

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS  
OF TEACHERS WITH REGARDS TO STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN A  
NAMIBIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL**

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## **Abstract**

Staff development (SD) is regarded as an important process, both for the professional growth of teachers and the organizational development of schools. The literature on SD uses the concepts of 'SD', 'professional development' and 'in-service training of teachers' interchangeably. The purpose of this study is to investigate the teachers' experiences and perceptions of SD practices in a Namibian secondary school.

This qualitative case study was carried out at the school where I am teaching. Two methods were used to collect the data, namely a blend of semi-structured and unstructured interviews with three teachers and one focus group interview with five teachers. The analysis of the data collected was carried using the method suggested by Taylor and Bogdan (1998) which includes discovery, coding and discounting. These concepts are discussed in Chapter Three.

The main finding of this research regards SD at the school as mainly in line with the traditional view. The study also made three other unusual findings that differ from the traditional view of SD held at the school. First, the principal's role as a human resource manager of SD; second the pastoral role of a principal in SD and third the role of teachers' unions in SD. All these findings are important for SD practices in schools and for further research because little is known in the current literature on SD.

Finally, this study proposes further research to develop an organizational development (OD) cycle of problem solving to help create an internal policy on SD, which is currently non-existent at the school.

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 What is staff development?**

Wanzare and Ward (2000: 265–266) give various definitions of staff development (SD): (i) SD includes those processes that improve teachers’ job-related knowledge, skills or attitudes (ii) SD is a process designed to influence positively the knowledge, attitudes or skills of professional educators to enable them to design instructional programmes to improve student learning, (iii) SD is a programme of activities planned and carried out to promote the personal development and professional growth of teachers.

Staff development is of immense benefit to the teachers and the school. According to Butler (2003: 6) the desired outcome of SD is one of the following: (i) Information transfer: participants receive information about new approaches, techniques and requirements, (ii) Skill acquisition: participants are taught a particular way to do something, (iii) Behaviour change: new information and/or skills are taught with the expectation that participants will apply the new learning and change their behaviours (Korinek as cited in Butler 2003: 6).

Wanzare and Ward (2000: 266) argue that the concepts of staff development, teacher development, professional development and in-service education are used interchangeably in the literature. The conceptualization of SD will be explored further in chapter two.

### **1.2 The conceptual framework**

The broader theoretical framework within which my study is located is the theory of organizational development (OD). The current educational reform process in Namibia is a change process “...and for the schools to change, teachers must themselves become both agents and facilitators of change” (MEC 1993: 76). Teachers can be empowered to become

agents of change through the implementation of staff development programmes to equip them with the necessary enabling skills and knowledge to bring about desired changes at their schools. Against this background, staff development becomes a necessity.

Staff development or professional development of teachers can bring about change and improvement at schools. Research done by Davidoff, Kaplan, Lazarus (1994) and De Jong (1999) suggests that for schools to be successful there must be ongoing and regular staff development programmes that include developing a shared educational vision, a collegial culture and which help schools become learning organizations.

Roy (1998) argues that research on what constitutes effective staff development is 20 years old. She provides suggestions as to what she regards as components of effective staff development such as teacher participation, effective training and the continuous development of a school culture that is conducive to learning.

Much of the research on staff development internationally has been based on large survey studies. I have found few examples of studies that have been done in Namibia about teachers' experiences and perceptions concerning SD practices.

### **1.3 Why this study?**

There are several factors that prompted me to pursue this research. First, I became interested in researching staff development practices as a result of the interest shown in the phenomenon by members of the cluster management committee. A cluster is a group of schools that are geographically close and accessible to each other for the purpose of sharing resources and for the internal training of their staff.

The cluster system operates on the principles of collegiality. Teachers and principals of various schools meet within the cluster committees and learn from each other by sharing experiences and ideas, assisting each other with the problems, consulting and cooperating at all levels. The cluster system emphasizes the importance of teamwork. Emphasis is put on

schools learning to work together collectively as teams. I anticipate that this research will be of interest to the cluster management committee in providing them with guidelines for future staff development programmes within the cluster.

Secondly, giving guidance and mentoring to the Basic Education Teachers Diploma (BETD) in-service training teachers sparked my interest in researching internal staff development practices. The Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture offer this diploma in-service. The teachers are given a chance to attend conduct sessions during the first week of the holidays to meet with the tutors. When they return to schools they are supposed to implement what they have learned in actual class situations. There are some teachers at my school who completed the programme and there are two who are currently busy with the programme. I am also providing my services as a part time tutor to this programme and am very interested in how teachers in this programme experienced and perceived SD issues.

Thirdly, I am doing this research because of my general interest in staff development issues. I have great interest in issues concerning professional development of teachers and how teachers keep up to date at school. My argument is that there should be a department within the school that specifically addresses the professional development of the teachers. These three interests prompted my desire to pursue this study.

#### **1.4 The research goal**

My research interest is an investigation of the teachers' experiences and perceptions of staff development practices in a Namibian secondary school. I intend to examine through this research the extent to which teachers at one school are involved in staff development practices and how they experience and perceive those practices.

## **1.5 Research approach**

I located my research within the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm enables researchers to concentrate on “meaning that people make of the phenomena” (Van Rensburg 2001: 16). Research within this paradigm requires active involvement with the participants and telling the story as it emerges and is understood by the participants (Cantrell 1993: 84).

The method that I have chosen for my research is a case study, because it allows me to do my study “within a localized boundary of space and time” (Basse 1999: 58) and to “investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin 1989: 13). The case study research method, therefore, enables me to understand the complexities of the situation that I study.

The instruments that I have used to collect the data include individual interviews and focus group interviews. I interviewed three staff members: the principal and two other teachers. A focus group interview consisted of five participants.

I analyzed the transcripts of the audio-recorded interviews and focus interviews using a qualitative data analysis technique used by Taylor and Bogdan (1998). This technique involved three stages: discovery, coding and discounting. These concepts are discussed later in the methodology chapter. Through working with the transcript data I sought emerging themes and categories which formed the substance of my written account (Miles and Huberman 1984; Cantrell 1993). I have taken the liberty of editing some parts of the quotes taken from the interviews to make them readable and to improve the language.

I entered into a written contract with all the interviewees prior to the interviews. The contract stated the purpose of my research and requested consent for the interview to be recorded and for resulting information to be used in this thesis. The contract also assured the participants that pseudonyms would be used instead of their names.

## **1.6 Research site**

This research was carried out at the school where I am teaching. The school was built in 1978 and is situated 28 kilometres east of Khorixas, the nearest town. More than 300 learners are registered with the school at present. There are 28 institutional workers, 12 teachers, 2 overseas volunteer teachers, 1 school secretary, 3 farm workers, 2 security guards and approximately 20 non-school going children which make up the community.

The fact that I hold a management position at my school and that I know the school very well could possibly have influenced my research. However, I have minimized any bias by letting the data speak for itself in chapter four, prior to the data analysis in chapter five. This I have done through the use of a blend of semi-structured and unstructured interviews and a high ratio of participant voice to researcher voice in my data work.

## **1.7 A route map of the chapters**

There are six chapters in this thesis, including this chapter, the introduction.

In chapter two I present an overview of the literature in order to understand the concept of SD and come to grips with the current thinking in SD issues. I review the literature under two major sections: (i) the classical approach to SD and (ii) organizational level SD.

In chapter three I outline the research methodology used in this study. I start by conceptualizing the research paradigm. Next I discuss and give reasons why my research is located within the interpretive paradigm. I further discuss and give reasons for selecting the case study method for my research. The research process I have followed is provided next, including the research sample used, the interviews conducted, how I analyzed the data and ethical issues. Finally, I highlight issues on research limitations.

In chapter four I present the main findings with regard to how the teachers involved in the study perceive and experience SD practice at the school. These findings are presented in the

form of five themes that emerged after I analyzed the data, namely: different modes in which SD is taking place, different routes of identifying SD needs, leadership and management roles of the principal in SD, the external organizations support of SD and organization wide perspective of SD. I present this chapter so that the interviewees and focus group participants' voices are heard without too much comment on the data.

In chapter five I devote my discussion to the interpretation of the main findings and try to give meaning to the findings. I do this by integrating the literature discussed in chapter two with new literature. I also comment on some issues by giving my own perspectives and viewpoints.

Finally, in chapter six I make concluding remarks on various issues. Firstly, I summarize my main findings on how teachers experience and perceive the SD practices at the school. Secondly, I draw attention to the potential value of this study. Thirdly, I give recommendation both for practice and further research. Finally, I bring to light the limitations of the whole study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature on staff development (SD).

According to Smith (1995: 20), “SD often functions without reference to organisational contexts in which it operates”. He views SD as an organisation-wide activity that does not only serve individuals but also organizations as a whole. Lipton and Greenblatt (as cited in Smith 1995: 20) argue that because of the individual character of SD “many potentially effective individual growth efforts fail because they don’t attend to group processes and dynamics such as interdependence”. Tam and Cheng (1996: 17) claim that traditional SD programmes neglect the group nature of staff in the schools and they argue that balance in SD activities should be maintained by addressing the individual, group and school.

There are two sections in this chapter. In the first section I give an overview of the classical approach to staff development and other related concepts and issues of SD. In the second section, I discuss the organization-wide perspective of SD. In this section I explore the extent to which organizational development (OD) is related to SD. In the same section, I give an overview of the important key features of organization-wide perspective SD, such as leadership, a learning organization, organizational culture, vision building, team building, collaboration and decision-making.

#### **2.2 The classical approach to staff development**

In this section I emphasise the traditional approach to SD by concentrating on discussing the concepts used in SD, different modes of SD and failures of classical SD. The purpose of

doing this is to distinguish it from the organization wide approach to SD, which I discuss later.

### **2.2.1 Towards an understanding of staff development: explaining the terminology**

The concept of SD originated from the commercial and industrial sector, private and public enterprise and management training programmes (Main 1985: 1). Today the concept is used widely in other sectors, including schools, where it is applied to school improvement, updating of knowledge and skills, life-long learning, team building, organizational development and individual development (Main 1985: 1). Because of these diverse aims there is no single universally accepted definition for SD.

There are other concepts, such as professional development and in-service training that are used interchangeably with SD (Buitendag 1998: 16), but in essence they are not the same. Professional development has more to do with personal development of teachers to equip them with the necessary skills to execute their tasks better (Schreuder, Du Toit, Roesch and Shah 1993; Law 1999). Schreuder *et al.* (1993: 12) argue that “professional development need not necessarily be linked to in-service training, because individual teachers may also develop themselves through other means”. Staff development is a broader concept because it includes the development of the individual as well as the organization. Even if there is a slight difference between SD, in-service training and professional development, in the literature the terms are used interchangeably.

The differences between these concepts are very narrow, so that Bayne-Jardine suggested that (as cited in Buitendag 1998: 16) “... it is helpful to regard staff development as an overarching concept and in-service training as the main way in which development can be encouraged”. In contrast, Pierce and Hunsaker (1996: 101) argue that professional development and in-service training are the same thing. They argue that professional development is the term used today to mean in-service training. According to Pierce and Hunsaker (1996: 101), it is an example of “new name, old game”.

According to Buitendag (1998: 21), staff development “focuses on the individual and takes his/her individual characteristics, strengths and weaknesses into account, and promotes development or movement towards a goal of showing greater skill, competence and confidence than before”.

Main (1985: 6–7) echoes that some people define SD narrowly while others define it broadly. A narrow definition of SD, according to Main (1985), puts much emphasis on the acquisition of skills to carry out specific tasks in a classroom, whereas the broader definition of SD emphasizes the preparation of staff for future roles within or even outside the school. Fullan (as cited in Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana 1997: 98) describes SD as a process that is intended to improve the skills, attitudes, understanding, or performance of the teachers in their present and future roles.

Staff development encompasses multiple functions. It includes developmental as well as training purposes. Some authors view the concepts of training and development differently. According to Jalling (as cited in Main 1985: 2) staff training embraces activities planned and implemented by the educational authorities to empower teachers in their teaching, whereas SD embraces activities which aim at increasing their readiness to accept and promote innovation. Browell (2000: 59) notes that development is a much broader concept with long-term benefits for the individual.

The importance of regular or ongoing SD programmes cannot be over emphasized. Stoll and Fink (as cited in Law 1999: 70) assert: “nothing in a school has more impact on students in terms of skills development, self-confidence, or classroom behaviour than the personal and professional growth of their teachers”. Walter *et al.* (as cited in Wanzare and Ward 2000: 265) noted that “the quality of teaching depends on the quality of the teachers which in turn, depends on the quality of their professional development”.

Staff development can take various forms: sending teachers to colleges or universities for training, as well as empowering them through formal lectures, workshops and in-service training. Even newly appointed teachers directly from colleges or university need SD.

Donald *et al.* (1997) argue that school authorities sometimes neglect orientation of new teachers. Therefore, SD is important because it will remind the school authorities about their task to facilitate continuing professional development at schools.

There are various SD opportunities in which teachers can be involved.

### **2.2.2 Different approaches to staff development**

Donald *et al.* (1997) and Buitendag (1998) identify the following modes as examples of some of the activities through which SD is possible: (i) full time or part time studies, (ii) attending formal lectures, seminars, and conferences, (iii) visits to other schools, attending workshops and study groups, (iv) class visitations, (v) participation in professional associations and (vi) presenting lectures.

Meltzer and Sherman (cited in Wanzare and Ward 2000: 272) argue that there must be multiple SD activities for teachers to choose from, because not all approaches are effective. On this point, Koll *et al.* (cited in Wanzare and Ward 2000: 272) propose that:

Staff development programmes must provide options for participation so that choices will facilitate a match between motivation and activity. Conference attendance, skill building workshops, classroom observation, peer coaching, conversations with the principal about a journal article; these are but a few of the alternative opportunities.

Even if there are different approaches or strategies to SD all of them “should stress meaning, purpose, high morale, provision for individual differences, interest, quality attitudes, goal attainment, acceptance and respect for others, problem solving skills, and self concept development by participants” (Ediger 1995: 104).

In the next sections some characteristic SD activities are discussed.

### **2.2.2.1 Workshops**

Anderson (2000: 2) argues that “workshops are popular, successful, inexpensive, and relatively easy to schedule, and fill a need. They serve their purpose and help considerably to bring the skill level of teachers to respectable and expert levels”.

The concept of the workshop is common in the literature on adult learning. Adult learning is based on experiential learning and it encompasses the idea of learning by doing. According to Braus and Monroe (1994: 3) “research shows that people...learn best by taking part in activities that build on what they already know”. They also point out that the basic assumption underlying experiential learning is “the need to build on participants’ experiences and to create an atmosphere of trust that helps bring out their best” (1994: 3).

Workshops are a valuable SD tool to “promote awareness of new practices or curricula and provide opportunities for teachers to network” (Robinson and Carrington 2002: 240). Because participants are adults and professionals, who have been in the business of education for quite some time, and having the required qualifications, workshops are a good platform where teachers can collectively reflect on the practice of refreshing themselves on current and contemporary educational issues (Butler 2003 3).

### **2.2.2.2 In-service training**

In-service training can be twofold: external (off-site based) and internal in-service training (site based). The former takes place outside the school premises, whereas the latter takes place within the school. Bondesio and de Witt (cited in Buitendag 1998: 79) distinguish between external and internal in-service training by saying “the external in-service training is that which is the task of the education departments, often in conjunction with universities, while the internal in-service training is that which is arranged within the school”.

According to McNaught and Raubenheimer (cited in Lotz 1996: 93), in-service training has four major goals which include: (i) qualifying the under-qualified teachers, (ii) upgrading

under-qualified and qualified teachers, (iii) providing professional development in changing school governance, and (iv) professional development in curriculum related issues.

#### **2.2.2.2.1 Off-site based staff development (External in-service training)**

As the name suggests, the external in-service training or off-site based SD takes place outside the school premises. It includes teachers' training and development programmes carried out by education departments, usually in partnership with universities or education colleges or any other organization that specializes in teacher training and development. External in-service training can take different forms, ranging from refresher courses, workshops, seminars and lectures to formal education courses. The latter includes courses that the teachers can undertake, usually during holidays, over a period of years to improve their professional education qualifications.

Some education and training programmes referred to as INSET (In-Service Education and Training) are offered to the teachers outside of the school premises, normally during school holidays and can be regarded as in-service training. However, by this rationale, if a teacher takes a part-time Education Masters while he is still in-service, this would be in-service training. Thompson (cited in Lotz 1996: 92–93) summarizes these programmes as “activities by which serving teachers...may extend and develop their professional competence and general understanding of the role which they and the school are expected to play.”

