district supervisors, mentors, instructional coaches) (Carton, 2022). Ideally, orientation occurs prior to the start of the school year. During this several-day meeting, new teachers gather essential information to start their teaching careers. Some information is important for all teachers, whereas other information is specific to special education practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023).

Thakur (2020) indicates that inducting educators is vital in the demanding profession of teaching. As they traverse their teaching path alone, novice educators frequently experience physical and mental exhaustion (Madhesh et al., 2025). Many face overwhelming challenges in their first few years due to a lack of experience and issues with classroom management (Woodcock & Reupert, 2023). Induction programmes offer invaluable support and guidance to help novice educators succeed. SMT can support novice educators by helping them adjust to school systems and teaching methods (Madhesh et al., 2025). Novice educators can enhance their teaching strategies and communication skills with the aid of a reliable SMT. Induction programmes offer guidance on understanding the curriculum and refining teaching methods (Carrillo et al., 2020). Successful induction programmes help novice educators adapt to their profession and grow as educators. SMT are able to provide a safe space for novice educators to express doubts and share ideas, boosting their confidence (Keshmiri, 2025).

With guidance from an experienced teacher, novice educators feel supported and valued in their early teaching years.

2.2 Impact of induction on Novice Educators: Facilitating Professional Growth and Success

This section delves into the specific ways in which induction programmes, facilitated by SMTs, contribute to the professional growth and success of novice educators.

2.2.1 Enhancing Teaching Skills and Practices

Induction programmes provide a platform for novice educators to learn from the practical experience and expertise of SMT members (Geletu, 2023). This informal knowledge transfer, often more impactful than formal training, equips novice educators with valuable insights and effective teaching strategies (Li & Copur-Gencturk, 2024). SMTs play a crucial role in identifying the specific professional development needs of novice educators and guiding them towards relevant opportunities. This tailored approach ensures that novice educators receive support in areas where they require the most growth (Ewing, 2021).

As highlighted by Darveur (2020), classroom management poses a significant challenge for novice educators. SMTs, with their years of experience, can share effective classroom management techniques, helping novice educators establish a positive and productive learning environment. Each school's curriculum has unique nuances. SMTs play a vital role in orienting novice educators to the specific curriculum, ensuring they understand its content, objectives, and assessment methods (Bieda et al., 2020). This guidance enables novice educators to implement the curriculum effectively from the outset. Thakur (2020) emphasises the importance of timely feedback for teacher development. SMTs, through classroom observations and regular feedback sessions, provide novice educators with valuable insights into their teaching practices. This feedback loop encourages reflection, self-assessment, and continuous improvement.

2.2.2 Navigating the School Environment and Culture

Manish (2020) highlights the challenges novice educators encounter in adapting to a new workplace culture. SMTs, as experienced members of the school community, play a crucial role in acclimating novice educators to the school's culture, policies, and administrative procedures (Mlambo, 2022)

Building Relationships and Networks

Induction programmes, facilitated by SMTs, provide opportunities for novice educators to connect with colleagues, fostering a sense of belonging and support within the school (Ndabankulu, 2023). These connections are invaluable for professional growth and create a more positive and collaborative work environment (Birmingham et al., 2024). Haver (2020) emphasised that relationships are crucial to a supportive induction programme. There is no way to determine the most pressing issues for teachers without getting to know them and their experiences. Getting to know new teachers outside of induction meetings is important; check-ins are a great way to gauge the temperature, and quick classroom observations provide opportunities to celebrate successes. By the time each induction meeting rolls around, teachers should feel safe to share what they are going through and what's coming up in their classroom (Porter et al., 2021).

2.2.3 Promoting Well-being and Work-Life Balance

Managing workload and preventing burnout: The early years of teaching can be overwhelming. SMTs can offer practical strategies to help novice educators manage their workload effectively, prioritise tasks, and maintain a healthy work-life balance (Wang, et al. 2025), preventing burnout and promoting well-being. This section delves into the specific ways in which induction programmes, facilitated by SMTs, contribute to the professional growth and success of novice educators.

Addressing the Transition to Teaching: Bridging Theory and Practice: As Nemaston (2020) notes, the transition from theoretical teacher training to the practical realities of the classroom can be a jarring experience. Induction programmes, guided by SMTs, help bridge this gap by providing practical experience, support, and mentorship (Geletu, 2023).

Easing the Transition and Building Confidence: Shanoon (2023) emphasises the importance of comprehensive support during the initial years of teaching. Well-structured induction programmes, driven by SMTs, provide this essential support, easing the transition into the profession and fostering confidence in novice educators (Kekecs et al., 2023).

2.3 Benefits of Induction Programmes for Novice Educators: Fostering Support, Growth, and Success.

The initial years of teaching can be overwhelming for novice educators (Wang et al., 2024). Induction programmes, particularly those involving mentorship from experienced

SMT members, provide crucial support, guidance, and professional development opportunities, easing the transition into the profession and fostering long-term success (White et al., 2024).

Addressing the Challenges of starting a Teaching Career: Overcoming Reality Shock and Transitioning to Practice: As Nemaston (2020) points out, novice educators often experience a "reality shock" when transitioning from theoretical training to the practical demands of the classroom. This transition can be overwhelming, leading to psychological and emotional challenges (Carton, 2022). Induction programmes, with their emphasis on practical experience and mentorship, help bridge this gap, providing novice educators with the support and guidance needed to navigate the complexities of teaching (Keshmiri, 2025). Reyes (2023) highlights the diverse challenges novice educators face, from classroom management and lesson planning to interactions with students, parents, and colleagues. Induction programmes provide a structured environment where novice educators can gradually develop the skills and confidence to handle these multifaceted responsibilities (Arnold et al., 2025).

Creating a Supportive and Nurturing Environment: Reyes (2023) emphasises the importance of mentorship in helping novice educators overcome challenges and thrive in their careers. Induction programmes typically pair novice educators with experienced SMT members who serve as mentors, offering advice, assistance, and a safe space to address concerns and challenges. This supportive mentorship is invaluable for building confidence and fostering a sense of belonging within the school community (Arnold et al., 2025). Induction programmes offer targeted professional development opportunities specifically designed to meet the needs of novice educators (Ewing, 2021). Through workshops, seminars, and collaborative activities, novice educators can enhance their teaching skills, deepen their content knowledge, and develop effective classroom management strategies (Ewing, 2021).

Promoting Job Satisfaction and Retention: By providing structured support, guidance, and professional development, induction programmes empower novice educators to feel more confident and competent in their roles (Bergmark, 2020). This increased confidence translates into greater job satisfaction and a stronger sense of professional identity (Bergmark, 2020). Induction programmes foster a sense of community among novice educators, reducing feelings of isolation and providing a network of support (Madnesh et al., 2025). This sense of belonging and camaraderie contributes to a more positive and fulfilling work experience (Madnesh et al 2025).

Professional Development: SMT can promote professional development opportunities for teachers (Rahadian, 2023). Continuous professional development is essential for teachers to stay updated with the latest teaching methodologies, technologies, and best practices (Carrillo, 2020). By promoting professional development opportunities, implementing a system for regular classroom observations and feedback, and facilitating collaborative planning and teamwork, the SMT can create an environment that fosters growth, innovation, and excellence in teaching and learning (Pakdee et al., 2025). This feedback can be used to identify areas of improvement, highlight effective teaching techniques, and provide support to teachers who may be struggling (Bergmark, 2020). Therefore, professional development supports and improves classroom teaching, and SMTs organise general workshops/seminars for those teachers who are struggling as part of addressing areas of improvement. This intervention is supported by Gundo (2020), who states that existing workshops cover various issues, including the analysis of results, teaching methods, and topics and chapters from different subjects. Additionally, the SMT can allocate a budget and time for teachers to attend conferences, workshops, and seminars where they can enhance their skills and knowledge (Keshmiri, 2025).

Moreover, the SMT can arrange in-house training sessions and peer-to-peer learning opportunities where teachers can share their expertise and learn from each other and connect with other novice educators who are going through similar experiences and build a strong network of support as they embark on the teaching journey (Western Cape Education Department, 2024).

2.4 The Role of Induction Programmes in building Confidence and enhancing Instructional Skills

Induction programmes play a crucial role in empowering novice educators by fostering confidence, developing self-efficacy, and enhancing instructional skills (Lin et al, 2025). The guidance and support provided by SMT mentors are instrumental in this process (Lin et al, 2025).

2.4.1 Building Confidence and Self-Efficacy: Trusted Guidance and Practical Strategies:

Having an SMT member serve as a mentor gives new teachers a reliable advisor who can provide useful tactics and best practices catered to their particular requirements. (Ewing, 2021).

This personalised support is invaluable in building confidence and self-efficacy (Ewing 2021). SMT can help novice educators build confidence and enhance their instructional skills by observing and providing constructive feedback on their strengths and areas for growth, co-teaching with them, modelling effective instructional strategies and classroom management techniques (Rahadian,2023).

SMT can also share valuable resources, lesson plans, and best practices with novice educators. Nicole (2020) emphasised that providing opportunities for novice educators to network as a cohort is just as crucial as giving them the chance to learn from returning colleagues. Novice educators can support one another as a sounding board because they typically have similar experiences, concerns, and questions. Giving novice educators time to get to know one another gives them the chance to build relationships and start the year knowing someone on an equal basis. Throughout the year, these connections give novice educators an integrated support network. (Arnold et al., 2025).

Ashley (2023) indicates that with the help of SMT support, inexperienced teachers can apply successful teaching strategies, run classrooms more effectively, and foster a supportive learning environment. These successes contribute significantly to a sense of accomplishment and increased self-efficacy, (Allison, 2023).

2.4.2 Enhancing Instructional Skills

Bridging the theory-practice gap: Novice educators often enter the profession with strong theoretical knowledge but limited practical experience. Induction programmes, as Shannon (2023) suggests, close this gap by giving experienced SMT members the chance to observe, collaborate, and provide feedback.

Developing Effective Pedagogical Techniques: Novice teachers can improve their teaching abilities, pick up useful pedagogical strategies, and gain the flexibility required to meet a range of student needs through constant discussion and mentoring. (Donna & Roehrig, 2024)

Emotional and Psychological Supports: Teachers who are new to the field may find it emotionally demanding, particularly those who encounter a variety of difficulties.

To help novice educators navigate the emotional rollercoaster of their early years, induction programmes acknowledge this and offer a network of support. Novice educators can get direction, comfort, and advice on stress management, work-life balance, and

professional development from an SMT mentor who is sympathetic to their struggles (Melody, 2023). The Australian Council for Educational Research (2020) states that Principals and SMT who support a robust learning culture in their schools and educational environments can cultivate good induction. To help with the onboarding and support of new teachers, a strong culture entails fostering and maintaining relationships.

Geletu,(2023) suggest that in order to support the wellbeing of novice educators, principals and other SMT members must cultivate professional relationships with them. They also assist them in grasping the culture, practices, workplace health and safety, and the expectations specific to their local environment

SMTs should establish peer support groups or mentoring circles, provide access to counselling services or employee assistance programmes as another way of supporting novice educators (Gan et al, 2025).

Soltjie (2022) states that an important part of the induction process is introducing new educators to the school's history, culture, and philosophies. This introduction is not only aimed at job training but also at preparing novice educators for the values and organisational structure of the school. This creates a more uniform organisational structure and can help to boost morale, teamwork, and productivity (Benoliel, 2021).

The induction process is designed to ensure that novice educators are equipped with all the necessary resources and knowledge to succeed in their roles (Carrillo et al, 2020). Michael (2022) argues that an effective induction programme helps novice educators to integrate into their new surroundings and become familiar with school policies and procedures, ensuring a smooth transition into their roles. This reduces staff turnover and increases teacher retention. Haver (2020) emphasised that the school environment and the most important needs of novice educators should be taken into account in a well-designed induction programmes. Deeper knowledge is possible when discussions on systems, collaborative planning, curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment are spaced out over time.

Policy and International Context: In other developed countries, such as the United States of America, the Department of Education has recognised the significance of induction programmes and encourages districts to provide systems suitable to their contexts, rather than a “one-size-fits-all” approach (Conway & Thompson, 2022).

The Education Reform Act (1993, ch. 71, s. 38G) and Massachusetts Regulations for Educators Licensure (603 CMR 7.00) require districts to provide induction support for new educators, as these programmes improve practice, enhance professional responsibility, and positively impact student learning. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2020) adds that induction programmes also provide SMTs with an opportunity to reflect on their own practice and foster collaborative learning communities.

Effective induction processes are widely acknowledged as vital to the professional growth and integration of novice educators (Canip, 2020). A study conducted in Israel by

Davidovitch (2024) revealed that structured induction programmes, which involve pairing novice teachers with experienced mentors such as school administrators or veteran educators during school hours, provided essential professional support. This perspective is reinforced by Heikkinen (2020), who emphasises the pivotal role of mentorship in facilitating early career development.

According to Shanks (2022), practical assistance offered through these mentoring relationships not only strengthens novice teachers' self-confidence but also cultivates their problem-solving and critical thinking abilities. Similarly, Artman (2022) asserts that effective induction models promote both personal and professional advancement, particularly when senior management teams (SMTs) and novice educators collaborate within the same institutional environment. The quality of the relationship between SMTs and new teachers is therefore a critical determinant of induction success (Kearney & Klinge, 2019). Stemberger (2020) further supports this view, noting that novice educators often emulate the practices and behaviours of SMT members, highlighting the importance of strong professional relationships during the induction process.

The Role of SMTs in Effective Induction: Teacher quality and ability are the most significant school-based factors contributing to learner achievement and educational improvement (Kutsyurumba & Walker, 2020). Helping novice educators in their transition and socialisation into schools is important, yet many quit the profession in their first years despite heavy investments (Carlton, 2022). Effective induction programmes have been shown to improve novice retention, learner achievement, and reduce resource waste, (Borko et al., 2021).

Principals, as SMT members, facilitate introductions, school orientation, and access to resources - steps essential to making novice educators feel valued and supported, (Winter et al,2021).

Departmental heads and deputy principals, as curriculum leaders, also provide novice educators with policy documents (e.g., CAPS, ATPs, pacesetters, exam guidelines) and assist with interpretation (Chiana, 2019). Kadel (2023) highlights that induction programmes enable novices to mature professionally and reduce attrition caused by classroom challenges.

Comparative Studies: USA and Turkey: Tekir (2021) found that SMTs in the USA play a greater role in customising induction programmes, whereas in Turkey, mentors act mainly as programme implementers under the Ministry of Education. In the USA, SMTs are responsible for reflective practice, weekly meetings, collaborative planning, and mentoring support, while in Turkey, mentors follow a standardised process. Research in the USA has shown that mentoring is considered the most useful induction component, although novices reported mixed experiences with their mentors (Lloyd et al, 2024). In Turkey, the selection of inappropriate mentors and a lack of mentor expertise were cited as weaknesses of the programme (Tekir, 2021). Reduced teaching loads in Turkey allow novices to engage in induction, while in the USA, they share the same workload as experienced colleagues. Reduced teaching loads have been shown to ease novices' adjustment (Tekir, 2021). Both contexts include professional development, though quality and delivery were perceived differently by novices in each country (Tekir, 2021).

2.5 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY SMTs IN THE INDUCTION PROCESS.

The induction of novice educators is conceptualized as a methodical and all-encompassing professional development program for new teachers with 0–3 years of teaching experience. It is designed to enhance their knowledge, skills, and self-assurance in the classroom, enabling them to become effective and efficient educators who foster each student's potential, abilities, and talents (Anthony, 2023). Therefore, the SMTs continue to play a vital role in this process. Some of the common challenges encountered by SMTs during the induction of novice educators are as follows:

2.5.1 Lack of Formal Induction Policy

A study conducted by Mahome & Mphahlele (2023) shows that since 2005, teacher integration has been considered a top priority for the South African government.

A South African Department of Education report states that all new teachers must participate in a formal induction program lasting at least two years (DBE, 2008).

Nearly 20 years later, this goal still remains unfulfilled, as South Africa's public schools do not have formal induction programs in place.

It was recalled that the DBE and the Department of Higher Education and Training's Integrated Strategic Planning Policy for Teacher Training and Development calls for the introduction of teacher induction programs, including mentoring, to stabilize the teaching profession and enable teachers to become competent professionals. (DBE, 2008).

In response to slow progress and the urgent need to implement formal induction programs in South African public schools, the National Teacher Induction Program was developed in 2018-2019 by the Department of Basic Education in collaboration with Jet Education Services and the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance (VVOB). Mamba (2020) argues that a new teacher who joins a school without being inducted takes more time to adapt than one who undergoes induction. Therefore, inadequate induction has negative repercussions for all stakeholders in the education sector. Inadequate induction results in novice educators quitting the job prematurely, loss of resources, and reduced learner achievement (Ewing, 2021).

2.5.2 Limited Time

SMTs responsible for the induction of novice educators often lack sufficient time due to the numerous responsibilities assigned to them. Matsepe & Maluleke (2019) found that in some schools, staff shortages result in overcrowded classrooms, forcing SMTs to spend time on discipline and classroom management. According to the PAM document (DoE, 2016), SMT members are expected to perform multiple duties, including administration, teaching, extra- and co-curricular activities, and communication functions, leaving little time for induction. Mkhabele (2022) maintains that principals are responsible for developing staff training programmes, both school-based and external, to assist teachers, particularly new and inexperienced ones, in achieving educational objectives (DoE, 1998). While the DoE states that the principal is responsible for induction there is a lack of clarity on how this process should be structured (Pilla, 2019).

The deputy principal is responsible for guiding and supervising staff, while departmental heads are tasked with providing guidance on subject methods, evaluation, and curriculum interpretation (DoE, 1998).

In practice, in some cases, SMT members are overwhelmed with school management responsibilities and have limited time to guide novices (Mkhabele, 2022).

Tekir (2021) indicates that one barrier identified by both new teachers and SMTs is the lack of time to meet. Marshall (2021) similarly found that time is one of the leading causes of stress for educators in mentoring relationships. Adrienne (2022) suggests that a positive school culture can reduce stress and support the induction process. School leaders, therefore, need to safeguard teacher well-being and mental health.

2.5.3 Lack of Support from Upper Structures

The Department of Education continues to show little support for SMTs in implementing induction programmes. Nemaston,(2020) found that, unlike in countries such as Singapore and the USA, where SMTs are required to undergo leadership training prior to assuming roles, South African SMTs are often not inducted themselves but are expected to induct novices. This lack of preparation undermines their ability to carry out induction effectively.

2.5.4 Inadequate Funds

Funding disparities in schools undermine opportunities for learners and limit induction support. Financial resources allocated to schools often take into account socio-economic status, with little allocated for teacher development (Reyness, 2022). The lack of funding and resources affects induction because novice educators may lack access to proper facilities, teaching materials, and mentorship opportunities. Marshall (2021) notes that access to adequate instructional resources could improve mentor–novice matching. Inadequate instructional resources, combined with budget constraints, often shift school priorities away from induction (Zhou et al, 2023).

2.5.5 Insufficient Training

Mkhabele, (2022) found that although SMT members must have at least three years of experience before promotion, experience alone does not guarantee a successful induction. Marshall (2020) suggests that SMT training and ongoing professional development are crucial for ensuring that SMTs acquire the necessary skills to support novices.

2.5.6 Lack of Motivation

Okumu et al. (2023) assert that lack of motivation was found to be one of the major challenges to effective induction programmes. Lack of motivation prevents SMTs from guiding novice educators adequately in their work. It leads to SMT being ineffective in their duties. The finding was supported by Reeves (2020), whose research showed that one of the main problems that workplace induction programmes encounter is motivating SMTs. It can be difficult to convince qualified and dedicated SMT members to participate in induction programmes. One of the issues that secondary school induction procedures face is a lack of motivation because teachers are not consistently inspired by SMTs, which causes them to disassociate themselves from SMTs. Lack of motivation is the main hurdle in the induction process. (Geletu, 2023).

Various studies indicate that poor relationships between teachers and SMTs can affect the induction process, as in most secondary schools they are often not on good terms (Lee et al., 2021). This is supported by Job Friedland (2021), who found that the way in which SMTs communicate with novice educators is fundamental to the induction relationship. Additionally, unrealistic expectations and assumptions can disrupt the induction relationship. It is beneficial for an SMT to utilise tools and strategies to facilitate and manage key aspects of their mentor–mentee relationship (Gundlach, 2025). The novice's frustrations and lack of guidance can inhibit their movement toward independence.

Due to the power differential between SMTs and novice educators, resolving this issue while maintaining a productive and amicable relationship proves challenging (Ewing, 2021).

Novices may believe that SMTs lack commitment to their careers. McKlim (2019) argued that personal incompatibility between SMTs and novice educators frustrates induction relationships. Okumu et al. (2023) conducted a study on mentoring in government secondary schools in Uganda, which revealed many challenges encountered by SMTs, including:

- Negative attitudes of novice educators towards induction programmes, with many not seeing their value.
- Lack of interest in learning about developments in the teaching profession.
- Persistent time constraints for SMTs to effectively implement induction.
- Inadequate training of SMTs, as they themselves are not inducted, leading to uncertainty in their practices.
- Poor workplace relationships that increase stress and hinder novice well-being.

2.6 INDUCTION PROGRAMMES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

In this section we report insights from countries around the world.

Nigeria: The research conducted in Nigeria by Ifarajimi et al., 2025 revealed that beginner teacher often face challenges such as classroom management, differentiating instructions and addressing the needs of diverse learners. In this context, mentorship offers critical supports in helping teachers to navigate these challenges, improve their teaching practice and build confidence in their roles.

Despite this overwhelming recognition of mentorship positive impact on retention the study continue to reveal a significant gap in the actual implementation of mentorship exist informally in some schools, there is no formalized ,consistent framework that can be universally applied across school in Nigeria. This highlight a critical contradiction: Although teachers acknowledge the value of mentorship, they are not always provided with structured, sustainable system of support their professional growth and retention (Ifarajimi et al, 2025). Therefore these absence of standardized framework for mentorship pose a very challenge both on beginner teacher and school leader and leads to leadership failure.

Ghana: The study conducted in Ghana by Antwi, 2020, found that one of the challenges of induction is the one size fits all approach employed in organizing the programmes in some educational contexts. This approach fails to take context specific issues into consideration. A classical example is where the Ghana Education Service organizes a one-day induction programme for all newly appointed teachers (GES Journal, 2012). This clearly cannot take the needs of the inductees into consideration and so will be far from being effective.

(Antwi, 2020; Coleman 2006), contends that, head teachers operate in diverse schools, each of which has a unique culture, making the general approach to induction inappropriate.

Antwi, 2020, indicate that the duration of induction programmes is a major factor that impedes its effectiveness. The duration of the programmes vary across educational contexts. They indicate that the duration is generally inadequate, making it difficult for head teachers to develop repertoires of skills for effective performance.

The problems encountered by the new principals in Kenya and other developing countries were also caused by lack of funds for the schools. In most of these countries, governments do not allocate adequate funds to the education sector of the economy, resulting in the schools' reliance on parents for financial support by collecting school fees. High poverty levels however, coupled with high birth rates characterizing developing and underdeveloped countries make it difficult for the parents to pay the fees (Antwi, 2020; Oplatka, 2004). This places the schools in difficult financial position which results in their inability to conduct proper induction for newly appointed teachers.

Available literature also points out that one of the factors that militate against the effectiveness of induction programmes is lack of funds to acquire induction materials such as workbooks. This is particularly common in both the developing and underdeveloped countries in Africa where most governments allocate insufficient funds to the education sector.

Zimbabwe: In Zimbabwe, according to Maponya (2020) and Khoza (2021), most school principals face difficult times as they are overburdened with responsibilities and tend to concentrate more on routine administrative rather than management and instructional leadership roles. The limited focus on instructional leadership affects their ability to actively support teaching and learning processes, including curriculum development, instructional quality, and teacher professional development.

Principals struggle to monitor and supervise teachers, thus affecting the performance of the schools. The lack of supervision affects performance management as principals cannot measure teacher performance and thus lack the capacity to differentiate between competent and incompetent teachers (Khoza, 2021).

Currently, principals in Zimbabwe lead and manage schools in an environment of political and economic instability, affecting their performance.

Political instability presents a dynamic and often unpredictable environment for educational leaders. The volatility primarily disrupts the continuity of educational initiatives, making it challenging to implement long-term strategies and maintain consistent standards. Economic instability compounds these challenges as budgetary constraints and resource shortages directly impact the school's overall functioning. Principals are tasked with managing these constraints while attempting to uphold educational quality, often making difficult decisions regarding resource allocation that can impact both teachers' capabilities and students' learning experiences. In addition, the economic meltdown and political violence, poor infrastructure for effective teaching and learning (Maponya, 2020).

