BASIC EDUCATIONAL REFORM AND PROVISION OF QUALITY EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA (1994-2018): A TENTATIVE EXPLORATION OF POLICY IN THE MAKING

by

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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation, I declare that the entirety of the work contained herein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third-party rights, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification at another educational institution.

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ABSTRACT

Quality education as a human right and its emphasis in education policy have garnered much attention in education research. Emphasis has also been placed on what children learn in school, as well as the features of a quality education. Research on education in South Africa is well documented. Much of the existing research focuses on inequality in education, especially the lack of provision of quality education for the majority of learners in South African schools. Quality education includes the provision of learning opportunities that are conducive to mastering basic literacy and numeracy skills as enablers of success in subjects across the curriculum. Various international, regional, and localised South African tests indicate that the mastery of these skills is influenced by the availability of relevant resources and socio-economic conditions, which in South Africa vary greatly between provinces, and even within provinces. The aim of this study was to critically discuss and analyse the role and influence of policy changes within South African basic education (1994-2018) in the provision of quality education in public primary schools.

The study followed a qualitative research approach and is partly inductive in nature. For purposes of answering the three research questions that drove this research project, a hybrid approach was followed, which was rooted in a multiple case study design. This was divided into three major political administrations during the period 1994 to 2018 to indicate policy changes that occurred with the change in leadership and agendas that had a notable influence on policy implementation and other challenges in the educational context. Data on literacy and numeracy levels (and quality education) were collected from available literature, governmental and other stakeholder literature, and the works of reputable education researchers. These works were analysed using the document-analysis method. The study employed models of public policy analysis to elucidate the challenges associated with the South African policy environment and the influence thereof on quality education provision in public primary schools.

The findings indicated that the quality of education and the attainment of literacy and numeracy levels differ between provinces, and correlate with the languages through which learners acquire literacy and numeracy skills. Poverty levels and parental involvement also differ from province to province. Political instability, state corruption,

socio-economic inequality, limitations on social mobility, a poorly educated workforce, and socio-economic conditions all deepen challenges in the education system in general, and the achievement of essential levels of literacy and numeracy in particular. Apartheid's legacy still impedes the provision of equitable quality education. Provision is also confounded by hasty and poor decision making and a lack of collaborative decision making, which are compounded by unprecedented levels of corruption. Various policy inadequacies exist, especially in terms of language policy in schools, as well as the management of schools. This, along with huge educational backlogs and learning deficits that span centuries, have perpetuated the cycles of ineffective learning in the South African educational landscape.

The study recommends that quality provision in schools be tackled from various levels in the collaborative climate envisaged by education policies by adopting the Eastonian feedback loop. Participatory spaces that enable critical citizen engagement need to be established with targeted information sessions, especially for the most vulnerable societies (such as those found in rural areas) with high poverty and unemployment levels. Given the crucial role of teachers and other role players in the learning process, the South African Department of Education needs to finalise the policy on teacher and educator accountability, and accountability should be a core part of all spheres of government. For any initiative to work, structures need to be in place for accountability, competence, and consequences for not living up to required skills and knowledge standards, as emphasised in the national government's framework for democratic public participation.

Keywords: quality education, policy, administration

OPSOMMING

Kwaliteitonderrig as 'n basiese mensereg, asook die manier waarop dit aangespreek word in onderwysbeleid, is tot op hede deeglik bestudeer in onderwysnavorsing. Daar word in die literatuur veral klem gelê op leerinhoud en die kenmerke van kwaliteitonderrig. In die goedgedokumenteerde navorsing oor onderwys in Suid-Afrika is daar 'n sterk fokus op ongelykhede in die onderwys, met spesifieke verwysing na die onvoldoende voorsiening van kwaliteitonderrig aan die meerderheid van leerders in Suid-Afrikaanse skole. Kwaliteitonderrig sluit die voorsiening van leergeleenthede in wat bevorderlik is vir die bemeestering van basiese geletterdheids- en syferdheidsvaardighede as aktiveerders van sukses in alle vakke in die kurrikulum. Verskeie internasionale, streeks-, en plaaslike Suid-Afrikaanse toetse dui daarop dat die bemeestering van hierdie vaardighede beïnvloed word deur die beskikbaarheid van toepaslike hulpbronne en sosio-ekonomiese omstandighede. In Suid-Afrika is daar 'n groot onderskeid ten opsigte van beskikbare hulpbronne en sosio-ekonomiese omstandighede; nie slegs tussen provinsies nie, maar selfs binne provinsies. Die doel van hierdie studie was om die rol en invloed van beleidsveranderinge in die Suid-Afrikaanse basiese onderwysstroom in die voorsiening van kwaliteitonderrig in openbare primêre skole krities te ontleed en te bespreek.

Die studie het 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodologie gevolg en was deels induktief van aard. 'n Hibriede benadering, geanker in 'n veelvallige gevallestudieontwerp, is gevolg om die drie navorsingsvrae waarop die studie gebaseer is aan te spreek. Die gevallestudies het die drie groot politieke administrasies tydens die periode 1994 tot 2018 betrek ten einde aan te dui watter beleidsveranderinge ten opsigte van leierskap en agendas gedurende hierdie tydperk 'n noemenswaardige invloed gehad het op beleidsimplementering en ander uitdagings in die opvoedkundige konteks.

Data rondom geletterdheids- en gesyferdheidsvlakke (en kwaliteitonderrig) is versamel vanuit die beskikbare literatuur, regerings-, en ander belanghebbende publikasies, sowel as die werke van erkende onderwysnavorsers. Dokumentontleding is gebruik om die data te ontleed. Modelle van openbare beleidsontleding is gebruik ten einde die uitdagings in die openbare beleidsomgewing te bepaal, sowel as die invloed daarvan op die voorsiening van kwaliteitonderrig in openbare primêre skole in Suid-Afrika.

Die bevindings dui daarop dat kwaliteitonderrig, sowel as geletterdheids- en gesyferdheidsvlakke, tussen provinsies verskil en dat hierdie vlakke ook korreleer met die tale waarin leerlinge geletterdheid en gesyferdheid moet bemeester. Daarby verskil armoedevlakke en ouerbetrokkendheid ook grootliks tussen provinsies. Politieke onstabiliteit, staatskorrupsie, sosio-ekonomiese ongelykheid, beperkings op sosiale mobiliteit, 'n swak-opgevoede arbeidsmag, en sosio-ekonomiese omstandighede vererger die uitdagings in die onderwysstelsel in die algemeen, en geletterdheid en gesyferdheid in besonder. Apartheid se nalatenskap belemmer steeds die voorsiening van billike kwaliteitonderrig. Verder word die voorsiening van kwaliteitonderrig bemoeilik deur swak, ondeurdagte besluitneming, asook 'n gebrek aan samewerkende besluitneming, asook ongekende vlakke van korrupsie. Ontoereikende beleide ten opsigte van taal en bestuur in skole en massiewe onderwysagterstande wat oor eeue strek dra ook by tot die voortgesette siklusse van ondoeltreffende onderrig in die Suid-Afrikaanse opvoedkundige omgewing.

Hierdie studie beveel aan dat kwaliteitsvoorsiening in skole aangepak word vanaf verskillende vlakke binne 'n klimaat van samewerking, soos beskryf in die onderwysbeleid, met die implementering van die Eastonian terugvoerlus. Ruimte moet geskep word vir burgerlike deelname wat ook gepaard gaan met geteikende inligtingsessies, veral vir die mees kwesbare samelewings (soos dié in landelike gebiede) waar armoede en werkloosheid hoogty vier. Gegewe die belangrike rol van onderwysers en ander rolspelers in die leerproses is dit noodsaaklik dat onderwysbeleid ten opsigte van onderwyser- en opvoederaanspreeklikheid gefinaliseer word deur die Departement van Onderwys. Aanspreeklikheid is in der waarheid onontbeerlik in elke faset van die regering. Vir die sukses van enige inisiatief moet daar strukture wees vir aanspreeklikheid, bevoegdheid, en gevolge wanneer daar nie aan standaarde ten opsigte van vaardigheid en kundigheid voldoen word nie, soos beklemtoon in die nasionale regering se raamwerk vir demokratiese openbare deelname.

Sleutelwoorde: kwaliteitsonderrig, beleid, administrasie

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This thesis is dedicated to my loving grandparents, "Ma" **Ella Jeanetta Katherina Lawrence** and "Pa" **Moos Jacobus Lawrence**. Thank you for raising me from the age of nine months. I will never forget your lessons, your belief in me, and your love and guidance. Most importantly, thank you for working well beyond retirement age to ensure that I have a home and an education. You taught me to read and love books, to work hard, and to love and serve others. You also taught me many other life lessons that I am eternally grateful for.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
ANC	African National Congress
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
ECE	Early childhood education
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
EFA	Education for All
FET	Further Education and Training
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEAR	Growth, Equity and Redistribution
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
HPC	Highest Performing Country
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IAE	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
INSET	In-service education and training for teachers
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
IRR	Institute for Race Relations [South Africa]
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievement
NDP	National Development Plan
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management System
NIDS	National Income Dynamics Studies
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
OBE	Outcomes-based education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIRLS	Progress in the International Reading Literacy Study
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators

SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SEACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SGB	School governing body
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TA	Tripartite Alliance
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TIMSS SA	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study South Africa
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1:
BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratizing force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances.
Indira Gandhi

1.1   BACKGROUND

Education is universally regarded as a fundamental human right that aids human development through the reduction of chronic poverty and elimination of intergenerational poverty transmission. Education transforms and improves employment prospects for both men and women, assists in closing gender gaps, may boost economic growth (provided the quality of education is high), and can improve health outcomes on various levels, including from mother to child (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2014). Higher levels of education are associated with higher levels of income, reduced periods of unemployment, "higher life expectancy, improved health, reduced participation in crime, and greater civic participation" (Green & Riddel, 2012:1). Gumede (2020:207ff), in his analysis of education in South Africa, echoed these sentiments.

Education is a driver of future success, employment, active citizenship, and overall improvement in quality of life. The right to education is a universally accepted human right, as encapsulated in Article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations [UN], 2015:54), which indicates that education should be directed towards

> full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Education shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship amongst all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

At the World Conference on Education for All (EFA), held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, more than 150 countries agreed that their education systems had greatly weakened in the 1990s and had left many citizens illiterate and unable to participate fully in their societies. This conclusion led to the development of many international cross-sectional surveys to measure predetermined learning outcomes over time and to ensure that

basic education in countries translates to students acquiring knowledge and skills that are universal (Chinapah, 2003:8).[1]

As outlined by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2000), various characteristics and features should be in place for leaners to receive a quality education. These are trained and qualified teachers, good educational resources (including for individual schools), learning-orientated spaces, good school management practices, parental involvement, no violence in schools, and well-nourished learners. Quality education, as outlined by UNICEF (2000), should be the emphasis of all education policies and processes, as well as increasing access/quantity to the education system in society. This is particularly relevant in a society such as South Africa, where past discriminatory apartheid legislation excluded many learners based on their race (see Gumede, 2020:207ff, 213ff; Jansen, 1999; Kallaway, 2002; Case & Deaton, 1999.)

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (RSA, 1996c:15), all citizens have the right to basic education, which includes both adult and further education. It places an obligation on the state to provide and make accessible such education. Citizens have a right to receive this education in public education institutions, either in an official language or in their language of choice. This right, however, is subject to the state considering "(a) equity; (b) practicability, and (c) the need to redress the results of past racially discriminatory laws and practices" (RSA, 1996c:15). At present, South Africa has 11 official languages; the inclusion of which in the education system has proven an insurmountable challenge to date. This challenge is elaborated on in Chapter 2.

One of the fundamental skills essential to a high-quality and effective educational system is the transfer of basic literacy and numeracy skills. According to Frostell and Pessoa (2008:9), literacy is an essential component of quality basic education that can lead to many benefits related to health, children's school attendance, and combatting other development challenges, such as, *inter alia*, unemployment. Increased literacy is also linked to reduced poverty, increased personal wealth, and higher economic

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[1] The use of social surveys since the 1870s has assisted in attaining a clearer picture of social challenges in various areas (Parsons, 1995:93). Parsons (1995:93) argues that not only in Germany, but especially in Britain, the empirical study of social problems became influential, to the extent that it also impacts policy.

growth (Richmond, Robinson & Sachs-Israel, 2008:39; Gumede, 2020:207; Schaefer, 2005).[2]

South Africa's participation in various international and continental education system competitions sheds light on major challenges in the provision of quality education in the country. Significant differences in the performance of poorer-resourced schools compared to better-resourced schools indicate high levels of inequality in school performance and quality provision (Chinapah, 2003; Howie *et al.*, 2008; Howie, Van Staden, Tshele, Dowse & Zimmerman, 2012; Moloi & Strauss, 2005; Mullis, Martin, Foy & Hooper, 2017). In his report on quality in education (1994-2014), Spaull (2013:6) underscores this by indicating that

> an analysis of every South African dataset of educational achievement shows that there are in effect two different public-school systems in South Africa. The smaller, better performing system accommodates the wealthiest 20-25 percent of pupils who achieve much higher scores then the larger system which caters for the poorest 75-80 per cent of pupils. The performance in this latter, larger category can only be described as abysmal. These two education systems can be seen when splitting pupils by wealth, socio-economic status, geographic location and language. While there are minor differences depending on which dimension one chooses to split the distributions the overall picture of two different schooling systems is quite clear. [3]

1.2   INTRODUCTION

South African policy development and application prior to 1994 showed evidence of discrimination, inequality, and segregation. The adoption of the Constitution post 1994 called for a policy framework that was more inclusive, non-discriminatory, and centred on human rights and equality (RSA, 1996c:2). Upon transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa in 1994, the new government faced a mammoth task to enact changes that would, in principle, grant all citizens broad-based equal freedom. It was deemed important that these changes further protected and enhanced citizens'

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[2] For an insightful discussion on education, education and poverty, and education and inequality, including gender inequality (including in so-called developing countries), see numerous observations by the sociologist Anthony Giddens (1993:443ff;78-79; 423ff; 429; 444ff).

[3] Fleisch (2008) splits it 80/20. The main premise is that the larger cohort of learners, when taken by race and other characteristics, are predominantly black African, from rural areas and poor.

"democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom", as enshrined in Chapter 2, the Bill of Rights, of the South African Constitution. After many years of apartheid and racial segregation, many deep-rooted challenges had to be tackled, particularly a highly fragmented education system, which today still mirrors the realities of a highly unequal society.[4] According to Rembe (2005) and Jansen (1999), these systemic realities included:

- 18 racially segregated education departments;
- poor educational outcomes for non-whites;
- poor levels and quality of education among black teachers;
- large teacher-to-learner ratios, which in certain cases exceeded 100 pupils per teacher in black/African schools;
- a rigidly defined curriculum based on apartheid ideology that viewed all non-white citizens as inferior; and
- a general shortage of suitably qualified black/African teachers.

Ideally, policies are enacted to improve a predetermined situation.[5] The fragmented education system in South Africa post 1994 is no exception. The South African educational transformation path started with the dismantling of apartheid structures. All racially segregated education departments were unified into a single national education system that comprised nine provincial departments (Jansen, 1999). Changes were promulgated by extensive policy documents from the national Department of Education (DoE) that guided its relations with public departments.

South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world by any measure (Freund, 2010; Seekings & Natrass, 2011; Pillay, Khadigala, Southall, Mosoetsa & Kariuki, 2018; World Bank, 2018; Gumede, 2020:187ff). Inequality in terms of access to education remains concentrated in the former apartheid "homelands" or rural areas in

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[4] The role that colonialism played as structural preparation for later policies of segregation (1910 onwards) and apartheid (1948-1989) cannot be dealt with in this chapter, nor the thesis as a whole. The same applies to structural violence in the educational realm. These issues will have to be dealt with in future studies.

[5] For now, I will hold on to this rather minimal definition of policy (arguably somewhat optimistically). I will touch on "policy as one term on which there seems to be a certain amount of definitional agreement" (derived from Heclo, 1972:84; cf. Parsons, 1995:13). It is important to make the reader aware that "policies are intended courses of action", but can also have unintended consequences. Parsons (1995:13) goes further when he suggests that at times policies can drift into a realm of "aimlessness".

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which the majority of black South Africans find themselves. Income inequality in South Africa is another a major problem. Women have always constituted the highest percentage of poor citizens in South Africa, and this condition is maintained by their limited access to education, employment in the formal sector, and government employment programmes (Meredith, 2005:682; Todaro & Smith, 2009).[6] After many years, insufficient progress has been made in this particular area (Gumede, 2020:188ff).[7] Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2019b) indicates that the labour market is the largest contributor to income inequality at 74.2%. A central feature of South African inequality is that the lowest 60% of households depend primarily on social grants, as opposed to income from the labour market. A demographic breakdown of the population indicates that the majority of this group constitutes black South Africans.

Van der Berg (2000:2, 3) argues that inequality in education has persisted, particularly in historically black and coloured schools, with white and Indian schools consistently outperforming these schools. The South African Institute for Race Relations (IRR) in its 2019 country survey placed the number of people with a degree and higher in 2017 as only 5.4% of black South Africans and 5.1% of coloureds, in relation to 18.7% of Indians and 29% of white South Africans (IRR, 2019:467).

Klandermans, Roefs and Olivier (2001:1) assert that the phenomenon of unequal education persisting in society demonstrates that resources are not used efficiently. Written more than two decades ago, it seems that their line of argument remains applicable in South Africa and elsewhere. Ashton (2009:1) reasons that unequal societies are far more prone to social ills than more financially equal societies. The higher the income inequality, the bigger the chances that there will be high crime and prisoner rates, poor education systems, as well as problems with poor health such as obesity and higher proportions of mental disease. The problem with the inequality in South African schools particularly is that historically black schools make up over 80% of the enrolment of the South African educational landscape (Van der Berg, 2000:18; IRR, 2019; Spaull, 2019).

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[6] For a broader discussion of global effects related to economic inequality, gender discrimination, and challenges facing women, as well as race and social mobility, consult Schaefer (2005:373-374, 381ff. 219, 381).

[7] For a more detailed account of ups and downs in poverty and inequality, as well as socio-economic vulnerabilities in Africa in general, and South Africa in particular, consult Gumede (2020:11, 43ff, 188ff). Despite some progress in some areas pointed out by Gumede (2020), vulnerabilities remain.

Education holds the key, not only to closing these race-based and gender-based inequalities in South African society, but also for economic growth. In this context, Gustafsson, Van der Berg, Shepherd and Burger (2010) argue that the South African gross domestic product (GDP) would be between 23% and 30% higher if the population were fully literate.

1.3   THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND PROBLEM SETTING

The South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b:3) distinguishes between two categories of schools, namely public and independent schools, which directs the funding and governance of schools. The differences between these schools are not limited to their funding models, governance, and resources, but also include their geographical locations. Public schools, according to the Schools Act (RSA, 1996b), receive their funding from the state, and can either be ordinary or special needs schools. Independent schools can be independently owned by an individual or by an organisation, and the rules for their establishment and functioning are set out in Chapter 5 of the Schools Act.

The Schools Act also places a duty on parents and caregivers to ensure that children in their care are enrolled in school from the age of seven to 15 or Grade 9 (whichever occurs first). The Act further provides that children may not be refused admission to school due to their parents' inability to pay school fees. Section 35(1) of the Act requires the minister to determine national quintiles for public schools. Schools are grouped into five quintiles; ranging from poorest in Quintile 1 to least poor in Quintile 5. To address the inequality rates in South Africa, public no-fee schools were established to provide the poorest children with access to education. These are schools in Quintiles 1 to 3 (Ogbannaya & Awuhah, 2019:106).

Data from 2016 and 2017 show that learners who attend no-fee schools proportionate to those who attend ordinary public schools are approximately 86%, and the proportion of learners in the 86% group who attend no-fee schools is approximately 79% (up from 76.2% in 2016) (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion). No-fee schools are attended predominantly by black and coloured learners, who are indicated to have very low educational rates and upward social mobility in the current South African society.

Despite the fact that South Africa spends a large amount of its GDP on improving the quality of its education system, it has been unable to improve the system sufficiently – a sentiment shared by the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2010b:11-12). Christie (2010:8) argues that there are various complexities associated with operationalising the right to education as envisaged by the Constitution of South Africa. The introduction of a fee policy, for instance, created structural inequality in the system that ensured that the wealthy receive better education than the poor. Christie (2010:8) further notes that national and international tests (such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study [TIMSS]) indicate that inequality in South African education remains and, in fact, has increased over time. Despite constitutional imperatives for principled equality and access to equitable education, the challenge of quality (or rather, lack of quality) in education persists.

1.4   INITIAL POLICY CONTESTATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The ideal of quality education for all in South Africa was already implied as far back as 1955 with the release of the Freedom Charter by the African National Congress (ANC, 1955). The Charter, as it was commonly known, envisaged a country characterised by equality, freedom, and prosperity for all citizens – conditions which in the democratic South Africa are enshrined in the Constitution. The constitutional guidelines released by the ANC in exile in Harare during 1989, before the negotiated transition from minority rule to democracy (1991 to 1994), confirmed this perspective. The adoption of the subsequent Constitution (1996), the education White Papers, current education policies, and the National Development Plan (NDP) supports this imperative, although seemingly in theory only.

The White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995) refers to commitment to the process of participation in curriculum development. Contrastingly, the ANC's (1994:136) policy framework for education and training stated at the time that "the present curriculum is effectively controlled from within a small locus and with hidden processes of decision making despite the rhetoric of decentralisation". In reflecting on these two documents, it is clear that they directly contradict each other since the ANC document, by implication, provides for curriculum changes to be affected without sufficient consultation or participation.

The government's strategy in the democratic era has always been to decrease or eradicate poverty and inequality levels caused by years of apartheid rule. One of the early examples was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the mid-1990s, which assumed distribution of land first, with the conviction that economic growth would follow. The RDP strategy would be facilitated by a mixed economy with strong elements of state intervention. The RDP was soon replaced by the Growth, Equity and Redistribution (GEAR) framework, which was based on a more liberalist economic approach – some may say an approach that catered for Western-led globalisation and liberalism-capitalism that implied growth first and then redistribution, if possible (South African Government, 1996). The impact of switching from one approach to another on social development was heatedly debated at the time and is still discussed today (Mulaudzi & Liebenberg, 2017:30). The abandonment of the RDP and replacement with the GEAR framework, with little to no public consultation, left much to be desired (Mulaudzi & Liebenberg, 2017:30; Mkhize, 2015:193) and had an impact on education as well (Mulaudzi & Liebenberg, 2017). In fact, as Mkhize (2015:193) suggests, a lack of participation/consultation often leads to unilateral decision making, which is often not in the best interest of the poor. These decisions had unintended consequences, which included uneven development. Unintended consequences in policy are discussed in more detail later in the dissertation.

The adoption of policy in South Africa is heavily influenced by the political ideology of the ANC, which became the ruling party in a multi-party, yet dominant-party, system following the election of 1994. The ANC's (1992) document on policy, *Ready to Govern: ANC Policy Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa*, outlines its political ideology as follows:

> This document does not present a rigid ANC blue-print for the future of South Africa to which our supporters will be expected to rally, and our opponents required to submit. Rather, the document presents a set of basic guidelines to policies we intend to pursue. The ideas will be developed through discussion within in the ANC, and through consultation with the broadest spectrum of South African public opinion. The policies will be adapted according to these processes and on the basis of experience.

The policy environment in South African education is also influenced by the political ideology of the ruling party. Many problems, such as teaching and learning

discrepancies in schools, persist in the education environment, which is a cause of great concern. Various points of criticism and problem identification in the policy environment related and still relate to policy coherence, policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as debates around the extent of participation (or in certain cases, consultation that the ANC ideology speaks of) (Chisholm, 2000, 2005; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Jansen & Christie, 1999; Van der Berg, 2000; Taylor, Fleisch & Schindler, 2008). These matters are discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 5.

Jansen (2002:207) succinctly summarises problems relating to participation in South African education policymaking as follows:

- The views of groups that are invited to participate in the process are not always incorporated into the final document (participation without incorporation).
- Participation in the initial debates may have been broad, but the final policy was not widely discussed, nor criticised or reformulated/recontextualised (little feedback or ongoing participation sought).
- Those participating have different levels of expertise and unequal power, which results in different kinds of emphasis in policy documents (asymmetric inputs in terms of quality added to reports).
- Participation sometimes emerges at a point where the policy framework is already decided (belated participation or, perhaps worse, ex-post facto consultation).
- Participation and consultation are sometimes misinterpreted and used to simply seek approval for final plans that are not modified based on consultative inputs received.