#### **2.2.2.2.2 Site-based staff development (Internal in-service training)**

The workplace is an important context for practical SD. It is also a place where what one learns through different staff development approaches can be implemented, tested and reflected. Internal in-service training is also referred to as school-focused or school-located in-service training because it is school-based and relies heavily on the school's resources and relates to education and training which teachers receive while they are in the teaching situation (Lotz 1996; Buitendag 1998).

After teachers have undergone external in-service training, which is normally spearheaded by education departments, there is still a need for ongoing staff development programmes in the schools to enable the teachers to stay abreast of the new developments in the education sector. According to Davidoff, Kaplan, and Lazarus (1994:12):

Without ongoing programmes and processes to encourage and support staff development, schools will become out of touch with educational trends and teachers will lose that sense of renewal and aspiration which is such an essential part of a meaningful education.

Teachers joining the profession for the first time need to be given guidance, and those who are already in the profession need internal in-service training. This is because education is not a static process; rather it is a dynamic and life-long learning process.

### **2.2.2.3 Personal development**

The personal development approach to staff development is individually determined. It is an approach that requires commitment and dedication from the individual. In this approach, teachers take responsibility for their professional growth by seeking expert help from their colleagues, education institutions, teachers resource centres, or any other educational resource in order to improve their practice. This is in line with what Bayne-Jardine (cited in Buitendag, 1998: 93): “All personal development is self development and this takes place when people use the opportunities available to increase their skills, knowledge, competence and confidence”.

#### **2.2.2.4 Class visits**

The class visit is the best known of the classical SD strategies in schools, but it is also one of the most problematic ways of conducting SD in a school (Buitendag 1998). Many teachers misunderstand the purpose of class visits. The blame for this misconception belongs not to the teachers, but to the people carrying out these visits. The school principals, together with their management teams, are usually the only persons authorized to carry out class visits. Buitendag (1998: 87) argues that if the entire staff were afforded the chance to carry out class visits, the perceptions teachers have towards class visits could change.

The way class visits are carried out in schools is unfair. The reasons put forward are that teachers feel that they are being degraded, humiliated and witch-hunted through the whole process of class visits. This happens because the teachers responsible for class visits are not executing their task, including after-class visit discussions and report writing, in a professional manner. Buitendag (1998: 84) proposes:

For class visitation to be relevant and meaningful, constructive feedback sessions need to be held following the visit. This is, in fact, the most important and valuable aspect of the class visit, as it affords the opportunity for development and growth.

In schools where great value is placed on learning, collaboration and team-worked class visits are viewed as having great potential for SD because, through the implementation of professionally conducted class visits, the following can be achieved: (i) weak areas of teaching could be identified to assess where the need for SD is, and (ii) a culture of learning and sharing in the school could be enforced.

#### **2.2.3 Failures of staff development approaches**

Fullan (cited in Buitendag 1998: 100) identifies the following reasons for why professional development programmes fail: (i) people other than those for whom SD programmes are intended usually choose topics, (ii) only occasionally are SD programmes supported by a

follow-up, (iii) follow-up evaluation takes place infrequently, (iv) staff development programmes rarely address the needs and concerns of individuals, (v) there is a lack of any conceptual basis in the planning and implementing of SD, which would ensure their effectiveness and (vi) although we are all teachers, the approach to our own instructional programmes shows a weakness in the understanding of how learning occurs.

In addition to the abovementioned failures in SD, Wanzare and Ward (2000: 269) have identified the insufficient emphasis placed on school-based in-service training programmes as a barrier. They argue that current in-service training activities are far removed from schools because they are done outside the schools, while implementation takes place in the schools.

Inviting principals or some teachers from the school for SD exercises, with the intention that upon their return they will plough back what they have learned to the rest of the staff, has proved futile, although it is thought to be cost effective. There exists widespread criticism about this form of SD in organizational development literature. The importance of participation, in the sense of involving the whole staff, is essential for SD in schools (Buitendag 1998; Wright 1990). French and Bell (1995: 56) speak of “getting the whole system in one room”. The idea, later developed by Weisbord into “future search conferences” (French and Bell 1995: 56), could be an appropriate platform to engage the entire school community in diagnosing their institutional shortcomings collectively and tackling the situation to bring about the desired changes demanded by the community.

The development of teachers to become better teachers through SD initiatives cannot be seen in isolation from organizational development (OD). The processes complement each other. The development of teachers will help develop the school as an organization. According to Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 35) we cannot develop an organisation (school) without developing the people who work in the schools; thus professional development is seen to be a necessary aspect of organisational development.

Therefore, to understand SD better will require an understanding of OD.

## **2.3 Organizational development and staff development**

In the preceding chapter I discuss the traditional approach to SD, which involves individual or expert views of SD. In the next sections the organization wide perspective on SD is discussed.

### **2.3.1 Conceptualising organizational development (OD)**

Many authors who write about OD define it as a change process to enhance effective organizational functioning. According to Schmuck and Runkel (1994: 45) OD intervention can be used to bring about desired change in educational programmes such as SD. The definition of OD by French and Bell (1995: 28) includes some of the very important characteristics of staff development. French and Bell define OD as follows:

Organizational development is a long term-effort, led and supported by top management, to improve an organization's visioning, empowerment, learning, and problem-solving processes, through an ongoing, collaborative management of organizational culture-with special emphasis on the culture of intact work teams.

Meers (1999) recommends in his research on school-focused SD stresses the importance of SD in increasing teachers' creativity with the goal of bringing about more innovation in teaching and also its ability to enhance whole school development. Stoll, Reynolds, Creemers and Hopkins (1996: 121), in analyzing the framework of school improvement, make the following proposition:

Schools will not improve unless teachers, individually and collectively, develop. While teachers can often develop their practice on an individual basis, if the whole school is to develop then there needs to be many staff development opportunities for teachers to learn together.

In the next section I look at how SD and OD can be integrated.

### **2.3.2 Synthesis of organizational development and staff development**

A broader theoretical framework under which SD can be placed is that of OD. Organizational development is about change and SD is also aimed at bringing about change “to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness” (ASTD, cited in Smith 1995: 20). In support of this view Votjtek (cited in Smith 1995: 20) argues that “individual and institutional growth are both necessary for maximum growth and effective change”. The departure point of Smith (1995: 23) is that individual development of teachers needs to feed into groups or institution’s goals or vision. This way of thinking give SD an organizational character and is supported in the literature on SD and OD (Tam and Cheng 1996; Browell 2000).

Erasmus and van der Westhuisen (1996) and Donald *et al.* (1997) argue that OD is aimed at managing change by involving both the human side of the organization and the environment. To ensure successful change in an organization requires facilitating change in both the people and the structures. Therefore, Smith (1995: 21) argues that staff development takes on institutional character and needs to be viewed as part of the OD process. Since people are in control of the structures, and they themselves need to be empowered to manage and run the change process, SD becomes a necessity as a process of empowerment to equip teachers to manage the change process.

Organizational development is a holistic approach to organizational renewal and includes all the subsystems of the entire organization. According to the systems theory, organizations are like living systems that hold different parts together. These different parts are interdependent. French and Bell (1995: 39) argue that systems theory “denotes interdependency, interconnectiveness, and interrelatedness of a set of elements that constitute the reliable whole”. Similarly, staff development could be viewed as an integral part of the organization, without which the organization could be dysfunctional. This has organization wide implications.

Organizational development and staff development enable teachers to understand their roles within the school so that they can interact constructively with fellow teachers as well as learners. The interchanging or renewal of old norms and doing things with innovative practices, better communication tools and problem-solving techniques which are provided by OD intervention (Schmuck and Runkel, 1994) and which will be transferred through institutionalized staff development programmes, will ultimately have a lasting effect on whole school development. Planned staff development and sustained commitment to the process on the part of teachers will have an impact on the organizational effectiveness in the long run.

### **2.3.3 Characteristics of organization wide SD**

The theory of OD makes assumptions about leadership, learning organizations, culture, vision building, collaboration, participation, team building and decision-making, which help to explain SD better. Against this background, I have identified them as key characteristics of staff development and in this section I explore their importance and relationship to SD.

#### **2.3 3.1 Leadership for staff development**

The definition of OD by French and Bell (in section 2.3.1) states that OD must be led and supported by top management. The same is true of SD issues and programmes in schools (Wanzare and Ward 2000: 266). The provision of leadership to sustain the process of SD is crucial. Weak leadership will normally be disastrous to staff development initiatives in the schools. Therefore, it is important to review the type of leadership needed for organization wide SD.

##### **2.3.3.1.1 Types of leadership**

The implementation, sustainability and continuation of staff development programmes in schools can depend on the type of leadership that is provided by the school management (Silins and Mulford 2002). According to Brown, Boyle and Boyle (2002: 41), “as schools

evolve and change, so different characteristics of a leadership repertoire may be required”. This is especially true for schools that are undergoing any process of reform. Trimble and Jacob (1997: 31) lament that weak leadership often discourages teachers from working to change schools. Therefore, school leaders need to build and facilitate school cultures that support change (Chamley, Caprio, and Young 1994).

According to Goldberg and Richards (cited in Brown *et al.* 2002), teachers in leadership positions in schools must unlearn old ways of leadership and replace them with new leadership structures. Brown *et al.* (2002: 41) further suggests that new forms of leadership must be based on openness, collaboration and power sharing across departments in a school.

In light of this, I have identified participatory leadership and delegated leadership as types of leadership that can advance SD in schools.

#### **2.3.3.1.1.1 Participatory leadership**

Principals, by virtue of their position in schools, are responsible for SD (Moloko 1996; Buitendag 1998; Czubaj 1999; Wanzare and Ward 2000). Blase and Blase (2000: 135) concur that an effective principal addresses and provides opportunities for the development of staff needs. Van Hoewijk (cited in Law, 1999: 73) argues that “leaders are not trained in learning but they have been socialized in a leadership model that prescribes knowing the answers instead of searching for the answers”. Erasmus and van der Westhuisen (1996) argue that in participative management, an effort is made to move away from the traditional view, namely the view where the principal is supposed to know everything. Holly and Southworth (as cited in Donald *et al.* 1997: 91) argue that “leadership...is not necessarily the property of the privileged few; it is the right and responsibility of ...all”.

Stoll *et al.* (1996); Moloko (1996); Erasmus and van der Westhuisen (1996) and Brown *et al.* (as cited in Brown *et al.* 1999), assert that the leadership potential of teachers is important and can be explored through involving teachers, because leadership is a function to which all

staff members can contribute (de Jong 1996: 69). Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus (1994: 15) underline the importance of leadership by other teachers by saying:

A healthy school is one in which leadership capacity is being developed in all staff members through ongoing personal development processes, designed to build the capacity of staff members to participate meaningfully in the change processes of the school life.

According to Erasmus and van der Westhuisen (1996: 203), participative management allows the best utilization of human resources and develops trust and confidence in teachers. Through participation, shared decisions are made, which in the long run develop a sense of belonging in the teachers, because their inputs and efforts are seen and valued by others. According to Brown *et al.* (2002: 32), shared leadership roles and responsibilities are paramount to the sustainability of SD in schools. Darling-Hammond (cited in Brown *et al.* 2002) asserts that teachers' ability to share and participate, coupled with the establishment of a collegial culture in schools, is crucial because, as professionals, they need to work together to learn from each other. The leadership provided, especially by the principals and head of departments, must be inclusive, for the reason that it enables teachers to be collaborative and willing to work in partnerships or teams (Blase and Blase 2000; Brown *et al.* 2002).

Participatory leadership, although argued to be the best leadership style in schools, has its disadvantages. One such disadvantage, according to the literature, is that it can be a time-consuming exercise (Udjombala, 2002:69). There are some decisions that need to be taken by principals on the spur of the moment because they are the headship of the school (Wanzare and Ward 2000:266). There are issues which may be so urgent or trivial that the principal cannot wait to consult other staff members.

#### **2.3.3.1.1.2 Delegated leadership**

Law (1999: 73) argues that when principals are not best suited to maintain SD themselves, this can be solved through what she terms "delegated leadership". What Law means when

she uses the term “delegated leadership”, is the utilization of senior staff members who have the leadership and professional attributes to sustain staff development in schools. Schreuder *et al.* (1993: 27) describe delegation as “entrustment of duties, responsibilities and authority by the leadership of the school to the teachers”.

Czubaj (1999: 183) points out:

The school principal should be an individual with good leadership skills and who can delegate responsibilities to competent individuals. The principal is no longer an authoritarian, but rather fills the role of facilitator, working cooperatively with staff and sharing the authority which was once vested in the principal’s role.

Staff development needs to be carefully planned and executed so that teachers know exactly what kind of task they are delegated with. The expertise of the teachers who carry out the SD programme is crucial and leaders of a school can play an important role in identifying the suitable teachers to implement and carry out the programmes. The teachers in leadership positions cannot carry out SD alone. It is a very strenuous task, on top of the already heavy management function they have. Therefore, to delegate the task of SD to teachers with expertise is a step in the right direction, because the leaders of the school should work to build confidence in teachers (Schreuder *et al.* 1993: 29) to ensure organized staff development programmes.

#### **2.3.3.2.2 Professional development commitment and leadership: a possible matrix**

Law (1999: 75–76) gives a comprehensive description of a possible matrix that could be used to explain staff commitment to professional development (see Fig 1). The matrix is based around key elements identified as part of the Keele Effective Educators Project (KEEP) research carried out in England and Wales. The matrix provides the relationship between the organizational structure, management process and leadership style and suggests four possible continuing professional development (CDP) leadership/cultural positions or perspectives: collaborative, directive, complacent and individualistic.

Where a collaborative culture exists, the leadership perspective is collegial and the staff commitment is high. The staff is valued as professionals and the professional development coordinator (PDC) often is viewed as approachable.

Leadership support for CPD	Strong	<b>A: DIRECTIVE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD-as-‘training’;</li> <li>• Teachers as trainees</li> <li>• Imposed (external-Govt/internal-SMT) development agenda</li> <li>• Disjointed and/or inflexible planning</li> <li>• Tendency to elite-focused networking</li> <li>• Top-down, bureaucratic decision-making</li> <li>• Hidden and/or informal evaluation</li> <li>• Centralized/unclear resource base and allocation strategies</li> <li>• Limited internal information flows/communication strategies</li> </ul>	<b>B: COLLABORATIVE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD-as-‘integrated development’;</li> <li>• Teachers as ‘professionals’</li> <li>• Participative decision-making processes</li> <li>• Focused (formal/informal) evaluation</li> <li>• Longer-term CPD strategy</li> <li>• Integrated networking opportunities</li> <li>• Needs-led with agreed institutional targets linked to teaching and learning</li> <li>• Balanced resourcing which endeavours to met range of needs (individual, group, whole school)</li> <li>• Clear, open CPD structures</li> </ul>
	Weak	<b>C: COMPLACENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD-as-‘imposition’;</li> <li>• Teachers as ‘employees’</li> <li>• ‘Abdicated’ decision-making</li> <li>• Limited or poor resourcing (funding steered away from CPD?)</li> <li>• Short-term, ‘quick-fix’ CPD strategy</li> <li>• Little or no overt or formal evaluation</li> <li>• Ad hoc, unsystematic CPD planning</li> <li>• Poor communication/information flow</li> <li>• Poor CPD ‘role modelling’ by SMT</li> <li>• Narrow, ‘lip service’ CPD focus</li> <li>• Limited open net working</li> <li>• Sense of professional isolation</li> </ul>	<b>D: INDIVIDUALISED</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD-as-‘self-improvement’;</li> <li>• Teachers as ‘self developers’</li> <li>• Decision-making influenced by institutional micropolitics</li> <li>• Informal and individualized networks</li> <li>• Uneven, diverse provision</li> <li>• Largely unrecorded, informal evaluation</li> <li>• Individually focused, organizationally dispersed CPD strategy</li> <li>• Random information gathering</li> <li>• Institutional resourcing unclear and/or inadequate</li> <li>• Hidden, personalized development</li> </ul>
		Low	High

**Fig 1 Staff commitment to continuing professional development (Law 1999: 76)**

Leaders within the directive CPD culture are, by contrast, likely to be more bureaucratic in approach. They do not encourage a broader development emphasis, thus, there is limited staff commitment, partly caused by lack of information.