Namibia: The Namibia Teacher Induction Programme (NNTIP) is a structured initiative designed to support newly qualified teachers in their transition into the profession. Established in 2011, the programme aims to enhance the competence and professionalism of novice educators over a two-year period through mentorship, workshops, and collaborative networks. Mentorship is a key component, pairing novices with experienced teachers who provide guidance on classroom management and pedagogical strategies (Kaveto et al., 2025). Additionally, professional development workshops focus on curriculum implementation and educational technology, while reflective practice sessions foster a sense of community and encourage continuous improvement. The programme is aligned with the National Professional Standards for Teachers, ensuring that the needs of novices are met while promoting emotional resilience and professional growth.

Despite its comprehensive framework, the implementation of the induction programme faces several limitations and challenges. One significant challenge is the inconsistency in mentorship quality, as not all experienced teachers are adequately trained to support novices effectively. Secondly, geographical disparities also create logistical hurdles, particularly for rural schools that may lack resources compared to urban institutions. Further, frequent changes in education policy can lead to confusion regarding the programme's objectives, further complicating its execution (Kaveto et al., 2025).

China: In China, novice teacher training programmes extend beyond helping teachers adapt and develop basic teaching skills (Miao, 2009). The primary goal is to secure novices' core competencies and accelerate their professional growth (Britton et al., 2003a).

Moreover, professional advancement is seen as a collective responsibility of all teaching staff (Ma, 1992). A prevalent view is that four-year pre-service training is inadequate for practical knowledge; novice teachers must continue professional learning from day one through apprenticeship mentoring, teaching research groups, and course-preparation groups (Li & Li, 2013).

Germany: Teacher education in Germany consists of two stages: university education and induction training (Vorbereitungsdienst), which occurs in schools and teacher training institutes (KMK, 2017). Passing the State Exam I or holding a master's degree is required for induction (Baki & Bektaş-Baki, 2016; KMK, 2017). This induction stage lasts 12–24 months, depending on the state, and includes supervised teaching, independent teaching, peer reviews, and seminars (KMK, 2017).

The training focuses on professional development and transparent assessment standards nationwide (Brinkmann & Kropp, 2012; Wehrhöfer, 2013). Some states integrate continuing education at universities to coordinate both pre-service and induction training (European Commission, 2004).

New Zealand: In New Zealand, the induction stage is called the Advice and Guidance (AG) programme. It is regarded as the first step in lifelong professional development (Wong et al., 2005). The induction involves observation, feedback, professional development, and assessment (Lind, 2007). Provisionally registered teachers, after undergraduate studies, must complete a 2–5 year AG period before applying for full registration. (Piggot-Irvine et al., 2009). The NZ Teachers Council requires novice teachers to document AG support as part of their full registration application (Wong et al., 2005). A provisional certificate allows teaching for up to six years. Obtaining full certification confirms that a teacher meets six professional standards and ensures quality instruction (NZ Education Council, 2018). The induction policy in New Zealand emphasises support rather than evaluation (Howe, 2006). Its purpose is not only to provide certification but also to ensure novice educators grow into high-quality teachers (NZTC, 2011)

2.7 THE PERSPECTIVE AND EXPERIENCE OF SMTs IN THE INDUCTION PROCESS OF NOVICE EDUCATORS.

2.7.1 Support and guidance

SMT members view their role in educator induction as crucial. Their purpose is to provide support and guidance to new teachers on their first day at school. This includes helping them understand the school's culture, policies and teaching practices. The *Guideline for the Induction of Early Career Teachers in Australia* (2023) suggest that supporting teacher health is essential to promoting the physical and mental health of teachers. Teachers who receive structured wellness support are better able to meet the demands of their work, manage stress, and focus on the learning needs of their learners. The introduction should include comprehensive information about how teachers can access services that support their well-being.

Schools can support the well-being of new teachers through resources, structured frameworks, and efforts to understand the specific well-being needs of their situations. (Fuentes et al, 2020).

2.7.2 Cultivate Partnership

SMTs recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with new educators. They actively engage in conversations, listen to their concerns and create a welcoming environment.

These relationships foster trust and collaboration (Allison, 2023). Relationships strengthen bonds between educators, staff, and students. Good relationships facilitate a smooth transition from school to work. Activities such as networking, team building, managing others, and promoting well-being are essential. (Wertzberger, 2022). Stress levels are a major factor in teacher attrition, so stress management, resilience and empowerment are essential to creating a stable and dignified workforce (ACER, 2020). Avoiding excessive workload is also an important factor in retaining new teachers (AITSL, 2022).

2.7.3 Observation and feedback

SMTs observe classroom teaching and provide constructive feedback. They focus on areas such as instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement. Their goal is to help new educators improve their teaching skills (Carton, 2022). Induction programmes must also gather feedback from all stakeholders and adapt to teachers' changing needs (Winter et al., 2020). Effective programmes are not only willing to make modifications, but also actively seek new ideas (Conway & Thompson, 2022).

2.7.4 Professional development

SMTs encourage participation in professional development activities such as workshops, conferences, and training sessions. Continuous learning is emphasised to enhance teaching effectiveness. Workshops offer novice educators opportunities to acquire new skills, adopt effective practices, and connect with colleagues (Jacks, 2023). Networking can open doors to career growth and collaboration. Ryan (2023) suggests methods such as Google Forms to identify teacher needs, grouping teachers by grade or subject, and collaborative brainstorming.

Presenting growth opportunities, whether through promotions or training, demonstrates investment in the futures of novice educators. This professional development encourages retention of teachers (Moore, 2022).

2.7.5 Advocacy

SMTs advocate for new educators within the school community, ensuring their voices are heard and promoting a positive work environment (Gan et al., 2025). Effective teachers improve the quality of education, and SMTs should strive to create conducive environments by acknowledging the diverse needs of staff.

Within fast-paced schools, personal challenges are often overlooked due to the limited face-to-face time available to novice educators (Moore, 2022).

2.7.6 Collaboration

SMTs collaborate with staff to create a supportive network, connecting novices with experienced teachers and preventing isolation. Mkhabele (2022) states that SMT members lack policy and guidelines for induction, relying on their own discretion. This discretion limits professional growth for novices.

Countries like Germany, Australia, Sweden, and Romania have national induction policies and training requirements (Borko et al, 2023). The lack of an induction policy in South Africa indicates that induction is not taken seriously, which in turn affects standardisation across schooling (Mkhabele, 2022). In countries such as Scotland, Ireland, and Canada, induction is compulsory, with national teaching councils overseeing the process (Mamba, 2020). In South Africa, registration takes precedence, and CPTD is not mandatory. Findings by Kieser (2022) confirm that induction programmes improve novice retention. Billingsley et al. (2019) argue that induction programmes often fail to provide sufficient teaching experience, while Burger et al. (2021) show that effective induction lowers emotional fatigue. Gordon (2019) contends that induction strengthens practical skills.

2.7.7 Formal and informal induction programmes

Induction involves both formal and informal relationships between SMTs and novices (Ayoobazadeh & Boies, 2020). Raduan and Na (2020) affirm that SMTs, as experienced teachers, play a guiding role.

2.8 IMPACT ON EDUCATORS

Induction is essential for career development and professionalism. Novice educators often face identity crises as they transition from students to teachers (Kadel, 2023). Inadequate induction hinders adaptation to school culture and full-time workload (Carton, 2022). They also face challenges in handling relationships with parents, colleagues, learners, and SMTs due to limited professional skills (Kadel, 2023). The main cause is the gap between theoretical training and classroom realities (Bahadur, 2023). Retention is a critical concern, with many novices leaving within the first year. Stress, lack of confidence, and workload drive attrition (Pakdee et al, 2025).

Stress leads to fatigue, disengagement, irritability, and decreased productivity (Colbert, 2021). Factors such as student behaviour, unsuitable training, and teacher evaluations intensify these challenges. Induction can address these issues by preparing novices for discipline and workload (Colbert, 2021). Gates (2020) emphasises that inadequate SMT support contributes to premature departure. Shibiti (2020) shows attrition is highest among younger teachers. In Nepal, induction is poorly implemented, leading to frustration among novices (Purna, 2022). Adhikari (2022) argues that well-structured induction boosts retention, job satisfaction, and confidence. Globally, attrition affects resources and student achievement.

Novice educators often feel unsupported and isolated, which can add to their stress (Adhikari, 2022). Induction programmes must therefore include authentic, context-specific approaches tailored to each school.

2.9 THE ROLE OF EFFECTIVE INDUCTION PROGRAMMES

Induction programmes serve to familiarize novice educators with the school expectation and school culture

- **Essential support:** Well-designed induction programmes are crucial for providing novice educators with the support, resources, and skills they need to navigate the challenges of the profession and thrive in their roles (Falk, 2012).
- **Addressing key challenges:** Effective induction programmes should address the following:
 - **Building confidence and familiarity:** Provide clear expectations, job-embedded professional development, and opportunities for observation and co-teaching to build confidence and familiarity with job requirements (Subedi & Karkee, 2020).
 - **Fostering a positive school environment:** Create a welcoming and supportive school culture where novice educators feel valued, respected, and part of a collaborative team (Brown & Wynn, 2009).
 - **Developing employability skills:** Incorporate training on essential employability skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and communication to prepare novice educators for the multifaceted demands of the profession (Lin et al, 2025).

Furthermore, a lack of administrative support or insufficient induction leads to stress for novice educators (Lee et al, 2021). The evidence presented by Steiner (2021) and Gates (2020) emphasises a compelling argument that inadequate induction processes, compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, have significantly intensified teacher stress and attrition. Teaching has long been recognised as a demanding profession, but the absence of structured induction support has left many novice educators ill-equipped to manage these pressures effectively.

Without adequate mentorship and professional guidance, new teachers are more vulnerable to burnout, especially in times of crisis such as the pandemic. The findings that teachers were nearly twice more likely to experience job-related stress and three times more likely to exhibit symptoms of depression than the general adult population highlight a systemic failure to provide sufficient emotional and professional support. Moreover, the fact that nearly half of the teachers who left the profession prematurely did so due to pandemic-related challenges reflects a deeper issue of institutional neglect. Therefore, the argument follows that strengthening induction programmes and ongoing professional support is not merely a developmental necessity but a crucial strategy for teacher retention, well-being, and the overall stability of the education system.

The study conducted by Ashley (2023) indicates that inadequate induction programmes can impact the quality of teaching. Novice educators need guidance and orientation to settle into their respective roles; without this support, their instructional practice may suffer. The Education Commission of the State (2020) states that induction and mentoring programmes have been shown to improve teacher retention. For example, in a recent study, teachers who were assigned a mentor and participated in induction during their first year of teaching were more likely than those without these supports to remain in the teaching profession for at least five years.

In some urban districts, early induction and mentoring programs were very effective; in Ohio and New York, attrition was reduced by more than two thirds. (Wang et al., 2024). While studies indicate that these programmes can reduce attrition and improve teacher job satisfaction, research suggests that the strength of these effects may depend on the type and quality of the programme provided (Woods, 2020).

Retention may be influenced more by elements like having a mentor/SMT member from the same field, having common planning time with other teachers in the same subject, and having regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers. (Woods, 2020).

Some studies highlight the importance of school environment factors for teacher retention, with school leadership and effective induction programmes by SMTs often being viewed as influential in determining the ethos and working conditions within a school (Allison, 2023). A series of observational studies suggests that teachers' perceptions of administrative support and leadership are strong predictors of their intention to leave (Gorard, 2020).

Huat (2020) argues that while working conditions generally appear to be important to educators and their future career plans, it is the social conditions, such as the principal's leadership, school culture, and relationships with colleagues that are most influential. Analysis in England, based upon the international TALIS dataset, also highlights the importance of good leadership. The principal should utilise their leadership to ensure that SMTs implement induction programmes effectively, thereby reducing the frustrations of novice educators. Effective implementation of induction programmes lies in the hands of school principals.

Huat (2020) found that having better school leadership is associated with higher job satisfaction and a reduction in the likelihood that teachers will leave. Programs for induction that help and acclimate novice educators are crucial in determining whether these educators choose to stay in their roles or leave the profession early. A well-structured induction programme can provide essential resources, mentorship, and training, fostering a positive initial experience for novice educators (Keshmiri, 2025).

The positive experience, in turn, can lead to increased job satisfaction, confidence, and a sense of belonging, which are critical factors in retaining novice educators within the education system. By addressing the challenges encountered by SMTs during induction and uncertainties faced by novice educators, and providing the necessary supports, induction programmes contribute to building a stable and motivated teaching workforce, ultimately improving the quality of education for learners (Adhikari, 2022). SMTs' failure to address the challenges encountered during the induction process has negative effects on the job satisfaction and retention of novice educators. Novices' failure to understand school culture can demotivate them and leave them uncertain about their progress (Bergmark, 2020).

In order to address the turnover rates that negatively affect school performance, it is imperative to comprehend the critical relationship between school culture and teacher retention. (Jamison et al, 2020). While various factors contribute to teachers leaving their jobs, including insufficient support, heavy workloads, and limited growth opportunities, the role of school culture is crucial (Mileo, 2023).

Mileo (2023) emphasises that a positive and supportive school culture, characterised by collaborative decision-making, recognition of achievements, and a nurturing work environment, significantly influences teacher commitment and job satisfaction. Conversely, a negative culture fosters toxicity, burnout, and diminished motivation,

ultimately resulting in turnover. Recognising this, SMTs must prioritise cultivating a positive culture to retain teachers and foster better outcomes.

Creating a positive school culture is a strategic move with tangible benefits. A school's culture has a direct impact on the satisfaction and retention of its teachers, creating a ripple effect on the overall success of the institution. (Busetto et al, 2020).

Parents and the community frequently support schools that have a positive culture. This positive perception becomes valuable, attracting learners and fostering a collaborative educational ecosystem. (Frenzel et al, 2021). Schools struggling with retention due to a negative culture face challenges in building trust and partnership with the community, impacting enrolment and support.

Teacher burnout and turnover are critical issues that many schools face today. Novice educators feel overwhelmed, stressed, and overworked, leading to declines in physical and mental health, motivation, and job satisfaction, and ultimately causing them to leave the profession altogether (Mileo, 2023). A study conducted by Joshua (2020) reveals that teacher attrition is a persistent problem worldwide. In the United States, hundreds of thousands of teachers, up to an estimated 8% of the workforce, leave the profession for various reasons, one of which is inadequate induction (Sutcher, 2016).

In addition to North America, this trend is also seen in the UK, Europe, Hong Kong, and Australia, where between 40 and 50 percent of new teachers quit their jobs within the first year of employment. (Lee et al., 2021). This issue, combined with fewer young people entering education, means schools and SMTs must find ways to retain quality educators (Sutcher et al., 2016). High rates of attrition pose numerous problems for schools, districts, and learners.

From an economic standpoint, the National Commission on Teaching & America's Future estimated that teacher attrition costs the nation \$7.3 billion annually. Attrition not only creates financial burdens but also negatively impacts staff and students who remain (White et al, 2024).

Furthermore, 63.7% of novice educators in Missouri leave the profession within five years, and it takes new educators three to seven years to become proficient in meeting the demands of teaching. Many students in high-attrition schools rarely benefit from experienced teachers (Sutcher, 2016).

Findings from research conducted by Botha and Rens (2018) indicate that due to inadequate induction by SMTs, novice educators doubted whether they had made the right career choice and questioned their suitability for teaching. Participants experienced a lack of effective classroom management and struggled to build meaningful relationships with learners.

Another factor that complicates novice educators' work is the lack of parental involvement in learners' education. Research has found that when teachers and parents collaborate, learners are more likely to achieve set goals (Allinson, 2023). Saleem et al. (2020) corroborated Kozikoglu's (2017) findings that novice educators struggle to build relationships with parents. Parental involvement is crucial to children's education. Nevertheless, family participation presents challenges for novices, including discussing their child's performance with parents and coping with absentee parents. Novice educators encounter difficulties when addressing parents about learner performance, disagreements, and behavioural challenges. Induction challenges thus negatively affect novices' ability to engage effectively with parents (Naeem et al, 2023).

2.10 POLICY VS PRACTICE

Research suggests that support for educators in South Africa primarily occurs during workshops organised by subject advisors (Mkhabele, 2024). According to policy, the SMTs are considered pivotal in providing support to educators (Geletu, 2023). Research in South Africa suggests that educators do not receive thorough, appropriate, and sufficient induction at the school level due to various challenges encountered by SMTs. Steinke (2021) emphasises that the current induction programmes are inadequate to prepare educators to effectively teach in schools. South African educators are facing continuous curriculum reviews from time to time. The Department of Education introduced four curriculum reviews in the past 17 years (Jamison et al, 2020).

In every curriculum, SMTs are inducted for only a few days and are expected to master everything, as well as induct new educators in the future. Practically, sufficient support for educators is far from adequate in most public schools in South Africa (Frenzel et al, 2021).

The study conducted by Nicholas (2023) reveals that items 3.6 of Annexure A.3 and 3.6 of Annexure A.4 in the revised Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM, 2016) stipulate that senior educators and master teachers should play mentoring roles for inexperienced educators. Item 3.2.3 of Annexure A.5 of the PAM further states that Departmental Heads of Schools should coordinate guidance for educators. In terms of section 198C (3) b of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA), educators employed on a part-time basis should have their working hours considered (Nicholas, 2023).

This guideline may include guiding inexperienced educators on how to perform their duties. Furthermore, Regulation 3(1) of the Regulations Regarding Terms and Conditions of Employment (RRTCEE, 1995) stipulates that the probation period for educators is 12 months. This timeframe can be extended if there is a valid reason for doing so. Item 8 of Schedule 8 in the LRA mentions that newly appointed educators should receive training during their probationary period. According to regulation 3(3) of the RRTCEE, the purpose of probation is to certify that the educator has been diligent, behaved well, and is well-suited to the position, thus qualifying for permanency (Tanchuk, 2025). The reality, however, is that during probation, only a few educators are inducted, as SMTs lack sufficient time to induct them, and the 12-month period may lapse before recognition occurs (Tanchuk, 2025).

2.10.1 QMS

The Education Labour Relations Council Collective Agreement Number 8 of 2003 (ELRC) introduced the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), which was implemented in schools from 2005. Despite measures put in place to strengthen its implementation, schools continued to experience challenges. A formal review of the systems and procedures impeding the effective implementation of IQMS was carried out by the Department of Education. ELRC Collective Agreement Number 2 of 2020 replaced Collective Agreement 8 of 2003 and 2 of 2014. The QMS is a performance management system for school-based educators designed to evaluate individual performance levels and in the process, achieve high levels of school performance.

The Teacher Development Summit (29 June–2 July 2009) agreed, among other points, that a clear, coherent policy and regulatory environment should be designed for teacher appraisal and development. It was further agreed that appraisal for development should be delinked from remuneration and salary progression (Department of Basic Education, Integrated Strategic Planning, 2011)

The purpose of the QMS is to ensure that educators carry out their responsibilities with integrity and a positive attitude toward learning activities, as well as to increase their effectiveness, efficiency, and good performance (Geletu, 2023).

Tachie and Mancotywa (2021) claim that QMS implementation ensures teacher development and professionalism led by SMTs. Lesson observation helps novice educators identify areas for improvement, and subsequent training helps close these gaps. Based on QMS outcomes, educators attended workshops conducted by subject advisors to bridge content gaps. These workshops equipped all teachers in the same phase with the necessary content and pedagogical knowledge.

The study further reveals that the way QMS was managed by principals was not encouraging, despite their involvement in the team responsible for managing QMS. The research suggests that principals may lack knowledge about QMS, resulting in ineffective or absent management plans (Carton, 2022). This meant that some schools found it difficult to implement QMS, while in others it was not implemented at all.

Furthermore, SMTs conduct performance appraisals of educators, including lesson observations, and keep records to support all educators, including novices. Nesengani et al. (2022) state that QMS was implemented too rapidly and was hampered by challenges, as educators lacked adequate knowledge of the process. Most educators also held negative attitudes towards the system, while training and support were inadequate. The advocacy was poor because those introducing the programme were themselves unsure of its objectives. The linking of QMS with pay progression distorted its developmental purpose. Performance management has not received due attention, particularly as QMS implementation met resistance from teachers who viewed it as punitive and blame-oriented (Toge, 2020).

Mollo (2022) emphasises that SMTs encountered problems such as a lack of cooperation from educators, a poor understanding of QMS due to limited SMT training, and dishonesty in ratings for monetary benefits. Inflated ratings reflect problems that limit the evaluation's ability to improve instruction and achievement.

Maina (2018) identifies issues such as **the use of poor evaluation instruments, which** systems emphasised as measurable but were not always meaningful indicators.

- **Limited district guidance:** Districts often failed to provide evaluators with substantive rubrics, focusing instead on timelines and processes (Ugwuanyi, 2021).
- **Lack of evaluator time:** SMTs reported insufficient time to conduct thorough evaluations.
- **Lack of evaluator skill:** Evaluators lacked content knowledge, and professional development was rare.
- **Lack of evaluator will:** Principals were not held accountable for rigorous evaluations, leading to inflated ratings.
- **Absence of high-quality feedback for teachers:** Evaluators failed to provide detailed feedback despite teachers requesting it.
- **Few consequences attached to evaluation:** Teacher performance ratings showed little variation, making it hard to reward excellence or address underperformance.

2.10.2 South African Council of Educators (SACE)

The South African Council of Educators (SACE), established under the SACE Act No. 31 of 2000 and amended by the Education Laws Amendment Act (2011), outlines the professional responsibilities of educators. The Act emphasises that educators must cooperate with and support their colleagues, acknowledging their professional obligation to mentor and induct new members into the profession. Section 2(b) of the SACE Act (2000) stipulates that one of the objectives of the Council is to manage a system for the promotion and continuous professional development of all teachers. In line with this, SACE has developed a Professional Development Points Schedule for Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD), ensuring that educators engage in lifelong learning to maintain and enhance competence.

2.10.3 Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD)

Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) encompasses activities that enable novice educators to evaluate and enhance their professional skills, ultimately becoming competent and effective teachers.

These activities include planning, assessing, and revisiting instructional strategies (Bwanga, 2020). The necessity of CPTD arises from the recognition that initial teacher education is insufficient for sustaining a teaching career over time. Developing a professional identity is a continuous process that requires ongoing learning and skill enhancement (Noge, 2018).

The CPTD system is primarily digital, with teacher training conducted online and implementation occurring within schools (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019). In South Africa, the CPTD system is managed through the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development, which mandates SACE as the statutory body responsible for its implementation, management, and quality assurance (Gomba, 2019). The OECD's 2008 report on education policies in South Africa emphasised the pivotal role of SACE in teacher development, highlighting its potential to elevate the public teaching profession (OECD, 2008). The CPTD system encourages educators to participate in professional development activities by awarding points for engagement, thus incentivising continuous learning and improvement (Gomba, 2019).

Research consistently demonstrates that effective and well-informed teachers are the most significant school-related factor influencing student performance (John & Sosibo, 2019). Given the subpar performance of South African schools, it is imperative to focus on the training and support of both novice and experienced educators. CPTD plays a crucial role in this context, as it ensures that teachers remain updated with the latest research on pedagogy, emerging classroom technologies, and new curriculum resources (Tjirumbi, 2021). Despite its importance, the implementation of CPTD has not been without challenges. Studies reveal that many novice educators struggle with understanding the core functionalities of the CPTD system, leading to demotivation and a lack of recognition of its importance in their professional development (John & Sosibo, 2019).

Tjirumbi (2021) further elaborates on these challenges, noting the difficulties novice educators face in selecting appropriate activities that align with their professional growth.

Type 2 activities in the CPTD schedule are school-led initiatives that promote learning within schools. These activities include school-based meetings, workshops, development sessions, support meetings, seminars, mini-conferences, twinning initiatives, networks, and professional learning communities (SACE, 2014). School Management Teams (SMTs) are responsible for encouraging novice educators to participate in these activities as part of their induction into the education system.

However, the reality is that professional development is often less effective than intended. Educators often do not take CPTD seriously due to the absence of direct monetary benefits and a lack of accountability to employers regarding participation in development programmes (Bernadine, 2019). While CPTD has been endorsed by the Department of Education and teachers' unions as a robust system for managing and monitoring teacher development, it faces several challenges. Bernadine (2019) identified the following issues:

1. **Poor planning by SACE:** The CPTD portal's capacity is inadequate, complicating the reporting process for educators. The electronic submission system requires significant upgrades, and many teachers struggle to access or operate the system, often resorting to submitting hard copies, which adds to the administrative burden for SACE.
2. **Lack of or poor ICT skills:** Some educators, particularly those who have been in the profession for many years, are technophobic and reluctant to engage with technologically driven systems. Issues such as lost or forgotten usernames and passwords further complicate access to the CPTD electronic system.
3. **Selective reporting:** Teachers tend to focus on Type 1 activities (teacher-initiated) while neglecting Type 2 (school-initiated) and Type 3 (externally driven by service providers) activities. This indicates a disconnect between CPTD activities and Quality Management System (QMS) activities in schools, which reduces the perceived value of CPTD programmes.
4. **Poor or non-participation:** There is widespread non-participation in CPTD activities due to limited access to information technology and resources, particularly in schools with poor network infrastructure.