As indicated earlier, policy development and processes were heavily influenced by apartheid rule prior to 1994. Public and state resources were also allocated discriminatorily, according to racial lines (Maile, 2008:5). The legacy of the apartheid system resulted in inequality continuing to play an important role in the South African educational landscape. Poorer learners still continue to receive an education that is inferior to that of more affluent learners who attend private schools. In a post-apartheid or post-transition context, the abovementioned criticisms by Jansen (2002:207) are important, should transformation in (and through) education be sought.

The challenges regarding participation, coherence, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation are the departure point of this dissertation. The policymaking process is one that requires harmonisation, alignment, and coherence. Policy coherence, in simple terms, means that time and effort are not wasted by one sphere undermining the actions of another sphere (Maile, 2008:5). The ANC's ideological documents and founding documents indicate a policymaking sphere that is centred on democratic values and committed to participative government. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to critically discuss and analyse the role and influence of policy changes within South African basic education (1994-2018) in the provision of quality education in public primary schools.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study set out to answer the following research questions:

- What are the constraints of quality education provision in post-apartheid (1994-2018) South African public primary schools?
- How did policy changes in post-apartheid South Africa (1994-2018) influence the provision of quality education in public primary schools?
- What recommendations can be made to improve the provision of quality education learning opportunities from a policy perspective?

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study sought to achieve the following research objectives:

- To critically discuss the features/constraints of quality education provision in post-apartheid (1994-2018) South African public primary schools.
- To determine how policy changes in post-apartheid South Africa (1994-2018) influenced the provision of quality education in public primary schools.
- To search for and make recommendations to improve the provision of quality education learning opportunities from a policy perspective.

1.8   THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The importance of education in general and the provision of quality education in South African public primary schools prompted this research. The performance of schools in the South African education system in various international, regional, and localised tests and surveys indicates that literacy and numeracy skills vary greatly across different South African provinces, and even within provinces. Additionally, looming inequalities persist in the education system many years after the demise of apartheid. An alarmingly high proportion of schools in the South African education system do not provide learners with learning opportunities that are conducive to mastering literacy and numeracy skills. For this reason, this study focused on factors that impede the provision of quality education in South African public primary schools to illuminate the policy environment and its influence on the provision of quality education.

1.9   DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

Looking critically through the lens of the UNICEF (2000) definition of quality education, it is apparent that it not only entails the provision of literacy and numeracy skills, but also the creation of a learning environment that supports the full development of a learner. Since learning is a cumulative process, this study focused on South African public primary schools and the initial policy framework targeted at these schools.

The disparate history of education in South Africa has played a crucial role in the unequal provision of quality education; the starting discussion therefore offers a brief overview and analysis of the history of education in South Africa. South Africa is still an inherently unequal society, and its education system is a microcosm of that reality. By virtue of the nature of this study, the early background of apartheid, namely colonialism, however important, cannot be dealt with here.

1.10   THE LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

The study of education is broad, complex, and encompasses various factors that influence the quality and success rates of learners. Generally speaking, factors such as school attendance, teacher assistance, availability of and access to resources and facilities, and policy choices past and present will inevitably impact the quality of school

education at any level. Apart from policy, this research touches on an array of these factors and related theories and debates on education.

The study is limited to the public primary school environment in South African education and the influence of policy frameworks on the provision of learning opportunities that are conducive to a quality education. The rationale for this focus is the responsibility of the government for this area of the schooling environment, the cumulative nature of education, and UNICEF's (2000) guidance on the features of a quality education. Given the vast scope of education research in South Africa, the policy environment offers a unique lens through which changes in the primary school environment can be observed. The study of public policy analysis offers various steps and models that can be used in the adoption of policies within a society. It has a role to play in and a potential influence on the creation of the collaborative culture envisaged in education policies in South African basic education.

1.11   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study sought to highlight the constraints that hinder the provision of quality education in South African basic education in public primary schools (1994-2018) through the lens of UNICEF's (2000) definition of a quality education. One important aspect of this definition is the creation of a learning environment that is conducive to learning through the adoption of policies that support such an environment. The government is responsible for managing this environment, as stipulated in all education policies, and this aspect is the focus of this study.

Learning, much like socialisation, is a cumulative process that starts from before birth and is strengthened by quality teaching during the schooling process. The mastery of certain critical applications through various stages of education will ultimately impact the world of work, the child's future vocation, his/her ability to obtain certain higher-paying jobs, or to add value to the world of work and the broader society.

Derived from the findings of the study, recommendations are made to improve the state of education in the area researched, specifically in the policymaking environment. The study also offers a range of areas in need of further research, as related to the education policy environment.

1.12   STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This study is divided into six chapters, which cover the following broad topics:

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter that provides the background and context of the study. Additionally, the rationale, limitations, purpose, and significance of undertaking this study are outlined to provide a clear picture of why and how this topic was selected. Most importantly, the chapter reveals the significance of the demarcated focus area within the study of education in general and South Africa in particular. The chapter concludes with the layout of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 offers the literature review, which is an in-depth consultation of available scholarly works. The chapter focuses on the concepts that frame the study, such as the definition of quality education, which includes literacy and numeracy as umbrella concepts. The models and theory that underpin this study are rooted in the study of public policy analysis, particularly educational policy. In addition to the discussion of the models of public policy, the chapter provides relevant background that is essential for an authentic framing of educational quality in South African schools.

The brief historical overview of education in South Africa forms an important part of the discussion in terms of the past and its legacy or continued effect on the provision of quality education in the present. It also discusses challenges to the broad-based provision of quality education, which are deeply manifested in the education system. The definition of what constitutes a quality education, as outlined by UNICEF (2000), offers the study a specific lens through which South African schools and society are critically viewed. The various characteristics and features of quality education, as outlined by UNICEF (2000), frame the last part of the discussion in Chapter 2. This includes teacher profiles, school resources, learning, management, parental involvement, and violence and safety in schools. The external and internal dimensions that influence educational quality, as suggested by UNICEF (2000), also form part of this discussion.

Chapter 3 provides evidence of the quality of education in the South African education system in terms of student performance in international and regional tests. Localised South African literacy and numeracy tests and learner performance are also discussed

in terms of the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) and the DBE's Systemic Evaluations.

Chapter 4 contains the methodology of the study, such as the research design, the research approach, and the method of data analysis, which entailed a literature study accompanied by a documentary analysis of available reading in the selected area of the study. The reason for the focus on policy issues is introduced in this chapter.

The focus in ***Chapter 5*** is on the quality of education in South African schools from the departure point of policy conceptualisation in South Africa in support of quality education provision in South African primary schools (1994-2018). The focus is on policy coherence, policy implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation of these policies following the demise of apartheid. Reference is made to the policy process at large, steps in the policy process, as well as the feedback loop outlined by Parsons (1995). Policy is divided along the three largest political administrations of Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, and Jacob Zuma.

Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter of this study. Given the vast scope of the issues discussed in the preceding chapters, the focus of this chapter is on a succinct summary of issues and findings in terms of the research questions, lessons learned, and the value that this holds for policy conceptualisation, refinement, monitoring, and evaluation. Recommendations derived from the research results are made. In conclusion, suggestions are made for areas and themes in need of future research.

Figure 1.1 provides an illustrated summary of the structure of the dissertation.

DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

Chapter 1: Background and Introduction

- *Research Aim and Design*
- *Methodological Justifications*
- *Study Contributions*

Chapter 2: Literature Review

- *Review of Literature:*
  - ✓ *Conceptual Framework*
  - ✓ *Models of Public Policy*
  - ✓ *Historical Overview and Post-Democracy Transformation*

Chapter 3: South African School Performance in National and International Tests

- *South African School Performance in Various Regional and International Tests*
- *National Test Performance*

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

- *Research Aim and Design*
- *Methodological Justifications*
- *Study Contributions*

Chapter 5: Policy Conceptualisation in South African Education: A Theoretical Exploration

- *Nature of Public Participation*
- *Nelson Mandela Administration Thabo Mbeki Administration*
- *Jacob Zuma Administration*

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

- *Research Conclusions*
- *Recommendations*
- *Future Research Areas*

Figure 1.1: Structure of the dissertation

CHAPTER 2:
LITERATURE REVIEW

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.
Martin Luther King

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 2015) states that everyone has the right to an education. The ANC (1955) Freedom Charter outlines the core values of the present ruling party in South Africa and encapsulates its objective to ensure a just, fair, and equal society. One particular aspect of a just society is the granting of equal and fair education to all citizens. It is against this backdrop that the drafting of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996c) obligates the state to provide said equal and quality education to all South African citizens. Pursuant to the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its being a signatory to the World Dakar Framework for Action (2000), South Africa has committed itself to providing quality education for its citizens at all levels. Education is the central driver contained in South Africa's NDP for 2030 and the African Agenda 2063, to which South Africa is a signatory, that set goals centred on sustainable development and growth in Africa in general and South Africa in particular.

Quality education is a basic objective of development since it is essential for a satisfying and rewarding life. The quality of education determines the pace at which societies become prosperous. It also determines the rate at which society becomes more equitable and consequently less vulnerable to disease and ill-health. Besides the national benefit of quality education, it enables individuals to improve their personal efficacy, productivity, and income (Todaro & Smith, 2009). Green and Riddel (2012:2) add that, apart from other multidimensional objectives, school systems around the world are judged by their ability to impart basic literacy, numeracy, and analytical skills to students. Markedly, the importance of literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills is often emphasised by employers.

Internationally, South Africa's education system is ranked very low due to the high inequality in terms of educational attainment and the transfer of basic skills and

knowledge to its learners, especially in terms of basic education. National policy for education is important as it sets out the educational goals of the country. It should be coherent and adapted to a rapidly changing international and national learning environment and technological advancements.

The focus of this study is on the provision of quality education in public primary schools in South Africa. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the variables/concepts that underpin the study by reviewing related literature. The starting point is to reflect on the conceptual framework. Secondly, the chapter discusses the important concepts that guide the study, with emphasis on the features of quality education. The theoretical framework discusses policy frameworks from a literature exploration perspective and comments on the policy realities in South Africa, by focusing specifically on education policy in the basic education environment. Since South Africa is a highly unequal society, framing education quality using the UNESCO (2014) lens requires a backward-looking approach. A historical overview is thus offered of apartheid education and its role in the provision of educational resources in South Africa and its influence on policy frameworks and decision making in South Africa.

2.2   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE THE STUDY

In order to construct social theory, concepts are needed to formulate ideas. Specificity in defining concepts is imperative, since a lack of correct and aligned definitions of concepts can create obstacles in the advancement of knowledge and science (Berg, 2009:22). According to Merriam and Simpson (2000), the goal of a conceptual framework is to categorise theories, concepts, and the relationships between them. Furthermore, it serves the following functions:

- It builds a foundation;
- It is meant to demonstrate how a study advances knowledge;
- It conceptualises the study; and
- It is meant to assess the research design and instruments.

The following are the cornerstone concepts that frame this study:

- Quality education;
- Literacy;

- Numeracy;
- Literacy and numeracy as cornerstones of quality education;
- The distinguishing features of quality education in the South African education system; and
- The influence of policy enactments on the provision of quality education in South African schools.

2.2.1 Defining quality education

In defining quality education, UNICEF's (2000) definition is utilised as the point of departure. According to UNICEF, a quality education has the following distinguishing features:

- Learners who are healthy, well-nourished, and ready to participate and learn, and who are supported in learning by their families and communities;
- Environments that are healthy, safe, protective, gender sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;
- Learning content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy, and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and peace;
- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities; and
- Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society (UNICEF, 2000:4).

UNESCO (2005:35-37) provides a framework for education quality that encompasses the following dimensions:

- **Learner characteristics:** These refer not only to the commonalities, but also to learner differences such as potential inequalities that should be taken into account. It also includes perseverance and school readiness. In a highly fragmented society such as South Africa, this is an important determinant of educational quality measurement.

- **Enabling inputs:** These refer to all the resources that are available to support quality education, such as human and physical resources and infrastructure, which also include:

- **Teaching and learning:** This includes time spent on teaching, teaching pedagogy assessments, class size, etc.

- **Outcomes:** The outcomes of quality education include all the perceived benefits to society and the individual, such as literacy, numeracy, and life skills.

- **Context:** The societal, economic, and religious context, parental support, national governance, educational knowledge and support infrastructure, time for schooling and homework, and a host of other contextual factors that must be taken into account when assessing education quality since context has a significant impact on quality education.

This framework shows how complex and encompassing educational quality can be in a society. With a complex society such as South Africa, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine how educational quality can be achieved in a fragile democracy. While it is not impossible, it requires coherence and participation on multiple levels.

2.2.2   Defining literacy

Literacy can be defined as the acquisition and use of reading, writing, and numeracy skills, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality (DoE, 2009).

2.2.3   Defining numeracy

Numeracy can be defined as understanding how mathematics is applied in the real world, and making the best decisions when choosing to apply it. It entails the following parts:

- Interpreting data, charts, and diagrams;

- Processing information;

- Solving challenges;

- Checking answers; and

- Understanding and explaining solutions (National Numeracy United Kingdom, 2020).

2.2.4   Literacy and numeracy as cornerstones of quality education

As outlined in UNICEF's (2000:4) definition, the transfer of literacy and numeracy skills is essential in the achievement of quality education. Since literacy and numeracy are defined internationally by various methods and standards, an important starting point for this study is to discuss these definitions in relation to how South Africa defines them within its policy framework(s).

2.2.5   The distinguishing features of quality education in the South African education system

Two different systems prevail in the South African education system. It is apparent that these two differ fundamentally in what is offered, relayed, and learned in South African schools. The COVID-19 pandemic also highlighted many of these differences, as the pandemic necessitated that schools and educators fundamentally changed how learning took place in schools across the country. The protracted lockdown and the development of an appropriate vaccine to ensure herd immunisation further perpetuated these inequalities in school systems. Teachers make up a high proportion of COVID-19-related deaths and infections, which caused some delays, especially in schools where insufficient funding exists to employ more teachers. This, along with the projected shortage of teachers, should be considered a threat to the provision of quality education in South African schools, especially for more disadvantaged communities. However, COVID-19 and its subsequent effects fall outside the scope of this dissertation; given the focus period of this study (1994-2018) and will have to be dealt with in subsequent works.

2.2.6   The influence of policy enactments on the provision of quality education in South African schools

Educational change is said to be heavily influenced by policy enactments. In South Africa, national policy guidelines direct all educational activities, yet policies cannot operate in isolation. How they operate in a domain is influenced by various international and national developments, as well as an array of contextual factors, which are elaborated on in Chapter 5 with the description of the policy environment and enabling factors discussed per administration in the South African political sphere.

Figure 2.1 provides a diagrammatical representation of the conceptual framework of this study.

Figure 2.1: Diagrammatical representation of the conceptual framework
Source: Author's own construction

2.3 PUBLIC POLICY IN CONTEXT

The national policy for education is important as it sets out the educational goals of the country. Ideally, it should be coherent and adapted to a rapidly changing international and national learning environment and technological advancements.

Section 195 of the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996c:111) stipulates that, besides the guiding values of the Constitution, the following values and principles must govern public administration:

a) A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.
b) Efficient, economic, and effective use of resources must be promoted.

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c) Public administration must be development orientated.

d) Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably, and without bias.

e) People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policymaking.

f) Public administration must be accountable.

g) Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible, and accurate information.

The Constitution is very descriptive in the South African context, and with South Africa being a constitutional democracy, it should be taken into consideration when public policies are enacted. However, the guidelines above call for more than just the consultation of the Constitution; they also highlight the importance of including the public in a more participatory capacity for policymaking through the creation of participatory spaces. Policy is defined by De Coning and Wissink (2018:5) as "a statement of intent, or an action plan to transform a perceived problem into a future solution". Dye (2002:1) considers policy as whatever a government chooses to do or not to do, whereas Anderson (2000:4) defines policy as a "relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern". While the different definitions of policy indicate that policymaking, and its related discussions, is not something that is necessarily agreed upon, it is clear is that it should be a purpose-driven process.

Parsons (1995:77) identified seven stages of a policy lifecycle, namely problem identification, problem definition, identifying alternative responses/solutions, evaluation of options, selection of policy option, implementation, and, lastly, evaluation (see Figure 2.2).
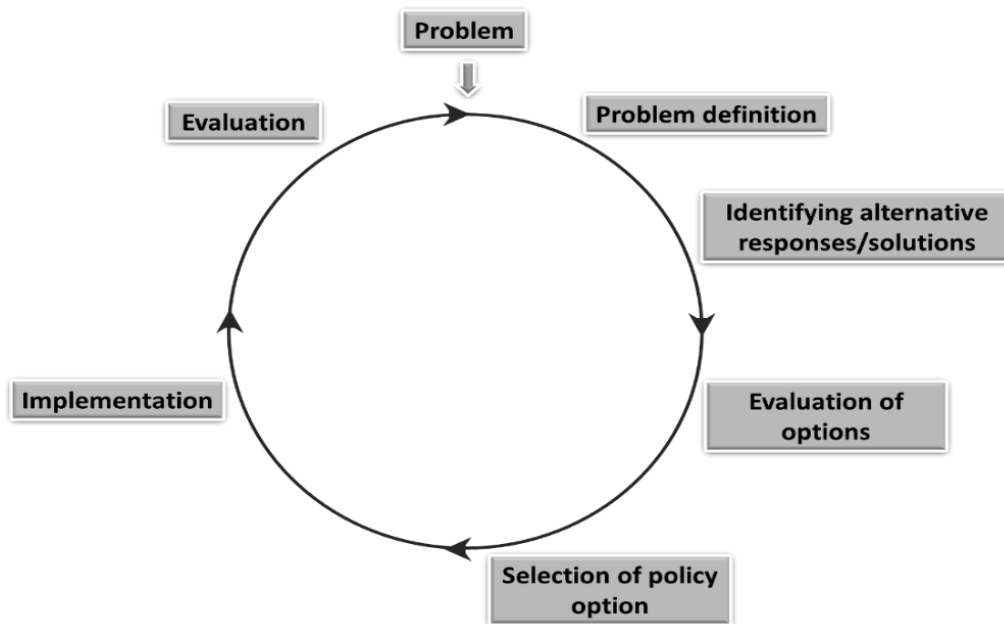
Figure 2.2: The policy lifecycle
Source: Parsons (1995:77)

Policy (and by implication the decision to embark on a policy), according to Parsons (1995:87), originates from a problem identified in society. What constitutes a problem and how it will be defined depend on how the policymakers define the problem, as indicated by the first step in the cycle (see Figure 2.2). Dye (2002:33) asserts that in the "real world", the steps/processes often do not occur in a smooth and sequential fashion; rather, they occur simultaneously as different role players are engaged in different processes at the same time.

In the South African context, the National Framework for Public Participation (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2007:15) defines public participation as an open, accountable process through which individuals and groups in selected communities can exchange views and influence decision making. It is further defined as a democratic process of engaging people in deciding, planning, and playing an active part in the development and provision of services that affect their lives. The National Framework for Public Participation advocates for various approaches to increase public participation, which include:

- legitimate structures for community participation (ward committees and stakeholder forums);
- planning mechanisms for communities (community-based planning);

- integrating this planning into municipal integrated development planning, budgets, performance management systems, etc.;

- support for wards to monitor, evaluate, and implement their plans, using discretionary funds that they control, and encouraging voluntary action to do so; and

- providing facilitation and support to ward committees and community groups using community development workers that hold ward committees and municipalities to account (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2007:21).

This is by no means a perfect system and is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. Mkhize (2015:199) notes that although these participatory spaces do exist in South Africa, they are not entirely effective and are marred by various complexities and constraints.

2.4   MODELS OF PUBLIC POLICY

According to De Coning and Cloete (2006:27), a model is an oversimplified representation of reality that illustrates the relationship among variables. Models, by this definition, aim to help people understand a phenomenon better through a visual representation. What a policy model does, in principle, is to show in a graphical format what the essentials of policymaking are and how it is supposed to unfold within a country, and, most importantly, in a young democracy such as South Africa. Based on the research questions of this study, it is important to discuss policy models as part of the discussion of how policy is made, why certain policies are adopted instead of others, and why participative governance is important in a society such as South Africa. Different models of public policy exist (De Coning & Cloete, 2006), which can either focus on the contents of policy options or the analysis of policy processes. Given the context of this study, the following discussion concentrates on the latter.

2.4.1   The elite/mass model

The basic tenet of the elite/mass model is the assumption that the government (the ruling elite) is solely responsible for all policy decisions, which are made on behalf of passive, "ill-informed" masses (Cloete, Wissink & De Coning, 2006:26-37). In short,

this model, as illustrated in Figure 2.3, divides society into two: those with power and those without power.
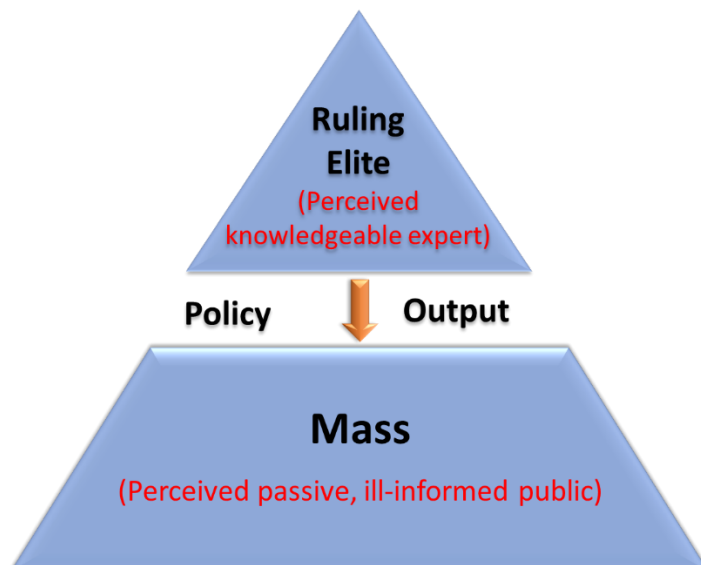
Figure 2.3: Elite/mass model

Source: Adapted from Cloete *et al*. (2006:37)

In its purest form, this model shows the decisions of the elite filtering down to the masses. According to Dye (2002:23), this model of public policy does not arise from the demands or needs of the masses, but rather from a small elite group from the upper socio-economic level/strata of society. The group also comprises those who moved from the non-elite positions, very slowly, depending on their allegiance to the ideals/goals of the elite part of society. Yet, based on recent research, Cloete and De Coning (2018:43) argue that the public or masses are not necessarily passive and ill-informed and can act as "a dynamic catalyst for policy change". Cloete and De Coning (2018:43) also contend that this model is typically applied in more autocratic societies and is not suited for a democratic society as it does not create the climate for democratic management and governance capacity building.

2.4.2 The group model

According to the group model, various interest groups and stakeholders are able to exert influence on policy outcomes. Dye (2002:21) notes that these groups share a common interest, both informally and formally, so that they can exert their demands on the government. The model thus assumes that the policymaker is sensitive to the

needs of interest groups (Cloete *et al.*, 2006:38-39). The forum activity is a feature in South African society, and has been used as a vehicle for policy change. Dye (2002:21) states that the influence of the said groups depends on factors such as their "numbers, wealth, organisational strength, leadership, access to decision makers, and internal cohesion". Figure 2.4 illustrates the group model.
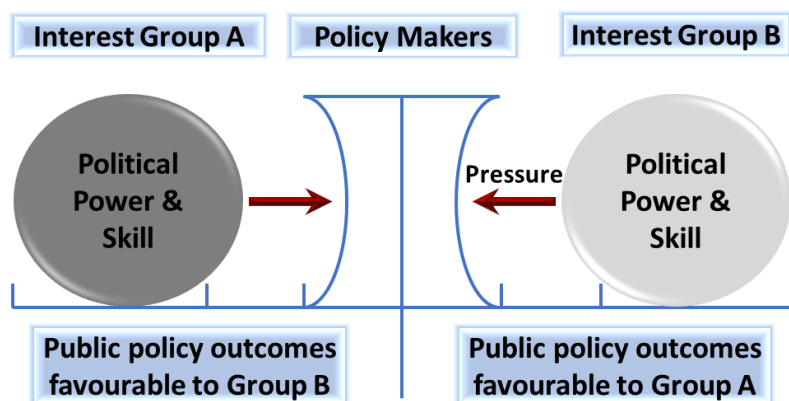
Figure 2.4: Group model

Source: Cloete *et al.* (2006:38)

De Coning and Cloete (2018:43) argue that when there are struggles between groups, the aim of the government should be to find a win-win outcome for both interest groups. However, De Coning and Cloete (2018:43) maintain that this is hardly or rarely possible in practice. Henry (1982, in Cloete & De Coning, 2018) argues that the risks of this approach to policymaking can be "state capture", which receives more attention in Chapter 5) through campaign contributions and vested interests; for example, the Gupta family (former President Jacob Zuma's associates) in South Africa.