The leaders in the individualistic cultural perspective tend to adopt an unimaginative, ad hoc and limited view of their roles, leaving others in the institution with the need to drive their own inset and to encourage a self-centred and individualistic perspective, thus, this perspective does not enhance teacher development at different organizational levels.

Law (1999) suggest that this matrix must not be viewed as rigid and the categories as stereotypical. She argues that the matrix is merely an aid to provide leaders and individuals involved in SD programmes feedback about the nature of leadership and SD commitment to teacher development in the schools.

The leadership for SD, if effective, can create and promote learning. According to Sinclair and Ghory (1997: 117) "... schools need leaders who focus on promoting learning more than on managing schools". After all, SD is about learning, and, therefore, it is crucial that school leadership must have a vision to develop a culture of learning in schools so that schools can be transformed into what Senge (1990) calls "learning organizations".

### **2.3.3.2 The learning organization**

DiBella and Nevis (cited in Johnson 2002: 241) write that "the learning organization is an advanced state of organizational development". Handy (cited in Law 1999: 68) described learning organizations as organizations that "... are capable of encouraging people to learn". Peter Senge (1990: 4) elaborates that learning organizations must be able to "discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn in all levels in the organization". Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 35) regard a learning organization as "an organization which is constantly and systematically reflecting on its own practice, and making appropriate adjustments and changes as a result of new insights gained through that reflection...."

According to Senge (1990: 3), learning organizations are "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together."

According to Browell (2000) and Brown *et al.* (2002), learning entails empowering teachers to stay abreast of the important developments in education with the aim of improving their practice. Learning is not just the assimilation of information but it entails, according to Argyris (cited in Jaftha 2003: 16), the "...ability to solve problems, to reflect critically on

one's own behaviour, to ascertain how one often unintentionally contributes to problems, and finally be able to change the way one behaves". Browell (2000: 58) notes that learning must be an individual as well as organisation-based process. She argues that learning organisations are "characterized by inter-organisational learning". Hence, this makes learning a team activity.

According to Jaftha (2003: n.p.), "learning in learning organizations becomes a team process that requires new and creative ways of learning". In schools, all the individuals must put their efforts together as a team to maintain the proper functioning of the schools and to ensure the schools stay productive, innovative and competitive. Principals alone cannot ensure the maintenance of success in the school. Therefore, Senge (1990: 4) argues that "it is no longer sufficient to have one person learning for the organization". It must be a collective endeavour (Salins and Mulford 2002). Blase and Blase (2002: 135) claim that frequent participation of the principals as learners themselves in SD sessions is motivational and encourages teachers to follow suit.

The Task Team Report on Education Management Development in South Africa (1996: 31) states the following about learning organizations: "Learning organizations treat change as an ongoing feature of their existence. They make change part of their organizational ethos and support individual and collective learning as part of their mission."

According to Hopkins and Lagerweij (1990: 75), "learning is a mechanism that gives the organization and people involved in it the chance to learn new skills and insights that are needed". They argue that new skills could range from new teaching methodology to sharing new experiences that work and that teachers wish to share with their colleagues. To be able to achieve that goal, the importance of teamwork must be emphasized. Katzenmeyer and Reid (cited in Smith 1995: 20) "believe that staff developers must expand their roles to include the development of teams and organizations". Organizational members need to learn to share and discuss information, set shared goals, trust each other, complement each other and compensate for each others' limitations (Senge 1990: 4). The learning process over the

years will be an asset to the organization, because “the team that became great didn’t start great, it learned how to produce extraordinary results” (Senge 1990: 4).

Schools need a type of leadership that will take staff learning as a means to improve teachers’ practice, as well as institutional improvement. According to Senge (1990: 340) “leaders are designers, stewards, and teachers. They are responsible for building organizations, where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, and improve shared mental models-that is, they are responsible for learning.”

Walker’s (1997: 17) statement that leadership must acknowledge that learning is not and can never be complete is very important because acknowledging it as fact will enable people in leadership positions to transform schools into learning communities. Schools are there for children to learn and as role models the teachers need to show children that they are also learners. In the same breath, educators need to learn to stay abreast of new developments in the education sector. Walker (1997: 18) is of the opinion that leaders who do not continue to learn are the ones without confidence. They view education as a static process, whereas leaders who continue to learn regard learning as a life long journey, and they provide opportunities for learning to the staff through organized SD programmes.

Some schools are serious about organizational learning therefore they have institutionalized SD programmes to make sure that learning is taking place, whereas others are not as involved in institutional learning processes. Against this background, understanding of organizational culture is essential.

### **2.3.3.3 The organizational culture**

Smith (1995: 20), in his analysis of organisational level SD, argues that SD is sometimes referred to as “professional development of groups to improve organisational climate and to develop organizational culture”.

Organisations are cultural establishments and to bring about desired change in the organisations will require cultural change within. Only if we can understand cultural issues within our schools, and are willing to exchange or sacrifice them to the benefit of the institution, is the organisation ready for change. Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 42–43) echo this:

If we do not understand or recognise the culture that exists at a school, attempts at change and innovation could prove futile, because we are not acknowledging or dealing with the aspects of school life that will most likely hinder processes of transformation. One of the ways of changing the culture of the school, therefore, is to help people working in schools to identify what the culture is.

Even if they have common purposes or goals, different organizations have different ways of operating (Handy and Aitken 1986: 83). Organizations with the same goals, such as schools, might seem to function similarly due to the prevailing bureaucratic routine common to most. However, because their inner cultures are not the same, schools are actually providing different outputs. According to Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 47):

...schools are centres of learning and in this way have much in common with one another. However no one school is identical to another, and it is in the particular characteristics which differentiate one school from another that their uniqueness lies.

Some schools are very successful and effective, but others are not. Therefore, to understand how schools are unique, it is necessary to understand what organizational culture is. Organizations do not possess the same values, norms and practices and that makes them different. Each organisation has its own identity, values, norms and ethos which depict the prevailing culture in the school (Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus 1994; Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana 1997; Davidoff and Lazarus 1997). However, Arthur, Davison and Moss (1997: 49) argue that "...teaching is located within a set of beliefs, values, habits, traditions and ways of thinking that are shared and understood by those in the...profession, but which are seldom articulated". This could be attributed to the fact that some cultures are "hidden and complex"

and they need to be understood to accurately decipher why there are differences in organizational success and effectiveness in different settings (Schein 1992). Therefore, Schein (1990: 5) argues that “a deeper understanding of cultural issues in groups and organizations is necessary to decipher what goes on in them”.

The seriousness with which a school views professional development of its staff can have a lasting effect on the teachers in the school, and if SD became a routine exercise in the school, then over the years it could become part of the school’s culture.

Smith (1995: 21) points out that “organizations’ core values provide a focus for SD that drives the organisation toward its shared vision”. Vision building is important in schools because vision is the answer to the question “Where do we want to go?” (Hopkins and Lagerweij 1996: 74). In the next section, the importance of shared vision and its impact on SD are discussed.

#### **2.3.3.4 Vision building in school**

According to Davidoff and Lazarus (1997: 46) “a shared vision is one where common values are distilled and translated into practical realities...in staff development programmes”. According to Hopkins and Lagerweij (1990: 75) “training of the individual teacher and the entire teaching staff is an important and indispensable feature in school development”. For this reason, SD in school can be a good platform where shared visions can be created through involving the entire staff as a means of collective learning.

Vision is an indispensable commodity in organizations because it gives present and future direction to the organization. Organisational visions are direction statements that are aimed at problem solving by finding ways to get the organization from where it is to where it wants to be. According to Jaftha (2003: n.p.) “without a vision statement that pulls the school community behind it, competing energies in the school will divert attention from consistent focus on achieving specific objectives”. Visions in most cases are strongly tied to the ethos,

norms and values of a school. Because of its strong association with values, Arthur *et al.* (1997: 59) refer to vision or mission statements as “value statements”.

According to Senge (cited in French and Bell 1990: 56) “the origin of the vision is much less important than the process whereby it comes to be shared”. All individuals in the organization must be granted an opportunity to contribute to the creation of a vision. Therefore, according to Senge (1990), Hopkins and Lagerweij (1996), the Task Team Report on Education Management and Development (1996), Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) and Buitendag (1998) the vision of the school should embrace all members of the school community: the school management, teachers, parents as well as learners both as contributors and learners. Pierce and Hunsaker (1996: 102) state:

A necessary component to creating long-term, effective school change is to establish a common vision among the school community [emphasis mine]... a vision in which they [emphasis mine] have vested interest in supporting. If a common vision can be established, it will serve as a foundation for building school unity and the guide for change.

Campbell and Southworth (cited in Bush 1995: 61), in their research in primary schools, found that goal setting should involve the “whole school and everybody has got to agree about the aims and purpose”. This is in contrast to the argument forwarded by Schreuder *et al.* (1993) that the school vision should be the principal’s vision and must be instilled into the teachers and learners. According to Buitendag (1998: 34), there is nothing wrong with principals having their visions for the school, they must just be considerate in the manner they introduce it, because if they force it on learners and teachers the chances of success will be minimal.

Learning must be one of the visions of all schools because, after all, schools are about learning. According to Senge (1990: 9) if there is a genuine vision that is shared by all members of the organization, it will catalyze true learning and enable people to work towards the vision through a personal conviction rather than their having being told to do so. In their

model of organizational learning Silins and Mulford (2002: 441) suggest that organizational learning must stress the importance of “monitoring and review of the schools mission and goals for continual development of shared understandings, values and practices”.

As indicated earlier, learning, creation of organizational culture and shared vision require collaboration and participation by all the organization’s members. Their collaboration and participation will enable them to contribute to organizational decision-making and this will strengthen team building in the school. Arguing from this perspective, I will discuss the importance of teambuilding, collaboration, participation and decision-making in the next section.

#### **2.3.3.5 Team-building, collaboration, participation and decision-making**

Staff development can foster good team building, collaboration, participation and decision-making in schools (Browell 2000). In well run schools, principals will do their best and take advantage of institutionalized SD programmes to ensure good team spirit and collaboration (Buitendag 1998). Team building can benefit every one in the team, including the individual, the team and the organization; ultimately this will result in higher student achievement (Chivers 1995; Tam and Cheng 1996).

The way team-building exercises are organized in schools will encourage teachers to take part. If they are open, warm and interesting, then teachers’ confidence levels will be raised, ensuring a very good platform for SD. Wanzare and Ward (2000:270) point out: “approaches that enable teachers to feel good about themselves, enhance feelings of competence and empowerment, and push them to peak performance are those most likely to make a difference in the classroom.”

Blase and Blase (2000) and Udjombala (2002) noted that collaboration can increase teachers’ motivation levels and self-esteem which in turn improve practice. Therefore, as Koll *et al.* (cited in Wanzare and Ward 2000: 270) state, “staff developers need to plan in-service education programmes that will tap teachers motivation and self-esteem, autonomy, and self-

actualization levels”. Buitendag (1998: 97) argues, “true collaboration...gives all teachers a voice and they are thus empowered in the sense that they are given the opportunity of becoming part of the decision making”. As suggested by the Task Team Report on Education Management and Development (1996: 30), “decisions related to the concerns such as...staff development, derive from the premises founded on common, agreed principles”. Therefore, it is imperative that everybody’s concern in the organization must be sought when staff developmental issues are planned.

Pierce and Hunsaker (1996: 101) argue that “professional development in most cases takes place around the teachers, but rarely seems to involve the teachers”. In the research carried out by Brown *et al.* (2002: 35) on professional development needs of managers in schools in the United Kingdom, prominent suggestions are made that involving whole schools in collaborative decision-making is fundamental to identifying the professional training needs of the teachers. Therefore, Southwood argues (2002: 3) that: “...the design and implementation of teacher professional development must involve the teachers themselves. It should be a collaborative process in which the teacher is the main protagonist, identifying needs and organizing and implementing activities.”

Ediger (1995: 194) stresses that “a bottom up, rather than top down, procedure of staff development needs to be in evidence”. Trimble and Jacob (1997: 31) point out that imposed staff development by leadership from the top can easily create anger and resentment from teachers who often feel that there is no need for them to be developed, because they are already professionally qualified to deal with educational issues. French (cited in Wanzare and Ward 2000: 270) cautioned that SD programmes will not succeed if teachers are passive recipients instead of them being active participants.

The issue of teacher collaboration, participation and decision-making is crucial in this era, which is characterized by educational reform and restructuring processes in schools all over the world. Therefore, Blom (1999) in his research on teacher participation, states:

The problem in extending teacher participation in decision-making processes appears to be how to move from what has traditionally been an individual activity to one which is shared. This implies that activities of selection of [...] staff development programmes, should be the concern of all involved.

According to Brown *et al.* (2002: 34) there are various styles through which decision-making can take place. He classifies three types: collaborative, quasi-democratic and authoritarian. The collaborative type of decision-making style is the one that needs to be advanced by schools through the SD programmes. The reason for this is that people learn more about themselves and others in groups in a collaborative manner, and learning in groups enables individuals to confront reality when they would rather not be confronted with the truth (Erasmus and van der Westhuisen 1996: 201). Therefore, SD which is based on collaboration, where the participants are involved in the planning and execution of the programme, and where the topics of SD are selected according to the participants' interests, ensures healthy learning and thus enables the participants to confront reality which, in turn, is to the advantage of the organization.

The collaborative inquiry strategy suggested by Smith and Knight (1997) is a powerful vehicle for SD. According to Smith and Knight (1997), this strategy enables teachers to work together to solve instructional problems and to create a culture of reflection and experimentation in the school. One of the components of the collaborative inquiry strategy is a study team. According to Smith and Knight (1997: 42) the study team creates a platform and opportunity for collective learning. By participating in the study team activities, teachers perceive a sense of professional community, which reduces their feeling of isolation in the work place.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The literature review addresses the classical approach to SD as well as an organization wide perspective on SD. The literature also identifies and discusses leadership, learning

organization, organizational culture, vision building and team building as important issues that advance efficient organizational wide SD in schools.

In the next chapter I introduce my research methodology.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Research Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter consists of six sections. In the first I explain what a research paradigm is. In the second section I identify the paradigm most appropriate to my research requirements and discuss its main features, strengths and weaknesses. In the third section I describe and defend the research method with which I have chosen to work. In the fourth section I discuss and describe my research process. In the fifth section, I discuss issues related to doing research in one's own working environment. In the sixth and the final section, I critique my research by addressing its limitations.

Throughout all the sections I will keep my research question alive, to make sure that the methodological design I choose to work does not contradict the question I ask. My research interest is to investigate the experiences and perceptions of a group of teachers with regard to staff development practices in a school.

### **3.2. Conceptualising a research paradigm**

Terre-Blanche and Durrheim (cited in Jaftha 2003: n.p.) explain: "Paradigms are all-encompassing systems or interrelated practice and thinking that define for researchers the nature of their enquiring along three dimensions: ontology, epistemology and methodology."

The mechanical metaphor of a toolbox used by Mark Twain (Cantrell 1993: 81) helps to clarify the research methodology, and hence the paradigm, more clearly. According to Mark Twain, "if the only tool one has is a hammer, then one tends to treat everything as if it is a nail". According to Cantrell (1993), for a long time research has only used one philosophical stance, the scientific paradigm, also known as positivism, to carry out research, as if the same notions of reality, knowledge and data gathering and analysis guide all research. Today

various tools are available in the researcher's toolbox. They are research-specific and dependent on the questions the researchers ask. Not all researchers are asking questions that are quantifiable and can be explained through the use of statistics: some research questions are based on perceptions, people's understanding and experiences, all of which needs an alternative paradigm.

In the next section I describe and defend the paradigm within which I work.

### **3.3. Identifying the paradigm for the research**

Currently in the research enterprise, according to Locke and Schaffer (cited in Connole 1993: 22–23) there are four paradigms that can be employed in a particular research situation, depending on the purpose of the research. They are positivism, interpretivism, critical science and deconstruction/poststructural approaches. By virtue of the underlying assumptions of my research question and goal that are based on socially constructed meanings and understandings of the people with regards to SD, my research falls within the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm is classified under a group of methodological frameworks referred to as “symbolic sciences”, of which phenomenology and ethnography are part. The interpretive paradigm is interchangeably used with qualitative inquiry because it enables researches to concentrate on people's meanings and understandings of a particular situation. The data collected takes the form of language.