5. **Lack of support from school management:** There is a lack of systematic and regular monitoring of teachers' progress in reporting. Poor planning for CPTD activities at the school level, combined with insufficient encouragement from school principals, contributes to low participation rates. The six-year grace period before punitive measures are enforced by SACE further diminishes the urgency to participate.

In response to these challenges, the Department of Basic Education has introduced the New Teacher Induction Programme (NTIP), designed to support novice educators during their first two years of permanent employment (Maje, 2023). The NTIP is a comprehensive programme that introduces new educators to the profession, to available resources, and to the support systems provided by the Department of Basic Education and stakeholders (Maje, 2023). The programme, currently in its pilot phase, consists of seven modules aligned with the Professional Teaching Standards, which are fundamental to maintaining teaching as a profession regulated by SACE (Maje, 2023). These modules cover essential topics, including classroom management, discipline, diversity management, inclusive teaching, and work-life balance. The induction process is grounded in four pillars: mentoring, training, professional development, and peer support (Maje, 2023). Feedback from participants indicates that the NTIP is valuable, particularly in addressing practical challenges faced by novice educators, including classroom management and balancing professional and personal responsibilities (Maje, 2023).

2.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

For the purpose of this study Professional socialisation theory was selected to explain how novice educators learn to become better educators within the society. Novice educators are paired with experienced educators to receive instructions and also acquire knowledge to satisfy professional expectations such as subject competence and professional relationship and collaboration.

Asiye, 2020 indicates that socialisation is a process through which someone learns to become a member of society. Individuals learn how to perform their social roles, internalizing the norms and values of the community via socialization. Professional socialization is a type of adult socialisation. It is a process through which newcomers internalize the norms, attitudes, and values of a profession. They receive instructions, and they learn the knowledge and skills necessary to satisfy professional expectations they are supposed to meet.

Thus, they can adjust to the new circumstances and new roles of the profession. Individuals gain a professional identification and feel a commitment to a professional role during the process. In some way, the interpretation of newcomers, the agents of the profession, and the organization produce this.

Novice educators participate in the community of educators, and they learn how to be a member through the socialization process. They learn new skills, such as how to teach, and internalize new values, such as believing there will be cooperation among colleagues. They learn regulations and organizational contexts, while they develop a style of teaching. As a consequence, they construct a professional identity by internalizing values and norms of the profession and redefining it. This sometimes happens regardless of the school in their professional socialization process. Despite the many challenges inherent in the profession, novice educators are expected to be socialized while performing their duties. Thus, new teachers try to develop an identity and survive in the job through interaction and communication with other teachers (Asiye, 2020).

2.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the primary challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in facilitating the induction of novice educators in South Africa. An analysis of SMT members' experiences and perceptions highlights the urgent need for comprehensive induction programmes that can effectively support early-career teachers. The absence of a formalised induction policy, the limited allocation of time, and insufficient support from the Department of Education have emerged as critical barriers. These shortcomings constrain the capacity of SMTs to provide meaningful guidance, thereby impeding the professional growth and retention of novice educators. Research demonstrates that inadequate induction is associated with several adverse outcomes, including diminished self-efficacy, job dissatisfaction, and strained collegial relationships.

In the absence of structured guidance and sustained support, novice educators may struggle to adapt to the demands of the profession.

This not only undermines their development but also increases the workload of SMTs, who are often required to intervene in addressing performance-related concerns. Existing initiatives, such as the South African Council for Educators (SACE), the Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) system, and Professional Learning

Communities (PLCs), provide valuable opportunities for professional growth. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these initiatives can only be fully realised through the collective engagement of all stakeholders. A coordinated and collaborative approach to the design and implementation of induction programmes is therefore imperative. Such an approach would foster a supportive and enabling environment for novice educators, thereby strengthening teacher professionalism and contributing to a more resilient and sustainable education system.

2.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed scholarly literature on teacher induction and the role of School Management Teams (SMTs) in the South African context. The review highlighted the significance of structured induction programmes in supporting novice educators, enhancing professional growth, and improving teacher retention. International perspectives demonstrated that effective induction is characterised by comprehensive mentoring, collaboration, and policy alignment. However, the South African context reveals gaps between policy expectations and practical implementation, with SMTs often constrained by insufficient resources, limited time, and a lack of formalised support frameworks. The literature further illustrated that induction is not merely a technical process but a professional and emotional transition that requires continuous support. Challenges such as curriculum reforms, inadequate training, and insufficient departmental backing emerged as recurring themes. Studies also emphasised the importance of leadership, policy coherence, and collaborative practices in strengthening induction processes. Overall, the review established that while SMTs are positioned as pivotal actors in supporting novice teachers, systemic shortcomings hinder their effectiveness.

The chapter concluded that addressing these gaps requires coordinated strategies, stronger departmental involvement, and the development of formalised, contextually relevant induction programmes. This critical synthesis laid the foundation for the subsequent empirical investigation into SMTs' lived experiences of implementing induction in South African schools

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter (Chapter Two) presented a comprehensive review of the literature on the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in inducting novice educators. It emphasised the importance of structured induction, the persistent gaps between policy and practice, and the systemic barriers that hinder SMTs from effectively supporting new teachers (Kearney, 2021; Shanks, 2022). Building upon these insights, the present chapter (Chapter Three) outlines the research methodology adopted for the empirical phase of the study. Its purpose is to provide a transparent account of the research design and processes followed, ensuring the credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the findings (Nowell et al., 2021). This chapter begins by discussing the research paradigm that guided the study. A **qualitative paradigm** was selected, as it is best suited for exploring human experiences, perceptions, and meanings (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). In the context of this research, the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of SMT members and novice educators within their school environments. Unlike quantitative research, which prioritises measurement and statistical analysis, qualitative inquiry allows for the generation of rich, descriptive data that capture the complexity of social realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2020). Aligned with the chosen paradigm, the study adopted a **qualitative case study design**, which provided a structured framework for investigating the phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2022). The case study approach was particularly appropriate because the challenges encountered by SMTs and novice educators are deeply embedded within the social, cultural, and institutional contexts of schools. By focusing on selected school cases, the researcher was able to produce a holistic portrayal of the induction process while acknowledging the uniqueness of each setting (Stake, 2020).

The chapter then explains the **population and sampling procedures**. The population consisted of members of SMTs and novice educators in public schools.

From this population, participants were purposively sampled to ensure the inclusion of individuals with direct experience of induction practices (Palinkas et al., 2021). Purposive sampling is especially valuable in qualitative research as it enables the selection of information-rich cases relevant to the research objectives. Accordingly, the sample included principals, departmental heads, and novice educators, offering multiple perspectives on induction challenges within schools. Following this, the chapter describes the **data collection methods**. Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection instrument, allowing participants to express their views and experiences freely while enabling the researcher to probe emerging issues (Braun & Clarke, 2022). To complement the interviews, document analysis was conducted, including the review of school policy documents, induction manuals, and institutional records. This triangulation of methods enhanced the **credibility** and **trustworthiness** of the study by facilitating cross-validation of information obtained from diverse sources (Fusch et al., 2021). The **data analysis process** is also presented. Thematic analysis was employed to systematically identify, code, and interpret recurring patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The process involved familiarisation with the data, coding, categorisation, and theme development. The use of thematic analysis ensured that findings remained grounded in participants' narratives while directly addressing the study's research objectives (Castleberry & Nolen, 2022).

Finally, the chapter addresses **ethical considerations**. Ethical clearance was obtained prior to data collection, and participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage. Informed consent was secured through signed consent forms, and measures were taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (BERA, 2021). Throughout the research process, the researcher adhered strictly to ethical guidelines to uphold respect, integrity, and accountability in all interactions. In conclusion, this chapter provides a detailed account of the methodological framework underpinning the study.

It outlines the philosophical orientation, research design, sampling strategy, data collection techniques, analytical approach, and ethical safeguards.

These methodological choices were deliberately aligned with the study's aim of exploring the challenges faced by SMTs in inducting novice educators, thereby establishing a solid foundation for the presentation and analysis of findings in Chapter Four.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm refers to the overarching framework or worldview that guides how researchers conceptualise, conduct, and interpret their inquiries. It encompasses the fundamental assumptions, beliefs, and methodological orientations that inform the research process (Kivunja, 2021). In essence, a paradigm functions as the lens through which reality is perceived and interpreted, providing a coherent foundation for selecting research designs, data collection methods, and analytical strategies (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Understanding the paradigm underpinning a study is therefore critical, as it shapes every stage of research from defining the problem and formulating questions to interpreting and presenting findings (Mertens, 2020). According to Khatri (2020), a research paradigm determines not only the methodological strategies employed by a researcher but also influences how evidence is generated, understood, and validated. It establishes the philosophical stance of a study, encompassing assumptions about the nature of reality (**ontology**), the nature and sources of knowledge (**epistemology**), and the values guiding inquiry (**axiology**) (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2021). For instance, researchers working within a **positivist paradigm** tend to focus on measurable, observable phenomena and employ quantitative methods, while those adopting an **interpretivist paradigm** emphasise meaning making and utilise qualitative approaches to explore lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2023; Alase, 2021).

The term *paradigm* has a rich and contested history. Deriving from the Greek word *paradeiknynai*, meaning “to show side by side,” it was initially used to signify “examples” or “patterns” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023). Over time, its meaning has evolved, leading to scholarly debates about what constitutes a paradigm in academic research.

Some interpret it as a typical or representative model, whereas others regard it as an exemplary framework that embodies ideal scientific or philosophical practice (Morgan, 2022).

The contemporary understanding of the term in research is largely attributed to Thomas Kuhn, whose seminal work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970) transformed how scientific progress is perceived. Kuhn argued that scientific advancement occurs not through gradual accumulation but via *paradigm shifts*, that is radical transformations in the prevailing worldview of a scientific community (Bird, 2021).

According to Kuhn, a paradigm provides a shared set of beliefs, values, and exemplars that define what constitutes legitimate inquiry within a discipline. Kuhn's conceptualisation profoundly influenced the social sciences, including educational research, by illustrating that research is not value-free but situated within interpretive frameworks (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2021). For example, within a **constructivist paradigm**, researchers recognise that knowledge is co-constructed through interactions between the researcher and participants, while within a **positivist paradigm**, knowledge is assumed to exist independently of human perception and can be objectively measured (Mertens, 2020). These distinctions are crucial, as they directly shape the choice of research design, data collection tools, and analytical procedures (Chafe, 2024). Beyond Kuhn's foundational work, contemporary scholars continue to emphasise the central role of paradigms in structuring research. Paradigms function as *intellectual roadmaps* that help researchers determine what constitutes valid knowledge, identify suitable methods for generating it, and interpret findings within coherent philosophical boundaries (Kivunja, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Without a clearly articulated paradigm, research risks inconsistency and conceptual misalignment, as methodological decisions may conflict with underlying philosophical assumptions (Chafe, 2024).

In educational research, paradigms play a particularly vital role due to the field's engagement with complex social, cultural, and political realities. For instance, an interpretivist paradigm is often employed to explore educators' and learners' subjective experiences, whereas a critical paradigm is used to examine issues of power, inequality,

and transformation within educational contexts (Cohen et al., 2021; Lincoln et al., 2021). Recognising and explicitly articulating the research paradigm guiding a study ensures both methodological coherence and intellectual transparency.

A paradigm is not merely a technical component but a philosophical foundation that informs the entire research process from the framing of questions to the interpretation of results (Chafe, 2024). Rooted in its etymological meaning of “pattern” and redefined by Kuhn’s influential framework, the concept of paradigm continues to underpin rigorous scholarly inquiry across disciplines. By clearly defining their paradigmatic stance, researchers situate their studies within broader theoretical traditions, justify their methodological choices, and enhance the coherence and credibility of their research (Kivunja, 2021; Creswell & Poth, 2023).

3.3 INTERPRETIVIST RESEARCH PARADIGM.

This study was located within the interpretivist paradigm, which is grounded in the assumption that reality is subjective, multiple, and socially constructed (Creswell & Poth, 2023; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2021). Within this worldview, truth is understood as being shaped by individual perceptions and social interactions rather than existing as an objective, universal entity. Accordingly, the researcher sought to understand reality through the lived experiences of School Management Team (SMT) members and novice educators, acknowledging that these experiences vary across individuals and contexts (Kivunja, 2021). This approach recognises that meaning is co-constructed between the researcher and participants, making interpretivist highly suitable for studies concerned with human experiences and meaning-making processes (Nickerson, 2024). The interpretivist stance enabled the collection, review, and analysis of data in ways that foregrounded participants’ perspectives and lived realities rather than reducing them to numerical representations (Chafe, 2024). The **rationale** for using this paradigm lies in its ability to integrate human subjectivity into research and to explore how individuals construct meaning within their unique social contexts (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2021).

According to Nickerson (2024), interpretivism allows researchers to examine the beliefs, motivations, and reasoning processes that underpin individuals’ actions within social

settings. This interpretive process is vital for decoding the meanings embedded in data derived from human contexts, where experiences are dynamic, multifaceted, and contextually grounded.

By applying this paradigm, the researcher was able to uncover the beliefs and perspectives of SMT members regarding the challenges of inducting novice educators and to explore how novice educators perceived and experienced induction within their professional environments. Data collection in this study was conducted primarily through face-to-face interviews and observations, methods particularly compatible with interpretivist inquiry because they promote authentic engagement and the co-construction of meaning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2022). These techniques enabled participants to articulate their experiences in their own words, providing insights into both the successes and shortcomings of induction practices. For example, interviews with educators in Case Study School 1 (CS1) allowed the researcher to capture the nuanced experiences of both SMT members and novice teachers, thereby identifying practical and systemic challenges within the induction process.

Interpretivism supports research that relies on direct interaction between the researcher and participants and assumes that human behaviours and experiences are context-dependent rather than universal (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This orientation was particularly relevant to the present study because SMTs' challenges in implementing effective induction programmes cannot be divorced from the socio-cultural and institutional realities of their schools. Through direct engagement, the researcher was able to build rapport, clarify meanings, and ensure that interpretations authentically represented participants' perspectives (Nowell et al., 2021). Furthermore, interpretivism is founded on the belief that individuals' perceptions, ideas, and interpretations of reality are central to understanding social phenomena. These perceptions can only be meaningfully explored through an inquiry into the cultural and social contexts that shape them (Burns et al., 2022). Consequently, methods that aim for objectivity and generalisability, as in the natural sciences, are less applicable to social research. Instead, interpretivist inquiry embraces the idea that individuals act upon their interpretations of the world, making context an essential aspect of analysis (Mertens, 2020).

Interpretivists adopt a relativist ontology, which posits that events can be understood through multiple, equally valid interpretations rather than through a single objective truth (Ling, 2025).

This ontological stance enables researchers to explore phenomena in their full complexity and depth, revealing diverse meanings and perspectives. As Creswell and Poth (2023) explain, interpretivism encourages researchers to examine not only *what* has occurred but also *how* and *why* it has occurred within specific contexts. Similarly, Pervin and Mokhtar (2022) argue that interpretivist inquiry allows for a deeper appreciation of both the processes and environments in which social actions unfold. In applying this paradigm, the present study explored the complex dynamics surrounding the induction of novice educators and the embedded challenges faced by SMTs in supporting them.

The interpretivist framework provided an appropriate philosophical and methodological foundation, facilitating an in-depth investigation of subjective experiences and co-constructed meanings. By embracing interpretivist assumptions of subjectivity, relativism, and contextuality, the study generated nuanced insights into how SMTs and novice educators experience, interpret, and negotiate induction processes within secondary schools.

3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

The concept of a research paradigm is central to scholarly inquiry, as it establishes the philosophical and methodological foundation that guides researchers in designing and executing their studies. A paradigm represents a set of interconnected beliefs, assumptions, and values that influence how knowledge is constructed, interpreted, and validated (Chafe, 2024; Pretorius, 2024). Understanding research paradigms is therefore critical, as they shape the development of research questions, the choice of methodologies, the interpretation of data, and the overall credibility of the findings (Younas et al., 2023). Awareness of paradigmatic orientations allows researchers to recognise the philosophical assumptions underpinning their work, including those related to ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), and axiology (the role of values in research) (Luft et al., 2022). By acknowledging these assumptions,

researchers can make informed methodological choices that ensure internal coherence and intellectual rigour throughout the study (Varpi et al., 2020).

For instance, within a positivist paradigm, researchers seek objective measurement and generalizable findings, whereas interpretivist paradigms emphasise subjective understanding, meaning-making, and contextually grounded interpretations (Nickerson, 2024; Ide & Beddoe, 2023).

Different academic disciplines tend to align with distinct paradigms, depending on their research objectives and epistemological traditions. Natural sciences, for example, typically adopt positivist or realist paradigms, focusing on empirical verification and replicability. Conversely, the social sciences often utilise interpretivist, constructivist, or critical paradigms to examine social dynamics, power relations, and human experiences in depth (Varpi et al., 2020; Yong et al., 2021).

Recognising these distinctions minimises methodological bias and ensures that researchers employ tools and strategies consistent with their epistemological stance. Yong et al. (2021) argue that familiarity with multiple paradigms helps researchers avoid mismatched methodologies and supports the development of valid and reliable research instruments. Similarly, Pretorius (2024) contends that articulating the paradigm guiding a study enhances transparency and strengthens its trustworthiness. When researchers explicitly state their paradigmatic stance, they enable readers to interpret findings within the appropriate philosophical and conceptual framework (Younas et al., 2023; Chafe, 2024). This openness promotes interpretive accuracy and facilitates meaningful comparison between studies that share similar or divergent paradigmatic orientations.

Another essential dimension of understanding research paradigms is cultivating reflexivity. Reflexivity requires researchers to critically evaluate their positionality, biases, and assumptions and to consider how these influence data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Ide & Beddoe, 2023). Engaging in reflexive practice enhances transparency, fosters intellectual honesty, and contributes to the credibility of qualitative and mixed-methods research (Nickerson, 2024). Moreover, reflexivity encourages

methodological pluralism, allowing for diverse perspectives that enrich scholarly debate and promote innovation in research design (Chafe, 2024).

A clear grasp of paradigms also facilitates methodological alignment. When researchers understand the philosophical basis of their work, they can ensure that their research questions, data collection techniques, and analytical strategies are consistent within their overarching paradigm (Luft et al., 2022). This coherence minimises contradictions and enhances the validity and interpretability of findings. For example, a study grounded in critical theory might use participatory and emancipatory methods to expose inequalities and promote social justice (Ide & Beddoe, 2023), while a realist study would focus on identifying causal mechanisms within observable phenomena (Varpi et al., 2020).

In conclusion, an understanding of research paradigms is indispensable to rigorous inquiry. Paradigms provide a philosophical and methodological compass, guiding every stage of the research process from conceptualisation to interpretation.

They ensure methodological coherence, enhance trustworthiness, promote reflexivity, and mitigate bias in decision-making.

By situating their work within a clearly articulated paradigm, researchers not only produce credible and contextually meaningful findings but also contribute to the advancement of reflective and ethically grounded scholarship (Chafe, 2024; Pretorius, 2024).

3.5 RESEARCH APPROACH

3.5.1 Qualitative Approach

The qualitative research approach was adopted in this study because of its effectiveness in exploring human experiences, perceptions, and behaviours within their natural contexts. Unlike quantitative methods, which emphasise measurement and generalisation, qualitative research prioritises depth, meaning, and contextual understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Flick, 2022). This approach was particularly suitable for the current study, which sought to examine the experiences and challenges faced by novice educators and School Management Team (SMT) members in implementing induction programmes in South African secondary schools. A qualitative

approach enables researchers to investigate complex social phenomena through the perspectives of participants, thereby generating rich, detailed, and nuanced insights (Denzin & Lincoln, 2020). Rooted in the interpretivist paradigm, qualitative inquiry assumes that reality is socially constructed and best understood through the meanings individuals ascribe to their experiences (Salmons, 2022). In this study, it allowed the researcher to explore how SMT members and novice educators interpret and make sense of the induction process, as well as the contextual factors influencing its effectiveness.

One of the key strengths of qualitative research is its flexibility and responsiveness to participants' narratives. It allows the researcher to adapt questions based on emerging themes, engage with participants' perspectives empathetically, and probe deeper into sensitive issues (Tracy, 2020). This adaptability was crucial for uncovering the complex interpersonal and institutional dynamics surrounding teacher induction.

Furthermore, qualitative research empowers participants' voices, offering them the opportunity to express their thoughts, emotions, and reflections in their own words (Ide & Beddoe, 2023). Such participant-centred engagement enriches understanding and ensures that findings authentically represent participants' lived realities. Qualitative inquiry is also characterised by its naturalistic orientation, as it seeks to understand phenomena in real-world settings rather than under experimental conditions (Silverman, 2021). The present study employed methods such as semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis to collect first-hand data from SMT members and novice educators. These methods enabled an in-depth exploration of both the personal and organisational dimensions of induction practices. The data collection process prioritised interaction and meaning-making, allowing the researcher to capture the diversity of experiences across different school contexts (Nickerson, 2024).

The analytical process in qualitative research typically involves identifying themes, patterns, and relationships that emerge from participants' narratives (Nowell et al., 2021). In this study, interpretive thematic analysis was employed to synthesise data, ensuring that the resulting themes reflected participants' authentic experiences. This method is particularly effective for studies seeking to explore under-researched areas, as it allows

new insights and theoretical understandings to emerge inductively from the data (Chafe, 2024). Qualitative research is inherently exploratory, focusing on understanding phenomena rather than predicting outcomes or generalising findings to wider populations (Luft et al., 2022). It emphasises the significance of context, recognising that social realities are dynamic and influenced by cultural, institutional, and interpersonal factors (Younas et al., 2023). For this reason, it was ideal for investigating teacher induction processes, which are shaped by contextual variables such as school leadership, organisational culture, and resource availability.

In summary, the qualitative approach provided both the philosophical and methodological foundation for this study. Grounded in interpretivism, it enabled the researcher to explore the socially constructed realities of SMT members and novice educators in depth.

By capturing participants' perspectives through context-sensitive and flexible inquiry, the study generated meaningful insights into the successes and challenges of teacher induction in secondary schools. The qualitative approach thus ensured that the research remained credible, contextually relevant, and aligned with its interpretivist philosophical underpinnings.

3.5.2 The Value and Significance of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research remains indispensable for exploring and understanding complex social phenomena that cannot be adequately addressed through numerical data alone. Human behaviour, beliefs, and interactions are influenced by multifaceted social, cultural, and institutional dynamics, which quantitative approaches often fail to capture (Creswell & Poth, 2023; Saunders et al., 2024). By employing qualitative methods, researchers can uncover the subtleties and interconnections inherent in human experiences, thereby producing a holistic and contextually grounded understanding of social realities (Tracy, 2020). According to Lim et al. (2023), neglecting qualitative inquiry risks oversimplifying intricate social realities, leading to incomplete or distorted interpretations. Qualitative research thus plays a crucial role in generating rich, contextualised insights that foreground participants' perspectives and lived experiences (Nowell et al., 2022). Methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant

observations allow individuals to articulate their interpretations of the world, contributing to a more nuanced and empathetic understanding of social issues (Maguire & Delahunt, 2021). This human-centred approach provides depth and texture to social inquiry, enabling researchers to develop culturally relevant theories and inform policy and practice.

Furthermore, qualitative research bridges the gap between academic knowledge and real-world challenges. By situating investigations within natural social settings, it ensures that the knowledge produced reflects authentic community experiences and remains relevant to practitioners and policymakers (Silverman, 2022). This grounding enhances the practical applicability of findings, supporting evidence-based decision-making that addresses societal concerns effectively. In an era marked by rapid social change, qualitative research demonstrates exceptional flexibility and responsiveness.

As societies evolve under political, economic, technological, and environmental pressures, qualitative approaches allow scholars to capture emerging patterns and respond to transformations in real time (Flick, 2023). Lim (2024) emphasises that this methodological adaptability enables researchers to engage with dynamic social contexts and contribute meaningfully to current debates and interventions.

In summary, qualitative research provides a powerful framework for interpreting complex human realities. Its emphasis on depth, context, and participant voice ensures that findings are both theoretically sound and practically meaningful. Through its capacity to capture evolving social processes and generate actionable insights, qualitative research continues to be a cornerstone of contemporary social inquiry.