2.4.3   The institutional model

According to the classical interpretation of this model, governmental structures give legitimacy to public policy, and only the policies instituted by the government apply to all citizens (Cloete *et al.*, 2006:39). Using the classical interpretation of the model, De Coning and Cloete (2018:45) assert that conceived policies are driven by institutions embedded in societal culture, with normative path dependency. Changing the structure of interaction among governmental institutions or the focus and direction of a policy will therefore dramatically change that policy in the future.

Figure 2.5 depicts the governmental structures in South Africa.

[S.1 PAIA] PART (a): Any national or provincial department or municipality

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT:

Legislature: Parliament	Executive: National Executive	Judiciary: Court System
Consists of: National Assembly and National Council of Provinces	Consists of: President - Head of Cabinet and State Cabinet - Ministers (the Heads of our National departments) and Deputy Ministers	Constitutional Court Supreme Court of Appeal High Courts Magistrates Courts

The political heads of departments: Ministers
*PAIA Relevant Authority

The administrative heads of departments: Director-Generals
*PAIA Information Officer

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT: South Africa has nine provinces

Provincial Executive | Provincial Legislature

Premier | Executive Council: Appointed from Legislature

The political heads of departments: Members of the Executive Council
*PAIA Relevant Authority

The administrative heads of department: Director-Generals
*PAIA Information Officer

Head of department | Chief Director

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT: South Africa has about 300 municipalities*

Municipal Council

The political head: Mayor
*PAIA Relevant Authority

Executive/Mayoral Committee

Municipal Administration

The administrative head: Municipal Manager
*PAIA Information Officer

Heads of Departments

* As at November 2014 there were 276 municipalities listed by the Department of Communications on their website www.gcis.gov.za.

[S.1 PAIA] PART (b)(i): Any other body performing a public function in terms of the Constitution

Chapter 9 of the Constitution creates institutions that have a mandate to protect constitutional democracy in South Africa.

SOUTH AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION*	PUBLIC PROTECTOR
Monitors and assesses the observance of human rights	Investigates improper discrimination, maladministration and abuse of power in state matters

Independent Electoral Commission	Auditor-General	Commission for Gender Equality

Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities

[S.1 PAIA] PART (b)(ii): Any other body performing a public function in terms of any legislation

EXAMPLE:

CCMA (Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration)	Commission on Traditional Leadership Disputes and Claims
Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA)	National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA)
Eskom	Information Regulator*
National Credit Regulator	National Nuclear Regulator
South African Reserve Bank	South African Revenue Services (SARS)

* Complaints about PAIA requests should, once it is set-up and in operation, be submitted to the Information Regulator. As at November 2014 the Information Regulator was not yet set up. Until the Information Regulator is set-up and in operation, complaints about PAIA requests are submitted to the South African Human Rights Commission.

* For up to date contact information for any government structure visit www.gcis.gov.za

Figure 2.5: Structures of the South African government

Source: South African History Archive (2021)

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2.4.4   The social interaction model

Cloete *et al.* (2006:42) describe the policymaking process according to the social interaction model as one that is "a political subprocess within the wider policy process". It is not difficult to discern that in their model the theoretical approach relates to a partially functional structuralist paradigm, namely interactivity, interconnectedness, and interdependence in society and sub-systems such as education, schooling, socialisation, and how to maximise such interconnectedness – in this case, the educational environment in South Africa. Figure 2.6 depicts this model is diagram form.
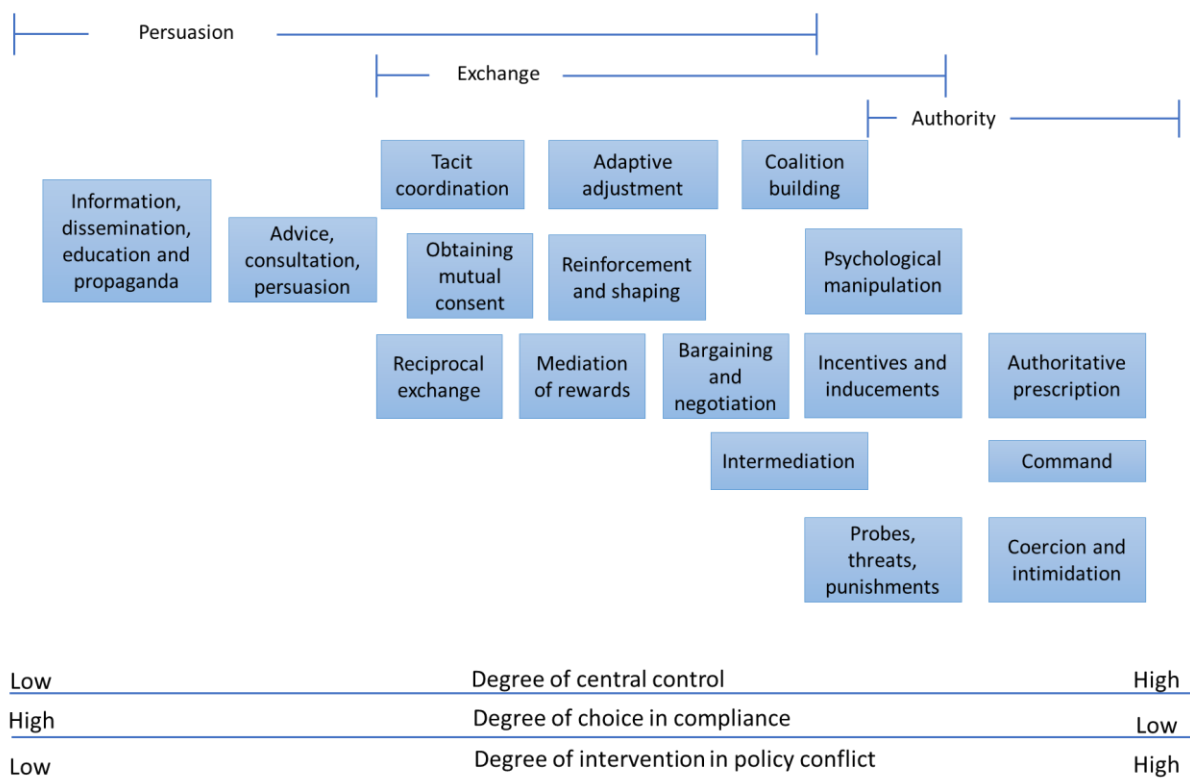
Figure 2.6: Social interaction model
Source: Cloete *et al.* (2006:41)

Figure 2.6 shows the different stakeholders in the policy process, as well as the different levels of interaction among these groups. The nature and level of interaction and control determine the degree of unilateral enforcement of policy decisions. It is evident that there are many stages and parts that affect the policy outcomes for these stakeholders (Cloete & De Coning, 2018:45).

2.4.5 Dunn's problem-centred policy-analysis model

Dunn's problem-centred policy-analysis model characterises policy analysis as a series of interrelated and integrated sequential intellectual activities, with integrated, political, and interdependent phases that can follow a linear or non-linear path. According to De Coning and Cloete (2018:47), this is a more rational approach to provide a sensible policy response to an identified policy issue or problem. Figure 2.7 portrays the different steps and phases in the problem-centred policy-analysis model.
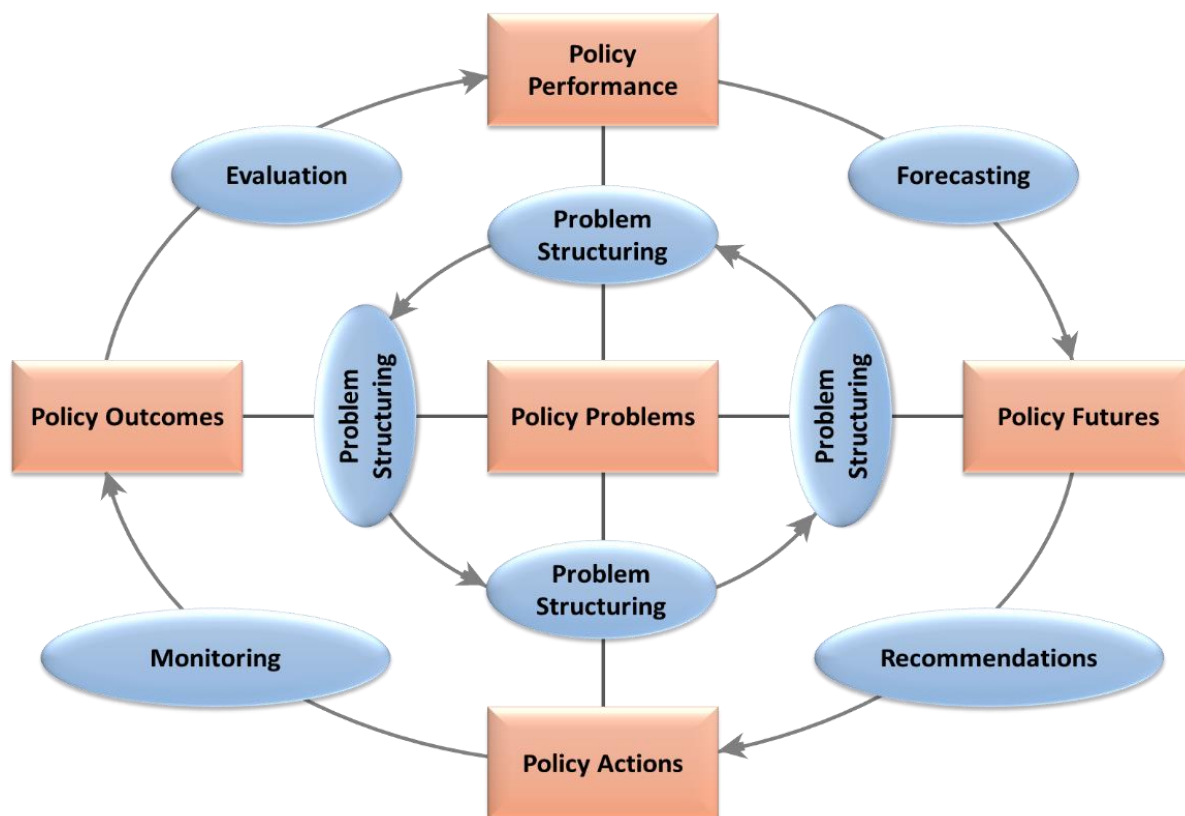
Figure 2.7: Dunn's problem-centred policy-analysis model
Source: Dunn (1994:15)

Dunn (1994) argues that policy analysis is an intellectual process that entails many interrelated steps and that continuous monitoring and feedback are required in order to provide crucial input for problems in policy to be restructured. Dye (2002) points out that policy analysis can only be utilised optimally when there is consensus on what the problems in society are. It cannot be used as a tool for resolving value conflicts.

2.4.6   Wissink's stage model

South African scholars have greatly influenced the policy field. Wissink's stage model serves as an example. The model indicates that there are sequential stages that depict the "real dynamics and activities that result in policy output" (Cloete & De Coning, 2018:48-49) (see Figure 2.8). The first activity is initiation, or the process of becoming aware of a public problem through any of the stakeholders or stakeholder actions, after which it is placed on the policy agenda. Processing involves the identification of action and stakeholders and deciding on the best alternative before making this selection public. Resource allocation is another crucial step in this process prior to implementation. The model also allows for adjudication of enforcement of the policy by administrative means before the impact evaluation, while the final step involves feedback (Cloete & De Coning, 2018:48-49).
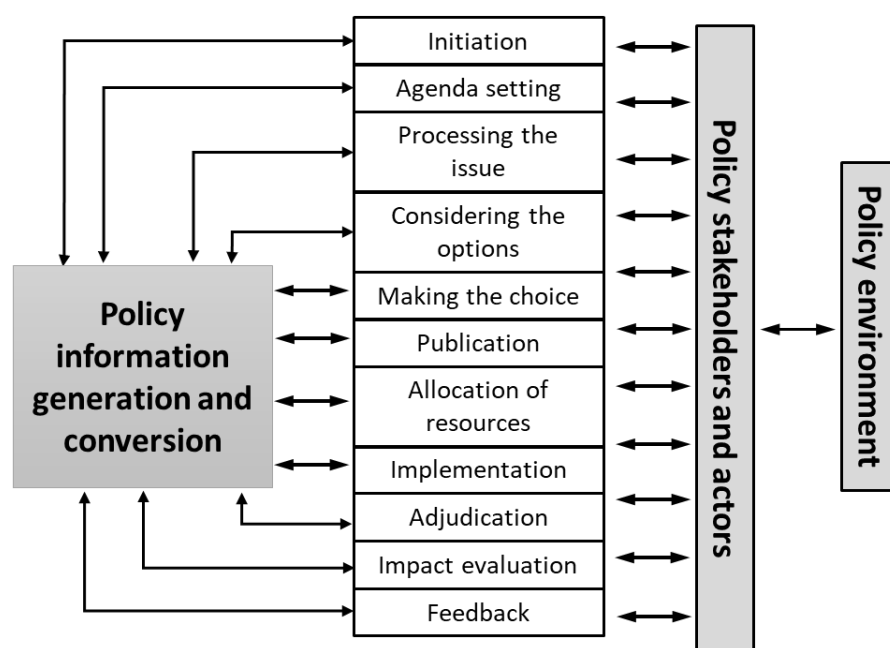
Figure 2.8: Wissink's stage model
Source: Cloete *et al.* (2006:51)

The focus of this study is on education policy in the basic education environment in South Africa. Since South Africa is a highly unequal society, it is necessary to provide a historical overview of apartheid education and its role in the provision of educational resources and its influence on policy frameworks and decision making in South Africa.

2.5   HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF APARTHEID EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

It would be apt to summarise the chasms in South African education pre-1994 through a quotation by the founder of the apartheid system: "When I have control over native education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them" (Verwoerd, 1953, in Christie, Perold & Butler, 1991:12).

The post-apartheid South African government has made huge strides in the educational sphere by ensuring that transformation of the education system remains at the forefront of its development agenda. At present, South Africa has one of the highest enrolment rates for school-going children, as well as an equitable gender enrolment ratio (Mouton & Taylor, 2013:453). The roadmap that the education department has followed is briefly illustrated within a post-apartheid framework in this section. An overview of apartheid education is also provided to characterise the current challenges that originate from decades of entrenched apartheid education.

The history of education in South Africa is marked by enforced segregation and inequality. The colonial era in South Africa was characterised by white superiority and racial inequality in education. Unequal education persisted due to the establishment of different education systems for different racial groups. Within these systems, the quality and quantity of facilities were disparate; a condition that was exacerbated by the grossly lopsided proportional budget allocation for white schools education as opposed to that for black schools. In addition, a policy of "ten years of free compulsory schooling" reserved for whites meant higher dropout rates in schools for black learners and subsequently a reduction in the quality and duration of schooling for black learners (Christie, 1985:11).

Through segregation in schooling and the social and economic exclusion of non-whites, income inequality was deeply entrenched along racial lines. According to Christie and Collins (1982:59), the Eiselen Committee[8] reported in 1951 that

> black education should be part of a carefully planned policy of segregated socio-economic development for the black people. Above all, it emphasized the

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[8] The Eiselen Committee was formed in January 1941, which made recommendations for "Native Education" that would form the basis for teaching black people as a separate race (Christie & Collins, 1982:59).

functional value of the school as an institution for the transmission of the development of black cultural heritage.

In apartheid South Africa, racial discrimination against Africans grossly damaged the social mobility and quality of life of these citizens. According to Giliomee (2009:192), the context for the restructuring of black education was linked to "a need to re-establish discipline and order over black youths". Evidently, it was not an educational imperative. Giliomee (2009) further points out that there was an overall agreement that "educated blacks would become increasingly frustrated if they could not pursue a white-collar career"; hence the drive towards offering them an inferior education (Giliomee, 2009:194). In the same vein, Christie and Collins (1982:60) reveal that the training of teachers and learners in their syllabuses was ingrained with "ideas of racial inferiority" as set by the government.

The promulgation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (which was later renamed the Black Education Act) legalised the formation of racially segregated education departments and assigned various extensive powers to the then Minister of Native Affairs, Dr H.F. Verwoerd. The Bantu Education Act (South Africa, 1953:261-262) gave the minister the right to appoint, dismiss or retain, and train teachers and other employees as he (or the Department of Native Affairs) deemed fit and in particular gave him free rein to assign funding to Bantu community schools, but also the right to suspend, reduce, or withdraw such funding at any particular time. The funding proved far too little with the rapid growth in student numbers from 800 000 in 1953 to 1 800 000 in 1963, and even more rapid growth in the following years. The government funding model perpetuated inequalities as government spending on black children in relation to white children was 14 times less and by 1968 this number had dropped to one-sixth (Giliomee, 2009:195-196). "Bantu" schools were only to be recognised if they were registered under the ambit of the Department of Native Affairs. Additionally, in terms of the Bantu Education Act (South Africa, 1953:268), the minister also had the power to select and approve the members that were to be responsible for the day-to-day management of schools. The government terminated the payment of grants to missionary schools to ensure either their closure or registration with the government to practise control over their curriculum. Also, as pointed out by Christie and Collins (1982:6), the Bantu Education Act and the Eiselen Commission report stressed the

central control over black education to generate a stable flow of black labour reproduction.

The promulgation of other racially charged legislative documents, such as the Pass Laws,[9] the Group Areas Act of 1950,[10] and the Population Registration Act of 1950[11] assigned the minority groups in South Africa certain designated areas where they were allowed to work and reside. These Acts severely restricted movement and entrenched segregation between the various races and even within "racial designations", and limited the upward mobility of all black people. Large-scale forced removal or eviction of non-whites ensued, which forced people from white urban areas to designated "black" areas or "homelands".[12] The promulgation of the Population Registration Act ensured that people were grouped into four population categories: white, black, coloured, and Indian. According to Case and Deaton (1999:1048-1049), three key effects of these Acts on black people were evident. Firstly, segregation between white and black people and the placement of black people in homelands meant that they were unable to migrate to areas with better-resourced schools. Secondly, they were unable to participate in and select the type of schooling they (and by implication their children) could receive. Lastly, the funding disproportions created disparate teacher-to-learner ratios, which ranged from 1:20 for white schools and 1:80 for black schools.

According to the Public Participation Framework for the South African Legislative Sector (South African Parliament, 2013:12), the emergence of strong social movements that opposed the apartheid state from the 1950s and especially the 1980s indicates the democratic participation of social organisations, labour, civic organisations, and people from all walks of life that led to South Africa's democracy.

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[9] The pass laws date back to the 1800s, and meant that slaves were issued passes that would control their movements and ensure a steady stream of labour in certain designated areas. These passes would be carried by all non-white South Africans (South African History Online, n.d.a).

[10] The Group Areas Act determined that the South African government could segregate the living areas of the citizens according to race (South African History Online, n.d.b).

[11] The Population Registration Act classified South Africans as white, coloured, or native according to their ethnic and other groups. The Act also made provision for the compilation of a population register (Population Registration Act, No. 30 of 1950).

[12] Homelands or Bantustans refer to the designated areas created by the apartheid government to move black South Africans to from "white South Africa". These areas, as the name suggests, were created according to a person's culture, i.e., a person who was classified as Zulu would be moved to KwaZulu homeland (South African History Online, n.d.c).

The landmark 16 June 1976 student-led protest by black school-going children, remembered for the senseless death and injury of hundreds of youths at the hands of the police, sparked international outrage and placed considerable pressure on the apartheid government to reform. These protests were in response to Afrikaans being made compulsory as a medium of instruction, together with English, in 1974, the disparate quality of schools and infrastructure, and the apartheid ideology as such. The images of police firing teargas and live ammunition at the children gave credence to the damaging nature of the apartheid regime, and led to a national revolt and uprising against the apartheid government.

Kallaway (2002:2) notes that by the 1980s there was considerable[13] improvement in terms of education for the disadvantaged race groups, although "extreme inequity" persisted in terms of the various homeland authorities and educational departments for the "coloured", "Indian", "Bantu", and "white" groups, respectively. Some of the challenges that plagued the education department(s), which required urgent attention from the then government, were a racially divided education system; inferior education provision for "non-whites"; large funding and capacity disparities; under-educated, uneducated, and unqualified African teachers; as well as very large teacher-to-pupil ratios.

South Africa continues to have one of the highest inequality rates in the world (Seekings & Natrass, 2011:339; World Bank, 2018). These inequalities reign in education, whether in terms of access to education, educational attainment, educational opportunities, health status, pass rates, or dropout rates (Seedat-Khan, Jansen & Smith, 2016:162-163). According to Alexander (2014:114-124), language planning after the demise of apartheid also has deep-rooted legacies resulting from apartheid, due to complex power relations and the advancement of Afrikaans as a superior and major public language by various means.

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[13] The term "considerable" in this regard should be taken in context of how severe the restrictions and inequity were at the onset of the apartheid system. "Considerable" in this case does not mean it was necessarily a good improvement, as indicated by the author.

Regarding the negotiated settlement in 1993 and subsequent complexities post 1994, from his work on the Pan South African Language Board, Alexander (2004:124) highlights the complexities at play in post-apartheid language planning:

> … premised on the promotion of cross-cultural, horizontal multilingualism, it is tending increasingly to stress a vertically segregated multiple monolingualism. Instead of dealing with clusters of cognate languages, the Board is sitting as the representative of eleven, sometimes fourteen, separate pillars. Increasingly, a kind of ethnic, as opposed to a multicultural and multilingual, ethos appears to be the driving principle behind the activities of the Board. It would seem that only economic imperatives and, sometimes, popular pressure, bring about ad hoc adaptations to the multilingual clustering on the ground.

2.6 QUALITY EDUCATION FEATURES IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: THE EVIDENCE

After the 1994 democratic elections, the newly formed government faced the huge task of changing all aspects of the country to reflect the democratic values enshrined in the new Constitution. At the centre of the changes to address high black unemployment rates and white to black inequality was the highly fragmented education system. A number of policies on curriculum reform were introduced by the newly formed DoE in 1996, which were to be progressively implemented until 2005. Emphasis was also placed on the creation of organisations and institutions that would promote effective educational transformation (DoE, 2001a).

The fundamental root of educational change in South Africa can be traced back to the post-1994 policy formulation and promulgation to redress the gross inequalities of the past and to set a framework for transforming education and training. Initially, post-1994 South African education was transformed into a single national education system, but was split into two departments in 2009, namely the DBE, which was to focus solely on primary and secondary schools, and the Department of Higher Education and Training, which had the primary responsibility for tertiary education and vocational training.

UNICEF's (2000) definition of quality education, as well as the quality education framework outlined earlier, calls for the provision of more than just teaching material.

It requires provision of an environment or space for learning that is healthy and safe, in which knowledgeable teachers are able to teach beyond just the norm to the full development of the learners. The EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2015:192) indicates that millions of children are not acquiring basic arithmetic and reading skills, and are therefore most likely to drop out of basic primary education as they typically suffer from a knowledge deficit throughout their school careers. Monyooe (2013:430) indicates that basic education in South Africa is marred by many challenges, including:

- "poorly trained and under-developed teachers;
- questionable national assessment standards set to pass the National Senior Certificate [NSC] examinations (Grade 12) which do not compare favourably with those in Africa and across the globe;
- the collapse of organisational leadership and management, efficacy and work ethic in schools;
- a questionable Education Management Information System (EMIS) to centralise data;
- questionable management of records and/or data on teacher and learner profiles (enrolment, age, retention, qualifications, experience placement, etc.);
- ineffective school inventories (classrooms, location, number, equipment, etc.);
- access to educational facilities, such as walking long distances and crossing rivers infested with crocodiles;
- paucity of resources (infrastructure and instructional resources); and
- egregious cases of teacher misconduct and negligence that have led to the proliferation of dysfunctional schools and poor learner performance for Grade 3-6 as delineated by the Annual National Assessments (ANA) results".

The remainder of this section discusses the features of quality education in post-apartheid South Africa. Key aspects that are highlighted include South African society, the profile of South African schools, as well as the complexities around teachers and teaching practices in South African schools. School funding and resources, parental involvement, and school management also receive attention. Furthermore, there is a focus on learner health, school violence, nutrition, access to early childhood education (ECE), and the issue of language and education achievement.