According to van Rensburg (2001: 16), interpretivism bases its interest on the “meanings that people make of the phenomena”. A researcher who carries out interpretive research puts much emphasis on how people view the world through their interaction with others. Here the perceptions individuals have about the same issue can differ, because individuals see the world from different perspectives. Therefore, subjectivity plays a crucial role within this paradigm. Interpretivism is based on constructivist theory, which claims that individuals actively build or construct their own notions of reality out of their own experience.

The interpretive research tradition will enable me to tell the stories of the three teachers I interviewed and the five teachers that form the focus group I interviewed concerning the staff development practices. It will also enable me to come to grips with the meanings, understanding and interpretations teachers have concerning staff development at a given school. According to Rosen (cited in Payne 1996: 23), the key concern for interpretive research is “to understand how members of a social group, through their participation in social process, enact their particular realities and endow them with meaning”. Cohen and Manion (1994: 36) noted that this methodological approach enables researchers to get inside the person’s perceptions and to understand him/her from within.

Cohen and Manion (1994: 37) say the following about interpretive researchers:

They begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. Theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations; it should be grounded on data generated by the research act. Theory should not precede research but follow it.

My research goal requires me to work within the interpretive framework and the data I need to collect for that purpose must be qualitative. In this respect, the case study is an appropriate choice, because most case study research is interpretive and is also relevant to this study, which is of limited scope.

In the next section I describe and defend the selection of the case study method for my research.

### **3.4. Selecting the method**

The method that I have chosen for my research is a case study because it allows me to do my study “within a localized boundary of space and time” (Basse 1999: 58) and to “investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin 1989: 13).

In explaining what case study research is Riege (2003: 80) elaborates: “The case study method is ... based on the need to understand a real-life phenomenon with researchers obtaining new holistic and in-depth understandings, explanations and interpretations about previously unknown practitioners’ rich experiences...”

My research goal is to investigate the teachers’ experiences and perceptions of staff development practices in a school. The case study research method, therefore, will enable me to understand the situation that I intend to study. According to Anderson (1998: 152) in case study research “the emphasis is on understanding and no value stance is assumed”.

Generally speaking, the research literature is not clear on what a case study is. Merriam (cited in Anderson 1998: 152) argues that although case studies are well known methods of research, it is seldom agreed what constitutes a case study. Winegardner (2001) concurs that case studies are the best-known method of researching, but she adds that it is the least understood method. Some researchers classify their research as a case study if they are not clear about the perfect fit of their study in the existing research methods. Stake (1988: 253) states that “a case study is what you call a study...in case you don’t have anything else to call it”. Winegardner (2001: 4) argues that one good thing about case study research is that it can be used to study any situation, whereas other methods are limited to particular situations.

The explanation given by Merriam (cited in Winegardner 2001: 5) suggests that a case study includes three features: particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. By referring to the particularistic features, Merriam means that “case studies focus on a particular situation, event, programmes or phenomenon”. Merriam elaborates that the descriptive feature of a case study “refers to the end product, which is rich or thick description of the phenomenon under study”. Merriam finally explains that the heuristic feature of the case study implies the enhancement of the readers’ understanding of the phenomenon and the extension of his experience.

Stake (cited in Anderson 1998: 155) distinguishes between three types of case studies, according to their purpose: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. According to Stake,

intrinsic studies are used to gain a better understanding of a specific case. My study can be classified as an intrinsic case study because I want a better understanding of staff development through the perspectives of the participants.

As I have mentioned before, the goal of my research is to investigate teachers' experiences and perceptions. In a nutshell, I want to get a picture of how they understand the identified phenomenon in a naturalistic setting. Against this background, a case study method will be helpful.

### **3.5. The research process**

#### **3.5.1 Selection of sample**

According to Cantrell (1993: 90) “the qualitative approach uses small, information-rich samples selected purposefully to allow the researcher to focus in depth on issues important to the study”. I decided to keep my sample small and I selected it purposefully.

The purposeful sampling strategy used was “convenience sampling”. According to Cohen and Manion (1994: 88) convenience sampling “involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents”. The fact that I was conducting this study in my own school gave me a convenient sample.

The selection of three teachers was purposeful. I interviewed three staff members: the principal and two other teachers. The selection of the principal was obvious by virtue of his position, but I selected the other two teachers based on their experience in educational issues and their respective positions as subject head and senior teacher.

#### **3.5.2 Data gathering**

I employed two methods to gather data, namely interviews and focus group interviews. In my initial proposal I indicated that I would also conduct document analysis, but after going

through some documents, such as minutes of various staff meetings and departmental meetings including year end reports, I realised that they would not be helpful to the phenomenon that I am studying and I disregarded them.

### **3.5.2.1 Interviewing**

Interviewing is one of the many instruments used in research to collect data. The purpose of the interview is to "allow the researcher to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words" (Cantrell 1993: 96). It is a method that is essential in situations when the researcher wants to target a limited number of people or an individual with specific knowledge about the research upon which one wants to embark. In this case my research concerns the teachers' perceptions of SD practices at the school.

According to Cantrell (1993: 96) there are different formats for conducting an interview. The first and simplest is the structured interview, where the researcher drafts questions he/she will ask the interviewee beforehand. The second interview format is the unstructured interview, where the researcher is probing for information from the interviewee by asking follow up questions to obtain an in-depth story. Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 135) confirm that in in-depth interviewing the researchers are attempting to walk in the informants' shoes, to see things from their point of view, and also to concentrate on obtaining rich and detailed information (Riege 2003: 75). Some researchers prefer to use semi-structured interviews, which are blends of both structured and unstructured formats.

To gain insight into the teacher's perspectives with regards to my research question I used a blend of in-depth, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The purpose of my study is to tell the teachers' stories with reference to their experiences, perceptions and understanding of staff development practices in a school. Therefore, using a blend of semi-structured and unstructured interview formats in collecting the data was helpful. The research question requires me to ask open-ended questions with a great deal of follow up questions to allow "laddering". Through the interviews I was looking for a particular, subjective truth, which is not necessarily going to be the same for all the interviewees because the way people

experience, perceive and understand the world differs. Therefore, using the unstructured interview format helped me to probe enough to accurately picture the life-world of a particular person in relation to SD. Schwandt (1997: 83) refers to life-world (*lebenswelt*) as an “intersubjective world of human experience and social action; it is the world of common sense knowledge of every day life”.

Identified teachers agreed to be interviewed and consented to a recording being made. I was asked to present them with the copy of my interview schedule (see appendix A) prior to the interviews to enable them to have an idea about the direction the interview would take. This may have been of little help to them as in the end I did not ask about two-thirds of my pre-prepared interview questions during the interviews. Most of the time, I was just probing to discover the informants’ responses. The length of the interviews ranged between one and one-and-a-half hours.

Straight after each interview I started with the transcription, which, on average, took me three days, before I started with the next interview. All interviews took place during the evening, starting at approximately seven o’clock in my office at the school. A number of distractions interfered with the interview process, ranging from teachers knocking at the door of the office to the school siren, located near the principal's office that rang as study sessions came to an end. One of the greatest disappointments that I experienced during my research was when my tape recorder with a cassette on which an interview had been recorded went missing before I transcribed the interview and I was forced to conduct the interview again.

### **3.5.2.2 Focus group interview**

Anderson (1998: 200) describes the focus group interview as:

...a carefully planned and moderated informal discussion where one person’s ideas bounce off another’s creating a chain reaction of informative dialogue. Its purpose is to address a specific topic, in depth, in a comfortable environment to illicit a wide

range of...perceptions from a group of individuals who share common experience relative to the dimension under study.

The focus group consisted of five teachers. All the teachers were employed at the same school. When I negotiated access to the school and explained my research purpose to them during a staff meeting they all volunteered to be included in the focus group.

There are twelve teachers on the staff, including myself. To involve all the teachers in the research I decided to exclude the three teachers whom I had interviewed individually from the focus group discussion. During the focus group interview I concentrated on five main questions, which I had drawn from the individual interview schedule. The focus of the group discussion was on questions concerning the types of SD activities the school was involved in. I facilitated the focus group interview. I also controlled the tape recorder. I asked the five questions one by one and allowed the participants to air their views while I was probing and facilitating the process at the same time.

I also tape-recorded focus group interviews with the prior consent of the informants. In qualitative research the researcher's main data is in the form of the words generated through interviews. Therefore, the use of technical support such as a tape recorder is essential. It also helps the researcher to capture longer responses for easy retrieval later and, in addition, to concentrate more closely on the interview. On the other hand, this form of technical support can scare away some possible interviewees. One of the possible reasons could be fear of being deceived and exposed (Cohen and Manion 1994). To prevent that, I had given assurance to the participants that their anonymity would be protected. Against this background, research ethics are very important.

### **3.5.3 Data analysis**

In Anderson's (1998: 157) words, "analysing data is like walking through a maze. There are many routes available..." Patton (cited in Cantrell 1993), Anderson (1998), Taylor and Bogdan (1998) all agree that there is no tailor-made procedure concerning how data should

be analysed; it is up to the researcher to develop his/her own way of analysing data within the framework of the guidelines given by qualitative data analysis technique.

Bogdan and Biklen (cited in Cantrell 1993: 97) point out that data analysis “...involves working with data, organizing it, breaking it down, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others.”

Marshall and Rossman (1995) and Taylor and Bogdan (1998) stress that qualitative data analysis is difficult. They argue that the process requires inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing that comes with experience. They suggest that a mentor is needed to show someone how it is done. The data analysis mini workshop we had as master’s students with our supervisors, as well as the advice, suggestions and comments provided by them helped me to make sense of the data.

I analyzed the transcripts of the audio-recorded interviews and focus interviews by using the qualitative data analysis technique recommended by Taylor and Bogdan (1998). According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 141–146) qualitative data can be analyzed through discovery, coding and discounting. Discovery includes identification of themes through working with the data. Coding refers to “refining one’s understanding of the subject matter” (1998: 141) and discounting refers to “interpreting of the data in the context in which they are collected” (1998: 156–157) to give meaning to the data.

To discover the themes immediately after the interviews and focus group interview, I transcribed the data from the tape recorder and produced a hand-written transcript from which I made a word-processed transcript. Through this cumbersome method, I familiarised myself extensively with the data and was able to identify preliminary themes or categories.

In my final analysis, I produced separate transcripts for the three individual interviews and a focus group interview by coding the data. By analysing the separate transcripts I cut and pasted responses given by informants from the original transcripts into the places where the

data fitted into themes and sub-themes. Through this process I produced a data analysis report for each interview that I made, including the focus group interview. By comparing and contrasting the data from these reports I produced a data chapter. I ensured that responses given by the informants within the themes were not only one person's perspectives, but included the views of all the teachers that I had interviewed.

There were some issues in the transcribed data that were not clear and which required me to do follow up interviews with all the interviewees, including the focus group participants. By doing the follow up interviews, new data emerged which give more detail to information on some of the issues that were not clear during the initial interview.

The following are the major themes that emerged and that were included in the data chapter: (i) different modes of SD, (ii) different routes of identifying SD needs, (iii) the roles of different people and organizations in SD, (iv) leadership, (v) the organizational wide perspective of SD. These themes will be discussed at length in the data chapter.

By rereading the data chapter, I attempted to discount the findings, that is: interpret or give meaning to the data. In the interpretation of the data two main themes emerged: (i) staff development culture, (ii) the external organizations' support for SD. These themes will be discussed in length later in the 'discussion of findings' chapter.

In the next section I discuss ethical issues related to this research.

### **3.5.4 Research ethics**

Bassey (1995: 15) says the following about ethics in research: "Researchers, in taking and using data from persons, should do so in ways which recognize those persons' initial ownership of the data and which respects them as fellow human beings who are entitled to dignity and privacy."

I entered into a written contract with all the interviewees prior to the interviews. The contract spells out the purpose of my research, the interviewee's consent to being tape-recorded and the use of their information in the writing of the thesis. The contract also assures participants that I will use pseudonyms for their names.

### **3.6 Doing research in your own working environment**

The fact that I hold a management position at my school, which is the research site, and the fact that I know the school very well, could possibly have influenced my research. Payne (1996: 28) notes: "Studying one's own professional work environment also seems fraught with risks of missing or misstating the assumptions of some colleagues or stakeholders. Still, interpretive...approaches appear to have the potential for identifying more guarded and preconscious assumptions..."

Studying one's own working environment may well influence research. I am not an extraordinary human being and I could have brought my personal bias to influence this study. Although I claim that I am working within the qualitative framework, there are some things I might have done unintentionally which could have impacted this research. In the 'discussion of findings' chapter, I integrate some personal views to make the interpretation of some issues understandable to the readers.

To minimize my personal bias and also to validate my study, I provided the participants with copies of the interviews and focus group interview transcripts as well as the data analysis report. I asked them to provide me with feedback as to whether I had correctly understood and recorded their perceptions of the issues. By doing this I also wanted to determine whether they still held the same perceptions or views. This is in line with the guidelines given by Riege (2003: 82–83) in which he refers to the 'peer debriefing technique', which involves giving key informants interview transcripts, parts of data analysis and, finally, a report outlining the findings to change unclear aspects if necessary. This is to increase the credibility of the qualitative case study research.

### **3.7 Limitations in the research**

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995: 143) “all research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated”. According to them these canons include questions on validity, reliability, credibility (internal validity) and confirmability. In this study I specifically look at credibility (internal validity) and reliability to assure rigour and trustworthiness of the findings.

Reliability in qualitative research is problematic, more specifically in my study where I am investigating teachers’ experiences and perceptions. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995) people hold different views, which are not static but dynamic, because human views are changing all the time. Therefore, to replicate such studies would not converge into one consistent finding and to generalize from such findings would be methodologically inappropriate.

Marshall and Rossman (1995) explain that the credibility (internal validity) in research has to do with providing in-depth description of the setting and deriving findings from the description. To guarantee that the findings are credible I have derived my main findings in chapter five from the data in chapter four. Further, to make certain of the trustworthiness of this study, as I have indicated before in section 3.6, I have done member checking. Finally, to ensure that the study holds internal validity, I have linked my research question to my data and findings.

I view the fact that I am new to this research arena as a limitation on this study. As I am a novice researcher conducting interviews, focus group interviews and qualitative data analysis and interpretation for academic purposes for the first time, I am concerned that I have not done as much as expected, although I know I have done my level best to reach this point. However, having read various research papers it was comforting to learn that these are techniques that one learns over a period of years. The more you do it the better you become.

In the next chapter I present the data collected.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Presentation**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is the product of the data analysis techniques recommended by Taylor and Bogdan (1998) described in the previous chapter. The themes or categories that emerged during the phase of the data analysis are reported in this chapter. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995: 113) data reporting is an analytical process that requires “organizing the data, generating categories, themes, and patterns...and writing the report”.

The respondents gave me voluminous data. During the process of analyzing the data I discarded much that was not in line with my research question: an investigation of the experiences and perceptions of teachers with regards to staff development in a Namibian secondary school.

Since this is an interpretive study, I give thick descriptions of what I heard from the informants. I use quotes frequently to ensure that the informants’ voices stand out. This is important for the qualitative case study, because in qualitative study it is important to report how the respondents shape their reality of the world and the best way of showing this is to use their words.

The names of the respondents I have used in this chapter are all pseudonyms. For the individual interviews I spoke with Mr. Cupido (principal), Mr. Shikongo (senior teacher) and Mr. Nauseb (subject head). For the focus group interview I spoke with Mrs. Mududu (junior teacher), Mr. Groenewaldt (senior teacher), Mr. Dausab (senior teacher), Mr. Gaingob (subject head) and Mr. Muhiva (subject head).

## **4.2 The emerging themes**

### **4.2.1 Different modes of SD**

#### **4.2.1.1 Peer coaching**

How teachers are sharing information and learning from each other was depicted in the interviews and during the focus group interview. Mr. Dausab, during the focus group interview, stressed that he learned a lot from other colleagues. In Mr. Dausab's words:

Mr. N and me are sharing information. I regard Mr. N as a very good resource of information. We are also teaching subjects that cover almost similar contents. The things that are in Agriculture are also in Geography. Generally there is a very good interaction and cooperation between our staff and that is helping a lot with my professional development. What you do not know, you ask From Mr. G. He is our walking dictionary.

During the focus group interview, Mrs. Mududu echoed these views:

I always ask Mr. F since he was teaching Geography last year how I should go about teaching some sections of Geography. He shows me what kind of models and teaching aids I can use. He even provided me with his lesson plans of last year and I can see how he draws up his lesson plans. He even advises me on how I can improve the plans.