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the comprehensive plan that guides the process of conducting a study, ensuring that each stage from data collection to analysis is systematically aligned with the research objectives. It functions as a blueprint that directs methodological choices and analytical procedures, thereby enhancing the reliability, validity, and overall coherence of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2023; Saunders et al., 2024).

According to Hassan (2024), research design is fundamental because it structures the entire research process, ensuring that data gathering, interpretation, and evaluation remain consistent with the study's aims and questions. Similarly, Khanday (2023) defines research design as a framework that integrates the various components of research in a logical and systematic manner, promoting methodological rigour and ensuring that outcomes are both meaningful and defensible. A well-conceived research design operationalises the research questions, clarifies the procedures for data collection, and outlines appropriate analytical strategies (Clarke & Braun, 2021). It enables researchers to anticipate potential challenges, maintain consistency in implementation, and establish the credibility of findings through transparent and replicable processes (Cohen et al., 2021). In qualitative research, the design is intimately linked to the underlying philosophical and theoretical orientations of the study, particularly those that prioritise understanding human experiences, meanings, and interactions within their social contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2023).

Unlike quantitative designs that focus on measurement, generalisation, and statistical relationships, qualitative research designs emphasise depth, context, and interpretive understanding (Flick, 2023). They enable researchers to capture the richness and complexity of participants' lived experiences, offering nuanced insights into social phenomena (Tracy, 2020). Common qualitative designs include grounded theory, ethnography, phenomenology, action research, case study, and narrative inquiry, each contributing unique analytical perspectives and methodological tools (Nowell et al., 2022; Silverman, 2022). Grounded theory aims to generate theoretical insights directly from data through an iterative process of coding and analysis (Charmaz, 2022). Ethnography focuses on understanding cultural patterns and social interactions within communities, while action research integrates collaboration and reflexivity to address practical problems and facilitate change (Reason & Bradbury, 2021). Phenomenological research examines the essence of lived experiences, shedding light on how individuals perceive their worlds (Moustakas, 2021). Case study research provides a detailed examination of a bounded context such as a school, institution, or social group allowing the researcher to analyse complex dynamics within real-life settings (Yin, 2023).

Narrative research, in contrast, investigates personal stories and life histories to uncover how individuals construct meaning and identity (Riessman, 2020).

Although these methodologies differ in focus and procedure, they share a common commitment to capturing authentic human experiences and allowing participants' voices to shape the findings (Nowell et al., 2022). The flexibility inherent in qualitative designs enables adaptation to evolving contexts and emergent themes, making them particularly valuable in educational research where institutional, cultural, and social factors influence participant experiences (Cohen et al., 2021; Flick, 2023). In summary, research design constitutes the structural foundation of any study. It provides a coherent strategy that connects philosophical assumptions, methodological choices, and analytical procedures. In qualitative inquiry, an appropriate research design facilitates an in-depth exploration of subjective experiences and contextual realities, thereby producing findings that are both theoretically robust and practically relevant.

By thoughtfully selecting and articulating a suitable design, researchers strengthen the credibility, depth, and applicability of their work in addressing complex educational and social phenomena.

3.6.1 NARRATIVE RESEARCH

In the study of School Management Teams' (SMT) challenges in inducting novice educators, employing a narrative research design provides an appropriate framework for exploring the personal experiences, perceptions, and lived realities of both SMT members and new teachers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2021; Riessman, 2020). Narrative research focuses on collecting and analysing stories to understand how individuals construct meaning from their experiences within specific social and institutional contexts (Spector-Mersel, 2021). By foregrounding personal accounts, this design enables the researcher to capture the emotions, complexities, and nuanced interpretations embedded in the induction process, offering depth of insight not achievable through quantitative methods (Elo et al., 2022). Many schools continue to lack structured induction programmes for novice educators. In the absence of formal systems, induction processes often become fragmented and inconsistent, leaving new teachers without adequate support during a

critical phase of their professional development (Davidovitch, 2024; Canip, 2020). Without clear guidance regarding expectations, policies, and school culture, novice educators frequently encounter uncertainty and confusion (Shanks, 2022).

A narrative design enables the detailed documentation of these experiences, providing insight into how the absence of structured induction impacts professional integration, classroom performance, and teacher confidence (Artman, 2022).

SMT members often face heavy workloads that limit their ability to effectively mentor and support novice teachers. Administrative responsibilities, staff supervision, curriculum oversight, and performance monitoring create competing demands on their time, constraining meaningful engagement with new educators (Kearney & Klinge, 2019; Stemberger, 2020). Narrative methods facilitate the examination of how SMT members address these challenges and employ strategies to balance institutional responsibilities with mentorship obligations (Nickerson, 2024).

Resource constraints in schools further complicate induction efforts. Limited budgets restrict access to professional development opportunities, mentoring programmes, and teaching materials designed to support novice educators (Heikkinen, 2020; Gates, 2020).

Collecting narratives from both SMT members and new teachers highlights the impact of these constraints on the quality and effectiveness of induction practices, providing evidence for targeted improvements (Davidovitch, 2024).

Inducting new teachers requires striking a balance between support and accountability. SMT members must provide constructive feedback while simultaneously meeting performance metrics and institutional quality standards. If the focus is disproportionately on outcomes, novice educators may experience stress, anxiety, or self-doubt (Steiner, 2021; Lim, 2024). Narrative accounts reveal the emotional and psychological dimensions of this balancing act, showing how both SMT members and novice teachers perceive and respond to these pressures. The availability and quality of mentorship also influence induction outcomes.

Experienced educators play a pivotal role in guiding novices; however, mentoring structures are often insufficiently developed, resulting in variability in the quality of support (Davidovitch, 2024; Artman, 2022). Narrative design allows these experiences to be documented, highlighting successes, challenges, and areas for programme improvement.

Adapting to the unique culture and expectations of individual schools presents additional challenges for novice educators. SMTs are tasked with introducing new teachers to school values, routines, and social norms (Canip, 2020; Shanks, 2022). If cultural induction is neglected, novice educators may feel isolated, which can impede their professional growth. First-hand narratives from new teachers provide insight into these experiences, demonstrating the importance of proactive engagement by SMT members (Nickerson, 2024). Finally, narrative research captures the emotional and psychological experiences of both novice educators and SMT members. Stories from new teachers illuminate experiences of stress, self-doubt, and classroom-related anxiety, while SMT narratives reveal contextual pressures, resource limitations, and institutional challenges (Steiner, 2021; Lim, 2023).

By combining these perspectives, narrative research offers a holistic understanding of induction practices, uncovering not only procedural aspects but also the human experiences that underpin effective mentorship and professional development.

In summary, employing a narrative design in this study facilitates the collection of rich, detailed accounts that illuminate the complexities of teacher induction. It captures the subjective experiences of novice educators while examining the contextual and institutional challenges faced by SMT members, providing insights into emotional, psychological, and organisational dimensions. By prioritising lived experience, narrative research fosters empathy, deepens understanding, and identifies strategies for enhancing the effectiveness and supportiveness of induction programmes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2021; Riessman, 2020; Elo et al., 2022).

3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Selecting an appropriate **data collection instrument** is a critical step in qualitative research, particularly for novice researchers. The choice of method directly influences the depth, richness, and credibility of the data collected, thereby affecting the trustworthiness and validity of the study's findings (Lim, 2023; Adosi, 2023). Adosi (2023) notes that methods such as documentary analysis may present challenges, including incomplete documentation and potential biases inherent in existing records, which can limit the reliability of insights. These limitations emphasise the importance of employing multiple complementary methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. In this study, a triangulated approach was adopted, combining semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Each method was selected to complement the others, capturing multiple perspectives on the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in inducting novice educators (Elo et al., 2022). The semi-structured interview was the primary tool due to its flexibility, capacity for deep exploration, and ability to generate rich, contextually grounded narratives (Alhabsyi et al., 2022).

3.7.1 INTERVIEW

Interviews are a widely recognised qualitative research method that allows researchers to engage directly with participants to explore their perspectives, experiences, and insights regarding specific phenomena, programmes, or situations (George, 2023; Lim, 2024). In this study, interviews were used to examine the perspectives of School Management Teams (SMTs) and novice educators concerning the induction of new teachers, focusing on their impact on professional integration and development. This method is particularly suitable for capturing personal narratives, subtle practices, and hidden sentiments that other data collection methods may not reveal (Shanks, 2022; Elo et al., 2022). The researcher conducted individual interviews with selected participants, including four principals, four departmental heads and four novice educators. Participants were purposively sampled to ensure inclusion of individuals with direct experience and knowledge relevant to the research problem. Purposive selection enabled the researcher

to gain in-depth insights into the challenges, strategies, and experiences associated with teacher induction in the schools under study (Adosi, 2023; Riessman, 2020).

Individual interviews were chosen over group methods to provide a more intimate environment that reduces social desirability bias, peer influence, or group dynamics that could affect responses (Lim, 2023; Magaldi & Berler, 2020). Each participant received a similar set of pre-arranged questions to maintain consistency while allowing flexibility to probe emerging themes.

Questions for novice educators focused on their lived experiences during induction, whereas questions for SMT members explored processes, challenges, and strategies employed to support new teachers (Alhabsyi et al., 2022). Given the post-COVID-19 context, interviews were conducted electronically, primarily via email, allowing participants to respond at their convenience while maintaining a detailed record of responses. In-person interviews were also conducted under precautionary measures, such as mask-wearing and hygiene practices, to safeguard participants' well-being (Heikkinen, 2020; Lim, 2024).

All interviews were recorded electronically, ensuring accurate transcription, thorough analysis, and preservation of participants' voices, including the nuances of tone, emphasis, and pauses (Elo et al., 2022; Shanks, 2022). Semi-structured interviews provided a balance between structure and adaptability, enabling the researcher to focus on key topics while exploring emergent themes and issues (Riessman, 2020; Davidovitch, 2024). In sum, individual semi-structured interviews allowed the collection of rich, contextually grounded, and nuanced data.

The combination of purposive sampling, electronic and in-person interviews, and recording tools facilitated the collection of comprehensive insights from both novice educators and SMT members, aligning with the study's objectives to explore the challenges, strategies, and experiences of teacher induction in the participating schools (Nickerson, 2024; Lim, 2023).

3.7.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are widely employed in qualitative research to explore experiences, perceptions, and personal narratives within social and organisational contexts (Magaldi & Berler, 2020; Lim, 2024). Defined as an exploratory method guided by a flexible interview framework, semi-structured interviews allow researchers to focus on key topics while adapting to participants' responses, facilitating the emergence of unanticipated insights (Alhabsyi et al., 2022). This method is particularly effective for capturing the **lived experiences** of individuals or groups.

Unlike structured interviews, which rely on pre-determined questions, semi-structured interviews provide an open environment that encourages participants to share their perspectives freely. The flexibility of this approach enables the interviewer to introduce additional questions based on participants' responses, fostering an adaptive and responsive research process (Riessman, 2020; Shanks, 2022).

Semi-structured interviews are typically guided by an **interview guide**, a flexible framework outlining key topics, questions, and potential probes. This guide helps maintain focus on relevant themes while allowing variation in phrasing and sequencing, enabling researchers to tailor interactions to each participant and context. This balance between structure and adaptability ensures that all relevant issues are explored while preserving participants' autonomy to express unique experiences (Davidovitch, 2024). Key characteristics of semi-structured interviews include their conversational style, interactive nature, and flexibility in delivery mode. Interviews may be conducted one-on-one, in small groups, or via digital platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, or Microsoft Teams (Heikkinen, 2020; Lim, 2024). This informal style encourages open dialogue, creating a "conversation with a purpose" that allows participants to elaborate on experiences and perspectives within the thematic structure of the study.

Semi-structured interviews may also adopt **thematic, biographical, or narrative forms**. Thematic interviews focus on specific topics or issues, allowing participants to provide detailed insights without a strict sequence of questions. Biographical or narrative approaches enable participants to recount experiences in their own words, often revealing

emergent themes and nuanced understandings of the phenomena under investigation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2021; Spector-Mersel, 2021). The adaptive structure of these interviews allows the exploration of unforeseen issues, enriching the dataset and producing a deeper understanding of the research problem. Finally, semi-structured interviews recognise that knowledge is **situated and contextual**. Researchers co-construct meaning with participants, highlighting the social and institutional contexts that shape experiences. This approach aligns with the interpretivist paradigm, which underpins the present study, emphasising the co-creation of knowledge through interactive and reflective dialogue (Nickerson, 2024; Lim, 2023).

Table 3.7.2 Mapping of Research Questions to Data Collection Methods.

Research Question	Data Collection Method
RQ1	Interview Schedule (Principal & DH)
RQ2	Interview Schedule (NT)
RQ3	Document Analysis

The following semi-structured interview questions were used to gain an understanding of the challenges encountered during the induction process.

Table 3.7.3 Semi-structured interview questions

Novice	Departmental heads	Principals
1. What role does the SMT play in the induction of novice educators?	1. What is the role of SMT in the induction of novice educators?	1. What is the role of SMT in the induction of novice educators?

2. What is your perspective and experience in the induction process?	2. What is your perspective and experience in the induction of novice educators?	2. What is your perspective and experience in the induction of novice educators?
3. What challenges did you encounter during the induction process?	3. What challenges did you encounter during the induction of novice educators?	3. What challenges did you encounter during the induction of novice educators?
4. How did you navigate through those challenges?	4. How did you navigate through those challenges?	4. How did you navigate through those challenges?
5. How do SMTs ensure that you're inducted?	5. How do you ensure that novice educators are inducted into your department?	5. How do you ensure that novice educators are inducted in your department?
6. Which strategies do you use to ensure an effective induction process?	6. Which strategies do you use to ensure an effective induction process in your department?	6. Which strategies do you use to ensure an effective induction process in your department?
7. How does insufficient induction affect your work?	7. Do you find it difficult to deal with novice educators in your department?	7. Do you find it difficult to deal with novice educators in your school?
8. What are the discrepancies for the effective implementation of induction programmes	8. What impact does the insufficient induction of novice educators have on the effective management of your department?	8. What impact does the insufficient induction of novice educators have on the effective management of your department?

	9. What are the discrepancies for the effective implementation of induction programmes?	9. What are the discrepancies for the effective implementation of induction programmes?
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In conclusion, the semi-structured interview is a versatile and effective method for conducting qualitative research. Its flexibility, depth, and focus on participants' perspectives make it particularly suitable for investigating the challenges faced by SMTs and novice educators during the induction process.

By balancing structure with adaptability, this method facilitates the collection of rich, contextually grounded, and nuanced data, which is essential for understanding complex educational practices and informing potential improvements in teacher induction programmes (Riessman, 2020; Elo et al., 2022).

3.8 Population and Sampling

Defining the population and selecting an appropriate sample are essential steps in qualitative research, as they influence the depth, credibility, and relevance of the data collected (Elo et al., 2022; Lim, 2023). The population in this study comprised novice educators and SMT members in selected secondary schools.

Novice educators were defined as individuals who had recently entered the teaching profession, ensuring that the study captured their perspectives during the early, formative phase of professional development, which often involves adapting to school culture, implementing curriculum, and adjusting to professional expectations (Davidovitch, 2024; Shanks, 2022).

3.8.1 Sampling

The study was conducted in four secondary schools within the Seshego Circuit, Capricorn South District, and Limpopo Province. Schools were purposively selected based on the presence of novice educators and the expertise of SMT members. Purposive sampling is

widely recognised in qualitative research as a method that allows researchers to select information-rich participants and sites that can provide meaningful insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Adosi, 2023; Riessman, 2020).

SMT members selected included principals and departmental heads responsible for managing, mentoring, and supporting novice educators. Including multiple SMT members ensured diverse perspectives on administrative, pedagogical, and professional support dimensions. Novice educators were selected based on their direct involvement in induction programmes and first-hand experiences with the SMT support structures (Lim, 2024; Nickerson, 2024). The study also considered contextual and demographic characteristics of schools, including size, staffing, and administrative structures, to capture variations in induction practices. Selecting schools with diverse SMT structures and teaching environments facilitated the exploration of contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of induction (Heikkinen, 2020; Davidovitch, 2024). Purposive sampling, aligned with the interpretivist paradigm of this study, prioritised information-rich cases over statistical generalisation, focusing on participants able to provide relevant, in-depth insights into teacher induction practices. The approach enabled triangulation of perspectives between SMT members and novice educators, providing a holistic understanding of induction challenges, strategies, and experiences (Elo et al., 2022; Lim, 2023).

In summary, the population and sampling strategy included novice educators and SMT members with direct experience of the induction process. Purposive sampling ensured participants were selected based on relevance and potential to provide rich, contextually grounded information. Conducting the study in four strategically chosen secondary schools in the Seshego Circuit enabled a comprehensive exploration of teacher induction practices, challenges, and experiences in the Limpopo Province. A total of 12 participants were included; demographic factors, such as age, gender, and race, were not considered (Alhabsyi et al., 2022; George, 2023).

Table 3.1 Participation information

School	Designation	Post level
School 1	Principal	4
	Departmental head	2
	Novice educator	1
School 2	Principal	4
	Departmental head	2
	Novice educator	1
School 3	Principal	4
	Departmental head	2
	Novice educator	1
School 4	Principal	4
	Departmental head	2
	Novice educator	1

3.8.2 Transferability.

In qualitative research, the concept of transferability diverges from the statistical generalisability emphasised in quantitative studies. Transferability pertains to the extent to which research findings can be applied to other contexts, settings, or groups. Unlike generalisation, which relies on statistical inference, transferability involves providing detailed contextual information to enable readers to assess the applicability of findings to different situations (Drisko, 2024; Stalmeijer et al., 2024).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced transferability as a key criterion for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. They emphasised the importance of providing rich, thick descriptions of the research context, participants, and processes to facilitate the transfer of findings to other settings. This approach emphasises the necessity of detailed reporting to allow readers to determine the relevance of the study's findings to their own contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ahmed, 2024). To enhance transferability, researchers should employ purposive sampling strategies that select participants who can provide in-depth insights into the phenomenon under study. Additionally, maintaining comprehensive records of the research process, including data collection methods and analytical procedures, contributes to the transparency and contextual richness necessary for assessing transferability (Stalmeijer et al., 2024).

In this study, the researcher ensured transferability by providing a detailed and transparent account of the research setting, participant characteristics, and research design. The selected participants, including novice educators and departmental heads responsible for induction, were purposively sampled to provide insights that are representative of the experiences and challenges associated with teacher induction within the Seshego Circuit. Detailed descriptions of participant roles, school environments, and the procedures followed during data collection were documented to allow readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings.

The combination of rich, contextualised narrative and clear methodological description enables other researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to determine how the findings might be relevant in comparable schools or educational districts (Drisko, 2024; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability in qualitative research refers to the consistency and reliability of the findings over time and under varying conditions. It is achieved by demonstrating that the research process is logical, traceable, and well-documented, allowing other researchers to understand how the study was conducted and how findings were derived (Stahl, 2020).

To ensure dependability, researchers should employ rigorous data collection techniques, including semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.

Each stage of data collection and analysis should be carefully documented, and interview transcriptions should be thoroughly reviewed for accuracy. Following consistent procedures in scheduling and conducting interviews, as well as in coding and thematic analysis of data, maintains a systematic approach that enhances the trustworthiness of the findings. Maintaining detailed records of methods, timelines, and changes in the research setting supports the dependability of the research outcomes (Stahl, 2020; Ahmed, 2024).

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings of a qualitative study are shaped by the participants and the data, rather than by the researcher's biases, preferences, or preconceptions. It ensures that the study findings are grounded in evidence and can be corroborated by other researchers through transparent procedures (Stahl, 2020). To achieve confirmability, researchers should ensure that their research process and resulting interpretations are traceable and auditable. This transparency allows other researchers to follow the path of analysis and verify how conclusions were drawn from the raw data. Employing techniques such as triangulation, maintaining a reflective journal, and conducting peer debriefing sessions can help identify and mitigate researcher biases, thereby enhancing the confirmability of the study (Stahl, 2020; Ahmed, 2024).

In this study, confirmability was maintained by detailing all methods, procedures, and processes involved in data collection and analysis.

An explicit coding schema was developed, identifying codes, patterns, and themes derived from the data, thereby providing a clear trail from raw data to final findings. Regular checks and re-checks of the data were conducted to verify consistency and accuracy. Transparency in data handling, including storage, transcription, and analysis procedures, ensured that the research process could be followed, evaluated, and, if necessary, replicated by other researchers. Additionally, a data audit was conducted prior to analysis to confirm that the data collected were authentic and accurately reflected participants' perspectives, further supporting the confirmability of the study.

By implementing rigorous practices to ensure transferability, dependability, and confirmability, the researcher strengthened the overall trustworthiness of the study.

These measures provide assurance that the findings are credible, contextually grounded, and relevant for both academic inquiry and practical application in similar educational contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stahl, 2020).

3.8.3 Positionality and Reflexivity.

Positionality describes a researcher's standpoint when conducting research. The researcher's position influences what they choose to investigate, how the research is conducted and the results. Various characteristics including gender, race, personal experience and values and beliefs, shape the researcher's positionality. Reflexivity in research is described as a type of relational awareness of how a researcher influence research participants' perception (Yip, 2023). The researcher's personal experiences as novice educator influenced the decision to employ narrative approach. This approach allowed participants to narrate their own experiences.

3.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics refers to the system of moral principles and standards that guide the design, conduct, and reporting of research involving human participants. According to Zhang (2020), research ethics encompasses the moral obligations that researchers have to protect the dignity, rights, and welfare of participants, particularly when observing and recording aspects of their lives. Ethical considerations in research extend beyond the immediate interaction with participants to encompass broader concerns, such as conflicts of interest, the sponsorship of research projects, and the safety of the researcher (Zhang, 2020). Ethical reflection is critical at every stage of the research process, prompting researchers to consider questions such as: How can the confidentiality of participants be protected? How can power imbalances between the researcher and participants be mitigated? How can potential harm or risk to participants be minimised? In this study, ethical approval was sought from the Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Education, University of South Africa, prior to commencing data collection. Obtaining formal ethical clearance ensured that the research adhered to established ethical standards and procedures, providing protection for participants while maintaining the integrity of the study.

3.9.1 Informed Consent and Voluntary Participation

Informed consent is a fundamental principle of research ethics that ensures participants are fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits before agreeing to participate (Xu et al., 2020). It represents a process in which participants are empowered to make voluntary decisions regarding their involvement. Xu et al. (2020) describe informed consent as the “cornerstone” of research ethics, emphasising that participants must understand what participation entails and provide their consent freely, without coercion. In practice, informed consent requires that researchers provide clear and comprehensive information, allowing participants to ask questions and seek clarification about any aspect of the study. Cargill (2019) and Klykken (2021) emphasise that informed consent is closely tied to epistemological assumptions about how knowledge is produced, framing it as a collaborative exchange of information between researcher and participant. For this study, the researcher wrote letters to the principals of the four selected schools, requesting permission to conduct research. Subsequently, consent forms were sent to all participants, which detailed the research procedures, expectations, and their rights as participants. Participants were encouraged to review the documents, ask questions to clarify any uncertainties, and sign the consent forms to indicate voluntary agreement to participate.

3.9.2 Harm and Risk

Ethical research mandates the avoidance, prevention, or minimisation of harm to participants. The Human Research Ethics Committee (2021) defines harm as any injury to the rights, safety, or welfare of participants, including physical, psychological, social, or economic consequences.

- **Physical harm** refers to actions or circumstances that may result in bodily injury or physical risk to participants (Human Research Ethics Committee, 2021).
- **Psychological harm** arises when participants experience emotional distress, anxiety, or trauma due to misrepresentation, deception, or mishandling of sensitive information (Human Research Ethics Committee, 2021).

- **Social harm** may occur if participation negatively affects the social standing, relationships, or community perception of the participant (Human Research Ethics Committee, 2021).
- **Economic or financial harm** includes risks such as loss of employment, income, or benefits resulting from breaches of confidentiality (Human Research Ethics Committee, 2021).
- **Harm to rights** occurs when participants' autonomy is compromised or when informed consent procedures are not properly followed (Xu et al., 2020).

Minimising harm also implies that research should involve only the necessary number of participants and procedures required to produce scientifically valid data, thereby reducing unnecessary exposure to risk (Human Research Ethics Committee, 2021).

Risk refers to the probability, magnitude, and potential permanence of harm associated with participation in the study. Research should generally involve minimal risk, and any study involving higher levels of risk must demonstrate that participation is essential to achieving significant scientific or societal goals that cannot be accomplished by alternative means (Human Research Ethics Committee, 2021). Participants must be informed of all reasonably foreseeable risks during the consent process (Xu et al., 2020).