2.6.1   Key features of South African society

According to the IRR (2018:5-6), the South African population stood at 56 521 948 in 2017. The racial breakdown of the population was as follows: Africans made up 80.8% of the population, coloured people 8.8%, white people approximately 8%, and Indians/Asians 2.5%.

In South Africa, a historical legacy of inequality remains, and the education system in South Africa strongly mirrors that reality. The World Bank's (2018:60) report on South Africa's poverty and inequality revealed that, based on a survey of 149 countries, South Africa is the most unequal country in the world by any measure. The inequality and poverty levels in South Africa vary greatly across provinces and municipalities and have increased during the past 24 years. Although the social grant system has been able to reduce the level of extreme poverty in South Africa, the World Bank (2018:xxv-xxvi) cautions that it would be unsustainable to expand social grants, given the lack of economic growth and a decrease in tax revenues. The harsh reality is that economic growth in South Africa remains sub-optimal and is likely to remain so for years to come.

The World Bank (2018:xxv) also revealed that poverty levels are concentrated in the previously disadvantaged areas and homelands where predominantly black South Africans live. The World Bank (2018:xxii) maintains that

> [r]ace remains a strong predictor of poverty in South Africa, with black Africans being at the highest risk of being poor. Large families, children, and people in rural areas are especially vulnerable to being in poverty for a long time.

A study conducted by Schotte, Zizzamia and Leibrandt. (2018), utilising National Income Dynamics Studies (NIDS) wave data in conjunction with surveys that were conducted by Stats SA, indicates that social classes in South Africa can be divided into five groupings, namely chronic poor, transient poor, vulnerable, middle class, and elite, as presented in Figure 2.9.
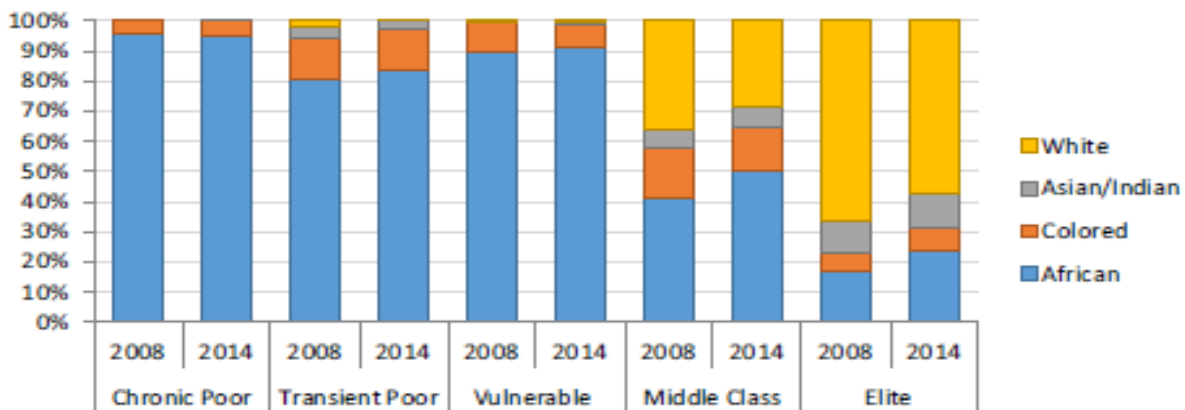
Figure 2.9: Social classes by race in South Africa: 2008 to 2014
Source: Schotte *et al.* (2018)

As depicted in Figure 2.9, the largest proportion of the poorest of the poor in South Africa are black African citizens, followed closely by those of the coloured designation. Poverty is also the highest among individuals who are less educated. Poverty levels decrease rapidly as the level of education increases. Additionally, gendered results indicate that female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households. The World Bank (2018:48) states that when the Human Opportunity Index for South Africa is applied, children who reside in townships or rural areas, and of which the household head has either a low education level or no formal education at all, are most likely to have limited or unequal access to quality education, are less likely to complete primary education in time, and, by extension, have inequality of access to tertiary education and the world of work or schooled labour. This is confirmed by more recent studies by Schotte *et al.* (2018) and Zizzamia, Schotte and Leibbrandt (2019), using the most recent NIDS data sources available in South Africa.

Various kinds of inequality exist in South Africa, of which the most pervasive is in terms of wealth and income. In terms of income inequality, people in highly skilled jobs on average earn five times more than those in lower-skilled jobs, although this only makes up about one-fifth of the working population. The white population (8.9%) on average earns around three times more than their working black African counterparts, although Africans make up more than three-quarters of the working population of South Africa (World Bank, 2018).

In terms of wealth in South Africa, the white population (8.9%) owns approximately 71% of the country's net wealth, compared to the 7% that is in the hands of 60% of the population. For black citizens, there is very low intergenerational mobility in South Africa. They are subject to inequality of opportunity in terms of wealth, which, combined with very low international labour networks for African citizens, means that the inequality levels are likely to remain high across generations and worsen as time progresses. Their prevailing socio-economic conditions and associated lack of quality education stunt their upward mobility (World Bank, 2018).

Tertiary education, in particular, is the one factor that can progressively (as much as 220% in relation to primary school) improve an individual's net wealth determination (World Bank, 2018:55). A key finding by the World Bank (2018) is that low growth rates indicate poor prospects of eliminating poverty by 2030, as projected in the NDP.

There are also large disparities between provinces and metropolises in terms of poverty and inequality levels. The educational performance of learners in schools is strongly correlated with the Human Development Index (HDI) of a particular province. Provinces that are generally more affluent have learners that outperform the learners from economically poorer provinces (Reddy, 2016; Spaull, 2016, 2020). This is a trend observed in all the international tests South African learners have participated in. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Research conducted by behavioural economists (Mani, Mullaitnathan, Shafir & Zao, 2013; Shah, Mullaitnathan & Shafir, 2012) found that people who live in a state of poverty can have impaired decision-making abilities, based on the premise that poverty leads to a scarcity mindset. According to Mani *et al.* (2013:976), "the poor must manage and make decisions regarding sporadic income, juggle expense, and make difficult trade-offs. Even when not actually making a financial decision, these preoccupations can be present and distracting". Additionally, experiments by Shah *et al.* (2012) indicate that scarcity impairs people's ability to make sound long-term decisions. Putting this into context, people are more likely to engage in borrowing behaviour to feed their current needs over long-term effects, despite the fact that the interest rates of some loans exceed 800%. Shah *et al.* (2013:684-685) conclude that living in a state of scarcity, or having a scarcity-induced focus, causes "people to

choose the most locally convenient response to pressing demands, leading to constant financial juggling".

The abovementioned studies offer alternative views on poverty, scarcity, and behaviour. In the South African context, consumer debt stood at R1.7 trillion in 2019, with the World Bank indicating that as much as one-third of adults are not saving money (Pillay, 2019). In a study of adults living in a large rural settlement in South Africa, Mashigo (2006:1) found that a lack of education in these groups confined them to low-skilled jobs that often provide insufficient money to sustain themselves or their families. This phenomenon leads to situations where children are sent to work to survive at an early age. In addition, Shah *et al.* (2012) and Mashigo (2006) indicate that people who live in informal settlements and rural areas sometimes engage in illegal financial intermediaries, often at high interest rates. The moneylenders often keep the clients' bank cards and identification documents until the loan is repaid. For many, this implies being caught up in an ongoing cycle of debt and increased poverty.

2.6.2   The profile of South African public schools (Quintiles 1 to 3)

The South African Schools Act (1996) makes provision for the establishment of both public and independent schools. According to Chapter 3 of the Act, a distinction is made between ordinary public schools and those established for learners with special education needs. Funding such schools is the responsibility of the state (Chapter 4 of the Act) and the governance of the school is vested in the governing body.

Chapter 5 of the Act discusses the establishment of independent schools, by any individual or organisation, at own cost, provided that it does not contravene the following:

- The standards must not be inferior to that of comparable public schools.
- No discrimination for entry should occur on the basis of race.
- It should comply with certain grounds for registration under the Act.

The numbers of learners and teachers in public versus independent schools, as well as the numbers of public versus independent schools in the different South African provinces in 2016, are presented in Table 2.1 (IRR, 2018).

Table 2.1: South African learners in independent and public schools: 2016

Province	Learners	Teachers	Schools
Eastern Cape	**Public:** 1 898 723 **Independent:** 62 824	**Public:** 52 667 **Independent:** 3 257	**Public:** 5 469 **Independent:** 207
Free State	**Public:** 671 712 **Independent:** 16 637	**Public:** 22 918 **Independent:** 1 058	**Public:** 1 214 **Independent:** 68
Gauteng	**Public:** 2 048 558 **Independent:** 278 026	**Public:** 62 978 **Independent:** 18 986	**Public:** 2 083 **Independent:** 730
KwaZulu-Natal	**Public:** 2 808 137 **Independent:** 69 407	**Public:** 94 097 **Independent:** 4 989	**Public:** 5 895 **Independent:** 247
Limpopo	**Public:** 1 706 725 **Independent:** 58 830	**Public:** 52 173 **Independent:** 2 768	**Public:** 3 867 **Independent:** 151
Mpumalanga	**Public:** 1 046 234 **Independent:** 28 118	**Public:** 31 935 **Independent:** 370	**Public:** 1 725 **Independent:** 122
North West	**Public:** 810 260 **Independent:** 19 207	**Public:** 24 590 **Independent:** 1 232	**Public:** 1 471 **Independent:** 63
Northern Cape	**Public:** 288 515 **Independent:** 4 080	**Public:** 9 818 **Independent:** 295	**Public:** 545 **Independent:** 30
Western Cape	**Public:** 1 063 349 **Independent:** 53 223	**Public:** 30 652 **Independent:** 4 264	**Public:** 1 450 **Independent:** 237
South Africa	**Public: 12 342 213** **Independent: 590 352**	**Public: 381 828** **Independent: 37 219**	**Public: 23 719** **Independent: 1 885**

Source: Compiled from data from the IRR (2018:521-538)

The Education Laws Amendment Act (No. 24 of 2005) provided the legal foundation for introducing no-fee schools in 2007. The Schools Act was also amended to reflect changes in the funding system of schools and to make provision for no-fee schools. Schools are grouped into five quintiles based on the level of poverty of the particular school and the poverty profile of the community surrounding it. Quintile 1 is identified as the poorest, with Quintile 5 being the most affluent. Learners from Quintiles 1 to 3 attend no-fee schools where parents are exempted from paying any school fees.

Section 35(1) of the Schools Act places the responsibility of determining national quintiles for schools on the Minister of Basic Education. The funding received by a school is determined by the relative poverty level in the community that surrounds the school, as well as the national targets that are set for school education by the DBE. Factors taken into account for poverty levels are income levels, unemployment rates, and the levels of education in the surrounding community.

The reality is that a large proportion of school-going children in South Africa attend schools with limited resources. Of those learners attending schools in South Africa, a very high proportion attend no-fee schools, which is distributed as follows: 96% in

Limpopo, 88% in North West, and 83% in the Eastern Cape. It is a logical conclusion that these learners will predominantly be black or coloured if one looks at the societal characteristics and wealth and income profiles. According to the IRR (2019:492, 498), there were a total of 23 796 public schools across the provinces in South Africa in 2018, 20 260 of which constituted no-fee schools. This amounts to approximately 85.8% of the total number of public schools. No-fee schools receive government funding only, have fewer resources, and are often unable to raise additional funding from their surrounding communities (Amnesty International, 2020:15), given the poverty level, as indicated above.

The Progress in the International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assessment of 2016 (Mullis *et al.*, 2017:x-xi) states that in terms of learners with reading ability, the best-performing schools are those with learners who have better-resourced homes and who attend better-resourced schools, learners with parents who encourage reading in their homes for themselves and their children, and learners who attended a minimum of three years of pre-primary school. Moreover, those schools are academically orientated and safe, their children are well nourished, and low levels of absenteeism are reported. The PIRLS assessment indicates that this is the norm when assessing the performance of schools and what typically separates the best-performing schools from the rest.

Research in education indicates various factors that would positively and adversely affect school-going children. This study is in the ambit of challenges specific to the South African context and falls within the broad definition of quality as envisaged by both UNESCO and UNICEF. Policy promulgation and, where applicable, its effect on the education environment, either directly or indirectly, are discussed to demonstrate how it may have contributed to challenges in the provision of quality education in South African schools. An in-depth discussion of policy and other enabling factors follows in Chapter 4.

2.6.3   Teachers in South African schools: Complexities

Education under the apartheid system ensured that there were large differences in terms of the type and level of qualifications held by teachers by 1994. According to Hofmeyr and Hall (1995:31), this also meant that there were large differences in the levels of remuneration. White teachers, on average, were more highly qualified (almost

100% suitably qualified), while black teachers made up 60% of unqualified or underqualified teachers. In 1996, major wage increases were instituted for teachers despite a decrease in annual school budgets from 1997 to 2001 (Chisholm, 2004:5). These increases or government policy changes instituted in the early 1990s were enacted to bring the salaries of all teachers on par with those of white male teachers (Armstrong, 2009:4).

The post-apartheid government instituted a policy of rationalisation and redeployment of teachers from better-resourced, urban, white schools to black, rural, and under-resourced schools. In reality, this policy did not work as these teachers did not move from the better-resourced schools. In fact, schools raised their own funds in terms of the Schools Act to employ additional teachers, who were called governing body teachers. Poorer schools hired new teachers that appeared to be un-/underqualified, as evidence indicates that the number of un-/underqualified teachers has increased rather than decreased (Chisholm, 2004:6). Many teachers also left the teaching profession voluntarily due to "attractive severance packages" (Hosking, 2000:654). The highest rate of attrition in 1994/1995 were among white educators (Hosking, 2000:654).

Implementing the rationalisation policy was complex. Various undesired consequences were experienced at the school level. Intended as a cost-saving measure, the policy actually accrued more costs. By early 1997, over 15 000 severance packages were approved across the provinces in excess of R1 billion, which was well over the planned R600 million that was to be raised from foreign governments (Chisholm, Soudien, Vally & Gilmour, 1999:392). These severance packages were approved even in provinces that experienced teacher shortages. The key challenge here, as outlined by Chisholm *et al.* (1999:394), was that this funding was only allocated to provinces "designated as overfunded" while teachers from all provinces could apply. Although education was the highest expenditure item on the national budget, promotions and higher teacher salaries after 1994 meant that provinces were struggling, especially those in the previous homelands.

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) was established in 2000 to oversee, monitor, and regulate the teaching profession, as well as the professional conduct and development of teachers in South Africa. The policy on the minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications (DBE, 2016) was revised, as part of the National

Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (No. 67 of 2008), to complement the changes made in terms of the NQF.

According to the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE, 2006a:5), the teaching values that underpin the policy from the Norms and Standards for Education (2000) require that a teacher is:

- "a specialist in a particular learning area, subject or phase;
- a specialist in teaching and learning;
- a specialist in assessment;
- a curriculum developer;
- a leader, administrator and manager;
- a scholar and lifelong learner; and
- a professional who plays a community, citizenship, and pastoral role".

In order to be registered as a teacher with SACE, one needs to hold either a four-year Bachelor of Education Degree or any other three- to four-year bachelor's degree followed by an Advanced Diploma in Education – similar to the Postgraduate Certificate in Education and the Higher Diploma in Education – from a registered higher or Further Education and Training (FET) institute in South Africa, specialising in either one of the three phases of education.

Teachers' professional development was offered through in-service education and training for teachers (INSET). This was done through workshops and courses of which the duration ranged from very short (a few hours) to very long (a year and longer). Some of the DoE's INSET courses comprised curriculum-based subject courses for both primary and secondary school teachers. A study conducted by Hofmeyr and Hall (1995) found that teacher education courses were generally of low quality, not cost effective, and not necessarily accredited. Their findings at the time did not bode well for the future of a society-in-transition and future value-added praxis in what was intended as a transformational society on all levels of society, including the realm of education. At the time, references were made to the lost generation(s) of South African youth on both sides of the racial and class divide, which was predicted to pose grave challenges for future education (Van Zyl Slabbert *et al.*, 1994).

In order to address apartheid deficits for black South Africans, the government instituted the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy. This was also done in terms of posts in education departments. Along with the severance packages offered to white teachers (in particular in mathematics and physical sciences-based subjects and for school principals), the rationalisation policy also meant to address provincial imbalances of qualified teachers in certain areas in South Africa. The challenges with these policies were that in practice they did not achieve what they had intended to. Instead, the policies allowed all teachers who wanted to exit the education system severance packages that were only intended for a certain number of teachers.

Teacher salaries in contemporary South Africa remain a contentious issue (Hosking, 2000:655). According to Armstrong (2009:30), teacher salaries are more advantageous to those at the entry level of the profession than to those who have stayed in teaching longer. Even with additional or higher levels of educational attainment, and many years of experience, teachers can earn considerably more in other professions. Hosking (2000:660) argues the following for the single wage structure of the teaching profession:

> If suitably trained mathematics and science teachers become scarce at a particular wage, as they have become, the appropriate market adjustment is to increase their wage, thereby sending a signal out to the market that it pays prospective teachers more to undergo these types of teacher training.

The problem with this approach is that it speaks to the availability of additional funding that can be utilised to increase teachers' wages.

2.6.4 Teaching practices in South African schools

Following the transition from apartheid to democracy, black/African teachers were not all formally qualified to teach in respect of their academic qualifications. According to the 1995 National Teacher Education Audit: Synthesis Report by Hofmeyr and Hall (1995:3), African teachers in mathematics and science programmes were faced with the following qualification challenges:

- 36% teaching mathematics while un-/underqualified;
- 66% teaching secondary mathematics with five years' experience and less;
- 73% teaching secondary general science with five years' experience and less;

- 27% teaching secondary general science while un-/underqualified; and
- 68% teaching secondary physical science with five years' experience and less.

Jansen (1999:154) shares similar sentiments when he argues that an "already weak culture of teaching was further undermined by the intensification of the administrative burden of change". Due to large-scale changes and pay differentials between races, the government aligned African teacher salaries to be on par with those of white colleagues. African teachers' qualifications were also upgraded (through the attendance of short courses that are mentioned by both Jansen, 1999, and Hofmeyr & Hall, 1995) to reflect change. As discussed earlier, these courses were not necessarily all of good quality or accredited.

Numerous studies on South African education indicate a poor standard of teaching in South African schools. This is typically the case in schools that are poorer and structurally dysfunctional. According to Taylor *et al.* (2008:48-51), the poor quality of education can be traced to many reasons, such as the following:

- *Rapid expansion of the system*, which is fitting in South Africa after apartheid with increased access for learners. However, the authors caution that "improved access to poorer learners does not provide anywhere near equality of opportunity, and this situation will remain until the quality issue is dealt with decisively".
- *System inefficiencies*: The lack of provision of even the most basic of education resources.
- *Teacher knowledge*: Test results show poor and in some cases below-average competency of teachers.
- *Usage of time*: Ineffective utilisation of time, high levels of absenteeism of teachers, lack of focus on reading (PIRLS test, see Chapter 3), and ineffective use of resources such as textbooks (drawing from the Khanyisa Programme where 24 schools were sampled), and ineffective reading exercises aimed at teaching learners to read and write properly.

A study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (Reddy *et al.*, 2010:8) found strong links between poorer schools and teacher absenteeism in support of international literature that the leave rates were higher in areas "of low

household income and poor working conditions". This is problematic as it affects teaching time and it does little to assist with improving educational conditions and quality in the education system.

Apart from the factors that impede quality education discussed earlier, various other challenges are still prevalent within the teaching profession. One such critical challenge is the shortage of teachers that South Africa is facing; a condition not likely to be resolved soon. According to Hofmeyr and Hall (1995:29), teachers leave the teaching profession for a variety of reasons, such as resignation, retirement, or death. Hofmeyr and Hall's (1995) report forewarned of a future teacher shortage, in part because educational institutions were not producing enough teachers to meet the projected future demand.

This is supported by Mapahala and Mphofu (2019), who state that initial teacher institutions only graduate 15 000 new teachers yearly, as opposed to the 25 000 teachers needed to maintain a favourable teacher-to-pupil ratio. These scholars also point out that between 18 000 and 22 000 teachers exit the system each year for reasons not conducive to retention. A DoE (2005:58) report indicates that teachers leave the profession because of poor learner discipline, lack of teaching facilities, overcrowded schools and classrooms, lack of adequate incentives, poor parental participation in school governance and in disciplining children, policy overload, ever-increasing administrative workload, role conflict, favouritism and nepotism at school governance levels, and the low status of the teaching profession in society.

Although the literature projects a future teacher shortage, a National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU, 2012) report indicates that there are many qualified teachers that are unable to find work within the system. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD, 2019) Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), as outlined by Mapahala and Mphofu (2019), indicates certain key issues with teachers in South Africa; among others that the average age of teachers is 43, and that around 32% of all teachers are 50 years and older. Given the existing and projected shortage, there will not be enough teachers to replace those that exit the education system, regardless of their reasons for doing so. South Africa does not produce nearly enough science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

teachers. There are also not enough qualified teachers to teach content subjects in certain languages, such as life sciences in particular home languages.

The TALIS Report (OECD, 2019) indicates that there is an oversupply of teachers in certain subjects and in certain geographical locations. As discussed earlier, ironically, this was actually a problem that the DoE wanted to rectify and address with its rationalisation policy. It is indicated that where teachers are willing to redeploy to rural areas or to schools with limited or less resources, their training does not prepare them for the realities of teaching in rural environments.

The problem of a shortage of teachers is one that requires critical attention as it poses a real and present threat to an already fragile education system, as well as the ability of a democratic government to pursue and achieve its stated socio-economic developmental objectives through education.

2.6.5   School funding and resources

The Equitable Shares Formula and the national Norms and Standards for School Funding (quintiles) were created to, in principle, ensure that those provinces with the most need and backlog receive more funding. The Equitable Shares Formula also aimed to achieve equality and redress poverty at schools in terms of non-personnel expenditure in a province. Non-personnel expenditure within the ambit of this study excludes teacher salaries and includes educational expenditure related to teaching and learning, such as textbooks, media equipment, and computers.

According to Christie (2010:8), the right to education as envisaged by the Constitution of South Africa must acknowledge the complexities in operationalising that right. The introduction of a school fee policy created structural inequality in the system that ensured that the wealthiest received better education than the poor. In this context, Taylor *et al.* (2008:22-23) posit that wealthier schools can exploit the high costs of schooling and associated high school fees to hire additional teachers who are better qualified, increase the salary of those in government posts, and purchase many learning resources that will lead to increased effectiveness in reading and learning and, by implication, literacy and numeracy acquisition.

As discussed above, policy amendments allowed for the establishment of no-fee schools. As mentioned earlier, a very large proportion of public schools are no-fee schools, and in some provinces (Limpopo, Eastern Cape, and Mpumalanga) account for over 90% of schools. This indicates that additional resources are not sufficient in bringing about true equality within the ambit of quality schooling. As stated by the National Planning Commission (NPC, 2012:14), "the quality of physical assets and infrastructure remains largely unequal". Many challenges that relate to internal efficiency are plagued by what Taylor *et al.* (2008:64) term the "absence of strategic leadership and management across the sector".

The National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) was established along with the National Schools Register to provide information and to indicate the progress made in terms of infrastructure in public schools across South Africa. The DBE developed the initiative to eliminate all backlogs in schools by 2014, including water, sanitation, electricity, fencing, and unsuitable physical structures. The idea was to provide redress through the provision of essential school infrastructure; however, progress has been very slow. Many schools, especially those in poorer provinces, are still without libraries, books, and computers. The 2019 and 2020 NEIMS reports indicate large numbers of public schools with unreliable electricity supply, poor sanitation, and large classroom sizes in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Limpopo (DBE, 2019; 2020). Amnesty International (2020) also found school buildings in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape that had not been updated since apartheid and that were poorly built and unsafe.

2.6.6   Parental involvement and academic performance

Research shows that even "perceived" involvement from parents can improve a child's academic performance levels. In a study of secondary school learners in Pakistan, Rafiq, Fatima, Sohail, Saleem and Khan (2013:221) found a significant relationship between parental involvement in the academic affairs of their children and academic achievement. According to Modisaotsile (2012:3), all stakeholders, such as "parents, teachers, learners, SGBs [school governing bodies], government departments, and the private sector" must collaborate closely to ensure good academic performance. This also holds true for administrative performance if there is good collaboration among the stakeholders.

The reason for the inclusion of parental involvement, besides the value it holds for learners' academic performance, is the South African education policy environment, which calls for a collaborative climate in schools. As a perceived part of quality education, it requires discussion.

The Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) places considerable power in the hands of SGBs to make decisions that are important to the ethos and performance of a particular school. In a study of principals and teachers of disadvantaged schools, Munju and Ncube (2018) found mixed views on and perceptions of the poor involvement of parents as subjectively described by teachers and principals. Their views are that parents display non-interest in or uncertainty of what their involvement should entail. These scholars state that there is a gap between policy and practice in terms of how the school-parent relationship is envisaged and practised.

Munju and Ncube (2018:88) maintain that the views of educators alienate parents from participating in school matters. In a similar study, Soegoe and Bisschoff (2019:172-174) also found some bias from teachers in failing to "encourage involvement of parents with low incomes" and some preferring that SGBs should rather have members that are/have been involved in education in the past, such as former teachers or principals and not "so many illiterate parents" in their particular low-income area where the schools are based.

Soegoe and Bisschoff (2019) also indicate that some parents are uncertain about the role they should play in their children's education. The teachers suggested that some parents believed that providing a safe home and ensuring that children go to school on time should be the extent or focus of their involvement. In Soegoe and Bisschoff's (2019) study, the teachers viewed the extent to which parents value education against "the extent [to] which parents collaborate with them". Modisaotsile (2012:3) adds other reasons for lack of parental involvement in South Africa, including the fact that many of them did not attend school themselves and do not know how to read, write, and calculate properly. Additionally, some parents work long hours, which results in them being too tired or unmotivated to, for example, check that homework is done properly. In other cases, parents do the homework for their children, for differing reasons, such as getting it done quicker, or assisting their children to get higher marks. Both these factors compromise quality education.

With the widespread benefits that education holds for both the individual and society at large, it is a key argument in the literature that quality education is extremely important for societal progress. Education, more than any other factor, may ensure that intergenerational poverty be halted, limited, and ultimately alleviated, especially in a society as unequal as South Africa (drawing from the World Bank's 2018 report). The model in Figure 2.10, as developed by Soegoe and Bisschoff (2019:179), proposes five stages that can improve parental involvement.
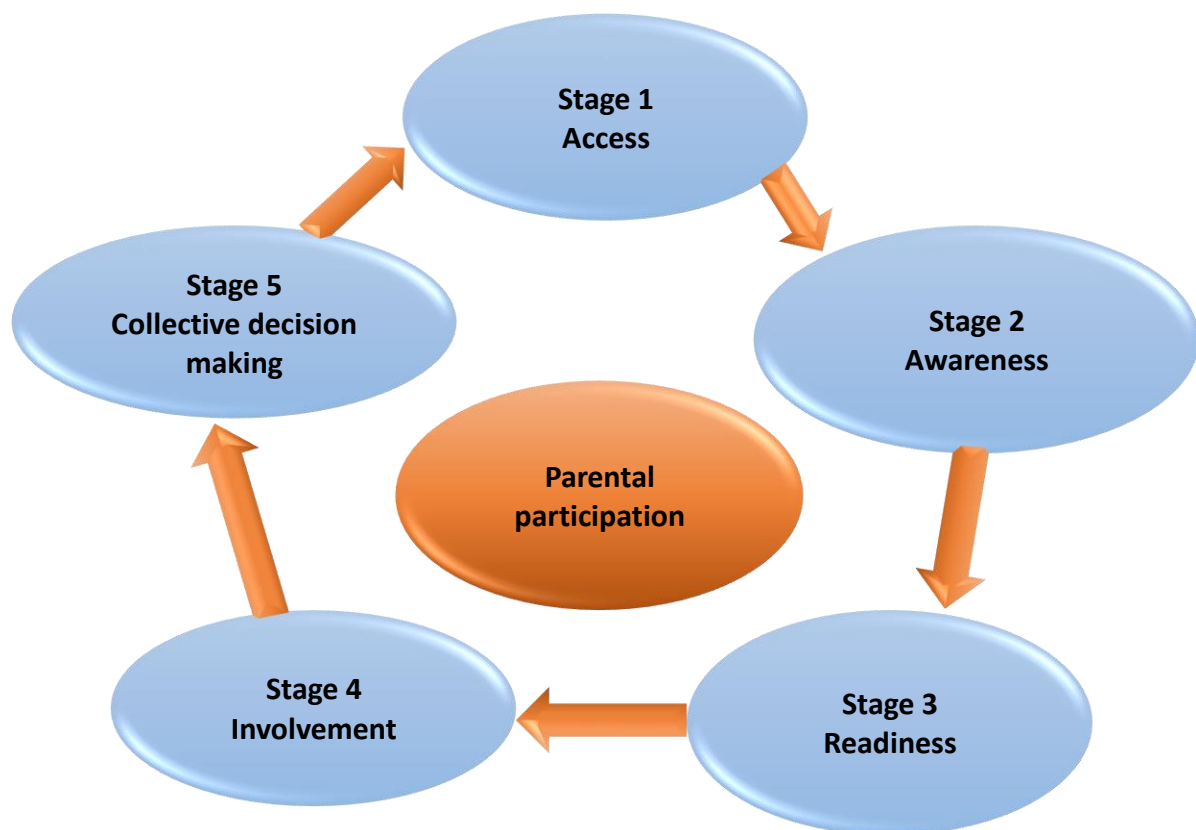
Figure 2.10: Model for parental involvement
Source: Soegoe and Bisschoff (2019:179)

In Stage 1, principals and teachers should create a "climate of accessibility" for parents to stimulate interest to participate in school and learner activities. During Stage 2, parents are informed of the important role that they must play at school and in their children's learning. Armed with this knowledge, it will make parents ready (Stage 3) and motivated to participate and get involved (Stage 4), which with time can translate into collaborative decision making of all patrons of the school (Stage 5).

Soegoe and Bisschoff's (2019) model may hold much value in offering a variety of ways in which the non-participation of parents may be improved in schools to assist teachers, parents, children, and the school towards attaining quality education. Teachers can move away from certain biases that they hold about illiterate parents, and schools may help to create a collaborative and supportive environment to assist schools and learners in attaining their educational objectives.

2.6.7   School management

In practice, school management requires skilled and suitably educated personnel. In post-apartheid South Africa, the practice of promoting skilled classroom teachers to managerial positions without management or administration training (Hofmeyr & Hall, 1995:33) appears to have been counter-effective. It is apparent that the rationalisation policy and the resignation/retirement of teachers to further BEE and affirmative action left many senior positions open for black teachers, particularly in the management sector of schools. Given the shortage of teachers and the practical effects of the rationalisation policy, it is a logical conclusion that qualified mathematics and science teachers would also have taken severance packages. One of the unintended consequences was that fewer teachers had good qualifications in mathematics after the abrupt "clean up". Losing teachers who were skilled in teaching (full-on) mathematics placed immense pressure on the education system at the time to move from "pure" mathematics to mathematical literacy. Given current circumstances, a move back to the previous condition is highly unlikely. Kate Skinner, the representative for the South African Democratic Teachers' Union purports:

> We felt the packages should only have been granted in those cases where they facilitated redeployment from historically advantaged to disadvantaged schools. Only those who couldn't be redeployed were supposed to be offered packages, and school principals and specialists maths and science teachers should have been refused packages (in Eveleth, 1997).

The effective management of resources is a key performance factor that cannot be ignored. Schools in poorer provinces are often unable to translate the funding they receive into achievable quality outputs. The NPC (2012:15) highlights many factors that contribute to the lack of quality education in poorer schools. Among others, it contends that improvement in the performance of poorer schools rests significantly on

the presence of a "good school principal". This principal should be able to manage the resources of the school, raise discipline, provide mentorship and support to teachers, and assist with the involvement of parents in the education and learning of their children. UNESCO (2005:20) highlights that the best primary schools are those that have strong school leadership, among others.

Another threat to the improvement in South African school management is collusion and nepotism in the recruitment and promotion of staff, which create "institutional dysfunctionality" (NEEDU, 2012:68). As better outlined by NEEDU (2012:68), "channelling opportunity through networks of patronage signals that expertise is unimportant". Teachers will not feel the need to improve their subject matter knowledge if expertise in obtaining positions becomes irrelevant. This, coupled with ineffective teacher assessment practices, leads to even more dysfunctionality. It stands to reason that teachers in South Africa have no real incentive to improve their skills and knowledge as there are no consequences for not living up to required skills and knowledge standards.

Additionally, the Schools Act places considerable power in the hands of SGBs to make decisions in terms of what would be in the best interest of their school communities; thus assuming that SGBs best understand their communities and learner profiles. If left unchecked, it incapacitates headmasters, school leadership, and teachers. This is particularly problematic since these policies assume that the parties to these SGBs have the relevant knowledge, qualifications, and management background to make critical decisions regarding the education of learners, the management of school resources, and other critical decisions that impact on learners and learning. This is also influenced largely by what Jansen (1999; 2010) in the outcomes-based education (OBE) discussions refers to as the mismatch between policy and the actual realities of what is happening in and around South African classrooms, with seemingly little regard for or insight into how policy would actually translate into the provision of quality education.

2.6.8   Learner health (and societal health)

It is well documented that South Africa has one of the highest rates of HIV infections in the world (World Bank, 2018), with over 7.1 million (12.8%) of the population infected (South African Government, 2017:xi).

In 2017, the then Minister of Health, Aaron Motsoaledi, described the enormity of the infection rate as follows:

> [N]early one in five people living with HIV worldwide are in South Africa; TB is the leading cause of death in the country; and more than 1.1 million new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are treated each year (South African Government, 2017:xi).

The impact of HIV on school attendance is most prevalent in the following areas: a decrease in learner enrolment, absenteeism, and the diversion of family income from education to support sick family members. A study conducted for the DoE (Education Labour Relations Council [ELRC], 2003:xiv) found that a high number of teachers leave the teaching profession due to medical reasons and illness, in particular HIV/AIDS (Chisholm, 2004:12). A UNESCO (2005:20) report shows that higher levels of education assist people to make informed choices about HIV/AIDS and result in less risky behaviour.

2.6.9   School violence

The UN's Convention of the Rights of the Child illuminates that children have various human rights that are meant to be protected by their parents, caregivers, and society in general. These rights vary, but centre on their protection, such as the right to be protected from inhumane, cruel, and degrading treatment, and the right to receive special treatment during childhood, the right to be protected against sexual mistreatment, as well as the right to education, among others. The Convention aims to ensure that all children enjoy a basic, good quality of life. The South African government shares similar views on the rights of children. In particular, Chapter 12(1) of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution (RSA, 1996c) secures all individuals' rights to be protected from mistreatment or punishment, it prohibits violence against children, and prescribes the protection of children in terms of Section 28 against violence, abuse, and maltreatment.

The brief discussion on the complexity of apartheid legislation in Chapter 2 dealt in part with violence perpetrated during that period by essentially all spheres of the apartheid government against "non-white" South Africans. According to Human Rights Watch (2001:5-6), "[y]ears of violent enforcement of apartheid era policies have fuelled a culture of violence". Furthermore, racial and "ethnic" tensions and deep levels of inequity, confounded by much uncertainty, are argued to fuel violence in society (Valley, Dolombisa & Porteus, 1999:80). In terms of integration in schools. Valley *et al.* (1999:84) argue:

> Although post-1994 educational legislation created the policy framework for the full integration of public schooling, social, economic and demographic barriers limit the possibilities for full integration. For example, school fees in most of the former white schools are prohibitive for most black parents, and this is compounded by transport (the effects of 'Group Areas Act' and residential segregation remain) and other inhibiting issues. Desegregation neither addresses the material needs of the vast majority of learners nor dramatically changes the racialised patterns of schooling. However, the new legislation nevertheless begins to address the long-term consequences of educational stratification in South Africa by providing a growing, albeit limited, proportion of urban black learners with access to better-resourced facilities. Yet even the schools that are beginning to desegregate retain a racialised character.

The South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) in section 10(1) states: "No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner." Any contravention of this can result in a criminal charge of assault. Violence at school is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) as:

> the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, (against one-self), another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (cited in Burton & Leoschut, 2013:2).

Research by Valley *et al.* (1999:86) and Prinsloo (2006:305) indicates that nearly 30% of girls are raped at school by either male learners or their teachers. Moreover, female learners have been subjected to various forms of sexual harassment and abuse at school that either interrupt their schooling by forcing them to leave school, or facing the threat of unwanted pregnancy and emotional pressure. Also, with the previous

discussion on the high levels of HIV/AIDS infections among educators, it is a logical conclusion that those who engage in sexual relationships and misconduct with learners could infect them.

The National School Violence Report (Burton & Leoschut, 2013:11) shows that between August 2011 and August 2012, one in five learners was subjected to some form of violence, which translates to approximately 22% of the entire school-going population. The National School Violence Report (Burton & Leoschut, 2013:3-5) states that, beyond the obvious physical and psychological harm that it causes to learners, the effects are often beyond the physical. It can affect school dropout, with associated future consequences, lead to underperformance, or have deviant behavioural consequences. Furthermore, a study by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013) revealed that school violence leads to depression, decreased academic performance, lack of concentration, and bunking of classes. In addition, it results in time wasted on conflict resolution instead of teaching and learning and a climate that is not conducive to teaching and learning. Moreover, the motivation and safety of educators and learners are compromised.

In comparison to the 2008 report, the National School Violence Report of 2013 (Burton & Leoschut, 2013) showed that no real change took place regarding the level of school violence experienced in the four years. Nearing three decades since the demise of apartheid, South Africa is still categorised as one of the most violent countries in the world. According to the Institute for Economics and Peace (2020), South Africa is ranked 123rd out of 163 countries, although there was some improvement in 2020. In terms of sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa is ranked 29th out of 44 countries and is characterised as a country with a "very high homicide rate, and very high levels of violent crime" (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2020:21). Following a landmark case in 2019, the South African Constitution now holds that parents cannot chastise their children and will no longer be entitled to a defence of reasonable chastisement. Parents are supposed to find alternative punishment methods, or seek disciplinary intervention.

The National School Violence Safety Framework (DBE, 2015b:26) outlines a multifaceted approach in dealing with violence in schools. This involves various stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and learners. The DBE also partnered with the South African Police Service in what is termed the Implementation Protocol to

reduce crime and violence in schools and surrounding communities. The Implementation Protocol outlines various responses, aimed at strengthening relationships between the police, schools, and the surrounding community.

It envisages a proactive approach to school safety and sharing of responsibility by all partners to deter potential offenders and empower potential victims and past victims.

Combatting violence in South Africa requires a multipronged approach to assist in reducing the numbers of women and girls exposed to, or affected by, violent behaviour in their homes, their schools, and their respective communities. At the same time, programmes need to assist to change the attitudes and perceptions of males in South African society to try to reduce the number of incidents against girls and women in society; schools included.

2.6.10 Nutrition

Health, nutrition, and quality education are interrelated. According to the World Bank (1993:18), nutritional deficiencies in early childhood lead to lasting challenges, including iron deficiency-induced anaemia, which reduces a child's cognitive function; iodine deficiency, which causes irreversible mental retardation; and vitamin A deficiency, which causes poor eyesight and, in extreme cases, blindness among children. Children of educated mothers tend to be generally healthier and more likely to complete their schooling (UNESCO, 2014:45).

Stats SA (2018:66-67) indicates that the proportion of households that experienced hunger in 2018 stood at 11.3%. Ledger (2020, cited in Reddy, 2020) argues that "[n]early 7,500 children under the age of five die annually in South Africa as a direct result of hunger. This is not because of the long-term effects of malnutrition on the immune system, [these children] literally starve to death". Ledger (2020, cited in Reddy, 2020) states unequivocally that one in four South African children are "so chronically malnourished" that they are classified as stunted.

The provinces with the highest level of self-reported inadequate and severely inadequate food access conditions are the North West (36.6%), the Northern Cape (32.3%), Mpumalanga (28.4%), and the Eastern Cape (25.4%). Household growth is also increasing faster than population growth (Stats SA, 2018:3). The General Household Survey (Stats SA, 2019c:64), which reveals the sources of income of

various households, shows that the Western Cape (above 70%) and Gauteng (above 70%) had the highest proportion of households with salaries as the main source of income. In other provinces, such as the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, social grants make up 45% and 57% respectively of households' main source of income.

As discussed previously, a large proportion of public schools are no-fee schools due to the pervasive poverty levels that are found in the surrounding communities. The implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) at these schools provides some relief, but is not sufficient to address the real and current needs that these families are experiencing. Kiti (2008) evaluated the NSNP in five selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal. What emerged was that, at the time of writing, the average household in the study had a net income of R500 per month. The study further illuminated that large households depend on meals that consist of maize meal, dried beans, and *samp* provided by their employers. Although a small study, the findings revealed positive outcomes in terms of General Enrolment Rate, with more learners attending school, a small improvement in learner performance, a decline in school dropout, as well as a decline in absenteeism. Moreover, there was a noticeable improvement in learner health. Additional challenges, ranging from insufficient funds to human resources and other challenges, are dealt with in Chapter 4.

Stats SA's (2018:16, 31-32) findings in its General Conditions of Living Survey 2014/2015 indicate that female-headed households are twice as likely to be poor than male-headed households. Furthermore, findings on child poverty reveal that the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and KwaZulu-Natal had the highest proportions of poor children, no matter the measure utilised. Approximately 80% of people in these provinces lived below the upper poverty level. Also, almost half of children living in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape were experiencing extreme hunger; thus, "one in every two children in these provinces lived in households that could not afford the minimum day-to-day nutrition necessary for human survival" (Stats SA, 2018:32).

Stats SA (2018:3) updated the national food poverty line to R561 per person per month (in April 2019 prices). This refers to the amount of money that an individual needs to afford the "minimum required daily energy intake" (Stats SA, 2018:3). This amount is lower than what the poorest households have at their disposal, given that social grants are the main source of income for large proportions of households in poorer provinces.

2.6.11 Access to early childhood education (ECE)

Research by the World Bank (2014) suggests that a child's brain development during the first three years, in combination with good health, nutrition, and appropriate and effective social interaction and stimulation, can lay the foundation for future learning and behaviour during his/her lifespan. According to the South African Education White Paper on ECE, "early childhood development is an umbrella term that applies to the processes by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially" (DoE, 2001b).

Education, health, and nutrition are mutually reinforcing and interrelated. Mothers who are educated have healthier children, and healthier children are more likely to complete their schooling (UNESCO, 2014:45) and in turn become healthier parents of their own children. According to UNESCO (2014), ECE holds many benefits for children that include, but are not limited to, higher intelligence scores, increased and timely school enrolment, fewer grade repetitions, reduced dropout rates, higher school completion rates, improved nutrition and health status, improved social and emotional behaviour, improved child-parent relationships, increased earning potential and economic self-sufficiency as an adult, and increased female labour force participation.

According to UNESCO (2015), "early investment in human capital is the most effective, as poor nutrition and disease at a young age can have lifelong implications for educational attainment and adult earnings". However, according to UNESCO (2013), ECE and care are progressing slowly on the African continent, with only one out of four children aged zero to eight years accessing ECE.

Education White Paper 5 (DoE, 2001b) outlines the South African government's plans to institutionalise public provision of Grade R as part of primary education in South Africa. It aimed to have 100% of children in the relevant cohort by 2010 entering Grade 1 in public schools, and one-year participation in an accredited reception year programme. Taylor *et al.* (2008:66) caution that with the projected expansion, the DoE should have learned from mistakes made in the primary school band and ensured proper teacher preparation and provision of a "well-researched pilot and a careful rollout plan".

2.6.12 Language and education achievement

The South African Constitution (RSA, 1996c:15) grants all citizens the right to basic education, including adult and further education. It places a duty on the state to provide and make accessible such education to citizens. Citizens have a right to receive this education in either their official language or a language of their choice in public education institutions. This progressive stance ensures that learners are able, at least in principle, to receive education in all 11 official languages in South Africa, where practically possible.

According to the DBE (2013b), the ideal approach to language policy in South African education is additive multilingualism. According to this approach, learners' home language is developed and strengthened over time and only then are other languages introduced to the learners' curriculum. The PIRLS 2016 report (Mullis *et al.*, 2017:179) shows clear evidence that if the language of testing is the learners' "native" or home language, they achieve much higher scores than when it is not. Schools also perform better if the sample group consists of more than 90% of learners whose home language is the same as the test language.

Desai (2010, in Desai, Qorro & Brocke-Utne, 2010:110) argues that in order for the language policy in South Africa to reflect true equality, it needs to move away from historically preconceived notions of African languages, and that equality equals English as a medium for learning. She suggests that learners be taught in their mother tongue, while at the same time being exposed to quality English teaching. According to Fleisch (2008:98-99), fewer than one in ten children in South Africa speak English as their first language, yet, by Grade 3 they are taught and assessed in English. Various assessments showed "covariance of underachievement and having been taught and assessed in a second or additional language" (Fleisch, 2008:98-99). According to Alexander (2004:124), there appears to be no synergy between policy imperatives that call for multilingualism and what is occurring on the ground, and Alexander (2004:124) refers rather to a shift to monolingualism driven by economics, politics, and the agendas of the middle elite.

However, Brocke-Utne (2010, in Desai *et al.*, 2010:82-83) suggests that, despite the language policy allowing for this, Curriculum 2005 has not allowed for the integration of schooling with the language policy, especially beyond Grade 4. Learners therefore

make the pragmatic, voluntary shift from their home language to English in Grade 4. Desai (2010, in Desai *et al.*, 2010:110) indicates that "[e]lite and educated black parents send their children to private English-medium schools as early as kindergarten age", which leads to the entrenchment of English as the main language instead of the use of all official languages (Desai, 2010, in Desai *et al.*, 2010:110).

This is further confounded by teacher shortages, as discussed earlier in this dissertation, especially competent multilingual teachers who are able to teach across the curriculum in the languages offered by the particular school; thus, not just the languages taught, but also the languages used as the teaching medium.

2.7   CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the characteristics of what constitutes quality education through the lens of UNESCO's (2005) framework for quality education. It focused on both the requirements and constraints that influence educational quality in countries. The apartheid era overview highlighted the societal characteristics that influenced the provision or starting point for post-apartheid educational and societal transformation. It also offered information on the complexity and needs that originated and needed to be dealt with by the post-apartheid government. The overview of public policy models and definitions indicated how complex public policy is as a phenomenon. Using UNESCO's (2005) lens of the features of quality education, the chapter outlined those central elements, namely teachers, their qualifications, and teaching methods in South African schools, school violence, learner health, school management and leadership, school resources, and a range of other important features.

The following chapter outlines South African learner performance in a range of international and regional tests to place the country's performance into perspective. Additionally, national tests and interventions by the South African government, as well as provincial governments, such as the DBE's Systemic Evaluations and ANAs, are discussed. The NSC is also considered as it is consistently used as a barometer by the national government to highlight the "health" of the South African education system.

CHAPTER 3:

SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TESTS

Spoon feeding in the long run teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon.
E.M. Forster

3.1   INTRODUCTION

UNESCO (2005) indicates that a good measure of determining educational quality is through assessments. International assessments and indices provide valuable information and peer ranking that South Africa can utilise to determine its performance economically, educationally, and otherwise in relation to other countries across the world. These measurements also allow South Africa to observe the trends and characteristics of top performing countries and to improve its own overall situation, particularly in terms education, which is its crucial developmental agent.

According to the Human Development Report (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2016:199),[14] South Africa is ranked 119th and falls in the medium human development category, below other African countries such as Botswana (108th) and Gabon (109th). The rationale behind the South African ranking on this index is the high level of income inequality at 56.4 points, the low levels of expected years of schooling of 13 years, inequality in education (13.8) (UNDP, 2016:207), and expected years of schooling according to gender (UNDP, 2016:211). South Africa is also consistently ranked low on the World Competitiveness Report (World Economic Forum, 2017)[15] due to an array of negative factors such as political instability, corruption, a high inflation rate, possessing one of the largest rich-poor divides globally, limitations on social mobility, and a generally poorly educated workforce.

Achieving top-quality education in South Africa cannot happen within a vacuum. International insights, trends, goals set and achieved, and actions taken are of great importance. Taking note of existing impediments to the provision of quality education,

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[14] The report, developed by the UNDP, ranks countries in the world on the HDI according to their living standards across three indicators: life expectancy, education, and gross income per capita.

[15] Competitiveness is defined in the report as "the set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the levels of productivity of an economy, which in turn sets the level of prosperity that the country can achieve" (World Economic Forum, 2016:4).

and applicable lessons about fixing them, may be beneficial to education in South Africa. South Africa is a society that is highly stratified, social mobility is frequently restricted, and class and racial discrepancies as a historical burden of apartheid are still prevalent. Much can be gained from reflecting on the assessed performance of South African schools as compared to those of other (similar) societies. The aim of this chapter is to frame the performance of South African schools in a range of international and national tests.