During the individual interviews Mr. Shikongo stated that to "learn from the old folks" is important, but learning from new teachers in the profession is equally important. He added:

It is also necessary that someone long in the teaching profession must learn from someone that is two or three years in the profession, because things are changing such as teaching methods and those teachers that are long in the profession might

have outdated knowledge with regards to teaching methods. Teachers coming from the universities might come with new approaches from which the old horses, the old experienced teachers, can learn from.

During both individual and focus group interviews it became clear that teachers were doing peer coaching in terms of assisting fellow colleagues that were taking the distance BETD (Basic Education Teachers Diploma) course. Both Mr. Shikongo, during the individual interview, and Mr. Muhiva, during the focus group interview, reflected that teachers doing BETD courses at the school were being assisted by colleagues with assignments and other tasks.

Mr. Shikongo echoed this in saying “each one teach one”. He explained that at the school, if one teacher is proficient in one aspect of teaching, then he helped other colleagues in that area. He provided an example: “the teacher that does the exact lesson planning takes the other teachers through how to do lesson planning”.

Mr. Groenewaldt observed that “teachers are a great source of encouragement and information in terms of professional development at the school.”

Mr. Nauseb shared the same views: “Teachers also give me support emotionally as well as socially. There are some teachers, although they are not teaching the subjects that I am teaching, who are always rendering support to me when I am requesting.”

Teachers were not only helping each other in their professional development, but sometimes they were responsible for their own professional development, as noted by Mrs. Mududu:

Teachers’ workroom has been given a redundant computer after the school purchases the new one. I see some teachers are visiting the workroom and start to use the computer. Some are even typing with one finger their question papers. I regard that as part of teachers developing themselves because they are now becoming computer literate.

#### **4.2.1.2 In-service training**

During the individual interview Mr. Cupido defined in-service training as follows:

In-service training according to my view is capacity building, where a teacher does not necessarily have to leave the current job in order to receive further or advanced training to enabling them to perform the task better that they have to perform. They are at the workstation and they are there where they are supposed to be to be and in that period we make room for the staff member to receive extra assistance in terms of whatever is needed. It is service that is provided while the teachers are still working.

All the interviewees, including the focus group, regarded the BETD programme as a good example of an in-service training programme. Mr. Nauseb confirmed this: “I believe this programme is helping teachers because I talk to a couple of them, since I am also helping them with their task and can see their change in development.”

Mr. Gaingob, during the focus group interview, and Mr. Shikongo, during the individual interview, both referred to MASTEP (Mathematics and Science Teachers Education Programme) as another important in-service training programme teachers were involved in. Mr. Gaingob explained that teachers obtaining this qualification were upgraded to teach senior level grades. According to him:

The teachers that complete BETD are only allowed to teach up to grade 10 level. Through the MASTEP programme they are upgraded to teach up to grade 12 level. These teachers are doing very well because they produce learners which obtain good grades during exams.

Mr. Nauseb gave more details about the BETD programme in terms of its quality and structure:

You know the BETD programme is a very open programme. It is actually a school based programme that allows teachers to practice what they have learned in the actual teaching learning environment. We had a teacher that completed the programme last year and we also have two teachers that are currently busy with the programme. There are some school-based activities such as assignments and worksheets with which I am assisting the teachers.

Mr. Cupido stressed “there are so many ways how we can deal with in-service training while the teachers still maintained their present post”. He referred to workshops as another form of in-service training. He further explained that in-service training at the school depended on the needs identified by the school before the help of other organizations was called in.

In case the school is not in a position to provide the kind of resources needed, then it becomes a regional issue. In that case the RO (Regional Office) will come in and assist in the provision of a workshop whereby an expert are call in to deal with certain topic. If the school itself does have the potential to deal with that specific need at the school level like in our case than we conduct mini-workshops, small workshops where necessary skilled people are utilized.

Conducting morning assemblies was viewed by Mrs. Mududu as a good platform for providing in-service training and hence SD:

...conducting morning assemblies, which is normally conducted by the top management, is also a good platform for SD. By involving other teachers in this function of conducting the morning assemblies you ensure that they learn to build confidence in themselves to stand in front of a large crowd and present a speech, which is an important skill that the teacher must have. The conduction of morning assemblies at our school is open it is only that teachers are not willing to make use of this opportunity. One day in a week is set aside to give chance to teacher for that

reason but there is no greater interest beside here and there one or two teachers will grasp that chance.

#### **4.2.1.3 Class visits**

The interviewees, including the focus group participants, indicated that class visits were an important instrument of SD. Mr. Nauseb expressed the importance of class visits:

You see class visits is very important. In the first instance you see how prepared a teacher is. Secondly, class visit is important in the sense that you see where the teacher lacks. Class visit is also important because through it you see how effective teachers are making use of the teaching aids. Class visits are important because it enables you to see whether the learners have understood what the teacher has taught.

Mr. Cupido regarded class visits as “one of the mirrors that will give you a true reflection of what the teacher really is capable of, for example with respect to the teacher’s subject knowledge”.

Mr. Nauseb elaborated on the internal class visit school policy:

We have a policy on class visits. According to this policy there must be class visits schedule for every teacher each trimester of the school term. There are some guidelines with regards to class visits such as class visits that are announced and those that are not announced. For the ones that are announced you inform the teacher in advance which class, which grade and which date you will like to visit him or her and if the teacher gave you go ahead than you continue with the visit. The other visit is the one that is not announced. Sometimes the visitor quickly, unannounced come into your class just to see whether you are doing your work

Mr. Cupido added further that the policy also made provision for debriefing after class visits:

Our policy requires that the teacher and the visatee must come together for a debrief where you hear the other person's side and that is what the individual think of the lesson, what was good or successful and based on that understanding the visit is then evaluated and then further recommendations are made as to whether next visit can take place. The debriefing take place preferably within the same day or it can be extended to the next day.

During the focus group interview, Mr. Groenewaldt echoed that class visits were compulsory for subject heads: "... you will have to do class visits whether you want it or not. You should do it. It is an enforced activity. But, well it is good because through this enforced activity, teachers are learning something."

Mr. Muhiva points out that class visits are important in the sense that it gives the school management an area to report on to the RO to fulfil their required managerial task. In Mr. Muhiva's words:

The school needs to complete an end-of-month report every month, that goes to the school inspector and if the class visits, various meetings held and any other activities the school is supposed to be involved in that specific month are not done, then what will the principal and the HOD's report? Therefore, if class visits are not being done than the top management require reasons why the class visits were not done.

Mr. Groenewaldt agreed that class visits were a good diagnostic tool to provide assistance to the teacher:

Class visits are also a SD activity. You go to the class of the newly appointed teacher to find out what the teachers weaknesses and strong points are. If you go to a class you are there to find out whether the teacher is on the right track. You also in the process find out strong points and if there are strong points you give praise to the teacher. If there are no strong points and only weak points you are trying to assist the teacher.

Mr. Cupido explained that if the school was not in a position to provide assistance, then help from other people outside the school was sought:

If the situation cannot be addressed at the school, then the assistance of the advisory teachers are sought for in that specific subject to come and look into the situation and to remedy that. If the advisory teachers are not in the position to address that then the external assistance will be sought. That is a whole idea to the class visits and consequent remedial action that is following after that.

Mr. Nauseb and Mr. Shikongo both felt that class visits were not there for the purpose of spying on teachers, but to help teachers where they fell short.

#### **4.2.1.4 Workshops**

The interviewees and focus group participants shared the same views about the importance of workshops for their professional development, as well as for the development of the school. Mr. Nauseb had the following to say about the IGCSE workshop he had attended:

After I have attended this workshop I have grown professionally. Before the workshop I was struggling in executing my subject head responsibilities. After the workshop my attitude of being a subject head and my understanding of being a subject head has changed completely. [...] The workshop gave me courage and confidence in doing what I am doing as a subject head now. It has broadened up my knowledge in terms of being the subject head.

Mr. Shikongo made the point that, when a need arose, interschool workshops were sometimes arranged between schools offering the same subjects. He referred to a workshop that he had attended as follows:

For example, two years ago I have to go to Swakopmund to another colleague of mine so that I could be taken through by him most especially in the way he prepares and does his practicals and technical drawings. That's been really helpful. The school supplies me with money for accommodation and food and that is something I really appreciated.

Both Mr. Muhiva and Mr. Dausab elaborated on the value of school-located or internal workshops. By citing one of the workshops that was recently arranged at the school, in which the school staff shared information on the just-released education act regulations, Mr. Dausab said:

During the workshop on education act regulations all the teachers were involved and everybody is now acquainted with the content of the regulations. We were divided in groups of two to three teachers and every group was given a topic for the workshop. The topics included School boards, State schools, Private schools, Discipline and LRC's.

In the same vein Mr. Dausab observed:

What we have done is we have to read the regulations first, understand it, and analyze the different topics we were given and present it to the entire teachers. Some groups even come up with posters and other aids to support their presentations. After presentations questions were asked. [...] What I have learned through this exercise is that group work pays off. By sharing the large document such as education act amongst ourselves in small pieces we could be able to go through the document in two days. All the teachers on our staff are now familiar with the content of the act. [...] What I have learned is through cooperation we can reach a lot. I have learned how to read circulars and policy documents. In the past I have only seen and ignored this documents but I have realized that there is a lot that one can learn from them.

The interviewees, including the focus group participants, confirmed that teachers had to debrief the rest of the staff about the workshop when they returned to school. Mr. Muhiva pointed out:

From the school's side if teachers have to go to a meeting or a workshop they need to give feedback to the rest of the staff on which the staff are given time to ask questions or give their comments. We are used to this arrangement at the school.

Mr. Cupido stressed the necessity of the debriefing sessions pointing out that a debrief of a workshop had, in one instance, not been given to the staff. As a result, a programme that was supposed to start at the school did not:

I remember the workshop on health education. A very important workshop. Most of the schools in our region have implemented the school health programme but unfortunately, not at our school because the debriefing has not taken place. The teachers were not informed about the rationale and the importance of that workshop and because they had not been informed they could not grasp the importance of such a workshop or the importance of such a project at my school.

The debriefing sessions mostly took place in the afternoons after school. "For every minute lost, the learners suffer. So we do not have workshop during school time. The workshops normally take place during weekdays after school" (Mr. Shikongo).

Mr. Cupido shared the same views:

It must be after school. It can not be during school time because that is the only time where the rest of the staff members can have ample time to try to find ways to better understand what is being debriefed. If it is during school time then even without understanding something properly the debriefing can be concluded. [...] It entirely depends on the arrangement that the teachers made and that is agreed upon when decision on time is made collectively. The decision on whether to hold the workshop

or debriefing session in the afternoon or in the evening entirely depends on what the staff will like to have.

The interviewees and focus group participants shared the same views about the effectiveness of the debriefing sessions after school. Some interviewees expressed that teachers preferred evening sessions over afternoon sessions: “Teachers do not like the afternoon sessions for meetings and workshops. But evening sessions from six o’ clock is well attended. The teachers themselves come up with time if after school sessions are arranged” (Mr. Muhiva).

Mr. Nauseb shared the same concerns:

You see if you want teachers in the afternoon sessions than you must have good reasons because what I have observed is that teachers dislike afternoon workshops. [...] The purpose of the afternoon SD sessions must be clearly known to the teachers and it must be something that they enjoy if the school really wants to attract them.

Mr. Shikongo explained that teachers were very helpful in internal SD programmes, such as conducting workshops for fellow teachers. According to Mr. Shikongo, there were teachers with different qualifications and expertise on the staff and when they were called upon to help with internal SD programmes they reacted positively:

Whenever it comes to certain issues, like for instance discipline and if there is a teacher that is well versed in educational psychology then he can for instance be asked to convene a workshop about disciplinary issues and how to solve it to the entire staff.

#### **4.2.1.5 Cluster activities**

Mr. Shikongo and Mr. Nauseb both indicated that the purpose of the cluster is to provide the platform where teachers could interact, share their experiences and work together for the common purpose. According to Mr. Shikongo:

A cluster is a group of schools that are almost operating like a region together. In the cluster the participating schools are unifying schemes of work. The teachers are meeting in subject groups to discuss subject related issues and in that way the inexperienced teachers learn from the others as well. During the meetings, ideas are shared, problems discussed and solutions reached.

Mr. Nauseb said the following about being part of the cluster system schools.

We are the cluster school and we are involved in sharing information with the other cluster schools, whereby we sit down and do planning with the entire cluster in terms of how to do the lesson planning. We are also busy drawing up the schemes of work and we are also involved in exchanging some subject related materials ...

Mr. Nauseb regarded cluster activities as very useful to his professional development:

You see, something that cluster activities taught me is the human relations, how to communicate with people and how to see things differently and how to exchange ideas between teachers. [...] What I basically get in the cluster is what I come and implement at the school. Teaching methodologies are one of the things that we are discussing and I am trying to implement that in my classes.

Mrs. Mududu voiced the following sentiments about the importance of the cluster system:

Our school is part of the cluster programme, which is helping the teachers with SD activities. The cluster idea affords teachers in the schools to share information amongst them.

Mr. Cupido regarded clustering as an important tool for management development and training. He reported that Cluster Centre head principals of different clusters had been recently trained to empower them to train different cluster principals to carry out school board training in their respective schools. Mr. Cupido regarded this as an important development because school board members were being empowered and the boards could therefore take better control of their responsibilities.

#### **4.2.2 Different routes of identifying staff development needs**

The individual interviews and one of the focus group discussions I had identified meetings, class visits and personal conversation as the prime areas through which the SD needs are identified by the school. Mr. Nauseb felt that SD needs at the school were forthcoming from the teachers themselves before the management acted:

Staff development is a responsibility of each and every teacher. Whenever you have something in your mind you can communicate to the principal or a HOD so that they can advise you on how you can go about that. SD will be a success if it comes from the teachers themselves. It must not be something that the principal must enforce on teachers or tell teachers to do. It must come from the bottom and go upwards.

Mr. Muhiva, during the focus group discussion, expressed the same views:

...the need for SD comes from the teachers themselves, for example, learning how to draft a scheme of work. What we usually do at our school is, if individual teachers have SD needs, then they contact the HOD's or subject heads. From there, depending on the outcome of the discussion, suggestions are made whether you will have to go and see the principal or the HOD to give assistance in that regards.

Mr. Shikongo felt that SD needs were identified because teachers were talking amongst themselves. He gave an example of how he dealt with his own SD needs:

If I experience a problem, for instance in my subject which is Metal Work and Welding, which has a practical side, theory and drawings and if I get problems especially practical side, then I let the school know about it because it can affect the children in the long run and the problem needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

Mr. Cupido shared the same view that SD needs at the school were identified through personal communication of the principal, HOD's or subject heads with the teachers. He felt that "if you talk to a teacher eye to eye there are certain things that catch up and based on that you will have overall view to what the needs of the teachers are in the certain area".

Mrs. Mududu, during the focus group discussion, commented that she regarded meetings as an important organ through which SD needs could be identified. For example:

During a meeting that I had with my subject head of English we discussed something and he asked me what I did not have in my subject area. I told him that I did not have cassettes for paper 3 (listening and comprehension) and he asked me how I could get them. When he did a class visit, he checked my file and saw what I don't have and he ... provided me with what I did not have.

Mr. Shikongo shared the same feeling:

...there are needs that are identified in subject meetings. During subject meetings problems are identified and suggestions are made and these are taken to the department responsible and than to the entire school.

Mr. Groenewaldt, a focus group participant, and Mr. Shikongo both confirmed that class visits were important to diagnose teachers' shortcomings. According to Mr. Groenewaldt:

I like class visits because by visiting teachers you can identify or find out what the needs of the teachers are and you can remedy the situation by taking action. Through class visits I identified individual teachers need for SD.

### **4.2.3 Leadership**

In Mr. Nauseb's words, the "principal is the main support" in SD issues:

I am in the lucky situation because the principal has a common knowledge in the subjects that I am teaching and he is the one that is guiding me. By using his experience he guides me how to approach learners with different intellectual levels.

In the same vein Mr. Nauseb said that:

The principal invites me to workshops that are subject-related. Like the workshop I attended in Swakopmund where we discussed alternatives to practical subject area in Geography. He encourages me to practice new learner-centered method. The end of term reports the principal is requesting every end of the month helps me in developing my skills of report writing.

Referring to the leadership skills the principal possessed, he continued:

My principal is always approachable. I always approach him if I have problems with lesson planning and drawing up of schemes of work. After classes principal invites me and we share experiences on how the teaching of the day went. He shares his experiences with me and I feel encourage and motivated. He always tells me to make use of the old examination question papers when doing revision with the learners in the class.