Potential risks in this study were clearly communicated to participants, including minor inconveniences, possible embarrassment, and concerns regarding confidentiality, as well as any unlikely but serious outcomes. By providing detailed explanations of these risks and the measures in place to mitigate them, the study adhered to ethical standards designed to protect participants and ensure voluntary and informed participation.

3.9.3 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Anonymity

In research, the concepts of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity are often mentioned interchangeably; however, they refer to distinct ethical obligations that require different protective measures. Tsindos (2023) defines confidentiality as an agreement to keep certain information private or secret, particularly participants' identifiable data.

In the context of research, confidentiality stems from informed consent, establishing a binding understanding that any identifying information provided by participants will not be disclosed to third parties without explicit consent (Louise, 2023). Louise (2023) further explains confidentiality as the principle that participants' personal identifiable information is safeguarded and only accessible to individuals or organisations with legitimate research purposes. Identifiable information may include names, personal details, and responses to research questions. Any information deemed private by participants is treated as confidential, and researchers are expected to employ rigorous measures to protect it. Such measures include ensuring that data is anonymised wherever possible, allowing participants to review and correct their responses, and strictly controlling access to data (Tsindos, 2023; Louise, 2023). In this study, all participant information and responses were kept confidential, and pseudonyms were assigned to protect the identities of participants, ensuring anonymity in the reporting of results.

Privacy refers to the participant's right to control how their personal information is collected, used, and disclosed (Tsindos, 2023). Tsindos (2023) highlights that privacy in research involves safeguarding participants during recruitment, enrolment, and data collection. Only the minimum necessary personal information should be collected to conduct the study effectively, in line with ethical recommendations from human research ethics committees (Louise, 2023).

Louise (2023) emphasises that respecting participants' privacy entails granting them control over the timing, context, and extent of their participation, thereby safeguarding their autonomy and rights throughout the research process. Anonymity ensures that participants cannot be personally identified in any stage of data collection, analysis, or reporting. According to Louise (2023), this means that neither direct identifiers nor indirect identifiers that could link data back to individual participants are retained. Anonymity safeguards participants from potential social, psychological, or legal harm, promoting honesty and openness in their responses.

3.9.4 Carefulness, Honesty, and Integrity

Research integrity and ethics are fundamental components of responsible research practice, essential for maintaining credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness in academic work (Lal & Sharma, 2023).

These principles encompass a set of core values that guide researchers in conducting their work responsibly, ensuring adherence to ethical standards while advancing knowledge.

Honesty and truthfulness are foundational to research integrity. Researchers are expected to accurately report their methods, procedures, data, and findings without fabrication, falsification, or selective reporting (Lal & Sharma, 2023). This ensures that the research process and outcomes reflect a truthful representation of reality. Transparency is closely linked to honesty; researchers should provide sufficient detail in their methodology, data analysis, and reporting to enable scrutiny, replication, and independent verification of results (Lal & Sharma, 2023). The open sharing of research outputs, including data and methodologies, not only fosters collaboration but also contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge.

Researchers are also required to adhere to ethical principles throughout the research process. This includes obtaining the necessary approvals, securing informed consent, minimising harm, protecting confidentiality, and adhering to established ethical review procedures (Xu et al., 2020; Lal & Sharma, 2023).

Respect for participants, animal subjects, and the responsible use of resources underpins the ethical conduct of research, promoting the credibility of its outcomes. Upholding research integrity is not only critical for individual studies but also for the broader scientific community. It ensures that research findings are trustworthy, supporting informed decision-making and contributing to societal progress (Lal & Sharma, 2023). Promoting integrity requires collective effort from researchers, institutions, funding bodies, and professional societies. Key strategies include fostering a culture that values ethical conduct, providing training on responsible research practices, establishing robust ethical review mechanisms, and encouraging open and transparent communication of scientific

findings (Lal & Sharma, 2023). By emphasising carefulness, honesty, and integrity alongside privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, this study maintained ethical rigour, ensuring that participants' rights were protected and that the research process met the highest standards of ethical practice.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has detailed the qualitative and interpretivist methodology adopted to investigate the challenges encountered by School Management Teams in the induction of novice educators.

By employing a narrative research design and purposive sampling, the study enabled the collection of rich, contextual insights from both SMT members and novice educators directly involved in induction processes. The chosen data collection methods, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations, allowed for triangulation and a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of induction experiences. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and the minimisation of harm, were rigorously upheld to protect participants and ensure research integrity. Furthermore, the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were systematically addressed, enhancing the trustworthiness and reliability of the findings. Overall, the methodological framework provided a coherent and transparent structure for conducting and reporting the research. These choices were closely aligned with the study's objectives and research questions, ensuring that the methods used were appropriate for capturing the complexities of the induction process. As a result, the chapter establishes a strong foundation for the presentation and interpretation of findings in subsequent chapters, positioning the study to make a meaningful contribution to understanding teacher induction, professional development, and educational leadership in South African secondary schools.

3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a thorough overview of the research methodology guiding the investigation into the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in inducting novice educators in the Seshego circuit. The study was framed within the interpretivist paradigm, underscoring the importance of capturing the subjective experiences and perspectives of participants. Key philosophical underpinnings, including ontology, epistemology, and methodology, were discussed to clarify the rationale for adopting a qualitative approach suitable for exploring complex social contexts, such as teacher induction. The research design was explained in detail, with the selection of a narrative case study enabling the collection of rich, personal accounts from both SMT members and novice educators. Purposive sampling ensured that participants were chosen for their direct involvement in induction activities, enhancing the relevance and depth of the findings.

The chapter described the data collection methods, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations, demonstrating how these tools supported a flexible yet comprehensive exploration of the research questions. Systematic thematic analysis was outlined as the primary approach for identifying patterns and drawing insights from the data. To ensure the rigour and trustworthiness of the study, strategies such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were carefully implemented. Ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and minimising harm, were strictly observed throughout the research process. The chapter also acknowledged limitations related to context and methodology, recognising factors that may shape the study's outcomes. In conclusion, this chapter established a strong methodological foundation for the research and prepared the way for Chapter 4, where the analysis and interpretation of the collected data will be presented, building on the approaches and principles set out here.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, the research design and methodology underpinning this study were thoroughly outlined. The chapter provided a detailed account of the various phases of the research process and described the procedures followed during the investigation. This current chapter focuses on the analysis, presentation, and discussion of data collected from the selected schools.

Data were collected through sessions conducted with four principals, four departmental heads (who served as members of the school management teams), and four novice educators. To uphold the university's ethical standards and ensure participant anonymity and non-traceability, the actual names of the schools and participants have not been disclosed. For the purposes of this study, the schools are referred to as School A, School B, School C, and School D. Similarly, the principals are designated as Principal 1 through Principal 4, the departmental heads as DH1 through DH4, and the novice educators as Novice 1 through Novice 4.

The participants included both male and female members of school management teams, as well as educators who have recently entered the teaching profession. Participants were purposively selected based on their roles as members of the school management teams, regardless of their prior experience.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and beliefs of the participants, this study employed semi-structured interviews with four novice educators, four departmental heads, and four principals. The data collected were analysed thematically, allowing for the identification of key themes and subthemes that encapsulate the nuanced perspectives of the participants. Data collected from the documents were added to themes. The researcher analysed the documents through thematic analysis and important facts were added as themes and the facts were linked with the one for interview.

The findings of the study are organised according to the following main themes:

- **Theme 1:** The Supportive Role of School Management Teams in the Induction of Novice Educators
- **Theme 2:** The Role of Induction Programmes in Supporting Novice Educators' Professional Integration
- **Theme 3:** Challenges experienced by Novice Educators during the Induction Process
- **Theme 4:** Self-Driven Initiatives by Novice Educators to address Induction Gaps
- **Theme 5:** Structured Support Strategies by SMTs to facilitate Effective Induction
- **Theme 6:** Collaborative and Developmental Induction Practices by SMTs
- **Theme 7:** Negative Impacts of Insufficient Induction on Novice Educators
- **Theme 8:** Gaps and Discrepancies in the Induction Programme for Novice Educators

The organisation of the findings into these themes provides a structured framework for presenting, analysing, and discussing the data. The subsequent sections elaborate on each theme and subthemes in detail, illustrating the perspectives and experiences of the participants and drawing connections to existing literature.

Theme 1: Induction Programmes and the Supportive Role of School Management Teams

Induction programmes play a crucial role in shaping the professional development of novice educators. The involvement of School Management Teams (SMTs) is central to this process, as their support not only strengthens pedagogical skills but also aids in the institutional integration of new teachers.

Subtheme 1: Provision of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM)

A key responsibility of SMTs is the provision of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM), which directly impacts the preparedness and confidence of novice educators. As Novice 1 explained, *“SMTs are instrumental in sharing information about the available teaching support materials (LTSM) and discussing long-range curriculum plans with us.”*

This proactive approach ensures new teachers are not left to navigate curriculum complexities alone. Novice 2 reinforced this by stating, *“They [the SMTs] ensure that we as novice educators have access to necessary resources such as textbooks, ehm... all teaching materials, Annual Teaching Plans, subject policy and also how to use them.”*

DH 2 supported Novice 2 by indicating that SMT always made sure they provided them with necessary documents *“Eeh... eeh... okay, as a departmental head or maybe if I can say as someone in the management, I always make sure that I give them or provide them with necessary documents such as ATPs, Caps documents and also orientate them through the school environment.* The timely provision of resources is essential for seamless curriculum implementation, as it reduces the anxiety often experienced by new educators regarding lesson preparation and planning (Morrison et al., 2021). As Botha (2020) notes, access to LTSM is intrinsically linked to instructional quality and equitable learning outcomes. Through effective distribution of these materials, SMTs exemplify strong leadership and foster a supportive learning environment, helping novice educators’ focus on teaching rather than on resource acquisition (Masinga & Moletsane, 2022).

Subtheme 2: Curriculum Orientation and Policy Familiarisation

In addition to providing resources, SMTs guide novice educators through curriculum planning and adherence to policy. According to Novice 1, *“They discuss long-range curriculum plans with us, eeh, they review copies of policies that we are going to use throughout the teaching years.”* This guidance fosters a deeper understanding of both the educational trajectory and institutional regulations. Novice 2 added, *“SMTs ensure we know how to use the Annual Teaching Plans and subject policy.”* DH 1 shared the same sentiment with Novice 1: *“I can say as someone in the management, I always make sure that I give them or provide them with necessary documents such as ATPs, Caps documents and also orientate them through the school environment”* Such deliberate efforts orient novice educators to the curriculum framework and specific policies governing their practice. Curriculum orientation is vital for educators to internalise pedagogical goals and accountability structures (Muthivhi & Mudzielwana, 2020), while

comprehensive policy familiarisation ensures alignment with legislative and institutional requirements. Without this guidance, novice educators risk misinterpreting curriculum standards or violating procedures, which can negatively affect teaching quality and learner achievement (Chikoko et al., 2021). SMT-led training supports consistent policy application and empowers novice educators to exercise sound professional judgment (Diko & Letseka, 2023).

Subtheme 3: Professional and Classroom Support

SMTs also provide critical support for professional development, particularly in classroom management. Novice 3 described this role, stating, *“Well, SMTs are responsible for overall support for us novice educators, they make sure that we understand our roles and also help us to manage our classroom very effectively.”* DH4 added *“Well, I offer....and make sure that they understand... I offer support and make sure they understand what is expected of them regarding their scope of duties and their conduct”*. Classroom management is often cited as a major challenge for new teachers, and a lack of mentorship can lead to stress or early exit from the profession (Kutsyuruba et al., 2021). SMTs support novice educators by modelling discipline strategies and assisting with lesson planning, which builds resilience and strengthens professional identity (Nkambule & Balfour, 2020). This collaborative support encourages a school culture of continuous learning and growth (Ramrathan, 2022).

Subtheme 4: Social Integration and School Culture Induction

Beyond pedagogical and logistical support, SMTs play a crucial role in the social and cultural integration of novice educators. Novice 4 explained, *“SMTs ensure that we are welcomed in the teaching field by providing necessary support, facilitating introduction to all staff members, helping us to familiarise ourselves with the school's mission and vision.”* DH1 reported that *“I play a very crucial role in the induction of the novice education, I make sure that all novice educators get all the support they need, orienting them, introducing them as new educators to the school policies”*.

Such efforts foster a sense of belonging and motivate novice educators. The introduction to colleagues and immersion in the school's ethos promote collegial relationships, collaborative professional practices, and job satisfaction (Pogodzinski, 2021). Without such integration, novice teachers may feel isolated, which can negatively impact morale and performance (Blandford, 2020). By facilitating social integration, SMTs nurture a positive organisational culture and reduce the risk of professional alienation among new educators (Sibanda & Mhlanga, 2023), ensuring they feel valued and connected from the outset of their careers.

Theme 2: The Role of Induction Programmes in Supporting Novice Educators' Professional Integration

Induction programmes are instrumental in facilitating the professional integration of novice educators, who typically enter the teaching profession with limited practical experience. These programmes are designed to familiarise novice teachers with school expectations and cultures, thereby bridging the gap between initial teacher training and actual classroom practice. Through structured support and collaboration with School Management Teams (SMTs) and experienced educators, induction programmes assist novice educators in applying theoretical knowledge and enriching their teaching practice.

Subtheme 1: Classroom Management and Discipline Support

Classroom management, defined as the ability to maintain a controlled learning environment that directs the class toward common goals, remains one of the most significant challenges for novice teachers (Muhammad et al., 2024). Effective induction programmes provide critical support in this area, enabling novice educators to settle into their roles more comfortably. As Novice 1 shared, *"Okay, so most novice educators or less experienced educators struggle with classroom management, lesson planning, discipline and also time management, so it's through the induction programmes that novice educators will learn how to handle issues like this."* Additionally DH4 reported that *"my view is that eeh...on...my view on the induction of a novice is that it should be a continuous process since learning is continuous and eeh...the novice educators should also take it very much serious, because it will build them to make them better educators"*

Research corroborates this viewpoint, indicating that effective induction practices are a key outcome of classroom management, which can help novice educators alleviate exhaustion, increase engagement, and foster a sense of accomplishment (Betsa, 2023). Furthermore, Outlaw & Griefenhagen (2021) highlight that induction practices enhance novice educators' efficacy in pedagogical development, contributing significantly to their professional growth.

Subtheme 2: Lesson Planning and Time Management Skills

The transition from university to the school environment presents novice educators with numerous challenges, particularly in planning lessons and managing their time. New teachers often feel overwhelmed by the demands of scheduling, organising, and addressing diverse learner needs. As noted by Comon et al. (2024), the multitude of responsibilities in teaching frequently results in difficulties with efficient time management among novice educators. Principal 2 highlighted that *"if someone is from a university, our university prepares the educators we know that they go for teaching practices, but now they will be doing everything in real life so which means that umm... we have to support them or give them adequate support to "*

A well-constructed lesson plan enables educators to approach classroom teaching with greater confidence and achieve desired learning outcomes (Fan et al., 2024). However, novice educators may find it challenging to design comprehensive lesson plans and may spend excessive time starting from scratch. The value of induction programmes in this context is emphasised by Novice 1: *"Novice educators struggle with lesson planning and also time management, so it's through the induction programmes that novice educators will learn how to handle issues."*

Induction structures are thus essential in guiding novice educators to master these foundational skills, aligning with findings by Abdallah et al. (2023), who assert that induction programmes provide systematic support, help teachers learn their professional responsibilities, and improve practices that ultimately benefit learner achievement.

Subtheme 3: Confidence Building and Skills Development

Novice educators often experience a wide range of emotions during their initial period in the profession. Orientation and induction programmes address these emotional challenges by offering a structured introduction to the school environment, policies, and norms, thereby empowering novice educators with the confidence to manage their roles effectively. These programmes also promote adaptability and resilience, preparing educators to face workplace challenges with a constructive attitude.

As Novice 3 stated, *“To me induction is a programme that is designed to help novice educators to build confidence in class and also develop skills through the difficult first years and so on of teaching.”* DH 3 therefore indicated that *“Uhh...it really assists them, the novice educators in comprehending their roles that they should play in the school”* The importance of professional empowerment through mentorship is further emphasised by Wexler (2020), who found that emotional support from mentors significantly boosts novice educators’ self-esteem and job satisfaction. Liu et al. (2022) assert that teachers with high self-efficacy, often fostered through effective induction, possess the subject knowledge and confidence necessary to create positive learning environments and employ diverse teaching strategies to meet learners' needs.

Subtheme 4: Adaptation to the School Environment

Induction programmes support both schools and novice educators by expediting the adjustment process and reducing the time required for new teachers to acclimate to their roles. A well-structured induction process enables novice educators to integrate smoothly into the school environment and understand the institutional culture.

Novice 2 highlighted this, stating, *“Induction is one of the crucial tools that enhance our teaching skills and also contribute to adapting to a new environment.”* In support of the statement, Principal 4 articulated that *“well, based on my experience, I’ve realised that the idea behind the induction is to welcome them, we must welcome these novice educators and also to develop them in terms of their professionalism. We must develop them and welcome them into this new working environment, so that is my experience”.*

According to Javed et al. (2022), induction training is comprehensive, aiming to enhance new educators' knowledge of the school environment, foster relationships with colleagues, and increase awareness of institutional rules and regulations. Paveen (2022) concurs, noting that such training efforts facilitate rapid adjustment for new staff and enable them to make meaningful contributions to the school community.

Subtheme 5: Facilitating Adjustment to the School Environment

Induction programmes introduce novice educators to the ethos, work environment, professional standards, codes of conduct, and key relationships within the school setting. Such programmes enhance new teachers' skills and knowledge while helping them familiarise themselves with the school culture and expectations. As Novice 2 stated, *"Okay, induction is important since it helps us to adjust to the school environment."*

In supporting Novice 2, Principal 1 indicated that *"It is important because I believe that it helps new educators to understand their roles in the school environment, yes, they come from varsity, they were well trained for this, but induction is important."*

Research confirms that induction not only sharpens professional abilities but also supports integration and adaptation, particularly when schools are organised as learning communities. In these contexts, induction is continuous and collaborative, drawing on the collective expertise of the educational community to enhance outcomes for all students (Mwila et al., 2023; Flecha et al., 2020).

Subtheme 6: Enhancing Confidence and Reducing Anxiety

Comprehensive induction programmes provide systematic training and guidance, enabling novice educators to navigate the cultural, social, and technical dimensions of teaching with greater ease (Lynn, 2023).

Such support is crucial for building confidence and reducing anxiety. Novice 1 reflected, *"Okay, it is important because it really helps us to integrate into our new roles and also the working environment. And the last thing I can say it also gives us confidence in whatever we are doing here at school."*

Principal 4 expressed a similar view to Novice 1: *“Well, umm...It helps these novice educators boost their morale as well as confidence, and as a result, it propels them and intensifies their confidence to help them perform their duties in most cases.”*

Effective induction has been shown to enhance novice teachers’ job satisfaction, boost their sense of efficacy, and support their professional growth and retention (Kadel, 2023; Lynn, 2023).

Subtheme 7: Promoting Professional Efficiency and Productivity

Induction programmes provide novice educators with opportunities to collaborate with colleagues, share ideas and resources, and establish professional networks. These interactions are vital for improving teaching efficiency and productivity. Novice 3 noted, *“Well, induction is important because it makes us more efficient and productive at work, and it also helps us to engage with experienced educators.”* Principal 2 reported *“as I said earlier, they were doing teaching practice, but now they have to face the reality, so it will help them to improve with the implementation of curriculum, and how to deliver the curriculum, and how to ensure the quality teaching and learning”*

Embedded systems of professional guidance and learning that begin in the earliest years of teaching can significantly increase retention and pedagogical competence (Bell et al., 2022; Kwok, 2021). Prioritising the needs and experiences of novice teachers within these systems leads to improved teaching outcomes and sustained professional development.

Theme 3: Challenges experienced by Novice Educators during the Induction Process.

Novice educators frequently encounter multiple challenges during the induction process, which can be attributed to factors such as workload conflicts, inadequate mentoring, and limited opportunities for peer collaboration and support. These challenges often result in heightened uncertainty for novice educators as they transition into the teaching profession.

Subtheme 1: Limited Scope of Induction Content

The successful implementation of induction programmes is often hindered by the extensive responsibilities shouldered by departmental heads, leading to a narrowed focus within induction content. This selective approach frequently leaves critical aspects of professional development unaddressed. As Novice 1 reflected, *“So during our induction eeh process our programmes, I mean, are designed to address certain issues only and leave some of the important aspects such as how to handle discipline unattended.”*

Research highlights that effective induction requires holistic support that encompasses psychological, emotional, physical, social, and occupational dimensions to enhance the well-being and retention of novice teachers (Van Zyl, 2020). However, current induction practices often lack the flexibility and comprehensiveness necessary to address the diverse contexts and needs of novice teachers.

The prevalent “one-size-fits-all” model has been criticised for its inability to adequately prepare novice educators, as it fails to account for specific school environments and the individual requirements of new teachers (Aarts et al., 2020; Kearney, 2021).

Such generic approaches to induction are insufficient for fostering meaningful professional growth and reducing teacher attrition.

Subtheme 2: Timing and Workload Conflict

The effectiveness of induction programmes is also compromised when they are scheduled concurrently with regular teaching responsibilities, creating significant workload conflicts for novice educators. Induction is most beneficial when it is strategically timed to minimise stress and maximise learning. Novice 2 highlighted this issue, stating, *“One of the challenges encountered is that induction happens at the same time as teaching, leaving us frustrated; we fail to balance work and induction at the same time.”*

Principal 3 added that *“one of the challenges is trying to use an all-size-fits-all approach well trying to induct the educators because it is not helpful, and trying to do everything on one day due to time constraints such as going to class and one need to manage the*

school and still having to do your own work eeh it becomes a problem so this makes both our novice educators and SMTs feel overwhelmed”

Structured and well-timed induction practices are essential for providing practical, effective, and sustainable support that facilitates the socialisation and retention of novice teachers (Betsa, 2023). Inductors must therefore ensure that induction activities do not coincide with peak teaching demands, enabling novice educators to engage fully in the process without feeling overwhelmed.

Subtheme 3: Insufficient Support from SMTs

A pervasive challenge for novice teachers is the lack of adequate support from SMTs, which often manifests as limited communication, minimal opportunities for personal development, and insufficient access to necessary resources and materials. As Novice 3 recounted, *“The challenges we..., that I experienced personally were that there was not enough support from our SMT, they just issued documents without helping us to interpret them.”*

Research shows that SMT continues to receive little support from their superiors, leaving them with little knowledge. As a result, they fail to effectively induct novice educators. DH 2 indicated that *“The challenges are many, but the most common one is a lack of support. You know, if you don’t have support from the people who are supervising you or managing you, then you are going to have a very big challenge”*.

Research further indicates that novice teachers often perceive a lack of teamwork and social support from colleagues, experienced staff, and the Department of Basic Education (Van Zyl, 2020; Dhlamini, 2023). This lack of a friendly and supportive work environment hinders novice educators, who, fresh from university, may lack the confidence and experience needed to deliver effective lessons and therefore require substantial guidance from more experienced teachers.

Subtheme 4: Inadequate Mentorship and Peer Collaboration

The effectiveness of induction programmes is further undermined by inadequate mentorship and limited peer collaboration, particularly in smaller schools where experienced mentors may be scarce. This challenge is compounded when induction is overseen by less knowledgeable staff, resulting in suboptimal training experiences for novice educators. Novice 4 described this situation, stating, *“Ummm, teaching at a school with few staff and few opportunities to connect with colleagues, this leads to induction being conducted by someone with less experience and doesn’t match your expectation.”*

Research highlights the importance of mentor-mentee compatibility in enhancing the effectiveness of mentorship relationships (Kwok et al., 2021). Effective mentorship requires both pedagogical and dispositional compatibility, shared teaching philosophies, aligned personalities, and similar motivations, which foster stronger professional bonds and reduce interpersonal conflict (Vaitzman Ben-David & Berkovich, 2022). Without such compatibility, the support provided to novice educators is likely to be insufficient, ultimately impacting their professional development and integration.

Theme 4: Self-Driven Initiatives by Novice Educators to Address Induction Gaps

Despite facing considerable challenges during induction, novice educators often adopt self-driven strategies to bridge the gaps left by inadequate formal support. These initiatives are crucial for their professional growth, confidence, and adaptation to the school environment.