3.2   INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL TEST PERFORMANCE

3.2.1   Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA)

In 1999, South Africa participated in the MLA[16] project with other African countries in an assessment of the literacy, numeracy, and life skills of Grade 4 learners. South Africa performed the lowest overall in relation to countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, Mali, and Senegal, with average scores of 48.1% for literacy, 30.2% for numeracy, and 47.1% for life skills (Chinapah, 2000).

3.2.2   Progress in the International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

This substandard performance was repeated in subsequent international assessments, such as the PIRLS, from 2006[17] to 2011. According to Venter and Howie (2008:12), the PIRLS was intended to be administered to learners in the language in which they were taught to read, and in which they were reading for a minimum duration of four years, which in South Africa would be from Grade 1 to 4. The test should thus ideally have been taken by Grade 4 learners only, but South Africa was one of six participating countries that also included Grade 5 learners. The South African learners' results were the lowest of the 45 participating education systems, and showed marked

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[16] The MLA project was started to provide member states with important information about the quality of their education systems. UNESCO (2000:25) states that the results could assist countries that are eager "to identify factors that [either] promote or hinder learning in primary school, analyse problem areas and develop policy changes and new practices to improve the quality of education" at that level.

[17] PIRLS was instituted in 2001 by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAE) to test comprehension, purposes of reading, as well as reading literacy behavior and attitudes (IAE, 2003:4).

differences in results between Grade 4 and 5 learners in the four set international benchmarks, as depicted in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Performance of South African learners according to international benchmarks

International benchmark	Average score	International mean	South Africa Grade 4	South Africa Grade 5	Russia HPC[18]
1: Low	400	94%	13%	22%	98%
2: Intermediate	475	76%	7%	13%	90%
3: High	550	41%	3%	6%	61%
4: Advanced	625	77%	1%	2%	19%

Source: Howie *et al.* (2008:26-29)

It is important to note that in terms of gender, female learners always outperform male learners in the assessment. The South African results can be further broken down in terms of the following benchmarks:

3.2.2.1 Benchmark 1: Locating basic texts ("basic reading skills")

When the performance of South African learners is further broken down according to the various official South African languages, 35% of Afrikaans and 36% of English learners of the abovementioned 13% Grade 4 learners could read at a basic level, whereas only 1% of isiNdebele and isiXhosa learners reached this first benchmark. These figures improved in respect of Afrikaans to 55% and English to 52%. Yet, for the African languages, the improvement was marginal, namely 4% for isiNdebele and 5% for isiXhosa. Other languages that reached the first benchmark from the Grade 5 group included Sesotho at 11% and Setswana at 14%. Of great concern, however, was that "almost half the learners tested in English and Afrikaans and more than 80% of learners tested in African languages have not attained basic reading skills and strategies" (Howie *et al.*, 2008:27).

3.2.2.2 Benchmark 2: Some reading proficiency in terms of making connections

The results for Benchmark 2 indicate that from the Grade 4 cohort, 22% of Afrikaans learners, 23% of English learners, and only 1% of the Setswana and isiZulu groups reached this level of reading. None of the other African languages could reach this

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[18] HPC means Highest Performing Country. This is only used to illustrate South Africa's performance as the lowest-performing country.

level at Grade 4. Additionally, the Grade 5 cohort showed differences that are very similar, with only 1% of Sepedi, Xitsonga, siSwati, and Tshivenda learners and 2% of Sesotho learners reaching this second benchmark.

3.2.2.3 Benchmark 3: Competent readers

From the 3% average seen in Table 3.1, only 8% of Afrikaans and 10% of English learners in Grade 4 reached this benchmark, which describes learners as being competent readers. There was a slight increase to 17% and 18% respectively in Grade 5. The African languages did not reach this benchmark at all, neither in Grade 4 nor in Grade 5.

3.2.2.4 Benchmark 4: Advanced readers able to disseminate challenging texts

The fourth and last benchmark indicates that South African learners are on average not advanced readers in any language. From the 1% of Grade 4 learners who reached this benchmark (see Table 3.1), only 1% were Afrikaans and 3% were English, while in Grade 5 both percentages increased to 5%. Again, no learners in the African languages category reached this benchmark. The low percentages in general, irrespective of in which language literacy acquisition was tested, were at least some cause for concern.

South Africa subsequently participated in the 2011 PIRLS assessment. The PIRLS 2011 included a new pilot assessment termed prePIRLS, which was designed for countries that did not perform well in the past study, to assess learners at a lower level than the PIRLS to determine their level of reading competence. South Africa was one of three countries to participate in prePIRLS, along with Columbia and Botswana. During the 2011 tests, Grade 4 South African learners participated in the prePIRLS in all official languages, while the Grade 5 learners were tested in either Afrikaans or English (Howie *et al.*, 2012:xv).

South Africa's prePIRLS results indicated once again a strong difference in performance by gender, with females outperforming males across Grade 4. South Africa achieved a national average of 461, compared to Botswana's average of 463 and Columbia's average of 576. The International Centre point score for the test was set at 500 and of the official South African languages, only Afrikaans and English

learners performed above the International Centre point. Table 3.2 depicts the 2011 prePIRLS performance by language.

Table 3.2: South African prePIRLS performance by language

Language	Average score	Score HL*	Score not HL
English	**530**	590	511
Afrikaans	525	533	507
siSwati	451	458	431
isiZulu	442	449	420
isiNdebele	435	441	425
isiXhosa	428	438	404
Setswana	428	437	409
Sesotho	425	438	401
Xitsonga	406	417	385
Tshivenda	395	405	365
Sepedi	**388**	398	389

*HL = home language

Source: Howie *et al.* (2012)

The prePIRLS results indicate that, across the board, the performance of South African learners is much higher when they are tested in their home language versus in an additional language. In the African languages, learners still scored much lower than Afrikaans and English learners did in their home languages. However, in all cases, test scores for home language testing exceeded the national average score.

Grade 5 participation in the 2011 PIRLS assessment was only conducted in English and Afrikaans, as indicated earlier. Given this information, the South African results from the 2011 assessment showed little improvement from the 2006 assessment.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the South African PIRLS performance in 2006 and 2011 for the variables South Africa, Afrikaans, English, males, and females.

PIRLS 2006 and 2011 performance of South Africa for selected variables
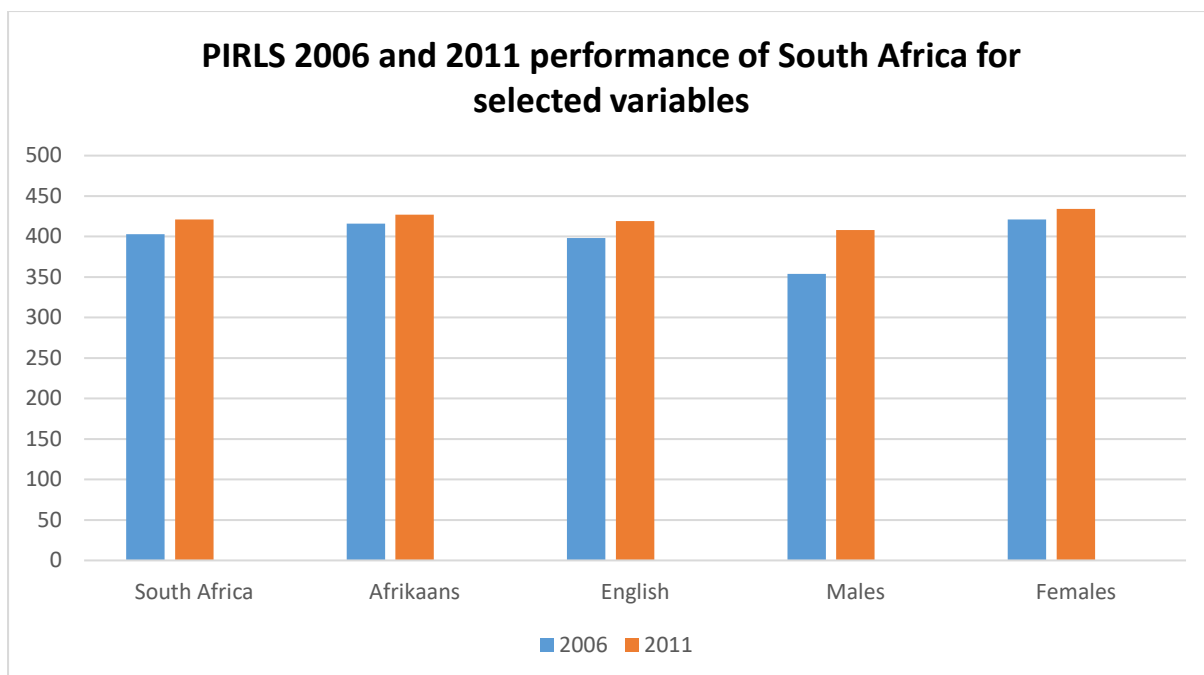
Figure 3.1: South African PIRLS performance in 2006 and 2011 for selected variables
Source: Howie *et al.* (2012:42)

The results for South Africa indicate that female learners outperformed male learners in reading acquisition and skills. Furthermore, the 2011 results indicate that South Africa still underperformed in terms of the national average, with a score still below the international set average of 500. South Africa was again the lowest-performing country in the participating group. There was, however, a sharper increase in results from South Africa in Afrikaans and English during the five-year period, which indicates some improvement in reading in these languages.

The 2016 PIRLS assessment Included 50 countries and 11 benchmarking entities (Mullis *et al.*, 2017:3). South Africa achieved last place in terms of learners' performance in reading abilities. The 2016 assessment comprised two different modes of assessment, namely PIRLS and PIRLS Literacy, which was equivalent to the PIRLS in scope and reflected the same conception of reading as the PIRLS, but in addition to passages in common with the PIRLS, it included some "less difficult texts" (Mullis *et al.*, 2017:50).

The 2016 results offer South African researchers and educators the benefit of drawing inferences and assessing trends over the last three assessments to establish how serious the reading problem in South Africa is, where the problem lies, and what can

be done to solve or lessen the problem. South Africa's reading achievement for Grade 4 learners over the three assessments is illustrated according to the four international benchmarks in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Reading performance of Grade 4 learners over the different PIRLS assessments

International benchmarks	2006 % of learners	2011 % of learners	2016 % of learners
Low (400)	13	24	22
Intermediate (475)	7	10	8
High (550)	3	3	2
Advanced (625)	1	0	0

Source: 2016 and 2011 data obtained from Mullis *et al.* (2017:58); 2006 data obtained from Howie *et al.* (2008:26-29)

From Table 3.3 it is evident that there was a visible difference in the performance of Grade 4 learners from 2006 to 2011. However, this performance did not improve significantly from 2011 to 2016. The most concerning aspect of the results over the assessment periods is that reading in Grade 4 remains a very serious problem. Of the school learners in South Africa, 78% were still not able to read for meaning in explicitly stated texts in 2016, which is what the first international benchmark measured. The 2016 results, however, shows a clear reduction in reading ability, which is fair given that a large majority of South African learners have not acquired basic reading skills since the start of their schooling. Another key finding from the PIRLS 2016 international report (Mullis *et al.*, 2017:36), which confirmed a trend from 2006, is that female learners outperformed their male counterparts in terms of reading acquisition. Of significance is that the female learners' cohort comprised a smaller percentage of the total sample, but they outperformed their male counterparts by a 79-point difference in terms of their average scores. The overall scoring difference for South Africa, according to gender, placed South Africa second of the countries assessed, with only Saudi Arabia scoring higher (Mullis *et al.*, 2017:36).

From the 2016 PIRLS results it was concluded that South Africa had a flat, no-change result in assessments from 2011 to 2016. However, a recent analysis of PIRLS data by Gustafsson (2020) concludes that this is false and that there was a small, yet visible improvement in terms of reading outcomes in South African schools.

Gustafsson (2020:20) explains as follows:

> Detailed and policy-relevant analyses of assessment microdata are of course important. The question could be asked why analysts inside and outside government in South Africa (including the author of the current paper) did not interrogate the strangeness of the flat 2011 to 2016 earlier, when the trend was released. Answers would include insufficient capacity for this kind of work in South Africa, a sense that the 'black box' of assessment statistics are difficult to understand, and an insufficient realisation that educational quality trends, and not just cross-sectional analyses of the situation at one point in time, lie at the heart of a country's educational development.

3.2.3   Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

Participation in the TIMSS is also conducted and administered by the IAE and focuses, as the name suggests, on noticeable trends in international mathematics and science across the world. TIMSS was first administered in South Africa in 1995 and has since been administered in 1999, 2003, 2011, and 2015. The results for the periods assessed are shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: South African TIMSS results: 1999 to 2011

Assessment year	Grade tested	Mathematics South Africa	Mathematics international average	Science South Africa	Science international average
1995	8	267	522	260	521
1999	8	275	487	243	488
2003	8	264	467	244	474
2011	9	352	*	332	*
2015	9	372	*	358	*

Source: Tabulated from TIMSS SA Fast Fact reports; international averages are taken from the respective TIMSS international reports

The TIMSS evaluates learner performance in mathematics across the globe according to the following four benchmarks, measured against the average score that needs to be attained:

- Lower Quarter (396): Learners can do basic computations with whole numbers.
- Median (479): Learners can apply basic mathematical knowledge in straightforward situations.

- Upper Quarter (555): Learners can apply their understanding and knowledge in a wide variety of relatively complex situations.

- Top 10% (616): Learners can organise information, make generalisations, and explain solution strategies in non-routine, problem-solving situations (TIMSS report, 1999:42, in Mullis *et al.*, 2000).

South Africa's results are tabulated over the various assessments in terms of the benchmarks listed above in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: South African performance in TIMSS mathematics according to international benchmarks

Benchmarks	1995	1999	2003	2011 (Grade 9)
Low	15%	14%	10%	24
Median	7%	5%	6%	9
Upper	2%	1%	2%	3
Top 10%	0%	0%	0%	1

Source: Compiled from various TIMSS reports

From Table 3.5 it is evident that the standard of mathematics acquisition and application in South Africa is relatively poor in comparison to the other participating countries, irrespective of the year of assessment. Of particular concern is the fact that even the most basic of mathematics skills are not acquired by the majority of South African learners. Moreover, if the results are taken within the framework of the samples containing predominantly Grade 8 learners from across the nation, it is highly unlikely that the basic mathematics skills were acquired from the earlier grades. As indicated in Chapter 2, certain skills are transferred in the earlier grades; the absence of which always shows up in later grades.

Similar to trends revealed in the PIRLSs discussed earlier, the South African mathematics results show a clear difference in attainment by gender. With the exception of the earlier years (1995 and 1999), male learners started to outperform female learners, and this gap is clearly growing. According to Reddy (2006:48, 61), there is a strong correlation between learner achievement and the socio-economic conditions of the particular province in which the learner resides, as measured by the HDI. Provinces with a higher HDI perform better than those with lower HDI scores.

In 2015, around 12 500 learners and 330 mathematics and science teachers from 292 schools participated in the study. The HSRC compared the South African performance in TIMSS 2015 at the Grade 9 level with the performance of other countries. It also examined the trends in mathematics and science achievement from 2003 to 2015. South African Grade 5 learners participated in the TIMSS for the first time. The results of this benchmarking assessment are important in the context of this study. In terms of science performance across the world, the TIMSS evaluates science scores according to four international benchmarks:

- Lower Quarter (410): Learners can recognise some basic information from the earth, life, and physical sciences presented using non-technical language.
- Median (488): Learners can recognise and communicate basic scientific knowledge over a range of topics.
- Upper Quarter (558): Learners demonstrate conceptual understanding of some science cycles, systems, and principles.
- Top 10% (618): Learners demonstrate a grasp of some complex and abstract science concepts (TIMSS, 1999:42, in Mullis *et al.*, 2000).

Table 3.6 illustrates South Africa's performance in science in terms of international benchmarks.

Table 3.6: South African performance in science according to international benchmarks

Benchmarks	1995	1999	2003	2011 (Grade 9)
Low	15	13	13	25
Median	8	6	6	11
Upper	4	2	3	4
Top 10%	1	0	1	1

Source: Compiled from various TIMSS reports

It is evident from Table 3.6 that not many noticeable improvements were made by South African learners in terms of science knowledge. A clear inference can be drawn that the largest cohort of learners in South African classrooms do not acquire the basic understanding of science concepts in a meaningful manner. It can also be inferred that the curriculum covered in this subject does not adequately prepare learners for higher and further education. However, Reddy (2006:114) asserts that language affected the test scores. The tests were conducted in Afrikaans and English – languages that many

of the learners were not proficient in. This is similar to the PIRLS test scores that also showed clear differences in scores when learners were tested in their home language as opposed to an additional language.

In addition, Reddy (2006) points out that in the period during which the 1999 and 2003 TIMSSs were conducted, Curriculum 2005 showed the least overlapping with the TIMSS assessment framework, and the South African curriculum was already identified as having a lack of emphasis on basic knowledge and skills transfer, especially in mathematics and science. Nonetheless, in the parts of the TIMSS that covered aspects that form part of the South African curriculum, only around 20% of learners achieved correct scores.

The TIMSS science scores do not show a great difference in scores for males and females (see Table 3.7). Irrespective of gender, performance remains rather low, regardless of grade and/or years of schooling. The South African education curriculum can therefore still be said to not affect the acquisition of critical and basic learning skills.

Table 3.7: Female versus male science scores in TIMSS assessments

Year assessed	Female	Male
1999	263	243
2003	242	244
2011 (Grade 9)	335	328
2015	362	353

Source: Drawn from TIMSS reports (1999-2015)

3.2.4 Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SEACMEQ) tests

SEACMEQ (previously SACMEQ), a collaboration between 16 ministries of education in Southern and Eastern Africa, aims to improve educational quality on the African continent by providing prominent research on learner achievement, as well as school conditions. The SEACMEQ II test in which South Africa participated was administered from 2000 to 2002 to test the reading and mathematics abilities of Grade 6 learners in 14 countries on the African continent. The tests were administered to both learners and teachers to assess their knowledge in the fields of literacy and mathematics. Learner performance was based on a predetermined mean score/scale of 500. Similar to other tests reported thus far, South African learner performance was rather

poor in relation to the other countries on the African continent. Of the 15 participating countries, South Africa achieved the ninth highest score in mathematics and the eighth highest in reading. From this random South African sample (and presumably a representative sample), South Africa achieved an average of 429 in reading and 486 in mathematics. Table 3.8 indicates the SEACMEQ II learner performance by each South African province.

Table 3.8: South African learner performance in SEACMEQ II by province

South African province	Reading scores	Mathematics scores
Eastern Cape	444.3	449.5
Free State	446.4	447.7
Gauteng	576.3	552.3
KwaZulu-Natal	517.5	510.3
Mpumalanga	428.4	433.6
Northern Cape	470.5	461.1
Limpopo	437.0	446.2
North West	428.0	419.8
Western Cape	629.1	591.0

Source: Adapted from Moloi and Strauss (2005:174)

The results from the SEACMEQ II test show that South African school learner performance remains low in relation to other African countries. When the results are further broken down into the various provinces, only three provinces achieved scores above the mean of 500, namely the Western Cape, Gauteng, and KwaZulu-Natal. The lowest mathematics and reading achievements were found in North West and Limpopo. What makes this particularly interesting is that the provinces that scored the lowest marks are predominantly populated by African (black) people, with 89% in North West and 96.67% in Limpopo (Stats SA, 2011). The fact that these are black learner-dominated provinces is significant; albeit not as significant as the languages that predominate in those provinces, namely Setswana (63.39%) in North West and Sepedi (52.94%) in Limpopo. These are languages that were shown in the PIRLS results to produce very low numbers of learners that achieve reading proficiency where it concerns even the lowest benchmark of basic reading skills. Sepedi scored the lowest average.

The demographics and dominant languages in higher-scoring provinces, the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Gauteng, are much different, with the Western Cape

comprising a high population of coloured (48%) and black people (32%), with the predominant home language in the province being Afrikaans at 49.70%.

KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng are also densely populated by black Africans, amounting to 77% and 86% respectively. The language that dominates is isiZulu. According to the PIRLS results discussed earlier, Afrikaans, English, and isiZulu learners outperform learners from the other languages, especially if the assessment is conducted in one of these languages as the learners' home language.

Primary school learners' results were further analysed by Moloi and Strauss (2005:170-171) to determine not only how learning takes place, but also how many children actually attain what is termed the minimum level of mastery and desirable level of mastery for reading. The results indicate that Western Cape learners clearly outperform learners from the other provinces in the mastery of reading, with the poorest scores recorded in Mpumalanga. It therefore becomes apparent that the mastery of educational quality differs much among provinces. Equally clear is that the languages in which learners learn play a huge role in their acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

SEACMEQ III commenced in 2006 and was completed in 2011. It assessed similar data related to quality and conditions of schools in 15 SEACMEQ education ministries, but newly included a section on learners' basic understanding levels of HIV/AIDS (SEACMEQ, n.d.). Additionally, SEACMEQ III not only tested the knowledge of learners, but also the knowledge of teachers (Spaull, 2011:5). Tests were conducted in either English or Afrikaans. This is an important consideration when the results are discussed below, as various links have been made with regard to assessments in the home language versus tests in a second or an additional language. Also, as Spaull (n.d.:6) indicates, when drawing inferences on the results attained in the tests, isiXhosa and isiZulu are the predominant languages of the majority of South African learners and society in general, but test conditions gave the English- and Afrikaans-speaking cohorts an added advantage over learners whose home language is one of the African languages.

The performance of South African learners in the SEACMEQ III, compared with that of the SEACMEQ II performance across the various provinces, is shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Trends in achievement for SEACMEQ II and III

Province	Reading SEACMEQ II	Reading SEACMEQ III	Mathematics SEACMEQ II	Mathematics SEACMEQ III
Eastern Cape	444	448	449	469
Free State	446	491	448	492
Gauteng	576	573	552	545
KwaZulu-Natal	517	486	510	485
Mpumalanga	428	474	433	476
Northern Cape	470	506	461	499
Limpopo	437	425	446	447
North West	428	506	420	503
Western Cape	629	583	591	566
South Africa	**492**	**495**	**486**	**495**

Source: Moloi and Chetty (2011:6)

The SEACMEQ tests indicate the overall poor state of the South African education system. Inequity between provinces is clearly observable. It is apparent that the more affluent provinces perform better than the poorer, under-resourced provinces. There is a clear indication that South African learners in the poorest parts of the country are not equipped at the school level with the fundamental skills needed to be successful in progressive grades. However, this is not a terminal condition; evidence from the various tests suggests how improvements can be made to facilitate an improved educational context that is conducive to quality teaching and learning.

According to the PIRLS 2016 international report (Mullis *et al.*, 2017:x-xi), international findings on reading indicate that learners perform better in reading if the following factors are observed in their homes and schools:

- Homes where there are reading material/books and where parents read and encourage reading;
- Early reading activities such as pre-primary schooling of at least three years;
- Better-resourced, academically orientated schools with a strong sense of school belonging;
- Safe school environments;
- Quality instruction from teachers, with added resources such as libraries; and
- Lower absenteeism and hunger.

3.3   SOUTH AFRICAN TESTS AND INTERVENTIONS

The South African DBE instituted the Systemic Evaluations to assess the quality of education in schools. These tests measure literacy, numeracy, access to schooling, and equality among learners in Grades 3, 6, and 9. According to the DoE's Chief Directorate: Quality Assurance (2003), the objectives of these evaluations are to determine the context in which learning and teaching take place, to obtain information on learner achievement, to identify the factors that affect learner achievement, and to make conclusions about appropriate education interventions. In line with education research and results in most related international tests, the results from all three these Systemic Evaluations were poor. Although the results for the Grade 3 Systemic Evaluation indicated an improvement of six percentage points in reading and five percentage points in numeracy between 2001 and 2007, they remained extremely low in 2007, with an average score in reading of 36% and 35% in numeracy (DBE, n.d.).

As Fleisch (2008:7) correctly points out, the average Foundation Phase learner struggles with numeracy and can barely cope with the demands of learning to read and write. The achievement rates of learners in the Grade 6 evaluation were even poorer than those for Grade 3, with learners obtaining an average of 38% for language (their language of teaching and learning). This makes sense if one looks at it rationally: with continued exposure to low-quality teaching, together with an already weak understanding of subjects in the lower phase, marks will not improve when the learner progresses to higher grades. This also demonstrates the effects of the (non-)language policy in action when children switch to English in Grade 4 after three years of mother-tongue education. Grade 6 learners obtained 27% for mathematics and 41% for natural sciences (DoE, 2005).