To ensure that the environment within which SD is taking place is conducive to effective and efficient SD programmes, the principal must not just be the administrative manager, according to Mr. Shikongo, but must also be there to:

...render support and to make sure the smooth running of the school. He is also there to listen to the problems of the staff. He is also there to make sure that there is peace, harmony and a conducive environment at the school. He is also there to handle conflicts and to listen to the complaints and to the welfare of the teachers. He is also there to be the marketer of the school to the outside world.

Mr. Shikongo elaborated further on how the principal dealt with marketing of the school through involving teachers:

Our school is doing incredible effort to market the school to the outside world, mostly to attract donors to help with rebuilding with the classrooms destroyed by fire three years ago. Under the leadership of the principal we hold many meetings and we discuss around how best we can market the school. Through these meetings we share information on how to write project proposals for funding. As a result of our efforts me, together with one other teacher were invited by an outside organization to get training on how to develop project proposal. Through our inputs after being trained in proposal writing we were funded by one donor organization to build ICT classroom at the school, which is currently in construction.

During the focus group interview, Mrs. Mududu gave an example of how the principal at the school provided leadership to prevent conflict between teachers at the school:

For our principal I will take my hat off. Sometimes during morning briefings, if a conflict arose or a personal attack is made on a teacher, he will handle it very professionally. He reminds teachers that some types of statements not to be made or the type of statement to be withdrawn and he even asks them to withdraw the statement and requests the teacher to apologize. [...] By doing that, the principal is

also developing the teacher. Our principal is doing a good job by also not taking sides in times of conflicts.

Mr. Muhiva assumed that for the SD to be effective at the school the principal must be able to intervene in the personal and domestic problems of the teachers. For Mr. Muhiva, an angry or unhappy teacher cannot be productive in the classroom:

Our principal is even helping out if you have domestic problems. His doors are always open, you can come to him anytime, chat with him and share even your personal problems with him. If you are angry and unhappy than you cannot be a productive teacher in the classroom.

Referring to a personal problem he had, he explained how the principal helped him out:

I was having problem with my farming and wanted to take leave. When I approached the principal we talk about my leave application and he informed me how this can affect the learners. Instead of giving me leave the principal advises me how I can go about to be able to attend to my farming without actually taking leave. In this since I think he is also providing me professional development. He develops me to be an open and approachable person by other teachers so that I can be able to help them if they are in the same situation.

Mr. Shikongo shared the same view of the principal being supportive to the personal problems of the teachers:

...SD needs can be...personal, like if a teacher is having financial problems or family problems and cannot cope at work then he needs support and some assistance from somewhere and if his manager is not understanding than that is going to affect his work. SD and personal problems of the teacher for me are interdependent. If the teacher is not happy then it can affect his performance at the school.

Mr. Shikongo elaborated:

Staff development can take many forms, like workshops, but domestic problems such as marital problems or not having food at home can affect SD programmes. Therefore, it is important that teachers need to develop to overcome such problems. Our principal is providing that environment. Thanks to him otherwise I will have neglected my official duty or have resigned even by now. But because he is easily approachable I come to him and he listens to my personal problems before he advises me. I think now I am able to deal with my own personal problems myself.

The leadership provided by the school management with regards to SD was democratic, participatory and collective, according to the teachers' perceptions during individual, as well as focus group, interviews. According to Mr. Nauseb:

You see what I have seen at our school is that the HOD's are facilitating, they are initiating discussion and they make room for other teachers to say whatever they want to say. Even if the agenda of the meeting is compiled the input of the agenda items is done in consultation with the teacher before the final agenda is drafted. I have observed in meetings that you have your democratic participation and the assurance to be protected by the chairman. Our teacher's involvement is commendable in this kind of meetings and they are not being disadvantaged.

The issue of delegated leadership also strongly emanated from the focus group discussion. The participants regarded the delegation of the school management tasks to other teachers as a way of empowering the teachers in one of the leadership functions, which is an important SD function. According Mr. Dausab:

Through delegation, inexperienced teachers learn a lot. I still remember one day when the principal and HOD's went for a meeting the principal delegated me and another teacher to act as a principal and a HOD. The principal exactly told us what to

do. [...] It was a first time in my entire life that such responsibility was delegated to me and I learned a lot in terms of how to handle the learners.

Mr. Muhiva shared the same view with regard to what was happening in his department at the school:

What we normally do in our department is to give chance to the teachers to chair meetings instead of only the HOD's. In this way, teachers are learning a skill that they can use if they become a next HOD or subject head. Previously the subject files were under the care of the HOD's but today the subject head keeps it. Therefore the subject heads know how to handle the subject files.

Mr. Groenewaldt viewed delegation as an important leadership function at the school, both for the professional development of the teacher and organizational learning. He therefore contends that leadership that is not delegating is detrimental to the teachers' professional development:

Sometimes, some managers are very rigid when it comes to SD. They do not want, or maybe they are scared, to let the staff members do things which managers are doing. By that you are keeping the teachers at the same level. The managers got the lot of work to do and to ease this workload it is better for them to delegate their task and in this process the teachers are also learning.

#### **4.2.4 External organizations role of SD**

##### **4.2.4.1 The regional office role in SD**

Both Mr. Nauseb and Mr. Shikongo regarded the regional office (RO) as supportive in providing workshops to the teachers with the aim of upgrading the teacher's performance in the classroom. Mr. Nauseb recalled the workshops that he had attended:

Last year RO arranged middle management training workshop for HOD's and subject heads. Teachers of different nearby schools were involved. The training workshop was about the role of the middle managements in the schools. The middle managers are very important and experienced people within a particular subject and the RO office is trying its best to uplift them through different workshops. Two years ago we have got a workshop about IGSCCE. The workshop was about the different aspects of IGSCCE syllabi such as how to contact IGSCCE classes, how to do marking and most importantly the course work activities. The course work activities were clearly explained to the teachers.

According to Mr. Nauseb: "most of the workshops are actually conducted by the RO, whereby the teachers are require to and attend".

Mr. Shikongo assumed that it is the responsibility of the RO personnel to provide assistance to teachers because the government provided logistical support to them:

It is the RO personnel's job to go out to schools and provide assistance to teachers since everything from food, accommodation to transport is catered for by the government and for the school it is nothing to worry about unless the person is a private expert not employed by the government.

Mr. Nauseb reported that the advisory teaching staff station at the RO office was helpful when they came to school. He referred to one of the visits where he presented a demonstration lesson:

I was asked by the visiting subject advisor to present a demonstration lesson about in geography to the grade 9 class in presence of teachers teaching geography and other related subjects. The aim was to demonstrate to the teachers how to carry out learner-centred lesson.

Mr. Nauseb continued to give full details about demonstration lesson:

Before I conducted the lesson I was given an outline by the subject advisor on how to carry out learner-centred lesson, including how to start the lesson, what content to include and how to conclude the lesson. After the lesson together with other teachers that joined my presentation we discuss the strong points and weak areas of the lesson. In the process other teachers that joined my demonstration lesson pick up some skills they can also use in their classes.

By referring to the visit by advisory teachers from the RO, Mr. Nauseb noted that he learned many things, such as how to do blackboard summaries, how to allocate marks for tests, how to choose and give classroom activities, time management and how to give praise to learners when they are performing.

#### **4.2.4.2 The teacher unions' role in SD**

All the teachers' interviewed confirmed that unions were playing a pivotal role in assisting teachers in their professional development. According to Mr. Shikongo, the unions were calling meetings to inform the teachers about their rights and the responsibilities of their profession.

For Mr. Dausab, the teacher development must go hand in hand with incentives in terms of salary increments, because it boosts the teachers' morale to take part in SD. Therefore, "unions play important role in salary negotiations of teachers with the government. The teacher that is satisfied with what he is earning is a very productive teacher".

Mr. Nauseb regarded the inception of the BETD programme as well as the provision of loans to the member teachers to cater for their studies as an important step in which the unions were involved:

I still remember the pivotal role that the unions had played in the inception of the BETD programme to upgrade teachers in-service that were not properly qualified.

The unions were involved in rendering financial assistance to its members in the form of loans to make sure that they obtain a minimum qualification of matric plus three years after school qualification.

Mr. Nauseb maintained that the unions, most especially Namibia National Teachers Union (NANTU), the official bargaining body of the teachers with the government, were concerned about the professional development of the teachers. Therefore, according to Mr. Nauseb, the unions called in their members to meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences to encourage, motivate and empower them on various educational issues.

#### **4.2.5 Organizational-wide perspective of SD**

There are many different things that staff members are involved in that depict the organizational-wide perspective of SD. One of the most important issues was when the, after they had attended workshops or meetings, teachers had to give feedback to the entire staff of the school. According to Mr. Muhiva:

I am going to refer to it as culture because it is a must that when teachers come back from workshops or meetings, they should give feedback to the entire staff. [...] From the school's side, if teachers have to go to a meeting or a workshop, they need to give feedback to the rest of the staff on which the staff will be given time to ask questions or give their comments. We are used to this arrangement at the school.

Mr. Nauseb shared this view and echoed that the school policy stated that teachers had to debrief the staff after they had attended the workshops:

Besides recording, the school's policy requires the teachers after returning from workshops, to debrief the entire staff of the school and they must held separate information sharing sessions with concerned teachers, because only certain teachers are delegated to attend workshops.

Mr. Cupido felt that “it is not going to serve a purpose to develop staff members if we do not share the overall goal of the school, where we will like to be at the end”. He elaborated on the importance of the mission statement:

Without the mission statement...or the long-term objective that the school is having we are all going to work in different directions and ultimately, we are not going to achieve the mission as set out by the school. For SD purposes it is really crucial that we all plan and develop our staff capabilities in such a way that it leads towards the final objective of what the mission requires.

Mr. Dausab, reflecting on the schools mission statement, pointed out that when the school’s mission was developed, all the teachers were involved and aired their views. Mr. Cupido viewed the involvement of teachers and other stakeholders in education as important when the school’s vision is to be developed:

a clear-cut people-related mission statement is good, that means a mission statement that has been developed by the staff through the staff and by the communities through the communities and by the learners. Once you are having that it is always possible that you can reach the objectives that you have set.

Mrs. Mududu gave an example of the nature of the group processes that were involved when the mission statement was drafted at the school:

During the development of the mission statement we posed a question, what kind of learners we want to develop? Different teachers came up with different views; such as we want to produce technically skill learners. Everything was written on the chalkboard and it was summarized later.

The focus group participants highlighted the team building and decision-making processes at the school. Mr. Muhiva noted:

Staff meetings can also be regarded as SD activity. In our school, during staff meetings we came up with a SWOT analysis. The principal and the HOD's are also of assistance to teachers with regard to subjects.

Pointing out the decision-making channel concerning SD issues at the school, he continued:

Usually at our school it starts with the top management to come up with an idea and it is then tabled to the rest of the staff members. The decision is first taken by the top management and goes to the rest of the teachers. But sometimes the teachers themselves make suggestions of the SD topics and then it is discuss by the entire staff how such suggestions of SD activities can be carried out. Recently during the staff meeting our staff have collectively identify control, teachers absence and learners involvement as possible SD activities.

Mr. Dausab shared the same view:

At our school before decisions are made on an issue it is first discussed with all the teachers. During such consultations solutions are reached collectively. We are making decisions democratically. There is no room that someone will impose his will upon the rest of us.

Mrs. Mududu supported this perception:

I will agree with my colleagues. The top structure initiates discussions by tabling suggestions to seek other teacher position, feelings and inputs on issues. Other staff members are also free to table anything, which they want to be discussed for a common decision to be taken on whether it is a minor or major thing. Nobody for example is denied to apply and go to mark national examinations.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

I have adopted an integrated approach in presenting the data by not discussing the three individual interviews and the focus group interview as separate cases but as a single case. This approach enables me to make links between the data and it also gives me information on how the interviewees perceive similar issues.

In the themes and sub-themes that I have identified, I looked at how the different informants experience, perceive and understand the issues within the identified categories with reference to my research question. Depending on the richness of the statements made by the informants I integrated them as a quote in the different categories to highlight the teachers' experiences and perceptions on staff development at the school.

Throughout this chapter, I have made an effort to triangulate the data generated from the individual interviews with three teachers and focus group interview with five teachers as participants. I have identified commonalities in the statements made by the informants in the themes and sub-themes and pointed out some differences.

To make sense of the data, further interpretation through the researcher's lens is required. In the next chapter I discuss the main findings by integrating the views of literature mentioned in chapter two, new literature, my own interpretations of the informants' experiences and perceptions of my research question in order to make the data more relevant and understandable to the readers.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussions of Findings**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 141–146) suggest three methods of data analysis: discovering, coding and discounting (see chapter three). In chapter four I analyzed the raw data from the interview transcripts by using the techniques of discovering and coding to arrive at the categories and themes that I have identified. Data presented in this way has no inherent meaning. Therefore, in this chapter, I analyze and interpret the data through the method of discounting, suggested by Taylor and Bogdan (1998), to give deeper underlying meaning to what the interviewees suggest or imply.

In the interpretation of the data I looked at how the data compared to and fit within the broader literature I have discussed in chapter two, including the new literature I introduce at this stage. Since I am doing this study in my own school, I will also bring in my own perspectives and viewpoints. Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 160–161) argue:

Findings do not exist independently of the consciousness of the observer. All observations are filtered through the researcher's selective lens. [...] Rather than to act as though you have no point of view, it is better to own up to your perspective and examine your findings in this light. [...] Understanding of your findings requires some understanding of your own perspectives, logic and assumptions.

Again I make sure that my interpretation of the data is addressing my research question, which is the study of teachers' perceptions and experiences of SD practices.

In the following sections I discuss the main findings under the themes that emerged as I tried to give meaning to the data, as discussed in the previous chapter.

## **5.2 Main findings**

I reviewed the literature in chapter two under two main headings: (i) traditional view of SD and (ii) organizational wide SD. The data in this research reveal that the SD issues at the school mostly fall within the traditional approach to SD. Very few findings were made on organizational wide SD.

This study has exposed three main findings. Firstly, the issues that involve the staff depict the SD culture within the school. The most noticeable issues centred on the instructional development of the teachers. This includes teaching, classroom management and lesson planning; secondly, the leadership and management roles and expectations of the principal in SD. The final main finding includes the support given by external organizations in SD issues.

In the next section I elaborate on the main findings.

### **5.2.1 Staff development culture**

I extensively reviewed organizational culture and its relation to SD in section 2.3.3.3. This research revealed that SD issues are mainly traditional and are aimed at empowering teachers with the necessary tools to make them effective in a teaching-learning situation in the classroom.

#### **5.2.1.1 Instructional development**

##### **5.2.1.1.1 Classroom view of SD**

The research shows that teachers, through their involvement in cluster activities and workshops, are helping themselves to become better teachers in the classrooms through personal development. Teachers expressed the perception that SD activities helped them to grow professionally and enabled them to develop new skills. As a result they were able to take charge of responsibilities with confidence in the classrooms.

This study also revealed that teachers are gaining practical experience when they took part in SD activities such as workshops. By referring to SD activities, such as workshops that they have attended, teachers felt that such activities helped them to develop new skills by being around the facilitator in “hands on” activities. Mr. Shikongo used the example of a workshop conducted by a colleague on how to carry out practicals in Metal Work and Welding and Technical Drawing that he had attended in Swakopmund,. According to Mr. Shikongo the workshop was helpful to his professional development.

The literature on SD I consulted regards SD as a way of improving individual teachers’ performance in the classroom (Fullan cited in Donald *et al.* 1997; Buitendag 1998) with the aim of improving learners’ results (Chivers, Tam and Cheng 1996; Butler 2003). The concept of the workshop is common in the literature of adult learning reviewed in chapter two. Adult learning is based on experiential learning (Braus and Monroe 1994: 3) and it encompasses the idea of learning by doing. The hands-on activities teachers are involved in during workshops are exactly in line with the experiential learning reviewed in chapter two. Mr. Shikongo’s experience of being provided with hands-on activities is important in terms of his professional growth. Botello and Glasman (1999: 22) note that providing hands-on experiential learning to teachers as part of their in-service training helps them to implement similar activities in the classroom, which is the ultimate aim of instructional activities of SD programmes.