Subtheme 1: Independent Research and Policy Engagement

In the absence of comprehensive induction content, novice educators frequently turn to independent research and engagement with relevant policy documents to enhance their understanding and classroom management skills. As Novice 1 described, *“So well, it’s a problem, but I had to do some research and visit some policy documents, such as the South African Schools Act and the new BELA BILL, to familiarise myself with how to handle discipline in a class.”*

Meanwhile, the SMT consult with upper structures to capacitate themselves. Principal 2 explains, *“As an SMT member, I have to make sure I consult with Department of Education for some of the aspects that I may not have knowledge of, so as SMT members, in most cases, when we are about to induct the novice educators, we ask for assistance from the circuit manager”*

Classroom management remains one of the most significant challenges for novice teachers, often necessitating self-initiated learning to find effective solutions (Mkhabele et al., 2024). Novice teachers are compelled to rely on their problem-solving abilities, drawing on personal strategies developed through experience or during their practicum to navigate the difficulties they encounter in their early careers. Furthermore, Shanyengana (2023) notes that while mentorship can be beneficial, time constraints often prevent mentors from providing sufficient support, leaving novice educators to develop effective teaching practices independently.

Subtheme 2: Proactive Scheduling and Time Management

To mitigate the impact of time constraints and inadequate induction, some novice educators proactively arrange supplementary induction sessions. Novice 2 reflected on this adaptive approach, stating, *“What I did is that I’ve requested my departmental head to schedule the induction meeting after hours.”*

The need for such proactive scheduling emphasises the logistical challenges faced by novice educators, which can be alleviated through well-organised induction workshops and flexible communication with school leadership (Kaplan, 2021; Kwok et al., 2022; Ruvhuhali & Mboweni-Pataka, 2020). These workshops provide critical support in navigating organisational culture, communicating with colleagues, and applying theoretical content to practical situations.

Subtheme 3: Seeking Clarification and Guidance

Novice educators, recognising the limitations of initial induction, often seek further clarification on their roles, disciplinary procedures, and institutional policies. As articulated

by Novice 3, *“What I did was that I consulted the SMTs to seek clarity on matters that were not clarified during the induction process.”* DH4 shared the same sentiments with Novice 3 in terms of seeking clarity and guidance from other colleagues *“We....consulted with our fellow colleagues from other schools as to how they did it since they were also having novice educators”*

Seeking guidance from school management is essential for novice teachers to fully understand their responsibilities and integrate effectively into the school culture. Garcia-Carrion et al. (2020) emphasise that induction practices should offer ongoing support, including mentorship and early career guidance, to help novice teachers address challenges and remain committed to the profession.

Subtheme 4: Engagement in Professional Development Opportunities

To further develop their skills and confidence, novice educators are increasingly participating in professional development activities, such as workshops. These opportunities are invaluable in equipping them with strategies to overcome classroom challenges and fostering continuous professional growth. Novice 4 noted the importance of such engagement, stating, *“Ummm ...I’ve requested the school principal to inform us whenever there is a workshop that can be helpful to me.”*

Professional development initiatives that address the specific challenges faced by novice teachers enable them to devise innovative responses and refine their teaching practice (Stewart & Jansky, 2021). Continuous engagement in these programmes not only enhances individual competencies but also contributes to the collective capacity of the teaching staff.

Theme 5: Structured Support Strategies by SMTs to facilitate Effective Induction

School Management Teams (SMTs) play a central role in the successful induction of novice educators, ensuring that new teachers feel welcome and settled within the school environment. Effective induction, orchestrated by SMTs, encompasses curriculum and planning guidance, orientation to the school setting, and ongoing opportunities for novice

educators to learn from experienced teachers, providing a form of continuous professional support.

Subtheme 1: Curriculum and Planning Guidance

The curriculum serves as a foundational pillar for any educational system, and its successful implementation is essential for achieving educational objectives at both national and institutional levels. The dynamic role of SMTs as curriculum leaders is crucial in guiding novice educators through lesson planning, curriculum adaptation, and instructional development. As Novice 1 remarked, *“Eeh, like I’ve indicated before or I’ve said before, the School Management Team shares the relevant information about the curriculum, lesson planning, lesson development, I meant to say and also makes sure we adapt to a new working environment.”*

DH 2 expressed a similar view with Novice 1: *“Eeh, I always make it a point that I give them the documents which they are going to use, like caps documents, ATPs, as I’ve mentioned, those are some of the documents which they need to have, I always make sure I give them these documents”*

SMTs facilitate access to diverse pedagogical methodologies, share institutional knowledge, and provide resources tailored to the needs of novice educators. These forms of support are instrumental in equipping new teachers with coping strategies that mitigate feelings of burnout and frustration (García-Carrion et al., 2020; Ravhuhali & Mboweni-Pataka, 2022; Symeonidis et al., 2023).

Subtheme 2: Orientation to the School Environment

A comprehensive induction programme relies heavily on the SMT’s ability to orient novice educators to the school’s unique culture, policies, and operational environment. This ongoing support ensures that new teachers are not only familiarised with procedural aspects but are also able to settle into the school community effectively. Novice 2 captured this experience, stating, *“What the SMT normally does is they orient us to the workspace, they help us to interpret various documents that we are going to use throughout the year.”*

DH2 concurred with Novice 2 by highlighting that *“Uhhh... structural orientation I organise departmental orientation to familiarise novice teachers with curriculum expectations eehI orientate novice educators to the school environment and provide them with a welcome pack, giving them ATPs everything that consists of all the necessary documents needed, such as the subject policy, your caps documents, and all the documentation that they are going to need as novice educators.”*

Research suggests that as novice educators become more attuned to their school's mission and educational objectives, they are better positioned to contribute to collective efforts aimed at improving student outcomes and community engagement (Flecha et al., 2020). Schools organised as learning communities offer a unique context for the induction and continuous professional development of new teachers, leveraging the collective potential of all staff to improve educational responses for all students (García-Carrion et al., 2020).

Subtheme 3: Document Provision and Interpretation Support

In addition to providing access to essential documents for lesson planning and implementation, SMTs play an active role in supporting novice educators in interpreting and utilising these resources effectively. Novice 3 highlighted this form of support, stating, *“What SMT usually does is issue all the documents that we are going to use throughout the teaching process.”* In supporting Novice 3 statement DH 2 indicated that *“Eeh I always make it a point that I give them the documents which they are going to use, like caps documents, ATPs, as I've mentioned, those are one or some of the documents which they need to have, I always make sure I give them these documents”*

Providing ongoing opportunities for learning and development, alongside sufficient documentation, has been shown to positively impact novice teachers' job satisfaction and competence development (Beausaert et al., 2020).

Subtheme 4: Mentoring Through Peer Collaboration

A highly effective strategy employed by SMTs involves pairing novice educators with experienced teachers, fostering a collaborative and sustainable model of professional learning. This peer-mentoring approach facilitates the transfer of practical knowledge and ongoing support, enabling novice educators to benefit from the lived experiences of their colleagues. Novice 4 described the value of this strategy: *“Pairing us novice educators with experienced educators seems to be a good strategy that the SMT uses to induct us. The main reason is that they want induction to be continuous, not a one-day thing.”*

Principal 4 also mentioned that *“well as I’ve mentioned, it’s more about pairing them with old ones, we pair them with these experienced ones, experienced educators have a lot of practical or practicality skills that can help these novice educators, hence we ... usually promote the idea of pairing them with experienced ones.”*

Collaborative induction practices, such as these, are supported by research, which suggests that professional growth is most effectively achieved through ongoing, collegial interactions rather than isolated training sessions or occasional external experts (Davidovitch, 2024; Olson Stewart et al., 2021). By facilitating continuous dialogue, shared reflection, and mutual support, SMTs help novice educators navigate professional challenges and integrate more seamlessly into the school community.

Theme 6: Collaborative and Developmental Induction Practices by SMTs.

School Management Teams (SMTs) employ a variety of collaborative and developmental strategies to ensure that novice educators are effectively inducted. These practices are instrumental in fostering professional growth, confidence, and integration among new teachers.

Subtheme 1: Scheduled Information Sharing Sessions

One of the pivotal elements in the induction of novice educators is the scheduled information-sharing session organised by SMTs. These sessions provide a structured platform for disseminating essential information, helping new teachers feel confident and

comfortable in their roles. As Novice 1 explained, *“So what they do is eeh... they normally is... am... sorry about that, what they normally do is schedule a meeting and share important information with us.”* To support Novice 1, DH 1 indicated the first week of arrival as a scheduled time of induction *“We make sure that new educators are orientated during the first week of arrival, that’s the time we use to induct novices as soon as they arrive. The first week is used for induction”*

Research has shown that induction programmes often include a variety of activities such as socialisation, adjustment, development, and assessment to support beginning teachers (Morris, 2023). Globally, these programmes may feature teacher meetings, workshops, seminars, and other opportunities for information exchange tailored to local contexts.

Subtheme 2: Provision of Key Teaching Documents and Resources

SMTs play a crucial role in ensuring novice educators have access to all necessary teaching documents and resources for effective integration into the school environment. Novice 2 highlighted this support: *“Ehmm... they ensure that we have all the necessary documents such as pace setters and ATPs, organise workshops for us and also provide constructive feedback where we are not doing things right.”* Principal 4 added that *“Eeh ... well, there are a couple, but the main one that we usually use is to ensure that all the material is accessible all the time. We make it easy for them to access this material and make it accessible for the most part.”*

Addressing the need for practical guidance, Flannery (2023) emphasises the importance of providing new teachers with materials and information related to the classroom setup, resource location, and lesson planning that align with required standards. Similarly, Morris (2023) notes that structured resource provision, including curriculum guides and district information, during the induction phase, supports the professional development of new staff.

Subtheme 3: Facilitation of Professional Development Opportunities

Encouraging participation in professional learning communities and facilitating access to professional organisations are key strategies employed by SMTs to promote continuous development. Novice 3 remarked, *“As I’ve said before, the SMTs paired us with experienced educators to make sure that we learn from them.”* DH3 shared the same view with Novice 3: *“Uhh... because of the workload and time constraints, novice educators are paired with relevant educators who have been in the profession, so sometimes, as induction on its own, it’s a process.”*

Davidovitch (2024) emphasises that such initiatives promote networking, cooperation, and the sharing of best practices, thereby fostering a supportive learning environment. Flecha et al. (2020) further assert that experienced staff act as facilitators for newly appointed teachers, engaging in classroom observations, feedback, and collaborative planning. This ongoing professional dialogue enhances novice educators’ self-confidence and helps build strong professional relationships within the school.

Subtheme 4: Mentorship and Peer Learning

Mentorship and peer learning are essential for equipping novice educators with the knowledge and skills needed to adapt quickly and effectively. Pairing new teachers with experienced colleagues accelerates their professional development and integration.

As Novice 4 articulated, *“as I’ve indicated before, they pair us with the most experienced educators, so that they can share their experience with us, umm...They can also share how to discipline learners and how to manage the classroom effectively.”*

DH 3 expressed a similar view to Novice 4: *“Uhh... because of the workload and time constraints, novice educators are paired with relevant educators who have been in the profession, so sometimes, as induction on its own, it’s a process.”*

Mamba (2020) highlights that comprehensive induction programmes facilitate rapid skill acquisition, which translates to improved performance and productivity.

Ndabankulu (2023) notes that effective induction should provide novice teachers with mentors, reduced teaching loads, and opportunities for peer observation and dialogue, enabling them to respond constructively to feedback and adapt to their new roles.

Theme 7: Negative impacts of insufficient induction on novice educators.

An inadequate induction process can have profound negative consequences for both novice educators and the broader school community. Without sufficient support, novice teachers often struggle to perform their duties effectively, experience low morale, and may ultimately impact the school's overall performance.

Subtheme 1: Decline in Professional Performance and Increased Stress

Insufficient guidance and professional support from SMTs during the initial teaching year frequently leave novice educators feeling overwhelmed and diminish their sense of personal accomplishment. Novice 1 expressed this sentiment, stating, *“Okay, insufficient induction affects negatively in many ways, but just to name a few, it reduces our performances and also increases the level of work-related stress.”*

Principal 4 reported *“Eeh, well, the common struggle that we have with novice educators is that eeh...they find it difficult to create a positive learning environment, so for the most part, it results in most learners underperforming, so that is the only struggle we have observed so far.”*

Empirical research supports these observations, indicating that novice teachers subjected to inadequate induction are more likely to experience workplace hardship, elevated stress levels, and rapid burnout. Such conditions can influence their decision to remain in or leave the profession, depending on the school environment and support structures (Betsa, 2023).

Subtheme 2: Challenges in Classroom Management and Discipline

The transition from teacher preparation to actual classroom practice is a critical and often daunting phase for novice educators, marked by a steep learning curve as they translate theoretical knowledge into practice (Green, 2024).

Classroom management and discipline are particularly challenging, especially when compounded by administrative tasks and curricular demands.

Novice 2 highlighted this challenge: *“Insufficient induction leads to ineffective classroom management, unable to discipline learners and also to manage time effectively.”*

Furthermore, DH 2 indicated that “Higher failure rate, sir, high failure rate because if novice educators are unable to manage the classroom, eeh...high failure rate, you are going to have a lot of students or learners failing the subject that *those people will be teaching.*”

Establishing effective behavioural and academic management plans is essential for novice teachers to meet their educational objectives. However, insufficient induction can leave them ill-equipped to address classroom disruptions, further exacerbating stress and undermining their confidence.

Subtheme 3: Role Confusion and Professional Uncertainty

When SMTs fail to provide adequate training, novice educators often experience confusion and uncertainty about their professional roles, which can lead to dissatisfaction, disengagement, and a decline in job satisfaction.

Novice 3 described this experience: *“If I were to speak broadly, it affects us as young students, especially young educating bodies, badly because we end up not understanding our role and responsibilities, which can also lead to dissatisfaction, confusion and boredom at work. Again, it can make us feel overwhelmed by too much information at once, making it difficult for us to prosper as educators in the workspace.”*

Principal 3 shared the same sentiments with Novice 3, *“Okay...okay so with our novices educators at times ehmm...they may struggle or they struggle to perform their duties efficiently right so this increasing the likelihood of non-submission to reach deadlines, and sometimes they may feel bored or some form of boredom in the field as novices educators seek better job opportunities outside the field of teaching.”*

Chandran (2022) found that such professional uncertainty can have a significant impact on the teaching effectiveness of novice educators, leading to negative feelings, declining confidence, and a diminished commitment to the profession. Proper support and explicit guidance are therefore crucial for helping new teachers overcome these obstacles and enhance their effectiveness in the classroom.

Subtheme 4: Strained Relationships and Social Isolation

Teaching is an emotionally demanding profession, and high levels of stress are closely linked to burnout, absenteeism, and increased turnover rates (Herman et al., 2020; Madigan & Kim, 2021).

Insufficient induction exacerbates these issues by impeding relationship-building and contributing to feelings of isolation. Novice 4 shared, *“Ummm we may struggle with the classroom management, building a good relationship with learners and colleagues and also contribute to job dissatisfaction.”*

In supporting Novice 4, Principal 4 indicated, *“Eeh well, the common struggle that we have with novice educators is that eeh...they find it difficult to create a positive learning environment, so for the most part, it results in most learners underperforming, so that is the only struggle we have observed so far.”*

Classroom behaviour management is a persistent challenge for novice teachers, with frequent disruptive behaviours undermining both teaching effectiveness and the classroom climate. Insufficient training that fails to address these core challenges often leaves novice educators isolated and unsupported (Karasova et al., 2025).

Theme 8: Gaps and discrepancies in the induction programme for novice educators.

Despite the intentions behind induction programmes, several gaps and discrepancies persist, undermining the effectiveness of novice educators' integration into the profession. These shortcomings often stem from inadequate coverage of key educational challenges,

insufficient time allocation, mismatched mentor assignments, and a superficial focus on select topics.

Subtheme 1: Inadequate Coverage of Critical Educational Challenges

Novice educators often face significant challenges in various aspects of teaching that are not adequately addressed during their induction. While SMTs tend to prioritise classroom management and adaptation to the school environment, important areas such as parental communication are often overlooked, impeding the development of productive partnerships between educators and families (Comon, 2024).

As Novice 1 remarked, *“Well, as I’ve indicated before, the induction programmes don’t cover all the aspects of education, so we encounter some of the challenges that were never touched during the induction process.”* This partial approach can hinder novice educators’ ability to address the holistic needs of learners and stakeholders.

Research shows that most SMTs are overwhelmed with their administrative duties, as a result, they end up providing insufficient training to novice educators.

DH 3 stated *“You know due to overwhelming administrative duties we are supposed to do the School Management Team does not have sufficient time to fully induct novice educators.”*

Subtheme 2: Insufficient Time Allocation for Induction

One of the persistent challenges undermining effective induction is the limited time dedicated to these programmes. Due to heavy administrative responsibilities, SMTs often fail to allocate sufficient time for comprehensive induction, resulting in novice educators missing crucial learning opportunities in areas such as learner discipline and creating a positive classroom environment. Novice 2 observed, *“Induction is not allocated enough time and induction doesn’t cover all the challenges, such as how to deal with overcrowded classrooms, learner discipline, yaaa, etc.”*

Schuls (2020) notes that both novice educators and SMTs struggle to manage competing demands on their time, which restricts the depth and breadth of induction content. Stewart (2022) further argues that the first year of teaching is particularly daunting for novice educators due to their limited classroom experience, and inadequate time for induction may lead to feelings of being overwhelmed and underprepared.

Subtheme 3: Subject Mismatch between Inductors and Novice Educators

A recurring discrepancy involves the assignment of mentors or inductors who lack expertise in the novice educator's subject area. This mismatch can diminish the relevance and applicability of guidance provided, resulting in confusion and reduced classroom effectiveness. Novice 3 highlighted, *"One of the discrepancies that stood out to me is that being inducted by a member of the SMT who didn't major in my subjects, which led to confusion on my part because they may give us something which they themselves don't understand and even when we attempt to seek clarification on it."*

Morris (2023) notes that increased hiring of new teachers, coupled with a shortage of experienced educators, often leads to mismatched mentor-mentee pairings.

Carlson (2023) found that subject- or grade-level alignment between novice teachers and mentors is correlated with higher retention rates, improved subject knowledge, and better student outcomes. Without thoughtful mentor-mentee matching, the induction process may contribute to attrition rather than retention (Pennanen et al., 2020; Yob & Crawford, 2012).

Subtheme 4: Superficial Focus on Selected Topics

Time constraints and overwhelming administrative workloads often result in the induction process focusing superficially on certain topics, most notably, classroom management, while neglecting other vital areas. Novice 4 described this experience: *"Ummm Our induction focuses only on the classroom management; other policies are not outlined in detail... Another discrepancy is that the time allocated for induction is not enough, Ummm... they feed us with more information in a short period of time."*

DH3 stated, *“You know, due to overwhelming administrative duties we are supposed to do, the School Management Team does not have sufficient time to fully induct novice educators.”*

Shanyengana (2023) asserts that despite mandated induction and mentoring programmes, many novice teachers continue to struggle, developing their practice independently and experiencing a period of intense learning and isolation. This lack of comprehensive, well-paced support impedes novice educators’ professional growth and their capacity to effectively navigate the complexities of the teaching profession.

4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter analysed the induction experiences of novice educators, emphasising the critical role of School Management Teams (SMTs) in supporting professional integration and development. Drawing from interviews with novice teachers, departmental heads, and principals, the findings highlight the value of well-structured induction programmes in guiding curriculum planning, lesson development, and classroom management. Proactive involvement by SMTs in sharing resources and orienting new staff was found to be essential for building confidence and job satisfaction. Despite these benefits, the chapter identified notable gaps in current induction practices, such as a narrow focus on classroom management, insufficient time allocation, and mismatched mentor assignments. These shortcomings often left crucial areas, such as parental communication and learner discipline, under-addressed. Nevertheless, novice educators demonstrated resourcefulness by engaging in independent research and professional development, which helped increase their confidence and adaptability. The negative impacts of inadequate induction were also evident, with many novice teachers experiencing stress, role confusion, and social isolation. This highlights the need for comprehensive, ongoing, and contextually relevant induction programmes that include effective mentorship. Ultimately, the chapter emphasises the importance of both structured institutional support and self-driven professional development for novice educators, recommending enhanced induction practices to improve teacher retention and educational outcomes.

CHAPTER 5.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION.

The aim of this study was to explore the challenges encountered by School Management Teams (SMTs) during the induction of novice educators. Chapter 1 provided an overview of the dissertation, while Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature relating to the difficulties SMTs face during the induction process. Chapter 3 deals with the methodology. The key themes that emerged from participants' responses were presented in Chapter 4. Thus, Chapter 5 offers a summary of the research findings, along with recommendations and conclusions.

Guided by an interpretivist research framework, the study adopted a qualitative methodology. The investigation focused on the role of SMTs in the effective induction of novice educators, as well as the challenges they face throughout this process, as informed by the literature review. The literature review also addressed the impact of induction practices on novice educators.

This chapter provides further recommendations and conclusions based on the research findings, and suggests areas for future study. The following research questions were addressed to examine the challenges experienced by School Management Teams in inducting novice educators:

- a. What are the primary challenges faced by School Management Teams in the induction of novice educators?
- b. How do these challenges affect the professional development, job satisfaction, and retention of novice educators within the circuit?
- c. What are the disparities between existing education policies and the practical realities encountered by School Management Teams in the induction process?

5.2 REFLECTIVE STUDY SUMMARY.

5.2.1 Findings

This section provides a reflective overview of the study, encapsulating the key findings and insights gained from the exploration of challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) during the induction of novice educators. Drawing from the perspectives and lived experiences of participants, this summary revisits the core themes that emerged throughout the research, highlighting how these challenges influence both the induction process and the broader professional environment within schools.

By reflecting on the alignment between the literature and the empirical findings, this section seeks to synthesise the study's contributions to the understanding of SMTs' roles, the impact on novice educators, and the practical realities within the educational context. This reflective summary sets the stage for the recommendations and conclusions that follow, ensuring that the study's implications are clearly articulated and contextualised within the existing body of knowledge.

5.2 Reflective Study Summary

The study investigated the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in inducting novice educators, using insights from departmental heads, principals, and novice teachers. The findings, summarised in relation to the literature and primary data, address three central research questions:

a. Primary Challenges Faced by SMTs in Induction

Key challenges identified include:

- **Time Constraints:** SMTs struggle to balance induction with daily responsibilities, leading to inadequate support and overlooked details in the induction process.
- **Lack of Support:** Novice educators often feel unsupported, particularly in managing classrooms and adjusting to new environments. SMTs themselves lack support and guidance from higher authorities, resulting in inconsistent induction practices.

- **Insufficient Training:** SMTs have not received adequate training on effective induction strategies, often delegating responsibilities without clear procedures or guidance.
- **Lack of Cooperation:** Tensions exist between SMTs and novice educators, sometimes rooted in miscommunication or resistance to fresh perspectives, which hampers collaboration.
- **Absence of Legal Framework:** The lack of standardized, formal guidelines results in discretionary and inconsistent induction, contributing to high turnover and poorly prepared new teachers.
- **Limited Resources and Fiscal Challenges:** Insufficient teaching materials, technology, and funding hinder the implementation of effective induction programmes.

b. Impact on Professional Development, Job Satisfaction, and Retention

The challenges above have significant negative effects on novice educators, including:

- **Social Isolation:** Poor induction leads to isolation, lack of confidence, and difficulty forming professional identities.
- **Late Submission and Underperformance:** Inadequate support results in late task completion and underperformance in teaching and classroom management.
- **Low Motivation and Burnout:** Lack of support and resources diminishes job satisfaction and motivation and can lead to early departure from the profession.
- **Poor Time Management:** Novice educators struggle with managing administrative and teaching tasks due to inadequate guidance.
- **Higher Learner Failure Rates:** Insufficient induction impacts teaching quality, resulting in lower learner achievement and higher failure rates.
- **Non-compliance and Lack of Confidence:** Novice educators feel uncertain about their roles, leading to non-compliance with expectations and reduced self-assurance.

c. Disparities between Policy and Practice

There is a clear disconnect between educational policies and their implementation:

- **Unclear Guidelines:** The absence of a robust legal framework and structured support results in inconsistent induction practices and high turnover.
- **Inadequate Training and Resources:** SMTs lack formal training and resources, leading to irregular and ineffective induction processes.
- **Lack of Support and Time:** Departmental support and formal policies are inconsistent, leaving SMTs overwhelmed and novice educators inadequately inducted.

The study reveals that SMTs face multiple interrelated challenges ranging from policy and training gaps to resource constraints, which significantly affect the induction and early career experiences of novice educators. Effective solutions will require comprehensive support, structured induction frameworks, and targeted capacity-building to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

5.3 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS.

The research aimed to explore the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) during the induction of novice educators, with a particular focus on how these challenges impact the professional development, job satisfaction, and retention of new teachers, as well as the gaps between policy and practice. Through a qualitative, interpretivist approach, the study has yielded several noteworthy conclusions that illuminate the complexities inherent in the induction process within South African schools. A central finding of this research is that SMTs play a pivotal role in shaping the initial experiences of novice educators. Effective induction is widely recognised as a cornerstone of professional growth and long-term retention for new teachers. However, the study revealed that SMTs often face significant systemic, organisational, and contextual challenges that hinder their ability to provide comprehensive support. These challenges include limited resources, insufficient time allocated for mentorship, and a lack of structured induction programmes.