The majority of Grade 6 learners failed to reach the standard required by the National Curriculum for Grade 6 in the three learning areas. Only 28% of learners reached the Achieved or Outstanding level in language, and only 31% did so in natural sciences. For mathematics, the situation was particularly concerning, as only 12% of Grade 6 learners managed to reach the Achieved or Outstanding level (DoE, 2005:77, 82, 86).

The difference in average scores between the best- and the worst-performing provinces (the Western Cape and Limpopo respectively) in the Grade 6 evaluation ranged from 19 to 34 percentage points in the three learning areas. In the Grade 3

Systemic Evaluation, the gap between the best- and the worst-performing provinces widened between 2001 and 2007. In 2001, the gap between the best- and the worst-performing provinces in literacy and numeracy was ten and nine percentage points respectively. By 2007, this gap had increased to 19 percentage points for literacy and 25 percentage points for numeracy. Despite the widening gap between the provinces, most provinces experienced an improvement in the Grade 3 Systemic Evaluation between 2001 and 2007. In literacy, the improvement ranged from two percentage points in Limpopo to 15 percentage points in the Western Cape. In numeracy, Limpopo experienced a two percentage point decrease, but among the other provinces, the improvement ranged from two percentage points in the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga to 17 percentage points in the Western Cape.

All other discussions on poverty and education in this dissertation point to scientific evidence of the tremendous impact of poverty on learning, whether indirect or direct. Poorer municipalities and districts simply cannot, with their budget allocations, bring the standards of schools up to the level of the wealthiest provinces. This is confounded by controversy around some key appointments, fraud, and other well-documented challenges in South Africa that impede the provision of even the most basic learner support in those municipalities. This is expanded on in Chapter 4.

The ANAs were instituted in 2011 by the DBE as a means to improve the quality of education, as a benchmark to evaluate performance, and as a measure of where improvements were required. Furthermore, the tests were envisaged to have four key effects at the school level: to expose teachers to better assessment practices, to make it easier for districts to identify schools most in need of assistance, to encourage schools to celebrate outstanding performance, and to empower parents with important information about their children's performance (DBE, 2010a:4). To date, four reports were obtained from the DBE during the period 2011 to 2014. The key data from these reports are summarised below.

A preliminary investigation provided the following key findings:

- No consistency in data reporting on ANAs;
- Data are represented differently each year;
- Data verification is stated as done by an independent company but the reports do not specify which company this is;

- Lack of legitimacy of these tests (given the lack of transparency and verification); and

- An overly positive yearly increase in performance.

In 2011, learners in Grades 1 to 6 were assessed according to the level of their language of learning and teaching. However, from 2012, two separate tests were set, one at home language level and one at first additional language level in Grades 4 to 6 and Grade 9. Candidates wrote either of these tests in 2012, while only one test was written on home language proficiency by Grade 1, 2, and 3 learners. The results for 2015 and 2016 are not available from the DoE; hence, only the results from 2011 to 2014 were considered in this study. There was a noticeable general improvement in the performance of learners in the ANA tests for Grades 1 to 6. With reference to Grade 9, improvement in learner performance in the ANA tests could also be observed between 2013 and 2014 with regard to home language, while a slight decrease in performance could be observed between 2012 and 2014 with regard to first additional language.

Apart from Grades 1 to 3, the results for Grades 4 to 6 and Grade 9 are of great concern. Greater effort should be made to facilitate a steady increase in performance of learners in the ANAs with regard to mathematics for Grades 4 to 6 and Grade 9.

The overarching goal of the DoE, in response to the president's State of the Nation Address in 2010, is for at least 60% of learners in Grades 3, 6, and 9 to achieve a competency level of 50% or above in language and mathematics. From the data presented, the percentage of learners obtaining at least 50% in mathematics clearly illustrates that the DoE is not achieving its objective by concerning margins. Only in the instance of Grade 3 for 2013 and 2014 were the percentages slightly above the expected mark. Yet, with reference to the percentage of learners obtaining at least 50% in languages, there are commendable results across nearly all grades and years.

The ANA 2011 assessed over six million children from Grades 1 to 3 and 4 to 6. The results ranged from a national average in literacy of 35% and an average of 28% in numeracy for Grade 3 learners to a 28% average for languages and a 30% average for mathematics for Grade 6 learners (DBE, 2011). Grade 1 mathematics (63%) and language (59%) results were found to be the highest. However, as the grades

progressed, the results became increasingly poorer. For Grade 1 to 3 learners the tests were available in all 11 official languages, while the tests for Grades 4 to 6 were only available in English and Afrikaans. The results were verified by the HSRC through remarking a representative sample of tests. The results, however low and indicative of poor quality in the educational system, held a few positives. Firstly, it demonstrated a more accurate and transparent picture of the extent and range of the problems in the system and, secondly, it provided the DoE and other role players the chance to take action and improve the situation.

The ANAs of 2012 assessed just over seven million learners from primary schools across the country, ranging from Grades 1 to 6. Grade 9 learners were also included in the 2012 ANA. There were major differences in the results between phases in the 2012 assessment. Firstly, Grade 1 to 3 learners were tested only in their home languages, while Grade 4 to 6 and Grade 9 learners were tested in both home languages and English or Afrikaans. The ANA results showed an increase in Grade 3 literacy to 52% and numeracy to 41%. Yet again, the results showed a dramatic decrease per year from Grade 1. In 2012, Grade 1 learners had a 68% pass rate in mathematics, which declined steadily to a very low 13% average for Grade 9 learners. The numeracy results indicated similar patterns, with Grade 1 learners achieving a 58% average pass rate. Grades 4 to 9 learners achieved greater results in their home language than in English or Afrikaans as the instructional language. South African learners' results were consistently low in all tests, either national or international, but with one difference: learners performed better in their home language than in the additional language (DBE, 2012b:22-24).

Furthermore, the ANA report states that "anchor items" from the 2011 assessments were used to allow for comparisons to be made (DBE, 2011d). It makes reference to a verification process, but does not specify how and who verified the results. Lastly, to ensure quality, a representative sample is professed to have been marked at the provincial level under provincial supervision. It becomes problematic to make accurate deductions from the results, given the differences in how the two tests were conducted.

Spaull (2015) comments on the analysis of the results that

> learners would tend to provide the same incorrect response to a greater degree than one would expect. This could point to two things. It is possible that in some schools' learners were guided during the test administration process, but in such a way that this guidance was not always correct.

Spaull (2015) concludes as follows:

> The problem is that these tests are being used as evidence of 'improvements' in education when the ANAs cannot show changes over time. There is absolutely no statistical or methodological foundation to make any comparison of ANA results over time or across grades. Any such comparison is inaccurate, misleading and irresponsible. The difficulty levels of these tests differ between years and across grades, yielding different scores that have nothing to do with improvements or deteriorations necessarily but rather test difficulty and content covered.

3.4   THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC)

The key barometer by which the DoE measures the quality of education in South Africa is through the results obtained by learners at the exit year of schooling, i.e., Grade 12, as encapsulated in the following statement by the DBE (2019):

> The National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations commonly referred to as 'matric' has become an annual event of major public significance. It not only signifies the culmination of twelve years of formal schooling but the NSC examinations is a barometer of the health of the education system.

In order to obtain an NSC, a learner is required to fulfil the following basic requirements:

- "Achieve 40% in three subjects, one of which is an official language at Home Language level, and 30% in three other subjects; [and]
- Provide full evidence in the SBA component in the subjects offered" (DBE, 2019).

In an analysis of school performance in the 2000 Senior Certificate Examinations, Oosthuizen and Bhorat (2006) found that better-performing schools were more likely to be located in areas where the adult population had completed a secondary or

tertiary education, while poorly performing schools drew learners from areas with higher proportions of adults with no formal education or with an incomplete primary education. This is in line with previous discussions throughout this study that showed direct links between parents' academic levels and their children's performance.

The fast improvement in the Grade 12 pass rate was outlined earlier in this chapter. Various reasons are offered by the DoE for the increase, which range from a shift from mathematics to mathematical literacy to a decrease in the number of learners writing the examination. Most importantly, the DoE called on the public to celebrate these results, since more learners have access to further studies or employment. The DBE (2019) also outlines that one million learners exit the schooling system yearly without obtaining a Grade 12 certificate.

Monyooe (2013:436-438) opines that the fact that Umalusi, the national council for quality assurance of Grade 12 results, refuses to indicate the subjects in which raw scores are adjusted does little to raise credibility in the Grade 12 results. Moreover, the results for Grade 12, when discussed parallel to the results of assessments of the quality of literacy and numeracy levels in other tests and surveys in this chapter, raise questions on whether this is indeed a measure of educational quality in South African schools. In fact, so contentious is the issue of Grade 12 results in the media, with the 2019 results surpassing 80%, that opposition parties and researchers alike contended that it is not an accurate depiction of the results, and that the real pass rate is in the region of 39%, as indicated by Prof. Jonathan Jansen (Cape Talk FM, 2020; Chotia, 2020; BusinessTech, 2020; Banton, 2020; Germiston City News, 2020).

In the NPC's (2011:16) Diagnostic Overview, the committee states that the school system simply passed on the problem of learners who are unable to cope or learners who are not ready for higher education and training to "ill-equipped further education and training institutions" that are unable to cope with the high number of learners who require academic support and academic content bridging. It can therefore be contended that schooling in South Africa perpetuates inequality in South Africa by not giving black South Africans the skills and knowledge required to continue to higher education and to consequently enter a higher sector of employment. Even if they do gain access, it does not allow them the opportunity to learn and cope individually with the demands of higher education institutions.

A research report by Van der Berg *et al.* (2019) indicates that only 33% of Grade 12 candidates passed mathematics with a grade of 40% or higher, only 29.2% of schools have a library, only 18.3% of government schools have science laboratories, and, perhaps most importantly, only 13% of the national Grade 1 class of 2006 managed to obtain a university entry qualification in 2017. The performance of South African learners as it relates to international assessments has sparked much debate among educationists and researchers alike. In response to learners' performance in these assessments, Crouch and Vijnevold (2006:6) developed an achievement index based on the performance of learners since 1990. This achievement index takes into account access to South African schools based on the net enrolment rates for primary and secondary schools during the 1990s and early 2000s. Crouch and Vijnevold (2006) indicate that, unlike the majority of other countries that managed to strike a balance between enrolment in education and quality education, South Africa underperforms in terms of the quality provided by its schooling system.

The NSC results should thus not be celebrated, but should rather be seen as indicative of another ill in our education system, namely that more learners pass because of low standards. In effect, learners are not adequately prepared for the intellectual demands of higher education, which in turn forces them into a cycle of perpetual poverty.

3.5   CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis proved that there are fundamental differences in the performance of learners in South Africa; not just in the country as a whole, but also within and among provinces. Trends regarding the country's performance indicate that poorer provinces / poorly resourced provinces with lower HDIs perform worse than their more affluent and well-resourced counterparts. Additionally, it was confirmed that there is a strong correlation between early reading and learning and performance in later grades. The tests revealed another factor that is clearly not emphasised enough in research, namely language proficiency. The test performances indicated a clearly higher performance if learners are tested in the language that is also their home or "native" language. The highest scores were obtained by Afrikaans- and English-speaking learners, as opposed to learners who were proficient in any of the other nine official languages, i.e., African languages. This stands to reason that learners in South

African schools are not exposed to quality teaching in other languages, which can be attributed to the shortage of qualified multilingual teachers in the country.

Two things are clear: Firstly, a large proportion of South African schoolchildren cannot read for meaning, even the most basic of texts (lowest benchmark). Secondly, there is no major increase in learners' reading abilities/performance, irrespective of the year the test was administered. Additionally, the PIRLS 2016 data indicated that there is a strong gender-based gap in performance. Another key function these international assessments fulfil is to measure the quality of the education systems of various international countries and to simultaneously provide comparative insights. Factors such as home resources, school resources, teacher demographics, and quality pre-primary education are among some of the factors that were assessed and found to have an influence on learner performance.

Given the size of the GDP, its national education budget, the ratio of spending on education, and the number of revisions of South Africa's education policies, one might have expected South Africa to perform better. Chapter 5 presents a theoretical exploration of policy conceptualisation in South African education.

Chapter 4 explains the research design and methodology chosen for this study, with the focus on the design, analysis, and justification for the selection of the documentary analysis method.

CHAPTER 4:
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

There is no single reason why people do social research … but, at its core,
it is done because there is an aspect of our understanding of what goes on
in society that is unresolved.
Bryman (2016:3)

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Critical to any research endeavour or pathway of academic enquiry is the research design and methodology utilised (Meehan, 1988:2ff, 4ff, 8). According to Lategan, Uwah and Swanepoel (2011:1), research can be defined as "a process of critical analysis to solve a problem". Babbie (2013:90) states that social research can be conducted to serve various purposes, of which the most common are exploration, description, and explanation. This study employed a qualitative explanatory-descriptive approach. Auriacombe and Holtzhausen (2014:21) point out that descriptive studies involve no formal hypothesis, and that the researcher already understands the underlying relationships of the problem. Confirmation of conclusive evidence is obtained to determine a course of action.

Auriacombe and Holtzhausen (2014:11) state that the aim of research is to generate scientific knowledge that is characterised by a collaborative nature, is generated from a methodological and rigorous process, is reliant on evidence, and is sceptical, as it does not treat all generated knowledge as absolute. This argument fits as the South African research environment itself has become more challenging and complex, owing to a variety of reasons and developments such as the subsidy (income) that can be generated from the thesis (research) being regarded as a research output, the critical intellectual demands and evaluation of one's own and others' work, the high standards imposed by the Higher Education Qualification Framework, as well as the questioning by the government and end users of the quality and impact of postgraduate qualifications (Lategan *et al.*, 2011:2-3). Similar complexities and social challenges are found in primary and secondary education and the current system and structures through which the service is rendered.

Bryman (2016:31) indicates that social research is conducted either by following a quantitative or qualitative research approach. The scope of education is very broad and the education policy phenomenon lends itself to various interpretations. This study, however, only focused on quality education and the gap between policy and practice in the 1994 to 2018 period. The explanatory-descriptive nature of this study required the use of existing literature to indicate the perceived disequilibrium between policy and practice in the South African education system.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the social influences on the selection of a research strategy. Additionally, the chapter provides an overview of and justification for the research strategy, method, conceptual framework, and method of analysis that were utilised based on the chosen topic of the provision of quality education in South African schools.

4.2   SOCIAL RESEARCH STRATEGIES: QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE

Social research strategies fundamentally distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research. The key differences between qualitative and quantitative research strategies are outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Fundamental differences between qualitative and quantitative research strategies

Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Quantitative	Qualitative
	Deductive; testing of theory	Inductive; generation of theory
Epistemological orientation	Natural science model; in particular positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological orientation	Objectivism	Constructionism

Source: Bryman (2016:31)

Bryman (2016:31) cautions that these differences are not cast in stone since a researcher can employ a mixed-methods design. Additionally, studies containing characteristics of one research strategy may contain characteristics of the other, and they often overlap. Berg (2009:8) argues that the aim of research is not only to generate large quantities of data, but "to discover answers to questions through the application of systematic procedures".

4.3   INFLUENCES ON SOCIAL RESEARCH

Bryman (2016:33) posits that many factors exist that influence the choice of research methodology and the conclusions reached by various types of researchers. These influences are illustrated in Figure 4.1.
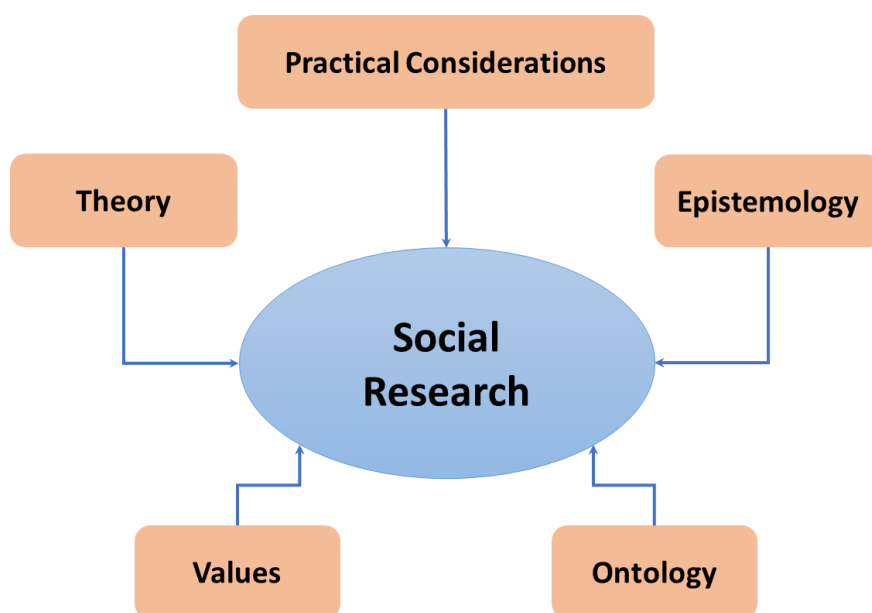

Figure 4.1: Influences on social research
Source: Bryman (2016:33)

The values and approach of the researcher ultimately influence the conclusions derived from research. For this purpose, various safeguards are included in the research design and methodology to ensure the validity and soundness of a research project. According to Auriacombe and Holtzhausen (2014:17), the ontological dimensions of a researcher are divided into three basic philosophies: objectivism, nominalism, and pragmatism. Objectivists view research objectively and in principle remain detached from the social world. In a qualitative study for a doctoral thesis, Liebenberg (2008) argues that objectivists (perhaps not aware of this) try to present a "God's eye view". As such, subjective elements (or what the author calls "angular optics", in following the views of Wilfred Desan) and the subjective nature of being in research are underestimated – if not overlooked entirely. Nominalists take the position that reality can only be constructed from the perception of reality. Pragmatists, as articulated by Creswell (2009:6, in Auriacombe & Holtzhausen, 2014), hold a participatory worldview, i.e., that social reality, although real, is also influenced by an

array of social, political, and cultural factors that are based on and interpreted using abductive logic.[19]

Society and the cumulative actions therein are simply too complex (and in social flux) to be restricted to objectivism. This also applies to the environment of teaching and learning.

Ontology refers to a study of the social world, shared realities, or multiple context-specific realities (Mouton & Marais, 1996:11). In terms of the research process of this study, the ontological questions that drove the research project were as follows:

- What is quality education?
- How is quality education defined in the literature?
- Is there any agreement on a standard definition?
- What are the distinguishing features of quality education in South African schools?
- How did policy disequilibrium/enactments in policy and practice affect these quality education features in South African education?

In terms of research philosophy, ontology and epistemology are two sides of a coin. There are close relational links (Peperzak, 1997, and Luijpen, 1980, quoted by Liebenberg, 2008:55). The epistemological questions that drive the research in question deals with the reliability of the documents consulted in the initial and extensive literature exploration. As Auriacombe and Holtzhausen (2014:18) point out, realists hold the view that is both objective and subjective, in that the research question that drives the project is more important than the method and paradigm. The ideology is also paramount. Taking a more social justice position, the overriding goal is the change and empowerment of marginalised individuals. An important question for this research project was what resources/literature would provide the most reliable information (or data) on the true state of education in South African schools, as it pertains to quality education, particularly no-fee schools, which by a considerable margin has the poorest educational outcomes and the highest enrolment of learners.

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[19] Abductive logic uses both deductive and inductive logic and is primarily used in studies that employ a mixed-methods design. Deductive reasoning is used to explain how variables are related, while inductive reasoning is used to explain, test, expand, or generate new theories (Auriacombe & Holtzhausen, 2014:17).

Literature on the topic is vast; hence, an important consideration was the type of studies consulted, not merely looking at a citation index of previous studies conducted. Focus is placed on the content and ultimate conclusions on the influence of quality, drawing from various interdisciplinary fields.

4.4 METHODOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGY

According to Mouton (1996:175), the research design is the plan for how the research will be conducted, based on the research problem that has been identified. This study sought to address three research questions and three research objectives. It thus required a detailed and appropriate research design. For the purposes of this study, a qualitative approach was used to gather data from a multitude of sources.

Babbie (2013:557) defines qualitative research as an approach that involves the examination or observation of non-numerical data to examine relationships and to identify patterns in such observations. According to Berg (2009:8), qualitative research attempts to answer research questions by examining humans' social settings and how they interpret these social settings though the use of symbols, etc. This approach does not confine itself to the examination of human behaviour and can also include the examination of documents to make sense of and explain human experiences, as was applied in this study[20]. Choy (2014:101) illuminates the distinct advantages and disadvantages of a qualitative approach, as listed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Advantages and disadvantages of a qualitative research approach

Advantages	Weaknesses
Differing perspectives can be drawn from a variety of people.	It is time consuming.
It offers the ability to probe for underlying feelings and/or beliefs (richness of data).	Important issues can be overlooked.
There is no preconceived set of questions; participants can bring in new issues.	Requires a great level of skilfulness.

Source: Choy (2014:101)

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[20] For a broader discussion on the role and nature of qualitative studies in the fluid South African context, both in the realm of case studies or broader casing, see Liebenberg (2008:52ff, 56ff, 63ff, 66ff, 71ff).

The discipline of education is broad. Although one would wish to read all available material on any particular topic, this would not be possible. The inclusion of statistics, newspaper articles, and national and international reports was necessary to glean a composite look at popular opinions and debates (and the broader discourse) in the educational arena.

Since the issue of quality in education is a hotly contested and evolving topic, materials for investigating it are widely available. The inclusion and analysis of education policy documents in Chapters 5 are meant to indicate the initial policy goals and intentions of the post-apartheid government. They were also utilised to discuss the transformation agenda that South Africa underwent as a country, which spilled over into all facets of the country, including the education system. Policy enactments and non-enactments in this sphere have also affected the situation practically, as policy documents did not always address the real challenges that were experienced practically at the time in the classroom and in society. This information was approached through an extensive literature exploration.

The study also followed an explanatory-deductive research approach (which is usually associated with a quantitative approach). This is because no theory was generated, but rather that deductions were made from preselected and published literature and education reports by scholars of education, sociology, public administration, and other disciplines. The start of the research project involved immersion in trustworthy, reliable, and readily available literature such as academic articles, books, chapters in books, official reports, and newspapers (the latter were used where applicable, especially for illustrative purposes) on the state of education in South Africa.

4.5   THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problems in the provision of quality education are well documented (Spaull, 2012, 2013, 2015; Van der Berg, 2008; Taylor *et al.*, 2008; Chisholm *et al.* 1999; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Spaull & Jansen, 2019). The genesis of challenges in the provision of quality education is evident from the apartheid era, where different racial groups were assigned different types of education (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion). The funding models, barriers, and spatial dimensions all ensured a huge divide and deficit that can now clearly be differentiated as two different education

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systems in the South African educational landscape. The effects are still evident almost 30 years after the demise of apartheid despite a huge differential in school funding allocations and the establishment of the national school quintile system.

Since the end of apartheid, mismanagement, teacher shortages, a lack of multilingual teachers, and ineffective teacher education, coupled with a myriad of other problems, have seen these inequalities perpetuated rather than mitigated (NPC, 2011). Policy inadequacies exist, especially in terms of the language policy in schools, as well as the management of schools. This, along with huge educational backlogs and learning deficits spanning centuries, have ensured that the cycles of ineffective learning continue in the South African educational landscape.

Although many studies have discussed these issues separately, this study hopes to fill the gap in the literature by answering the question of what constitutes quality education and what prevents the transfer of such quality to all South African learners, by focusing on policy inadequacies. The consulted literature seems to offer differing views in terms of what constitutes quality education. Moreover, the literature seems to provide more discussions of what should be present rather than what is absent. By contrast, this study, through using the lens of the UNESCO (2005) definition, attempted to define what constitutes quality education. The study also utilised UNESCO's (2005) definition to identify the barriers to the provision of quality education in South African schools; taking into account the country's unique history and subsequent change to democratic rule in 1994. What the literature does agree on is that education is the main vehicle through which social mobility, poverty, and inequality levels can be addressed. Additionally, education can be used to lower intergenerational poverty. This outlines the importance of the provision of quality education, as well as the importance of this study, through the lens of the UNESCO (2005) definition. This study hopes to contribute to the existing body of literature by providing pointers or recommendations in the policy environment to aid in the ideal of quality education provision for all learners in South African schools; irrespective of race, geographical area, or socio-economic position.

4.6   RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design can be defined as

> a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research question and the execution or implementation of the research. It should spell out systematically, not necessarily sequentially, as in the case with qualitative research, how the research will be executed to answer the research question (Durrheim, 2006:34).