The interviewees indicated that the cluster system allowed teachers to share information with the other cluster schools: they sat down and planned with the entire cluster how to do the lesson planning, including drawing up the schemes of work and also exchanging some subject-related materials. This had a significant bearing on their classroom performances. Most of the cluster activities took place in a workshop form. Corcoran (cited in Robinson and Carrington 2002: 240) suggests that “workshops may be valuable for promoting awareness of new practices or curricula and provide opportunities for teachers to network and share...” This is the underlying assumption upon which the cluster system is based. This study further reveals that another area in which clustering is useful is how to present lessons in the

classroom. According to the interviewees, school clustering was also helpful for the teachers because the skills and experiences that they picked up during cluster activities, such as teaching methodologies, were what they implemented at the school. This is in line with what is suggested by Korinek (cited in Butler 2003: 6), referred to in section 1.1, that the implementation of a skill or what one has learned during SD activities must show some indication of the change that has taken place. He argues that “new information and/or skills are taught with the expectation that participants will apply the new learning and change their behaviours”.

In the introductory chapter I explain that there are three areas in which SD activities can be beneficial to the teacher and the school. One of them is skills acquisition (Butler 2003: 6). The literature review also made pertinent assumptions on how SD improves teachers’ skills in various areas of the school setting. In this study it came to light that presentation skills can be enhanced through SD opportunities in the school.

#### **5.2.1.1.2 Peer coaching view of SD**

This study has found that teachers were involved in both individual and expert-based SD issues. The teachers perceived learning from each other as an important part of SD activities. From the data it seems that SD activities took place on an individual basis. Many authors in the literature review regard SD as taking an individual approach, which is more indicative of the traditional approach to SD. According to Buitendag (1998: 21), staff development “focuses on the individual and takes his/her individual characteristics, strengths and weaknesses into account...”

This study did find that teachers were engaged in peer coaching in terms of assisting fellow colleagues who are studying towards the BETD course. There were some teachers who were pursuing the distance education diploma (BETD) at the time of the study. According to the interviewees, this programme allows teachers to practise what they have learned in the actual teaching-learning environment. One teacher completed the programme last year and currently there are two teachers that are busy with the programme. Both Mr. Shikongo and

Mr. Muhiva reflected that their fellow colleagues helped with assignments and other tasks. This is important, because it breaks the feeling of isolation at the workplace (Smith and Knight 1997: 42). Hourgade and Bauwens (cited in Robinson and Carington 2002: 240) refer to teaching as a “lonely profession” especially for teachers who are involved in distance education programmes. Therefore, Gersten and Brengelman (cited in Robinson and Carington 2002: 240) argue that “professional development activities must include opportunities for teachers to discuss with colleagues.”

The positive interaction that existed between teachers in helping each other with their individual SD activities, referred to as peer coaching in chapter four, can be compared to the SITTI (School Innovation Through Teacher Interaction) model of SD by Pierce and Hunsaker (1996). The SITTI model is a good example of how professional development can be advanced in learning institutions. The central feature of the SITTI model is the peer coaching technique. There are many benefits that can be derived from using this technique. According to Pierce and Hunsaker (1996: 104) these benefits include: (i) increased collegiality, (ii) enhancement of each teacher’s understanding of the concepts and strategies and (iii) sustainability of restructuring effort by strengthening ownership of the changes.

Although this study has found little evidence of organizational-wide SD, it is interesting to note that there existed some fragmented issues on organizational level SD. Mr. Dausab argued that there was “good interaction and cooperation” between teachers at the school, which is a good ingredient for peer coaching. The aspect of cooperation is very important for SD. Browell (2000) states that cooperation can bring good team building; in turn team building will benefit the individual teacher, the staff collectively and the school as an organization (Chivers 1995; Tam and Cheng 1996).

### 5.2.1.1.3 Managerial view of SD

This study has found that top management and subject heads carried out SD activities as a method of control and it seems that it is embedded in the history of Namibia's education system. This is reflected by repetitive responses that emanated from the data referring to execution of SD issues as a measure of control. This is inferred through phrases used by the interviewees such as: "for announced class visits you inform the visitor"; "it is an enforced activity". The fact that only the principal, HOD's and subject heads were doing class visits gives the impression that the purpose of such visits is to check on the teachers to determine whether they are carrying out their responsibilities. Mr. Nauseb's argument that class visits are important because one can see how prepared the teachers are for the lessons also confirms the control purpose of such visits.

The following statement made by Mr. Nauseb also implies the control nature of SD:

You see, class visits are very important. In the first instance you see how prepared a teacher is for the lesson. [...]. Class visit is also important because through it you see how effective teachers are making use of the teaching aids. Class visits are important because it enables you to see whether the learners have understood what the teacher has taught.

The study reveals that management of SD seemed to be more bureaucratic in nature than being developmental. The decisions on SD issues were taken at the top management level before being shared with the teachers. As observed by Mrs. Mududu, "the top structure initiates discussions..." The fact that the school had to report every month to the circuit inspector about various issues that had taken place in the school, to my view, indicates that this is also a bureaucratic requirement.

On the other hand, even though decisions on SD issues were emanating from the top management, it is illuminating to learn that teachers themselves are the main role players in their professional development. As argued by Mr. Nauseb, SD will be a success if it comes

from the teachers themselves. This is in line with what Ediger (1995: 194) proposes – “a bottom up, rather than top down, procedure of staff development needs to be in evidence”.

Trimble and Jacob (1997: 31) point out that staff development imposed by leadership from the top can easily create anger and resentment from teachers who often feel that there is no need for them to be developed because they are already professionally qualified to deal with educational issues. This is true for a school such as ours, where the majority of the teachers are qualified and this is manifested by the arguments that always arise when times for afternoon SD activities are negotiated by management with staff members. Normally, when afternoon sessions were convened the teachers did not turn up in large numbers.

#### **5.2.1.1.4 Random view of SD**

There exists an ambiguity in the execution of SD issues at the school. It came to light that there was no organized SD programme at the school. The research also reveals that there was also no formal internal policy for SD. The issues on SD were taken as they came and this indicates that implementation is random and unorganized. This makes the SD issues fluid (Bush 1995: 114).

From my personal experience it was normal practice at the school to encourage teachers to attend cluster activities and workshops arranged outside the school premises as part of their professional growth, but having listened to all the interviewees it seems that little was done at school internally to continuously ensure that the teachers kept up to date with issues concerning education at the school. The SD activities at the school seemed fragmented, random and unorganized. Sometimes afternoon SD sessions were arranged but, as indicated by one of the interviewees, these were apparently not well attended by the teachers because of personal business.

A SD policy formulated in consultation with the teachers to ensure that they are given a sense of direction in terms of academic and professional growth was non-existent at the school. Consequently, the teachers did not attach much importance to SD activities intended to

enhance their classroom performance. The scenario is aggravated by the fact that when the activities for the year programme are planned, no provision had been made to include SD activities that had an immediate bearing on professional growth. Admittedly the staff meetings can be considered as SD activities but, in this context, were seen as more of a routine.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has been proactive in this regard and included schools taking charge of their own SD programmes in its vision for 2004. According to this vision, every school must have a SD coordinator selected from the staff to ensure that there are planned SD activities taking place within schools (Coombe, Bennet, Uugwanga and Wrighton 1999: 32). However, this is still to be formulated into policy.

### **5.2.1.2 Leadership and management role of the principal**

As with most schools, the organisational structure of the school is pyramidal, with the principal at the top of the pyramid and the teachers at the bottom. This has nothing to do with the order in which decisions are made or the roles played by the individuals, but it is only there to provide a logical explanation of how the structure functions. As suggested by Bush (1995: 144) the emphasis is not on the roles played by the individual teachers but rather on the expertise they provided. The principal, together with the HOD's and the hostel superintendent, constitutes the top management of the school and they are in charge of issues to do with SD and provision of leadership.

The data seem to indicate that the management and leadership role played by the school principal in SD was characterized by the following: (i) instructional leadership, (ii) human resource management, (iii) pastoral leadership, (iv) delegated and participatory leadership

#### **5.2.1.2.1 Instructional leadership**

For the past two years it has been the policy of the Ministry of Education to change the role of the principals from being administrative managers to instructional leaders, because of

deteriorating examination results nationally. The idea is to move principals away from their offices and to bring them nearer to the real issues in the classroom and the line function of the schools. The policy, therefore, clearly states that on top of the heavy management and leadership function principals have, they must also be involved in classroom teaching. They must not only teach non-promotional subjects but promotional subjects as well.

The informants in this study depicted the leadership role played by the principal at the school as reflecting instructional leadership. The findings suggested that the way the principal executed his management duties encouraged teachers to apply learner-centred education methods. The way he advised teachers motivated them to improve their teaching skills. As noted by Mr. Nauseb, the “principal is the main support ...” in SD issues. It was general practice at the school that the principal’s association with teachers had a direct effect on the teachers’ classroom instruction. Blase and Blase (2000: 137) indicate through their study on instructional leadership of a particular principal that the instructional leadership of that principal was embedded in the school culture, because the teachers expected that the principal would deliver instructional leadership routinely. This also appears to be the case in my research. Botello and Glasman (1999: 15) in their summary of instructional leadership behaviours of a principal suggest that motivating teachers in SD experiences is bringing about school-wide improvement.

The research also shed light on how the principal shared his teaching experiences with the staff. Teachers felt encouraged to improve their classroom performances because of the principal’s transparent attitude and willingness to share his own teaching experiences of the day with his colleagues. This is in line with what is suggested by Blase and Blase (2000: 135). They argue that frequent participation of the principals in SD sessions and being learners themselves is motivating and encourages teachers to improve their instructional performances.

The principal is a classroom teacher and it is expected that he execute areas of classroom management in which the other teachers are also involved. By being a subject teacher

himself, the principal is under the supervision of a subject head and hence a HOD, roles played by different teachers altogether.

#### **5.2.1.2.2 Human resource management**

This study has shown that the principal was executing some degree of human resource development. This emanates from the responses made by some interviewees that the principal was involved in conflict resolution, management of complaints made by teachers and marketing of the school. This is traditionally viewed in the corporate literature as a role played by a human resources manager (Main 1985).

The Ministry of Education requires principals to facilitate human resources development in their respective schools as part of their job description (MEC 2003: Annexure A). Browell (2000) argues that human resource management by school managers can contribute to institutional competitive advantage in this time of educational change and renewal for schools. She argues that human resource development programmes are “helping to ensure that the organisation has the people with the skills and knowledge required in order to achieve its strategic objectives” (Browell 2000: 58).

Mrs. Mududu’s experience of how the principal provided leadership to prevent conflict among teachers at the school by not taking a side when teachers were at loggerheads about an issue shows he engages in some degree of human resources management. In addition, Mr. Shikongo’s observation of the principal being instrumental in spearheading the marketing drive for the school also supports his human resources management role.

As indicated by the data the principal also dealt with teachers’ complaints. There was a perception amongst teachers that the principal was dealing with human resources management as a SD activity. This is because he created an environment conducive to trust within which SD could take place without teachers worrying about issues with which he was dealing.

#### **5.2.1.2.3 Pastoral leadership**

The pastoral leadership exhibited by the principal is as an unusual finding with regards to SD. The interviewees regarded the principal as a problem solver, an advisor and someone concerned with the welfare of his staff. Whenever they experienced domestic problems, it seems that the teachers looked to the principal for solutions, guidance and leadership. His door was always open if teachers experienced difficulties with their personal issues. As a result, teachers brought every little problem or incident they encountered to him. This is outside what are regarded as traditional SD issues. This could be attributed to the caring leadership qualities he demonstrated. He invited and motivated people to make use of his office to resolve small issues before they become worse. The teachers viewed this attitude as enhancing their professional growth and they valued it.

As indicated earlier, this study has revealed that for SD to be effective at the school, the principal should be able to intervene in the personal and domestic problems of the teachers. Mr. Muhiva argued that an angry and unhappy teacher cannot be productive in the classroom and he welcomed the principal's provision of a caring role because it made him open and approachable to other members of the staff. This is important because it enables the teachers to work collaboratively which in turn is one of the requirements of effective SD in schools.

Mr. Shikongo's agreed with Mr. Muhiva. He valued the principal's concern about his domestic or personal problems, because how the principal dealt with this issue, for him, was part of SD. He argued that if it were not for the principals' influence, motivation and advice he would either have already resigned from the school or neglected his duties.

#### **5.2.1.2.4 Delegated and participatory leadership**

One cannot conclude on the basis of the above-mentioned notions that the leadership of the school is vested in the principal, because the principal also respected and accepted the leadership that was provided by his colleagues. He also created a platform for the teachers to exercise and develop their leadership skills. Bush (1995) suggests that people should be

given opportunities to demonstrate their leadership skills. The departmental heads and heads of any other committee were regarded by the principal as equal partners, which helped to support and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of his office. The research suggested that a delegated leadership style, as well as a participatory leadership style, was prevalent at the school because other partners such as HOD's and teachers were involved. This is in line with what Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus (1994: 15) underline about the importance of leadership of other teachers.

This study has outlined various issues on how teachers were being empowered by the school management through both delegated and participatory leadership styles. The meetings were used as a platform for staff development. Previously only a member of the management team was responsible for chairing meetings, especially the staff meetings which were held once a term where major decisions of the school were made. Under the new principal, the chairman's position is rotated among the staff to enable them to learn essential skills regarding meeting control and procedure. The ultimate motive behind the move was to encourage the teaching corps to be more involved and to diminish the influence of the principal and his management team during such meetings.

This arrangement of giving a chance to other teachers to chair meetings, is in line with what was revealed by participants in Wilken's (2002: 123) recent study about schools as organizations. Wilkens argues that rotating the chairmanship during meetings and delegating responsibility as a way of sharing with other teachers is important for professional development of the staff.

The opportunity provided for the teachers to conduct morning assemblies, which was regarded as a top management function at the school, also helped in teacher development. Although some teachers lacked the confidence to make use of the opportunity, it is hoped that most teachers will benefit in the future. Mrs. Mududu reaffirmed that the school had set one day aside for willing teachers to conduct the morning assembly.

There was widespread opinion in the school among the staff that the leadership provided by the principal, with regards to SD was democratic, participatory and collective. Mr. Nauseb used an example of how teachers were consulted when agendas of meetings were drafted before a final draft was set. In Mr. Noabeb's opinion, this approach reinforced and manifested democratic participation in decision making in the school. Through participation, especially in meetings, shared decisions were made which, in the long run, developed a sense of belonging in the teachers, because their inputs and efforts were seen and valued by others. Brown *et al.* (2002: 32) shares the view that shared leadership roles and responsibilities are paramount to the sustainability of SD in schools.

The issue of delegated leadership also emanated strongly from the focus group discussion. The participants perceived the delegation of tasks to teachers by the school leadership as a way of empowering the teachers in one of the leadership functions. This is an important SD function. Mr. Dausab, stated:

Through delegation inexperienced teachers learn a lot. I still remember one day when the principal and HOD's went for a meeting the principal delegated me and another teacher to act as a principal and a HOD. The principal exactly told us what to do. [...] It was a first time in my entire life that such responsibility was delegated to me and I learn a lot in terms of how to handle the learners.

According to Heidenman (cited in Wanzare and Ward 2000: 270), the key elements of empowerment of teachers include "decentralizing decision making, delegating authority, and giving teachers a voice in their professional development". In the literature review in chapter two I have indicated the importance of delegation, especially as a form of SD. It is a very strenuous task, on top of the already heavy management function performed by the school leadership. Therefore, to delegate the task to teachers with expertise is a step in the right direction. Mr. Groenewaldt confirmed this: "the managers have got a lot of work to do and to ease this workload, it is better for them to delegate their task and in this process the teachers are also learning".

### **5.2.1.3 Law's matrix of cultural perspectives. A framework for analyzing SD**

In the review of Law's matrix (1999) in chapter two the data dictated that there were some elements of directive, collaborative, complacent and individualistic cultural perspectives of SD at the school. The matrix provides the relationship between organizational structure, management process and leadership style. Based on Law's matrix, the data mostly falls within the directive and individualistic cultural perspectives.

As indicated in section 5.2.1.3 when I discussed the managerial view of SD, the data suggests that the leadership style provided with regards to SD at the school is primarily bureaucratic. Those in leadership positions did not encourage or put emphasis on broader development issues. The only emphasis, as suggested by the data, which is the main finding of this research, is the effort that is made to address instructional performances of the teachers. This is viewed as a traditional approach to SD. There was little effort made by the school management to involve teachers in a more organizational approach to SD issues. Thus, there was limited staff commitment, partly caused by lack of information and as a result teachers were not committed to attending SD programmes arranged after school. Against this background, the SD issues at the school would aptly fit into Law's directive quadrant.