Many SMTs operate within environments characterised by high workloads, administrative burdens, and inadequate training in induction practices, which collectively hinder their ability to guide novice educators effectively.

One of the prevailing themes to emerge from the study is the gap between policy and practice. While national and provincial education policies emphasise the importance of structured induction, the realities in schools are often misaligned with these directives. Many SMTs reported that induction policies, where they exist, are either inconsistently implemented or altogether absent at the school level. Instead, induction often relies on informal or ad hoc practices, leading to variability in the quality and consistency of support provided to novice educators. As a result, new teachers can experience feelings of isolation, confusion, and a lack of direction during their formative months in the profession. Furthermore, the study highlights the impact of induction challenges on the professional development and well-being of novice educators. Where induction is poorly managed or insufficiently resourced, novice educators are more likely to struggle with classroom management, curriculum delivery, and integration into the school community.

This can lead to lower job satisfaction, diminished self-efficacy, and, ultimately, higher rates of attrition. Conversely, when SMTs are able to offer sustained mentoring, access to professional networks, and opportunities for collaborative learning, novice teachers report greater confidence, job fulfilment, and a stronger commitment to their roles. Another important conclusion is that contextual factors, such as socio-economic disparities, school culture, and leadership dynamics, play a significant role in shaping the induction process. Schools in under-resourced or rural areas face unique challenges, including inadequate physical infrastructure, limited access to teaching materials, and increased demands on existing staff.

These conditions exacerbate the challenges faced by SMTs and compound the difficulties encountered by novice educators. The study found that a positive school culture, characterised by collegiality, open communication, and shared leadership, can mitigate some of these challenges and foster a more supportive environment for both SMTs and new teachers.

The research also emphasises the need for professional development and capacity-building initiatives targeted at SMTs. Many participants expressed a desire for more training in mentoring skills, induction best practices, and strategies to support the emotional and professional needs of novice teachers. Strengthening the capacity of SMTs is essential not only for enhancing the induction experience but also for building more resilient and effective school communities.

Finally, this study calls attention to the importance of ongoing dialogue between policymakers, SMTs, and educators to bridge the gap between policy and practice. Greater alignment and collaboration are needed to ensure that induction frameworks are responsive to the realities on the ground and that resources are allocated equitably. Policy reform should prioritise the development of clear, structured, and contextually relevant induction models that empower SMTs to fulfil their roles effectively. The research concludes that while SMTs are central to the induction of novice educators, they require greater support, clearer guidelines, and enhanced resources to overcome the multifaceted challenges they face. Addressing these issues is crucial for enhancing teacher retention, promoting professional development, and improving the overall quality of education within South Africa's schools.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address the challenges identified in the induction of novice educators. The recommendations are designed to support both the Limpopo Department of Education and School Management Teams in improving induction processes, thereby enhancing the professional development, satisfaction, and retention of new teachers.

A. Recommendations to the Limpopo Department of Education

1. **Mandate Induction Programmes:** The Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) should make the induction of novice educators a compulsory component of school operations to ensure consistency and comprehensive support for all new teachers across the province.

2. **Compulsory Training for SMTs:** Findings indicate that SMTs often lack formal training in effective induction. The LDoE should provide mandatory, structured training for all SMT members on best practices for induction, mentorship, and support for novice educators.
3. **Develop Clear Legislative Guidelines:** The Department should develop and disseminate a clear legislative framework or set of guidelines outlining the induction process, expectations, and desired outcomes, to standardise practice and ensure alignment with policy.
4. **Reduce Workloads Through Additional Staffing:** To enable SMTs to focus adequately on induction activities, the Department should consider appointing administrative assistants or additional staff to alleviate the workload carried by SMT members.
5. **Allocate Dedicated Funding:** The LDoE should earmark specific funding for induction programmes, recognising that effective induction involves activities and resources that require financial support.
6. **Continuous Support and Monitoring:** The Department must provide ongoing support to SMTs, including regular monitoring and evaluation of induction programmes on a quarterly basis to ensure quality and identify areas for improvement.

B. Recommendations to School Management Teams (SMTs)

1. **Integrate Induction into School Planning:** Principals and SMTs should ensure that induction programmes for novice educators are included in the annual school calendar, making them an integral part of school operations.
2. **Active Participation in External Induction Events:** SMT members should prioritise attendance at induction events and training sessions organised by circuit or district officials to remain updated on best practices and departmental expectations.
3. **Prioritise Time for Induction Activities:** Despite demanding schedules, SMTs should allocate dedicated time for the induction of novice educators, recognising its critical role in teacher development and retention.

4. **Resource Mobilisation for Induction:** SMTs should explore ways to raise additional funds at the school level, through fundraising initiatives or partnerships, to support induction activities that may require extra resources.
5. **Engage in Continuous Professional Development:** SMTs are encouraged to undertake ongoing research into effective induction practices and seek collaboration with nearby universities or educational experts to enhance their programmes.
6. **Incorporate Technology:** To align with the Fourth Industrial Revolution and engage younger educators, SMTs should integrate digital tools and platforms into induction programmes, making them more interactive and accessible.
7. **Utilise External Venues for Induction:** Where possible, organising induction sessions outside the regular school environment, such as during weekends in alternative venues, can enhance focus, reduce disruptions, and distribute workload more effectively.
8. **Implement Regular Check-ins and Feedback:** SMTs should establish a system of regular check-ins with novice educators and provide constructive, supportive feedback to foster growth and confidence.
9. **Foster a Supportive School Culture:** Creating an inclusive, encouraging environment where novice educators feel supported will help to alleviate stress and anxiety, contributing to greater job satisfaction and retention.

By acting upon these recommendations, both the Department and school-level leadership can address the systemic and practical barriers to effective induction, ultimately supporting the professional success and well-being of novice educators in the Limpopo province.

5.5 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.

While this study has provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in the induction of novice educators, several areas warrant further exploration to deepen understanding and improve practice in this field:

1. **Longitudinal Studies on Induction Outcomes:** Future research could adopt longitudinal designs to track the experiences and professional development of novice educators over several years. Such studies would provide a clearer picture of how induction practices influence teacher retention, job satisfaction, and career progression over time.
2. **Comparative Studies across Provinces:** Investigating the induction challenges and practices in other provinces or educational districts within South Africa would enable a comparative analysis. This could reveal region-specific barriers or successes and highlight best practices that could be adapted for use in Limpopo.
3. **Impact of Induction on Learner Outcomes:** Further research could explore the relationship between effective induction programmes for novice educators and student achievement or well-being. Understanding this link could emphasise the broader significance of supporting new teachers.
4. **Exploration of Novice Educators' Perspectives:** While this study focused primarily on the perspectives of SMTs, future research could centre on the lived experiences and needs of novice educators themselves. This approach would provide a more holistic understanding of the induction process and its challenges.
5. **Role of Technology in Induction:** As the integration of digital tools becomes increasingly important, research could evaluate the effectiveness of technology-enhanced induction programmes. This includes exploring online mentoring, digital resource platforms, and virtual support networks.
6. **Policy Implementation and Evaluation:** Further studies could critically examine how existing induction policies are implemented at the school level and assess their impact. This could inform recommendations for policy refinement and the development of more effective monitoring mechanisms.
7. **Professional Development for SMTs:** There is scope for research into the specific professional development needs of SMT members regarding induction, mentorship, and leadership. Identifying gaps and developing effective training models could help strengthen the overall induction process.
- 8.

9. **Influence of School Culture and Context:** Qualitative case studies examining how different school cultures, leadership styles, and socio-economic contexts shape the induction experience would provide valuable contextual insights and guide context-sensitive interventions.

By pursuing these avenues, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the induction process for novice educators, ultimately supporting more effective leadership, improved teacher retention, and enhanced educational outcomes in South African schools.

5.6 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY.

While this study has provided important insights into the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) during the induction of novice educators, several limitations should be acknowledged:

1. **Limited Geographical Scope:** The study was conducted within a specific region (Limpopo province), which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other provinces or contexts within South Africa. Educational contexts and challenges may differ across regions due to variations in resources, policies, and demographics.
2. **Sample Size and Diversity:** The study involved a relatively small sample of 12 participants, which, while suitable for in-depth qualitative analysis, may not capture the full diversity of perspectives among SMTs. As such, some experiences and challenges may not be fully represented.
3. **Focus on SMT Perspectives:** The research primarily explored the views and experiences of SMT members. The perspectives of novice educators themselves, as well as other stakeholders such as district officials or experienced teachers, were not directly examined, potentially leading to an incomplete understanding of the induction process.

4. **Self-Reported Data:** Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, relying on participants' self-reported experiences and perceptions. This approach is subject to biases such as selective memory, social desirability, or reluctance to disclose negative experiences.
5. **Time Constraints:** The study was conducted over a limited timeframe, which may have restricted the depth of exploration and the ability to observe the induction process over an extended period. Longer-term studies could reveal additional insights, particularly regarding the sustained impact of induction practices.
6. **Contextual Factors:** The unique contextual factors of participating schools, such as leadership styles, school culture, and available resources, may have influenced the findings. These factors may not be present in other schools, which could affect the transferability of the results.
7. **Potential Researcher Bias:** As with most qualitative research, the interpretation of data may be influenced by the researcher's own perspectives and assumptions. Measures were taken to ensure trustworthiness, but some degree of subjectivity is inevitable.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a valuable foundation for understanding the complexities of the induction process for novice educators and identifies key areas for further research and intervention.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS.

This study has illuminated the critical role that School Management Teams (SMTs) play in the effective induction of novice educators within the Limpopo province. Through a qualitative exploration of SMT experiences, the research has highlighted both the opportunities and challenges inherent in guiding new teachers as they embark on their professional journeys.

The findings emphasise the importance of well-structured, adequately resourced, and contextually relevant induction programmes, as well as the need for continuous support and capacity building for SMTs themselves. Despite the existence of supportive policies,

the study reveals a persistent gap between policy intentions and the practical realities faced by SMTs and novice educators.

The impact of induction extends beyond the professional development of new teachers; it influences job satisfaction, retention, school culture, and ultimately, learner outcomes. Addressing the challenges identified in this study will require ongoing collaboration between the Department of Education, school leadership, and broader educational stakeholders.

By offering targeted recommendations and identifying avenues for further research, this dissertation contributes to the ongoing discourse around teacher induction, professional leadership, and educational improvement in South Africa. Strengthening the induction process through informed policy, practical support, and innovative approaches will not only empower novice educators but also foster more resilient and effective schools.

The successful induction of novice educators is a shared responsibility that requires commitment, strategic planning, and adaptability from all parties involved. The insights gained from this study provide valuable guidance for enhancing leadership practices and supporting the next generation of educators as they navigate the complex and rewarding landscape of teaching.

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY.

This final chapter has brought together the key findings, conclusions, and implications of the study, offering a comprehensive reflection on the challenges faced by School Management Teams (SMTs) in the induction of novice educators. Beginning with a reflective summary, the chapter synthesised the major themes identified through qualitative inquiry, demonstrating how SMTs' efforts and constraints shape the professional experiences of new teachers.

The research conclusions highlighted the pivotal role of SMTs in supporting novice educators, while also drawing attention to the persistent gap between policy and practice,

and the impact of contextual challenges on induction processes. The recommendations were formulated to provide practical guidance for both the Limpopo Department of Education and SMTs, emphasising the need for compulsory induction programmes, targeted training, resource allocation, and the fostering of supportive school cultures.

The chapter also identified avenues for further research, suggesting longitudinal, comparative, and technology-focused studies to deepen understanding and inform future practice. Acknowledgement of the study's limitations ensured a balanced interpretation of the results, while the concluding remarks reinforced the importance of collaboration, adaptability, and sustained commitment to the successful induction and retention of novice educators.

Overall, this chapter consolidates the study's contribution to the field of educational leadership and induction, offering actionable insights and a foundation for ongoing improvement in supporting new educators within South African schools.

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APPENDIX A: REGISTRATION LETTER



2322

MAILULA N F MR
1 HENNIS STREET
IVY PARK EXT 22
0699

STUDENT NUMBER : 47261234

ENQUIRIES TEL : 0800 001 870

eMAIL : mandd@unisa.ac.za

2025-02-07

Dear Student,

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

Proposed Qualification: MED (EDUC MANAGEMENT) (98405)

CODE	PAPER	S NAME OF STUDY UNIT	NQF crdts	LANG.	PROVISIONAL EXAM. DATE	EXAMINATION CENTRE (PLACE)
DFEDU95		MEd - Education Management	**	E		
* DFEDU95		MEd - Education Management	**	E		
* Exam transferred from previous academic year						

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

Your attention is drawn to University rules and regulations (www.unisa.ac.za/register).

Please note the new requirements for reregistration and the number of credits per year which state that students registered for the first time from 2013, must complete 36 NQF credits in the first year of study, and thereafter must complete 48 NQF credits per year.

Students registered for the MBA, MBL and DBL degrees must visit the SBL's ESONline for study material and other important information.

Readmission rules for Honours: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy academic activity must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the University during each year of study. If you fail to meet this requirement in the first year of study, you will be admitted to another year of study. After a second year of not demonstrating academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, you will not be re-admitted, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which you are registered. Note too, that this study programme must be completed within three years. Non-compliance will result in your academic exclusion, and you will therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same College for a period of five years after such exclusion, after which you will have to re-apply for admission to any such qualification.

Readmission rules for M&D: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy, a candidate must complete a Master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on recommendation of the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a Doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.

BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 12760.00

Payable on or before:

Immediately: 0.00	2025/03/31: 0.00	2025/05/15: 6380.00	2025/08/15: 6380.00
	2025/11/15: 0.00	2026/03/15: 0.00	

Yours faithfully,

Prof MM Sepota
Acting Registrar

0108 0 00 0



University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX B ETHICAL CERTIFICATE



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 15 November 2024

Ref: 2024/11/15/000000346/06/RB

Name: Mr. Nkuba France Mailula

Student No.: 47261234

Decision: Ethics Approval form

Dear Mr. Nkuba France Mailula

Researcher(s): Name: Mr. Nkuba France Mailula

E-mail address: 47261234@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Telephone: 0799049406

Supervisor: Name: Dr MT Lekalakala

E-mail address: elekalmt@unisa.ac.za

Telephone: 012 4292181

Title of research: *The Challenges of School Management Teams in Inducting Novice Teachers in Secondary Schools in Seshego Circuit, Limpopo Province.*

Qualification: MEd

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2024/11/15 to 2027/11/15.

The low risk level application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 15 November 2024 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 will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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**APPENDIX C: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT
SESHEGO CIRCUIT SCHOOLS**

1 HENNIS STREET

IVY PARK

POLOKWANE

0699

3 FEBRUARY 2025

LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

PRIVATE BAG X 9489

POLOKWANE

0700

**REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT FOUR SELECTED SCHOOLS IN
SESHEGO CIRCUIT**

DEAR SIR/MADAM

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT FOUR SELECTED SCHOOLS IN SESHEGO
CIRCUIT.

My name is Mailula Nkuba France, and I am currently enrolled in a Master's degree program in Educational Management at the Faculty of Education, University of South Africa.

According to the institution's requirements for obtaining this degree, I am required to conduct a research study and develop a dissertation. This letter serves as a formal request for permission to conduct research on the topic outlined below.

The title of my research is School Management Team's challenges in inducting novice educators in Seshego circuit, secondary school: Limpopo

The aim of this study is to investigate and understand the challenges encountered by School Management Teams during the induction process of novice educators in the Seshego Circuit, providing insight to enhance the quality of educator induction and improve teacher retention. There will be no compensation or any incentives for participating in the research, and no predictable harm is associated with this research.

The study will involve gathering data through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The semi-structured interview will be conducted outside learning and teaching time and will take approximately 30-60 minutes

Document analysis will also be conducted outside the normal teaching schedule, and no teaching and learning will be compromised during this study.

The study will involve four schools, four principals, four departmental heads and four novice educators.

The research feedback will be provided to the Limpopo Department of Basic Education, and upon request, the link to download the full dissertation shall be provided.

I trust my request will be favorably considered.

You may contact my supervisor or me should you have any queries or questions

Supervisor:

Prof Lekalakala MT

[Tel:0124292481](tel:0124292481)

Email: elekalmt@unisa.ac.za

My contact details :

Cell :0799049406

Email: Francemailula@gmail.com

Your positive response in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Mailula NF

APPENDIX D: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

1 HENNIS STREET

IVY PARK

POLOKWANE

0699

3 FEBRUARY 2025

THE PRINCIPAL

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.

My name is Mailula Nkuba France, and I am currently enrolled in a Master's degree program in Educational Management at the Faculty of Education, University of South Africa.

According to the institution's requirements for obtaining this degree, I am required to conduct a research study and develop a dissertation. This letter serves as a formal request for permission to conduct research on the topic outlined below.

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The study will involve gathering data through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The semi-structured interview will be conducted outside learning and teaching time and will take approximately 30-60 minutes

Document analysis will also be conducted outside your normal teaching schedule, and I will request copies of the relevant documents to analyse after the interview.

The research feedback will be provided to the Limpopo Department of Basic Education, and upon request, the link to download the full dissertation shall be provided.

I trust my request will be favorably considered.

You may contact my supervisor or me should you have any queries or questions

Supervisor:

Prof Lekalakala MT

[Tel:0124292481](tel:0124292481)

Email: elekalmt@unisa.ac.za

My contact details :

Cell :0799049406

Email: Francemailula@gmail.com

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated

Yours faithfully

Mailula NF

APPENDIX E: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH: THE PRINCIPAL

1 HENNIS STREET

IVY PARK

POLOKWANE

0699

03 FEBRUARY 2025

THE PRINCIPAL

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

My name is Mailula Nkuba France, and I am currently enrolled in a Master's degree program in Educational Management at the Faculty of Education, University of South Africa.

According to the institution's requirements for obtaining this degree, I am required to conduct a research study and develop a dissertation. This letter serves as an invitation to participate in my research on the topic outlined below.

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The research feedback will be provided to Limpopo Department of Basic Education and upon request the link to download the full dissertation shall be provided

Should you be willing to participate in the study please sign the consent form below.

I trust my request will be favorably considered.

You may contact my supervisor or me should you have any queries or question

Supervisor:

Prof Lekalakala MT

[Tel:0124292481](tel:0124292481)

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My contact details :

Cell :0799049406

Email: Francemailula@gmail.com

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated

Yours faithfully

Mailula NF

CONSENT FORM	(RETURN SLIP)
PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH I....., hereby give permission to Mailula NF to include me as a participant in his research on Challenges in supporting novice educators :A Case study of secondary schools in Limpopo Signature Date	

APPENDIX F: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH: DEPARTMENTAL HEAD

1 HENNIS STREET

IVY PARK

POLOKWANE

0699

3 FEBRUARY 2025

DEPARTMENTAL HEAD

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

My name is Mailula Nkuba France and I am currently enrolled for Master's degree in educational management in the faculty of education at the University of South Africa.

As per requirement of the institution of tertiary institution to obtain this degree, I have to conduct research study and develop dissertation. This letter serves as an invitation to you to participate in my research on the topic stated below.

The title of my research is School Management Team's challenges in inducting novice educators in Seshego circuit, secondary school: Limpopo

The aim of the study is to investigate and understand the challenges encountered by School Management Teams in the induction process of novice educators in the Seshego Circuit to provide insight to enhance the quality of educator induction and improve teacher

retention. There will be no compensation or any incentives for participating in the research and no predictable harm is associated with this research.

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PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH I....., hereby give permission to Mailula NF to include me as a participant in his research on Challenges in supporting novice educators :A Case study of secondary schools in Limpopo Signature Date	

APPENDIX G: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH: NOVICE EDUCATORS

1 HENNIS STREET

IVY PARK

POLOKWANE

0699

03 FEBRUARY 2025

NOVICE EDUCATORS

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

My name is Mailula Nkuba France, and I am currently enrolled in a Master's degree program in Educational Management at the Faculty of Education, University of South Africa.

According to the institution's requirements for obtaining this degree, I am required to conduct a research study and develop a dissertation. This letter serves as an invitation to participate in my research on the topic outlined below.

The title of my research is School Management Team's challenges in inducting novice educators in the Seshego circuit, secondary school: Limpopo

The aim of this study is to investigate and understand the challenges encountered by School Management Teams during the induction process of novice educators in the Seshego Circuit, providing insight to enhance the quality of educator induction and improve teacher retention. There will be no compensation or incentives for participating in the research, and no predictable harm is anticipated to result from this research.

The study will involve gathering data through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The semi-structured interview will be conducted outside learning and teaching time and will take approximately 30-60 minutes

Document analysis will also be conducted outside your normal teaching schedule, and I will request copies of the relevant documents to analyse after the interview.

The research feedback will be provided to the Limpopo Department of Basic Education, and upon request, the link to download the full dissertation shall be provided

Should you be willing to participate in the study, please sign the consent form below.

I trust my request will be favorably considered.

You may contact my supervisor or me should you have any queries or questions.

Supervisor:

Prof Lekalakala MT

[Tel:0124292481](tel:0124292481)

Email: elekalmt@unisa.ac.za

My contact details :

Cell :0799049406

Email: Francemailula@gmail.com

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated

Yours faithfully

Mailula NF

CONSENT FORM (RETURN SLIP)

PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

I....., hereby
give permission to Mailula NF to include me as a participant in his research on the

**Challenges in supporting novice educators :A Case study of secondary
schools in Limpopo**

Signature

Date

APPENDIX H. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

RESEARCH TITLE: Challenges in supporting novice educators :A Case study of secondary schools in Limpopo

1. What role does SMT play in the induction process?
2. What is your perspective and experience in the induction process?
3. What challenges did you encounter during the induction process?
4. How did you navigate through those challenges?
5. How do you ensure that you are inducted?
6. Which strategies does SMT use to ensure an effective induction process in your department?
7. How does insufficient induction affect your work?
8. What are the discrepancies and implementation for the effective induction process?
9. Why is induction important to you?

Thank you for your cooperation and for taking the time to speak with us.

APPENDIX I. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DEPARTMENTAL HEADS.

RESEARCH TITLE: Challenges in supporting novice educators :A Case study of secondary schools in Limpopo

1. What role does SMT play in the induction process?
2. What is your perspective and experience in the induction process?
3. What challenges did you encounter during the induction process?
4. How did you navigate through those challenges?
5. How do you ensure that you are inducted?
6. Which strategies does SMT use to ensure an effective induction process in your department?
7. How does insufficient induction affect your work?
8. What are the discrepancies and implementation for the effective induction process?
9. Why is induction important to you?

Thank you for your cooperation and for taking the time to speak with us.

APPENDIX J. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NOVICE EDUCATORS.

RESEARCH TITLE: Challenges in supporting novice educators :A Case study of secondary schools in Limpopo

1. What role does SMT play in the induction process?
2. What is your perspective and experience in the induction process?
3. What challenges did you encounter during the induction process?
4. How did you navigate through those challenges?
5. How do you ensure that you are inducted?
6. Which strategies does SMT use to ensure an effective induction process in your department?
7. How does insufficient induction affect your work?
8. What are the discrepancies and implementation for the effective induction process?
9. Why is induction important to you?

Thank you for your cooperation and for taking the time to speak with us.

APPENDIX K QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

1.1 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS FOR NOVICE EDUCATORS.

QUESTIONS	NOVICE 1	NOVICE 2	NOVICE 3	NOVICE 4
1. What roles do SMTs play in the induction process?	Okay, so the SMTs usually share information about the available teaching support materials (LTSM) and also discuss long-range curriculum plans with us. They review copies of policies that we will use throughout the teaching years.	Ehmm... the SMTs ensure that we, as novice educators, have access to necessary resources such as textbooks, all teaching materials, Annual teaching plans, subject policies, and also guidance on how to use them.	Well, SMTs are responsible for overall support for novice educators like us; they ensure that we understand our roles and also help us manage our classrooms effectively.	SMTs ensure that we are welcomed in the teaching field by providing necessary support, facilitating introductions to all staff members, and helping us to familiarise ourselves with the school's mission and vision.
2. What is your perspective and experience in the induction process?	Most novice educators or those with less experience struggle with classroom management, lesson	Ooh, my perspective on induction is that induction is one of the crucial tools that enhances our teaching skills and also contributes to	To me induction is a program that is designed to help novice educators to build confidence in	Ummm... my perspective on the induction is that induction is a process of getting novice familiarize with school

	planning, discipline, and time management. It's through the induction programmes that novice educators will learn how to handle issues like this.	adapting to a new environment.	class and also develop skills through the difficult first years and so on of teaching.	environment Ummm.... helping us to settle in and giving us the information required to become valuable educators.
3. What challenges did you encounter during induction process?	So during our induction eeh process our programmes I mean are designed to address certain issues only and left some of the important aspect such as how to handle discipline unattended.	One of the challenges encountered is that induction happens at same as teaching leaving us frustrated, we fail to balance work and induction at the same time.	The challenges we..., that I experienced personally were that were not enough support from our SMT, they just issue documents without helping us to interpret them.	Ummm teaching at a school with few staff and few opportunities to connect with umm colleagues, this leads to induction being conducted by someone with less experience and doesn't match your expectation.
4. How did you navigate through those challenges?	So well it's a problem but I had to make some research and visit some police document such	What I did is that I've requested my departmental head to schedule the induction meeting after hours.	What I did is that I consulted the SMTs to seek clarity on matters that were not clarified during	Ummm ...I've requested the school principal to inform us whenever there is a workshop

	as south African school acts and the new BELA BILL to familiarize myself with how to handle discipline in a class.		the induction process.	that can be helpful to me.
5. How SMTs ensure that you're inducted?	Eeh like I've indicated before or I've said before the School Management Team shares the relevant information about the curriculum, lesson planning, lesson development I meant to say and also makes sure we adapt to new working environment.	What the SMT normally do they orientate us to the workspace, they help us to interpret various document that we are going to use throughout the year.	What SMT usually what they normally do they issue all the documents that we are going to use throughout the teaching process.	Pairing us novice educators with experienced educators seems to be a good strategy that the SMT uses to induct us. The main reason is that they want induction to be continuous not a one day thing.
6. Which strategies do they use to	So what they do is eeh they normally do is	Ehmm... they ensures that we have all the	Like I've said before, the SMTs paired us	Like I've indicated before they pair us with

ensure effective induction process?	am am sorry about that what they normally do schedule a meeting and share important information with us.	necessary documents such as pace setters and ATPs, organize workshops for us and also provide constructive feedback where we are not doing things right.	with experienced educators to make sure that we learn from them.	the most experienced educators, so that they can share their experience with us, umm...They can also share how to discipline learners and also how to manage classroom effectively.
7. How does insufficient induction affect your work?	Okay Insufficient induction affect negatively in many ways but just to name a few it reduce our performances and also increase the level of work related stress.	Insufficient induction leads to ineffective classroom management, unable to discipline learners and also to manage time effectively.	If I were to speak broadly It affect us as young student eeh young educating body badly because we end up not understanding our role and responsibilities, it can also lead to dissatisfaction, confusion and boredom at work. Again it can make us feel overwhelmed by too much	Ummm We may struggle with the classroom management, building a good relationship with learners and colleagues and also contribute to job dissatisfaction.

			information at once making it difficult for us to prosper as educators in the workspace.	
8. What are the discrepancies in the induction process?	Well, as I've indicated before the induction programmes doesn't cover all the aspect of education, so we encounter some of the challenges that were never touched during induction process.	Induction is not allocated enough time and induction doesn't cover all the challenges such as how to deal with overcrowding classroom, learner discipline,yaaa,etc.	One of the discrepancies that stood out to me is that being inducted by a member of the SMT who didn't major in my subjects which lead to confusion on my part because they may give us something which themselves they don't understand and even when we attempt to seek clarification on it.	UmmmOur induction focuses only on the classroom management ,other policies are not outlined in details Ummm...Another discrepancies is that time allocated for induction is not enough ,Ummm... they feed us with more information in short period of time.
9. Why is induction	Okay it is important because it really help us	Okay Induction is important since it help us to adjust to	Well Induction is important because it makes us to be	Umm...Induction is important since it helps us to reduce the level

important to you?	to integrate into our new roles and also working environment. And the last thing I can say It also gives us confidence in whatever we are doing here at school.	the school environment.	more efficient and productive at work and It also help us to engage with experienced educators.	of anxiety and stress, it also build confidence amongst novice educators.
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1.2 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS FOR DEPARTMENTAL HEADS.

QUESTION S	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C	SCHOOL D
1. What role do you play in the induction of novice educators?	Departmental head 1 Thank you!uhhh...I play a very crucial role in the induction of the novice education, I make sure that all novice educators get all the support they need, orientating them, introducing them as new educators to the school policies.	Departmental head 2 Eeh... eeh... okay as a departmental head or maybe If I can say as someone in the management I always make sure that I give them or provide them with necessary documents such as ATPs, Caps documents and also orientate them through the school environment.	Departmental head 3 Fundamentally the role that I play is to give the novice educators the supports they actually need and to make sure that they are settled in and they feel welcomed such as whenever they come across any challenges or problems they will feel free to come and consult with me.	Departmental head 4 Well I offer....and make sure that they understand... I offer support and make sure they understand what is expected of them regarding their scope of duties and their conduct.
2. What is your perspective and	Departmental head 1	Departmental head 2	Departmental head 3	Departmental head 4

experience in the induction of novice educators?	I view induction programmes as a support structure since they will be novice educators ,they need support more especially from experienced educators Uhmm... to equip them with knowledge and skills and for them to acquit them with the environment	Eeh...Induction it basically in most cases helps them to integrate the school environment and all educators which are novice educators will basically know the environment and actually everything that is required from them.	Uhh...it really assist them, the novice educators in comprehending their roles that they should play in the school.	My view is that eeh...on...my view on the induction of a novice is that it should be a continuous process since learning is continuous and eeh...the novice educators should also take it very much serious, because it will build them to make them better educators.
3. What challenges did you encounter during the induction of novice educators?	Departmental head1 Uhmm...one! Time constraints, we are not sure whether we are doing it right sometimes since we do not have a clear guideline for inducting novice educators, we	Departmental head 2 The challenges are many but the most common one its lack of support you know if you don't have support from the people who are	Departmental head 3 Eeh... The challenges it would be that the fiscal aspect of it was a challenge because other induction resources demanded to be financed.	Departmental head 4 The...challenge mainly it was a the competing activities as you can know that the duties of the DH are so many and the one has to conduct all of

	have limited resources, like lack of appropriate materials.	supervising you or people who are managing you, then you are going to have a very big challenge.		them so you end up giving them Insufficient training eeh... due to the insufficient training you get from the department but the main one I can say is time because eeh...a lot is expected of us, you have to train other people and you also had to do other tasks of the DH.
4. How did you navigate through those challenges?	Departmental head 1 Uhhh...! We are just using our discretion as as eeh...experience d educators to says so that the novice educator in the field they	Departmental head2 I tried to engage with the stakeholders like department of education but the was no	Departmental head 3 I only concentrated only what I thought was important at that time, I remember for instance was a time where I	Departmental head 4 We....consulted with our fellow colleagues from other schools as to how did they do it since they

	can acquit themselves with the environment and with the work procedures.	luck if I can tell.	had induct another eeh ... novice educator we had problems with photocopier wasn't able to make many copies so I had to make the copies of a documents which in I thought were important at that time and other documents I had to do as the time went by.	were also having novice educators and we used their experience to make sure that we do induct our new educators or our novice educators at our school.
5. How do you ensure that novices are inducted into your department?	Departmental head 1 Uhhh... structural orientation I organize departmental orientation to familiarize novice teachers with curriculum expectations eehI orientate novice educators to the school environment and provide them with a welcome	Departmental head 2 Eeh I always make it a point that I give them the documents which they are going to use like caps documents, ATPs as I've mentioned those are one or some of the documents which they need to have, I	Departmental head3 I welcome them into the department and make sure that they fully understand their roles in the school as well as in the classroom, I also make sure that they are fully comprehend the Annual teaching plans I provide lesson templates for preparations	Departmental head 4 We... help them to adapt to the new environment by providing them with the necessary support then carefully monitor them on how they are adapting

	pack giving them ATPs everything that consisting of all the necessary documents needed, such as the subject policy your caps documents, everything all the documentation that they are going to need as novice educators.	always make sure I give them this documents.	and give them examples to show them how we prepare lesson plans and lesson preparations and so on.	
6. Which strategies do you use to ensure an effective induction process in your department?	Departmental head1 Uhhh....!we normally as SMTs eeh...engage novice educators in the first week of arrival to show them around ,show them how to work ehmm...using different method of teaching, just to orientate them just to know what	Departmental head 2 You know to get to know someone you need to have one-on-one session with that person and that will help you to basically know what this person is already knowing basically you'll know the prior knowledge of	Departmental head 3 Uhh... because of the workload and time constraints, novice educators are, they are paired with relevant educators who have being in the profession so some time as induction on its own it's a process.	Departmental head 4 We make sure that they do teach... one another more especially those who were in the field before for example if they are in the same field for example commercial, science and the likes they can learn from one another

	to do and not what do.	this people eeh...what they know from their previous experience eeh and their teaching environment basically from outside everything, you know everything that this people are ... already know.		and then where they don't understand they can come and consult on the SMT then eeh...we also anticipate them to do the mistakes and then they will learn from those mistakes going forward.
7. Do you find it difficult to deal with novice educators in your department?	Departmental head1 Not at all, Uhmm... up to so far I've never had any problem because I think young educators are eager to learn and they are eager to at least learn from us experienced educators, they are doing far much better.	Departmental head2 Not at all sir because the novice educators are...are very effective in integrating technology in the classroom, this people in terms of technology they are very effective.	Departmental head3 Absolutely not, they are still fresh ,they are energetic and very helpful	Departmental head4 No....it is easy to transfer information, remember that they are still new in the field ,they come expecting and they are eager to learn so someone who is eager to learn is very much easy to

				teach that kind of a person
8. What impact does the insufficient induction of novice educators have on the effective management of your department?	Departmental head 1 Uhhh... firstly late submission, if this people are nor inducted well because they don't know what to do now you'll have one late submitting since they are still trying to figure out how some of the things are done and also just to show them about time management because it's very difficult for some of them like eeh...like signing learners books, eeh...submitting the files ehmm.. Sometimes its becomes a bit of a problem to them but so when you induct them it	Departmental head2 Higher failure rate sir, high failure rate because if novice educators are unable to such managing classroom, eeh...high failure rate you are going to a lot of student or learners failing the subject which those people will be teaching.	Departmental head 3 Mmm...insufficient induction leads to lack of confidence which ultimately yields late comings to classes or even regular attends of classes at some times, at some point.	Departmental head 4 It's a... its leads to retaliation and ...non-compliance due to the fact that one is not eeh...knowing what is exactly expected of him so its leads to those two.

	become a little bit easier.			
9. What are the discrepancies in implementing for the effective induction process?	Departmental head 1 Like I've mentioned before not having a clear guideline on the induction of novice educators, we are not sure whether we are doing the right thing or not but with the experience, we are just thinking we are on the right track because it's just showing the ropes and the things that we have been doing in the system and just showing them the policies and just following the policies and when teaching using the ATPs	Departmental head 2 Eeh... I can say eeh ... for... for...effective implementation of an induction programme eeh... Lack of training will have eeh... eeh... major impact basically a lack of training.	Departmental head 3 You know due to overwhelming administrative duties we are supposed to do the School Management Team does not have sufficient time to fully induct novice educators.	Departmental head 4 Eeh... it's a lack of support from the department of education and...further more I think it should be dedicated to the HR unit because eeh you find that one has got to do it and one has got do with the scope of duties you are teaching and the likes, so if the is a dedicated department or HR that deal with the induction of that nature it will be very much eeh...effective

10. Why induction of novice educators important in your department?	Departmental head 1 It makes the life of both the School Management Team and the novice educators much more simple because firstly ehmm...the novice educators will know when to submit things, will know how to work around the environment so that they do things correctly.	Departmental head2 Eeh ... eeh... as I've mentioned before like you... you... going to have a... a... a high passing rate which means the failure rate is going to be reduced, and the level of anxiety ,you are going to work smooth with those educators who are orientated and who are equipped with everything.	Departmental head 3 It is really important because it gives novice educators the confidence that they really need to carry out their roles effectively, it essentially boost self-esteem which in the long run produces optimal results during the teaching and learning practical.	departmental head 4 For the smooth running of the department and also to make sure that the....err novices educators are settled, to make sure that they do enjoy their work because the is no way in which they can be able to deliver in as much as they do not know what they are going to do.
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1.3 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS FOR PRINCIPALS

Questions	School A	School B	School C	School D
1. What is the role of SMT in the induction of novice educators?	Principal 1 Ooh what we do as the SMTs is that we make sure that our new teachers are fully oriented in the school community.	Principal 2 Okay thank you very much sir, as you know that the school cannot function without the school management team it is the responsibility of school management team to help the educators or to to induct them because it will be beneficial to them and they will know how to do lesson preparations and lesson plans, they will know how	Principal 3 Okay so...Our role as school or SMTs we create a supportive eeh...learning and teaching environment through that we are trying to make sure that our novices educators feel comfortable in the school environment and they also understand school policies as we guide them.	Principal 4 Okay umm...our role as an SMT is usually to induct them, novice educators will be fresh out of university so most of the things are unfamiliar to them so our role as SMT is to ensure that they adjust to the school working environment that they are introduced to, to familiarize themselves with it.

		to do classroom management which entails the organizing ,leading and the controlling of the classroom and another thing it also help on how to deal with discipline because when inducting them will also explain to them about the code of conduct of the school or school policies pertaining to eeh...pertaining to discipline it will also help the to have knowledge of educational policies or legislative		
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		framework which are mandatory for all educators to know them such as south African school act84 of 1996 and other legislative framework, thank you.		
2. What is your perspective and experience in the induction of novice educators?	Principal 1 Uhh...with the experience that I have...I have noticed that induction in important, it is an important tool you know in terms of welcoming and orientating novice educators ,it shows them supports and ensures they grow professionally.	Principal 2 Okay according to me umm....my perspective or my experience with regard to induction is to make sure umm... that they know how to create a learning environment and it is also make sure that we support and we provide adequate	Principal 3 Okay so when it comes to eeh...induction or the perspective or experience right It's not something that you can do one-day as you still have to help them to navigate through the department of education and the school as a whole so, I view induction as a continuous	Principal 4 Well based on my experience I've realized that the idea behind the induction is to welcome them, we must welcome this novice educators and also to develop them in terms of their professionalism., we must develop them and welcome them into this new working environment.so

		support because remember if someone is from a university our university prepares the educators we know that they go for teaching practices but now they will be doing everything in real life so which means that umm... we have to support or to give them adequate support to them, Thank you.	support for novice educators until they able to stand on their own without further maybe monitoring around the school.	that is my experience.
3. What challenges did you encounter in implementing induction programmes	Principal 1 mmm... the challenges we encountered is that some of the novice educators hold a higher	Principal 2 Uhhh... the problem Uhhh... can you repeat the question sir. Okay the problem that I	Principal 3 Okay Sir I think eeh...one of the challenges is trying to use an all-size-fits-all approach well trying to	Principal 4 Well for the most part you know schools are not the same in terms of resources eeh... for the most part mmm... our

	qualification than we do ,they lack of cooperation coming they think they know better than we do because they hold higher qualification, that's the challenges we encountered.	encounter or we encountered as SMT in most cases is because eeh...there is absence of the legal frameworks uh... that is uh...is published by the government which informs the SMT on how they have to run the induction so as SMT we use our own experience to induct our novice educators and sometimes we may find that with the knowledge that we have you may find that we are providing the induction but	induct the educators because it is not helpful, and trying to do everything on one day due to time constraints such as going to class and one need to manage the school and still having to do your own work eeh it becomes a problem so this makes both our novice educators and SMTs feel overwhelmed.	time and resources are very limited so it becomes difficult when the part of inducting this novice educators come so also you know as SMT we have a lot of admin work so workload becomes problem as well when it comes to that part.
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		is not enough or we are unable to cover the most important think that the novice educators have to know, thank you.		
4. How do SMT member navigate through those challenges?	Principal 1 We are try our best to talk to them, reprimand them and show them the importance of induction.	Principal 2 Okay thank you very much sir...eh in most cases just because we know the hierarchy of department of education as SMT member I have to make sure I consult with department of education for some of the aspect that I may not have knowledge of, so as SMT members in most cases	Principal 3 Okay so as you know there are structures within the department right, so with us the immediate structure for support is the Circuit so every time that we are having a challenges or we need any support or guidance we go to our superiors at the circuit level.	Principal 4 So...for the most part we ensure that novice educators are not isolated we pair them or we put them together with educators that are already experienced so that they can assimilate from them, and in the process develop them in a way, so we pair them with these experienced old teachers as they say so we put them together so

		when we are about to induct the novice educators ,we ask for assistance from circuit manager and even from district if themselves for the fact that as I said there is no legislative framework sometimes it's even difficult for them to give us clarity on a certain issues so that is why I said it is very much important for department for department to have a legislative framework so that all relevant stakeholders		that they can learn from them.
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		and departmental officials they will be aware of what is it that we have to do during the induction, thank you.		
5. How do you ensure novice educators are inducted effectively in your school?	Principal 1 Eeer...I have dedicated the departmental heads to be responsible for inducting novice educators, what I do as the principal i offer support and I support the novice educators same as departmental head, whenever they inducting novice educators.	Principal 2 Okay thank you very much eh... first of all they have to know the vision and the mission of the school where the school is what are the expectations what are the goals that the school need to achieve but first of all I can say that we have to make sure that we introduce the culture to them for instance if we	Principal 3 Okay so we...assist or ensure that our novice educators are inducted effectively through going to class to observe novice educators during lesson and provide feedback to them and we also provide regular visits and address challenges that they encountered within the school either in the	Principal 4 Well as ive mentioned its more about pairing them with old one ,we pair them with these experience one , experience educators have a lot of practical's or practicality skills that can help these novice educators hence weusually promote the idea of pairing them with experience one.

		have appointed a novice educator, we used to have Saturdays classes or enrichment classes ,so in order to make sure that a novice educator is familiar with the norm and culture of the school we have to make sure that we induct them and we inform them how we are going to do things so that they may not be surprised when it their turn or when they have to render some of the extra activities or extra curricula activities but	classrooms, in staffroom or generally as individuals.	
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		if the know it won't be a problem I'm definitely sure they will perform their duties to their best of their ability because they knew what is that they have to do and what they don't have do, thank you		
6. Which strategies do you use to ensure an effective induction process in your schools?	Principal 1 We make sure that new educators are orientated during the first week of arrival, that's the time we use to induct novice as soon as they arrive the first week is used for induction	Principal 2 Uhhh... the only thing that I do sir I just make sure that all novice educator understand what is expected from them and for them to understand as I said I have to explain what is it that we expect from them as a	Principal 3 Okay so to ensure that we use part of the SMT, the departmental heads eeh..., we pair them with novice educators in the relevant field or stream so that they can guide and support them through their journey as	Principal 4 Eeh ... well there are couple but the main one that we usually use is to ensure that all the material are accessible all the time we make it easy for them to access this material and make accessible for the most part.

		school and when they have a knowledge of vision and the mission of the school it will be easy for them to know what is it that is expected from them and also my duty is to make sure that I make them understand and maybe allow them to ask questions where they don't understand during the induction because at the end of the day I expect them to perform as the same as the old educators or the old staff	novice educators.	
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		members so it is simple I have to make sure that I Uhmm. Ehmm ...I introduce them to the culture and also make that I explain to them or elaborate to them what is it that is expected from them, thank you.		
7. Do you find it challenging to manage schools with more novice educators?	Principal 1 It is quiet challenging because this new educators are addicted to their phones, they are always on their phones.	Principal 2 No I don't have any problem with it all sir because the advantage of having a novice educator, we are not saying old educators are not manageable ,the skills ,values and	Principal 3 Eeh...so far no, I haven't experienced any challenges or the no challenges as they still have fresh minds and they make it easier to work with.	Principal 4 No no it's not difficult at all because usually they come with this eeh...eagerness or enthusiasm so it make it easy for them to make a great team. It's not challenging at all if anything its more beneficial.

		attitudes that they acquired from a degree ,eeh...they might bring new ideas because remember the education is revolutionary it changes time and again so as educators we have to be up to date with the recent developments in education so when we are having a novice educator, they are innovative and they will bring new knowledge and they will be sharing or will make sure that the old educators will support the new or the novice		
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		educators at the same time the novice educators will share with the old staff about the new or recent development in education, thank you		
8. What impact does the insufficient induction of a novice have on the effective management of the school?	Principal 1 It has an impact in terms of eeh... productivity because new educators may feel isolated and then it can also affect their self-confidence and you know they feel isolated, they end up being absent from school.	Principal 2 Okay first of all sir... thank you first of all I in most cases it might lead to late submission another thing uh...it might be difficult for them to have a knowledge of educational policies for example in terms of south African council of educators act 81 of 2000 it stipulates the code of	Principal 3 Okay...okay so with our novices educators at times ehmm...they may struggle or they struggle to perform their duties efficiently right so this increasing the likelihood of non-submission to reach deadlines, and sometimes they may feel bored or some form of	Principal 4 Eeh well the common struggle that we have with novices educators is that eeh...they find it difficult to create a positive learning environment so for the most part result in most learners underperforming, so that is the only struggle we have observed so far.

		professional ethics on how the educator have to behave so which means that if they don't receive induction it will be difficult for the school to function and sometimes they might even submit late and they have to be aware also of the educators employment act 76 of 1998 which stipulates the condition of service of educators and also explain the consequence s of not following or taking orders from their	boredom in the field as novices educators seek better job opportunities outside the field of teaching.	
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		superiors, thank you		
9. What discrepancies and implementation issues for the effective induction process?	Principal 1 Ooh okay...Inadequate training of SMT is a problem because it hinders the effective implementation of those induction programmes. The SMTs is well trained.	Principal 2 Thank you very much sir as I said the only problem that we are having is lack of training I think lack of SMT training because I think that SMT need to be trained on how to induct novice educators as long as SMT we don't have a legislative framework or documents that guide us on how to induct the novice educators it will not be easy for us to induct novice educators so which means	Principal 3 Okay so...mmm the Insufficient induction policies they obstructs the implementation of the induction process.	Principal 4 Well umm the thing is some of the resources you may find that they are Limited resources so you know the limitation of resources sometimes it in a way delay can delay the implementation of induction programmes so we find it hard to induct you find that we are limited regarding resources, resources could be anything starting from money or time even funds so thatwhere our problems lies

		that all stakeholders eeh ... the educational officials or professionals or other stakeholders we have to use the uniform training or uniform induction which means that school A IS using induction for novice educators school B must also use the very same method so obviously eeh...Eeh...b y doing this it will help us a lot, thank you.		
10. Why is the induction of novice educators	Principal 1 It important because I believe that it helps new	Principal 2 Okay thank you very much sir...uhh...	Principal 3 Okay so I think one of the main eeh...importance of induction	Principal 4 Well umm...It helps this novice educators it boost their morale as

important in your school?	educators to understand their roles in the school environment, yes the comes from varsity they were well trained for this but induction is important because it's more like a reminder of what their role in school is	first of all I think it is good because it reduces the frustration because remember coming from a university uhh... as I said earlier they were doing teaching practice but now they have to face the reality so it will help them to improve to with the implementation of curriculum and how to deliver the curriculum and how to ensure the quality teaching and learning, thank you	It helps to reduce the level of anxiety and also makes the novice feel welcomed within our school environment.	well as confidence then as a results it propel them and intensify their confidence to help them perform their duties in their most part.
11. Did you receive any	Principal 1	Principal 2	Principal 3	Principal 4

training on the induction of educators?	Unfortunately no, I didn't receive any training.	No training was received that is why said I use my own experience and knowledge but in most cases I consult with the SMT from neighboring schools sometimes when I need further assistance I ask advice from the circuit manager.	No, unfortunately we have never received any induction so we just induct or teach them through our experience in the field.	No, it's unfortunate I've never received any induction programme
12. In your opinion, is the induction programme helpful to novice educators?	Principal 1 Yes, I think it is eeh... it helps them to work easier and makes the jobs more enjoyable.	Principal 2 Yeah I think it's is very much helpful because it closes the gap between university theory and realities of teaching and it also help	Principal 3 Yes as you know times have changed and ways of teaching so Induction programmes help novice educators with the necessary skills and	Principal 4 Very very helpful remember I've mentioned this above that these novice educators are fresh out of university so most of the things that need to be learned are not taught in the

		them to close the gap or to help them apply the knowledge that they've learned during their studies in to practice or to put in practice ,thank you	knowledge also ensure they are familiar with policies.	university It helps them to understand their roles at school level, for their most part novice educators come here with a very limited eeh...understanding of what teaching and teaching environment is, so it helps them understand their roles.
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Appendix L: Proof of editing

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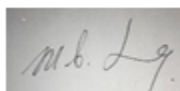
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