With regards to the individualistic quadrant, the data dictate that teachers were 'self developers' in their professional growth. The teachers seemed to embark on INSET programmes as a matter of self-improvement and development. I elaborated on this issue when I discussed the individual view of SD in section 5.2.1.2. That puts the leadership provided at the school in the individualistic cultural perspective, because it tended to adopt an unimaginative, ad hoc and limited view of their roles, leaving others in the institution with the need to drive their own INSET and to encourage a self-centred and individualistic perspective. According to Law, this perspective does not enhance teacher development at different organizational levels as is the case with a directive cultural perspective. In the current literature on SD there is a wide argument for going beyond what was traditionally done to develop teachers to more organizational level SD issues, which this researcher could

not find at the school. In fact, school managers, to obtain effective school wide improvement, must concurrently advance both the traditional approach and organizational SD.

As I have mentioned earlier, the SD issues also fell within collaborative and complacent cultural perspectives. The collaborative quadrant of Law's matrix suggests that there must be, amongst other things, collaborative decision making on SD issues at the school. This research has revealed that some degree of democratic decision-making existed when SD issues were discussed. Even though the decisions on SD issues at the school were taken at the top, as suggested by some interviewees, room was made by the leadership of the school to allow teachers to influence or even reverse the decisions taken.

The data seems to suggest also that some elements of the complacency quadrant prevail at the school. This is due to the fact that the SD programmes at the school appeared to be quick-fix, unsystematic and narrowly focussed. This could be because there was no internal SD policy to regulate SD issues at the school.

## **5.2 2 Organizations rendering support towards staff development**

### **5.2.2.1 The regional office support to staff development**

Namibia is politically divided into thirteen regions and by act of parliament recently, regional offices were established in each political region. This is in line with the Ministry's long-term vision of decentralization and devolution of the educational services to the local people and authorities (MEC: 167–173). Every regional office is staffed with subject specialists, which are referred to as advisory teaching staff or education officers. The function of these teachers is to provide much needed services in terms of capacity building and subject training to schools that are in need.

This study has indicated that RO staff was supportive in providing workshops to the teachers with the aim of upgrading the teachers' performance in the classroom and also to provide training to middle management to take charge of their responsibilities. If the school

diagnosed areas in which they are unable to provide assistance to the teachers through internal SD activities, normally RO is approached to give assistance to school. According to one of the interviewees, the workshops arranged by RO are developmental. This was because when visiting schools some advisory staff from the RO involved the teachers in their planned SD activities to reach their goal. Testimony to this fact was Mr. Nauseb's experience of being asked to present a demonstration lesson in Geography to the grade 9 class in the presence of the involved teachers. The demonstration lesson was about the use of LCE in the classroom. Before the lesson the teachers were briefed by the advisory teacher what was expected from the lesson. Other important things they learned during this experience included how to do a writing board summary, allocate marks for the test, how to choose and give classroom activities, time management and how to give praise to learners who performed well.

Most of the workshops that took place in schools or outside schools were carried out or arranged by RO staff. The involvement of the RO in teacher development activities could also be attributed to the financial support that is offered to them by the Ministry of Education. Although the interviewees perceive that the RO received financial assistance through the national budget, my experience has taught me that practically that is not the case. According to Coombe *et al.* (1999: 28), due to lack of operational resources, in particular vehicles, the advisory staff cannot visit schools, especially rural schools such as ours.

The involvement of the RO as a partner with schools is important. As noted by Clarke (cited in Wanzare and Ward 2000: 271) education departments must develop mechanisms that promote networks that provide opportunities for continued professional development. To ensure the good networking of SD issues between schools and RO, the Ministry of Education in its ten-year plan of educator development and support in Namibia is in the process of establishing Education Development Support units in the regional offices to empower them so that they effectively respond to the teachers' professional development needs and requests submitted by schools for assistance in SD activities (Coombe *et al.* 1999: 7).

### **5.2.2.2 The teachers unions support of SD**

Namibian Labour Laws make provision for involvement of unions, including teachers' unions, as partners with government in labour related issues and condition of service. The Namibia National Teachers Union (NANTU) has been provided with sole bargaining power by virtue of its strong membership support by a majority of the teachers to negotiate, articulate and represent interests and aspirations of the entire teaching corps with government.

Unionism, or school enterprise bargaining as it is called by O'Donoghue and Clarke (1999), is a new concept in the literature concerning SD. According to O'Donoghue and Clarke (1999: 45), this approach

...will allow education systems and individual schools to re-examine conventional ideas about the nature of teachers' work and conditions. In particular ... to the career structure of teaching, professional development and teacher evaluation, but also enabling teachers to contribute to the shaping of related policy through more participatory frameworks in schools.

This study has uncovered that unions are important bargaining powers that represent teachers' ideals and interests in various educational issues. One such instance of support, as stated by Mr. Nauseb, is the role that teachers' unions played in the inception of the BETD programme. The purpose of the BETD-INSET was to enable the large number of unqualified or under-qualified serving teachers to obtain minimum qualifications.

Teachers unions are traditionally viewed as negotiating for the condition of service and salaries of teachers, but in its quarterly newsletter, NANTU (Teach 2002: 2) recognizes the deteriorating professionalism amongst the teaching staff. According to the report in this newsletter:

We will have to move very fast to assist our unqualified and under-qualified teachers to upgrade their qualifications and reach the level of category C. It will mean the temporary departure from the pure trade union stance of concentrating on the condition of service, salaries, etc. to professional issues such as the quality of education and educational outcomes.

Because teachers need to upgrade their qualification the union provides small study loans to member teachers to cater for their studies to advance their personal development. NANTU has also established a professional development department, which is headed by the professional development coordinator. According to the progress report (2000: 16–17) presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> National Congress of NANTU, the department is responsible for capacity building of its member teachers by providing them with training in English, mathematics and science during holidays, as well as the coordination of the aforementioned study loans to the teachers.

The study further indicated that the unions, most especially NANTU, are concerned about the professional development of the teachers. Therefore, according to them, the unions call in their members to meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences to encourage, motivate and empower them on various educational issues. In the study done by Wanzare and Ward (2000: 268) on SD issues in Kenyan schools, it has been revealed that unions play an important role in partnership with the department of education in professional development of teachers by organizing seminars, conferences and training programmes to improve teachers academic and professional knowledge.

Mr. Dausab, during the focus group interview, argued that the development of teachers must go hand-in-hand with incentive in terms of salary increment because it boosts the teachers' morale and motivates them to take part in SD activities. According to him, "unions play important role in salary negotiations of teachers with the government. The teacher that is satisfied with what we are earning is a very productive teacher". The issue of incentives is what most people are equating with school enterprise bargaining. O'Donoghue and Clarke

(1999) condemn this notion of unionism and argue that it does not “support the expansion of teachers’ professional roles”.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

This study has provided insight into teachers’ perceptions and experiences with regards to SD practices at the school. The data illuminated that the school’s view of SD was primarily traditional. It aimed at developing the teachers as good classroom teachers. The other issues centred on the leadership and management style of the principal with regard to SD and some external influences such as the RO and teachers unions. The most fascinating findings for me are the human resource management and pastoral leadership roles played by the principal in SD issues and the role played by the teachers unions. These findings are not normally discussed in the literature on SD.

This study also reveals that the SD activities in the school were random and unplanned. It is seriously proposed that the school do something to rectify the situation in that regard.

This research has found little evidence of the organizational-wide perspective on SD. Some of the issues, such as team building and organizational level learning, that arose were too narrow and lacked sufficient substance to be justified as a culture prevailing at the school.

In the next chapter I give my concluding remarks, including my recommendations. I also provide in the conclusion some limitations with regards to this entire study.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusions, summary and recommendations**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In the preceding three chapters I have explained how I planned, carried out, analyzed and interpreted the data until I reach the main findings discussed in chapter five.

This chapter serves four purposes: (i) the summary of the main findings of teachers' experiences and perceptions of SD practices in a school, (ii) discussion of the potential value of this study, (iii) recommendations for both practice and future research, (iv) potential limitations of the study.

#### **6.2 Summary of the main findings**

The main finding of this research suggests that SD was traditionally orientated at the school. The participants in this research indicated that SD helped them to become better teachers in the classroom. The perception that existed amongst teachers was that, through SD, they picked up skills that they implemented in their classrooms. These skills include lesson planning, drawing up of schemes of work and carrying out practical activities in the classroom.

Individual teachers' development prevailed at the school. There is a clear collaborative working culture existing at the school. The teachers involved in the distance BETD-INSET programme are assisted by their colleagues. This makes the SD issues at the school more peer driven and self-developmental than organization-driven.

In most cases, the management of SD at the school seemed to serve the purpose of control. Staff development was mostly carried out to check whether teachers were carrying out their

tasks rather than diagnosing teachers' shortcomings in order to assist them. The management of SD seemed to be centralized and bureaucratic in nature because decisions on SD issues are taken at the management level before being shared with the staff. The fact that the end of term report for every month on various activities that took place at school has to be submitted to the school inspector indicated the bureaucratic nature of SD.

There was no policy existing at the school that could direct all SD activities. This made dealing with issues relating to SD at the school unplanned. It seemed like SD activities at the school were taken up as the need arose.

The study revealed that the principal acts as an instructional leader rather than an organizational leader. There was no evidence in this research that the leadership provided by the principal was addressing organizational level SD issues. The research mostly addressed interest shown by the principal in classroom teaching. The way he shared his own teaching experiences with the teachers motivated them to perform in their classrooms.

The principal provided a favourable environment for human resource management and development within which SD activities were taking place. He sometimes engaged himself in areas that were out of the scope of traditional leadership and management provision of SD. He was always involved in conflict resolution, problem solving, addressing teachers' complaints and marketing the school. The teachers perceived that as the result of the principal's way of carrying out his human resource management functions through involving them, they felt developed in the process.

The traditional leadership provision to SD and the nature of pastoral leadership provided by the principal in SD activities are unusual findings that emerged from this study. The principal was concerned about the welfare of his staff and helped them to solve their domestic affairs. The argument advanced by the interviewees was that a happy teacher is a productive teacher and can effectively take part in SD programmes.

Teachers' participation in SD issues which were previously regarded as solely the principals' function is allowed at the school. This is mainly done through the principal's delegated leadership practice. This is done through allowing other teachers to chair meetings and the delegation of responsibilities to teachers when the entire management is on duty outside the school or at a workshop during official school hours.

In using Law's framework of analyzing SD issues at the school, the research found that the relationship that existed between organizational structure, management process and leadership style on SD at the school, mainly fell within directive cultural and individualistic cultural perspectives. According to directive cultural perspective the SD issues were bureaucratic in nature and within the individualistic perspective the teachers were advancing their own SD needs.

Interviewees indicated the regional office (RO) and the teachers' unions as the two most important organizations outside the school that play a role in SD of the teachers. Most of the workshops that took place at the school were arranged by the RO whose workshops were more developmental. Because of the financial backing they have from the central government, RO personnel, such as advisory teachers, go to schools to assist teachers in the development of instructional skills.

The teachers unions, most especially NANTU, were viewed as playing a cardinal role in SD at the school. I regard this as one of the important findings of this research since it was outside the scope of what the literature suggested about the role played by outside organizations in SD activities. The unions were instrumental in discussions with the government that led to the inception of the BETD-INSET programme. As a result, teachers that were underqualified or unqualified were given a chance to join the INSET programme to upgrade their qualifications to the required minimum of matric plus three years teachers' qualification. Unions also arranged workshops, seminars and meetings for teachers' professional growth. Assistance was also given by the unions in the form of study loans to teachers to finance their distance education.

## **6.3 Potential value of my research**

As I indicated in my introductory chapter, my school is part of the Khorixas Secondary Schools Cluster. The basis of the cluster system works on the principle of developing the teachers and management of the schools within the cluster in different areas starting from teaching methodologies to resource sharing and cooperation. My study, which is about SD, is the main purpose for the introduction of the cluster system in Namibia. Therefore, this study can provide important information to be used by the cluster management committees in their planning of SD issues within the greater cluster.

This research can also be of value to policy makers with respect to teacher education and professional development at schools in Namibia. It can assist them in understanding some of the perceptions teachers have with regards to SD in schools to make informed decisions on some of the issues concerning teacher development they are dealing with from time to time.

This research is also of immense value to my school where the research was carried out. The school management could capitalize on the findings made in this research and improve or develop the aspects they think are important for teacher development. Conversely, if there were any finding that, to the perception of the school management, was not beneficial to the professional growth and hence the development of the school, the management could consider correcting the situation.

### **6.3.1 Recommendations for practice**

The study recommends that since there is no formal internal policy at the school that can direct and focus all issues concerning SD at the school, the school management, in collaboration with the teachers, should work on developing its own internal SD policy. Since I am also a member of the school, after this study I would play a central role in the development of such policy to ensure that the school draft its own internal SD policy. Against this background, I will use an OD process to arrive at a SD policy and practice. I recommend that the following be considered in developing in such a policy: (i) staff

development coordinator at the school, (ii) who will decide and provide leadership and management of SD activities?

This recommendation is in line with the Ministry of Education's phase three of the ten-year plan for educator development and support in Namibia, which is envisaged for 2004–2010 period. According to this envisaged plan, one member of the staff in the management position or an ordinary teacher at every Namibian school should be assigned responsibility for SD at the school (Coombe *et al.* 1999: 32).

This study also recommends that the advisory services provided to schools by the RO be intensified. This can be done through involving the advisory teachers who can take a leading role in cluster activities by providing most needed experience and expertise to the teachers in the subject group meetings. This will also minimize the expenses carried by the RO in terms of providing transport for the advisory teaching staff to travel to all the individual schools. Instead the advisory teachers would meet all the teachers of the cluster schools once.

### **6.3.2 Recommendations for further research**

The role that teachers' unions play in SD came as a surprise in this study. In the writing of my literature chapter I did not even consider the role that is played by the unions in SD. Therefore, I consider the role played by the unions as an important finding of this study. I believe that there is much that can be researched regarding the impact made by the teachers' unions in the professional development of the teachers.

The pastoral leadership role of the principal in SD issues is another important finding of this study. The current literature on SD only addresses the conventional leadership roles played by principals in SD, but the caring role of the principal in SD is rather unusual in the current literature on SD.

The organizational context of SD is an area that also needs further research. Although I have discussed issues such as learning organization, vision building and organizational culture in

the literature review chapter, I was unable to collect sufficient data through the interviews for this study. Therefore, I recommend that future researchers consider this area as a priority for further research.

Finally, another possible area for future research is to consider a specific section of the school population's perception of SD. A good example may be, for instance, to look at either the principal's perception of SD at the school only or that held only by teachers. In this study all stakeholders were involved and the findings, therefore, do not specifically indicate how one particular section of the school population perceives SD activities at the school. This could also be viewed as a limitation of this study.

## **6.4 Limitations of the study**

The study has a number of limitations.

This is a very small-scale study. It only involves teachers at one school. This may be a limiting factor because the findings cannot be generalized to other cluster schools. For this research to make a greater impact and contribution to the entire cluster it would have been advisable to interview teachers from all five schools which form the cluster. However, because of the limited time I had to complete this research, it was impossible to involve all the cluster schools.

Another limitation of this study that I have already discussed at length in section 3.6 of the research methodology chapter is the problem of doing research in one's own working environment. There is a danger of bringing one's personal bias to the research even if one claims that the research is located within the interpretive paradigm. I have tried to guard against such influences.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A.**

#### **Individual interview questions**

1. Provide an overview of your teaching career?
2. What other activities are you called to perform?
3. How do you keep current in your practice?
4. In terms of your teaching career what do you do best? How did you develop and is developing this skills?
5. What role do following different people or organizations play in your professional development?
6. Describe the type and the range of staff development activities that occur in your school? What is the purpose and rationale of these activities?
7. How are decisions made with regards to the content and the organization of staff development activities?
8. How does the school identify and address individual teacher needs?
9. What is your understanding of staff development?

## **Appendix B**

### **Focus group interview questions**

1. Describe the type and the range of staff development activities that occur in your school? What is the purpose and rationale of these activities?
2. How are decisions made with regards to the content and the organization of staff development activities?
3. How does the school identify and address individual teacher needs?
4. What role do following different people or organizations play in your professional development?
5. What is your understanding of staff development?