For the purposes of answering the three research questions of this study, a hybrid approach was followed, which was rooted in a multiple case study design. A case study is defined by Yin (2014:16-17) as an "empirical enquiry investigating a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident". According to Babbie (2004:293; 2013:339), defining what a case study is, is not generally agreed upon, and can refer to a period of time rather than a group of people. The main characteristic of the case study is the limitation of attention on the "particular instance of something" (Babbie, 2013:339).

One criticism levelled by Babbie (2013:340) against the case study approach is that it offers limited generalisability of the findings of one single case when discussing a phenomenon. This risk, Babbie (2013:340) argues, is greatly reduced if comparative case study research is employed. (The latter is sometimes referred to in qualitative research as broader casing.) Although this study is not primarily comparative in nature, certain comparative elements are found in Chapter 3, where local and international literacy and numeracy tests/surveys are discussed, and, where relevant, South Africa's results are tabulated or compared in relation to other countries that also participated in these tests. These results, in combination with relevant education policies, are utilised to determine the challenges that hinder the provision of quality education in South African schools from a public policy perspective.

Because quality education as outlined by UNESCO (2005) has various influences, and given the vast history and uniqueness of South African society according to its inequality rates and outcomes, particularly in educational outcomes, this study employed a multiple case study design.

Addressing educational quality in South African schools is highly problematic. Scholarly work by Van der Berg (2000), Spaull (2013; 2015), and Fleisch (2008), as well as reports released by the DBE and other governmental bodies, indicates that education systems in South Africa are essentially split into two: dysfunctional and functional; irrespective of the split in calculations. The larger part of the split (dysfunctional) comprises the poorer schools. On account of the socio-economic profile of the surrounding communities of these schools and the racial links that are evident (see Chapters 2 and 3), the focus of this study was mostly on schools found in Quintiles 1 to 3. These are no-fee schools and their total reliance on government funding for survival escalates their need for educational quality.

Given the fact that educational quality and policy issues are complex and influenced by a variety of international and national factors, it is impossible to discuss policy issues in education in isolation; no matter the approach followed. Many elements are at play in determining whether education policy is effective or ineffective. As discussed in Chapter 2, it is even challenging to define educational quality itself.

Following many years of apartheid, the complexity of policymaking in South Africa cannot be effectively attributed to single causes. This multiple case study design was therefore divided into three cases,[21] covering the most prominent and critical issues in educational quality and policy enactments, as well as the complexities of the specific period of 1994 to 2018. Three distinct cases are focused on:

- Case 1: The Mandela administration (1994-1998);
- Case 2: The Mbeki administration (1999-2008); and
- Case 3: The Zuma administration (2009-2018).

The approach taken by this study is partly inductive, as the focus was on the analysis of available literature, governmental and private organisational reports, and the research and findings of prominent and respected education researchers. In the discussion and analysis, care was taken to ensure internal validity and reliability and triangulation through the inclusion of studies from reputable national research bodies

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[21] There has been to date five presidents since the dawn of democracy in South Africa. However, the time span of this dissertation is restricted from 1994 to 2018. In this period, there was one other president, Kgalema Motlanthe, who served for only one year from 28 September 2008 to 9 May 2009 as a transitionary leader; the choice was therefore made to not include changes under the administration of President Motlanthe.

and experts in the field of education research. These national studies, unlike this study, did not all follow a single-method approach; yet, they have been broadly accepted as authoritative. In this study, original datasets, as far as possible, were consulted in conjunction with studies by international and nationally reputable scholars and think tanks. This is a method of triangulation, which employs the use of various types of data, methodologies, theories, and thematic discourses that are supposed to lead to improved validity in a study. Berg (2009:6) notes that there are a multitude of lines of action that are followed to ensure effective triangulation. These lines of action are illustrated in Figure 4.2.
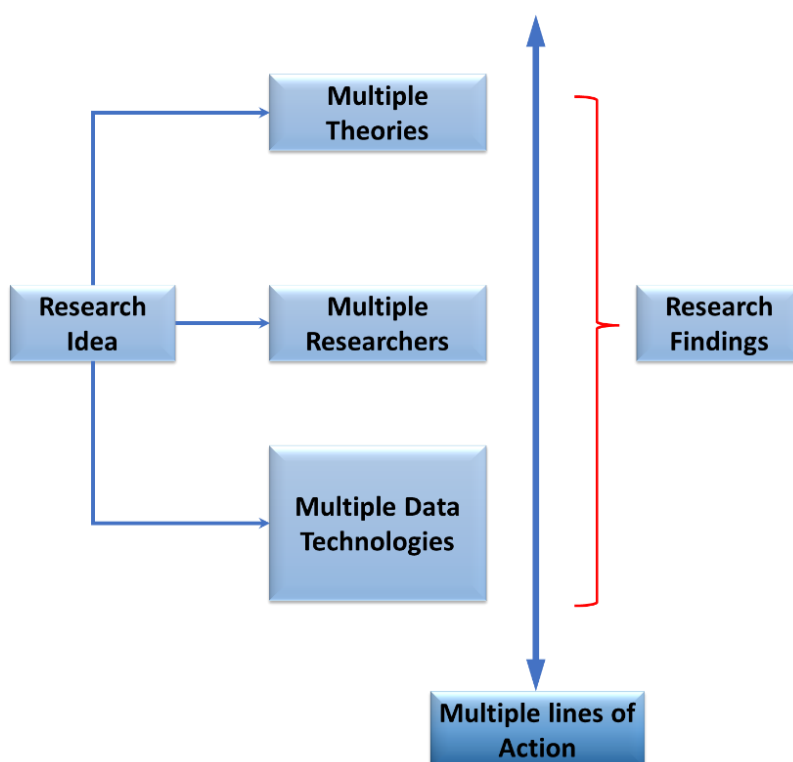

Figure 4.2: Multiple lines of action in triangulation
Source Berg (2009:6)

With the study of education being very broad, there are various authoritative sources that are quoted on various levels, especially by education researchers and governmental reports. This was the starting point for the selection of reading sources. The broad literature study approach also required the researcher to read about disciplines that were not necessarily the researcher's area of specialty, such as economics and sociology, which is the cornerstone for triangulation. Triangulation is defined by Kelly (2006:287) as an approach where material is collected from diverse

sources and in various different ways to better understand a certain phenomenon from different layers and angles. In this study, this did not necessarily involve the use of various methods interchangeably by the researcher, but rather blending the works of experts in education and various other related fields to best describe possible effects on the provision of quality education in South African schools.

The studies mentioned above employed mixed-methods approaches and are generally regarded as authoritative through their reference and use in subsequent studies. According to Berg (2009:6-7), triangulation does not necessarily involve the combination of different sets of data, but rather an attempt to interrelate these multiple theories and technologies in order to identify and counteract threats to validity.

4.7   METHOD OF ANALYSIS: DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

Given the broad field of education, the point of departure for this study was broadened and led to a more purposeful investigation of the South African educational context and landscape. The study utilised an extensive list of documentary sources, such as official reports, legal and policy documents, books, and newspapers that were relevant to this study. In some instances, these documents were used to indicate intent, purpose, or variances in approaches or policies, especially of various education departments.

Documentary analysis was employed as a method to analyse the secondary data consulted for this study. Bowen (2009:32) points out that documentary analysis is a technique or process that involves a combination of content- and thematic-analysis techniques. Various cautions also exist in the selection of documents for inclusion in one's study, such as suitability, quality, and comprehensiveness if the aim is to "evaluate documents in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced and understanding is developed" (Bowen, 2009:33-34). According to Kelly (2006:316), "documentary material can be even more extensive than interview transcripts and field notes, and requires very careful management". Kelly (2006:316) further states that the use of documentary material may in certain instances be preferred to conducting interviews or participant observation. Ahmed (2010:2) adds that document analysis may even be more cost effective than "social surveys, in-depth interview[s] or participant observation".

Although the Internet enables access to documentary material, it does not mean that all information is easily attainable or even relevant. Competent researchers must immerse themselves in past and current context-related literature on various levels (such as in the case of historical studies that require hours of archival searches). Ahmed (2010:2) states that documents are important sources of information and opines that the use of documents must be aligned with a theoretical frame of reference. In addition, Bryman (2016:420-421) asserts that the search for and use of documents for a research process can be a protracted process that requires great levels of interpretive skills to confirm the true meanings of the documents.

All approaches have advantages and disadvantages – no approach is an absolute fit. Documentary analysis is no different, as summarised by Ahmed (2010:8-10). A classic example of documentary (or secondary) analysis is found in the literature review (or the review of scholarly literature, as it is sometimes referred to) of all studies, which often leads to new insights into a particular phenomenon. Secondary sources are often used only to substantiate information collected through surveys, for instance. The absence of the inclusion of documentary analysis in research methodology textbooks has meant subsequent bias towards the method, although it requires "rigorous adherence to research ethics" (Ahmed, 2010:11).

The disadvantages of this approach stem from the particular purpose of data collection. It is often stated that documents cited for a research project were produced for other purposes than research purposes or a particular academic investigation. There are also biases in the selection of only some parts of documents, on the grounds that data might be used out of their original or intended context. Bryman (2012:315) adds that secondary analysis of data can mean that there is a lack of familiarity with the data, which may be unduly time consuming. Data may also be of a far higher quality and far more complex than if it were collected by the researcher her-/himself. What Ahmed (2010:11) argues for here is the inclusion of a research method that, when utilised in pure form, may add richness to any study, and like all other research methods may be held to the highest form of research ethics.

The inclusion of authoritative documents in this study was meant to present contemporary views that have added much value and assisted in the rich data available to undertake a substantial task. In Chapter 3, where tests results were

discussed, the researcher not only made use of the discussions of authoritative sources or expert views, but an analysis of the original tests was also undertaken, with the main consideration being to add new detailed insights into the problem of quality in education; a problem which in itself is difficult to define. No research approach is without flaws; hence the importance of strict adherence to the code of research ethics that is applicable to all researchers – this study included.

The use of any method, especially the use of a documentary analysis method, cannot proceed without some sort of systematic selection of documents. It requires a wider selection of documents, but also focused reading to draw succinct conclusions.

4.8   QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: ENSURING TRUSTWORTHINESS AND RIGOR

It is imperative for any researcher to decide on suitable documents as "reliable sources of evidence" (Ahmed, 2010:3). Given that the qualitative research method employs no hypothesis testing or measurement, concepts such as reliability and validity lose their meaning in these types of studies. However, the nature of qualitative research requires that the researcher be self-critical. Ultimately, the quality of the project is determined by the researcher's skill and "sensitivity" (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013:236).

With qualitative research, one must evaluate or ensure the quality of such projects through trustworthiness, which is evaluated through credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability (Bless *et al.*, 2013:236). In this context, with the selection of articles and reports, a useful tool is the citation index as found on Google Scholar, as well as immersion in texts and reports that are not always mainstream but are widely referenced.

Babbie (2013:408-409) points out that credibility is used by some qualitative researchers in place of validity in quantitative research methods, and quantitative reliability is "replaced" with dependability. While credibility refers to whether findings are indeed a true reflection of a study, dependability is confirmed once the researcher indicates that all steps were completed thoughtfully and carefully (Bless *et al.*, 2013:236-239). For the purposes of this study, careful consideration and care were employed to ensure that the findings of the study would be indicative of the reality of what is in fact occurring in the South African education landscape. Studies that are widely quoted in education and related research were selected based on their authority

in discussions and their ability to provide answers to the research questions that were formulated for this study.

Drawing from the work of Scott (1990), Ahmed (2010:3-4) and Bryman (2016:421) devised the following quality criteria checklist to evaluate relevant sources:

- Authenticity: The originality and relevance of the research results;
- Credibility: The validity of the results;
- Representativeness: The representativeness of the research findings in relation to its discipline; if not, whether it is substantiated; and
- Meaning: The replicability of the research findings.

Berg (2009:8) adds that triangulation also improves the "depth of understanding" by employing various design strategies and theories.

The documents used in this study were evaluated and then carefully selected based on the criteria checklist above. Where possible, newspapers were also used to indicate public sentiment at the time, especially concerning the standard of education and the Grade 12 results not being a true reflection of learners' "actual" performance.

4.9   CONCLUSION

The starting point for this study was to position it within the broad framework of what constitutes quality education in the international community, and to further delineate it according to what is available in the South African educational landscape. Following a qualitative research strategy that employed a more deductive approach, it was not a cumbersome process to determine that there are indeed problems in the South African education system.

The aim of this chapter was to explain and justify the research design and approach followed by the study.

The following chapter focuses on policy conceptualisation in South African education post 1994, as well as complexities associated with public participation in this particular society and context.

CHAPTER 5:

POLICY CONCEPTUALISATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION: A THEORETICAL EXPLORATION

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mine worker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.

Nelson Mandela

5.1   INTRODUCTION

Policy for education, particularly in terms of a quality education, is essential. It is considered a driving force for the national goals of an education system and outlines where considerable effort needs to be focused in order to achieve educational goals. Policy intervention, according to UNESCO (2005), is also one of the driving forces of educational change in any education system.

It was mentioned in Chapter 1 that the ideology of the ruling party influences policy adaptation in any country. South Africa is no exception. Maile (2008:1) asserts that the apartheid ideology greatly influenced policy frameworks and processes before 1994 and was also the main vehicle through which change was enacted and segregation enforced. However, after 1994, with the ushering in of a new constitution, and given the past character of society, things changed. For example, Chapter 195 of the Constitution places an obligation on the state to include the public in its policymaking and implementation processes. Policies need to be drafted in a more collaborative ethos, which is an important constitutional imperative, as indicated earlier (see Roefs & Liebenberg, 1999; Houston, Mpanyane & Liebenberg, 1999; Houston, Liebenberg & Dichaba, 2001).

As stated in Chapter 2, South Africa offers a unique case study due to its historically entrenched racial and other differences. A large, multilingual, and unequal society divided by race and class exists (for more background on this, consult Liebenberg, 1993, and Zegeye, Liebenberg & Houston, 2000). With their low levels of education and skills, and being excluded from the labour market, a large proportion of South African society is also subjected to a cycle of intergenerational poverty.

The preliminary analysis (see Chapter 2) also indicates various systemic inefficiencies and a large deficit in providing even some of the most basic educational resources required for quality education. Teachers, as central figures in educational quality and change, are often ineffectively equipped and, in some cases, not competent to teach at expected levels. With these major deficits in mind, this chapter elucidates on post-apartheid South African policy processes and illuminates the intended and unintended effects of policies in the South African context.

This chapter divides policy issues according to major different administrations to show the link between party ideology and policy issues, synthesising the policy life cycle as outlined by Parsons (1995), and using UNESCO's (2005) framework for quality education. There is also an important emphasis on the context of the study and the context in which policy is undertaken in South Africa. The focus of this chapter is on policy coherence and participation in policy processes during the period 1994 to 2018, as delineated by the aim of this study. UNESCO's (2005) framework, as discussed in Chapter 2, mentions all the factors that influence quality education. These include, among others, learner characteristics, enabling inputs, teaching and learning, outcomes, and context, as all these factors can significantly affect educational quality.

The rationale for division in terms of administrations is that emphasis was placed on different matters during the different administrations. This was necessitated by various changes in international and national developments, as well as the beliefs/ideology of the party leader and party members at the time. During Nelson Mandela's administration, the emphasis was on human rights, democracy, and solidarity; Thabo Mbeki's administration focused on African Renaissance and wealth creation; and Jacob Zuma's administration focused on security, wealth creation, and development.

5.2   THE NATURE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Participation in a constitutional democracy is essentially what the negotiated settlement between the apartheid government and the post-apartheid government signified or intended. According to Albertyn (2019:753-754), the 1996 Constitution envisions a society of "…political solidarity, inclusive economic growth and substantive equality".

Houston *et al.* (2001), Roefs and Liebenberg (1999), and Houston *et al.* (1999), at an early stage following transition to democratic rule, pointed out the need for synergy between the new Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and the constitutional obligations of the government under the Constitution, or social imperatives that included the educational realm and a well-planned policy process underpinned by public and citizen participation. Callahan (2007:1179-1181) points out that one of the most contested concepts in political science and public administration is the degree of direct or indirect public participation, and which one works best in a democracy.

Public participation is defined by the South African Parliament (2013:7) as

> the process by which Parliament and provincial legislatures consult with the people and interested or affected individuals, organisations and government entities before making a decision. Public participation is a two-way communication and collaborative problem solving mechanism with the goal of achieving representative and more acceptable decisions. Other terms sometimes used are 'public involvement', 'community involvement' or 'stakeholder involvement'.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the ANC-led post-apartheid government has created, in principle, various formal structures for participation by local communities. Public participation in legislative processes in South Africa is formalised, firstly, by lobbying of organised groups such as trade unions to targeted decision makers. Secondly, members of the public can directly approach their elected representatives' offices. Thirdly, members of society may draft petitions and, lastly, public hearings may be attended (Houston *et al.*, 2001:148). Despite these established structures, invitations to public hearings are often sent out at short notice; thus giving the public insufficient time to prepare inputs relating to matters that affect their lives (South African Parliament, 2013:36). Callahan (2007:1191) argues that research on public hearings consistently shows that they do little to "facilitate communication and build trust", and mostly only serve to inform the public of impending changes.

According to the Presidency (2014:26-27), the post-apartheid government created various platforms for public/citizen participation in governance processes, such as consultative forums and grievance mechanisms. However, a key challenge the report highlights is that these formal structures are not dynamic structures that elicit meaningful public engagements. Mkhize (2015:191) also argues that there is a lack of "open spaces for participation", and the unmet expectations of poor, marginalised

communities in South Africa, in particular in terms of poor service delivery and low levels of mobility, have led to widespread protests and resistance movements.

The Presidency (2014:27) posits that effort should be made to improve accountability mechanisms that manage deliverables/actions/expectations resulting from routine day-to-day interactions between citizens and the state. This could possibly curtail citizens' response to express their dissatisfaction by means of protests, which in South Africa can sometimes be very violent and destructive.

In a similar vein, Mkhize (2015:193) notes that systematic problems relating to consultation and participation around policy choices in national, provincial, and local spheres of government have led to widespread protests. The ruling party (ANC) does not critically engage with citizens, including its own Tripartite Alliance (TA) partners. The Presidency (2014:26-27) attributes the increased number of protests to the frustration of poor communities with local government over a range of concerns related to access to and quality of basic services and the perceived "non-responsiveness of local government". In this regard, Reddy (2016:1) highlights the importance of the local sphere of government at the grassroots level as the closest to the constituents for meeting their basic needs.

The South African Parliament (2013:31) adopted the following core values that were drawn and adapted from various international bodies and literature on participation for the South African context:

- Those affected by a decision have the right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- It is promised that the public's contribution will influence the decision(s).
- Sustainable decisions are promoted by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- The involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision is sought and facilitated.
- Input from participants in designing how they participate is sought.
- Participants are provided with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- It is communicated to participants how their input affects a decision.
- All relevant perspectives are included.

The South African parliament's public participation model is illustrated in Figure 5.1.
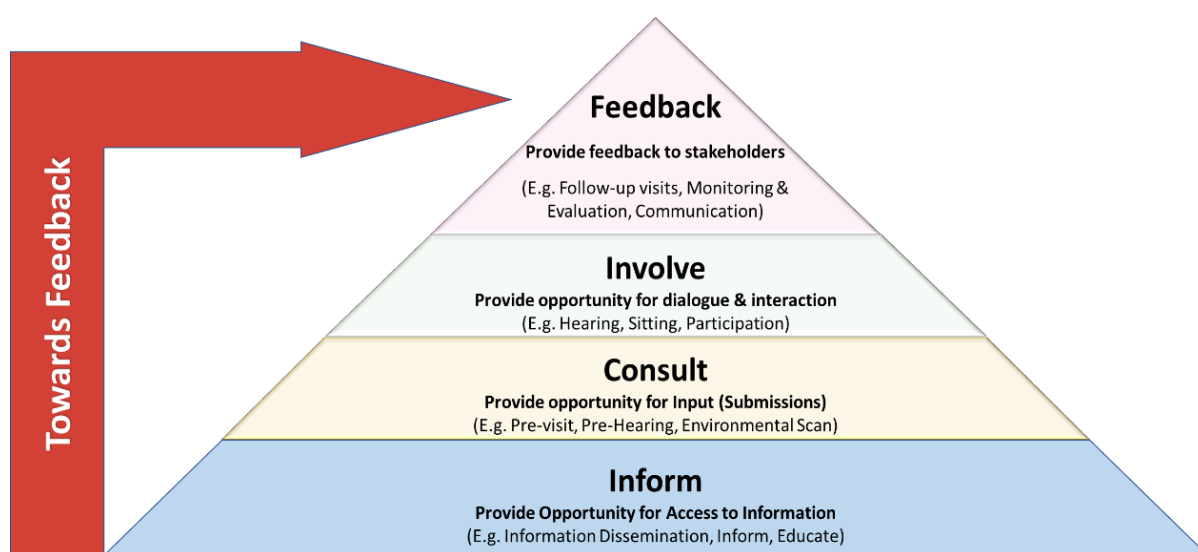

Figure 5.1: The South African parliament's public participation model
Source: South African Parliament (2019)

The model offers a layered approach to feedback and participation. According to this model, the public is informed, consulted, and involved by various streams to garner feedback. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, public participation from the onset of democracy has been fraught with many limitations and confusions regarding what constitutes participation in complex policy choices. Jansen (1999; 2002) highlights the complexity after apartheid with the tensions in society and the absence of capital at the time to engage in meaningful discussions on transformative curriculum reform.

According to the National Policy Framework for Public Participation (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2007:21), the struggle against apartheid led to a "passive recipient" mindset, with citizens being dependent on the government for their development, instead of the government supporting the citizens in their own development. The post-apartheid era saw the emergence of project-based community participation, but the Department of Provincial and Local Government (2007) states that this mindset continued, with the government acting as a gatekeeper instead of facilitating the emergence of community-controlled resource allocations. It further states that there is now a greater move to a partnership and negotiated development phase, where the government hopes to assist societies in recognising their rights and responsibilities for their own upliftment. Research by Houston *et al.* (2001:197-199) indicates generally low levels of participation in the political processes in South Africa,

with equally low levels of non-participation and inaction on the part of South African citizens; very little to limited knowledge on the part of citizens on the political mechanisms available, as well as the functions thereof; and a large majority of participants having no intention of participating in any of these activities. A larger cohort also believes that their participation has no influence on provincial or national governmental decisions. The Presidency (2014:27) states that a key stumbling block to participatory democracy is the fact that the processes are often organised as isolated events without proper feedback loops. Another stumbling block is the outsourcing of consultants for these events, and questions raised about the credibility of these consultants. Furthermore, there is a growing perception among community members that the state does not always take these structures seriously. In the poorest of communities, as highlighted by the Presidency (2014), "limited resources, social inequality and prevailing power relations can present obstacles to meaningful citizen engagement". Mulaudzi and Liebenberg (2017:40) therefore suggest that the NDP should assist in creating a favourable climate for participation.

Given all the abovementioned reasons offered by different authors, it is important that this discussion starts from the onset of democracy. It is apparent that the reasons for the state of public participation is as complex as society itself. It is therefore crucial to use the appropriate lens through which to objectively observe the search for quality education as a constitutional imperative and as a policy prescript. It is clear that a myriad of challenges exist regarding the provision of quality education in the South African schooling system. These relate to a lack of well-qualified teachers, poorly resourced schools, management challenges, and policy inconsistencies at various levels, even nationally. These challenges were outlined in previous chapters. The social ills faced by the poorest of South Africa lead them to a situation of prolonged exclusion from quality education and remedial situations to improve their futures. The task of fixing the education system in South Africa to ensure quality in schools, although challenging, is not necessarily unattainable.

5.3   NELSON MANDELA'S ADMINISTRATION: 1994-1999

No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

Nelson Mandela

During the Mandela administration, and after the first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa had just re-entered the international community after many years of being a pariah state[22]. Klotz (1995:83) argues that the transition of South Africa to majority rule is an example of many complex international pressures for reform, sparked by the large global rights movement. Because of a protracted liberation struggle, more emphasis, as per the Constitution (RSA, 1996c:4), was placed on transformation from a discriminatory environment to a participatory, democratic environment that is rooted in equality, healing of past injustices, and improving the quality of life for all citizens. The ANC Freedom Charter and subsequent post-1994 policy are rooted in social justice, distribution of wealth, and a reduction in inequality in a democratic space in South Africa. The ANC Constitutional Guidelines released in 1988 on the eve of a drawn-out negotiated transfer of power from minority rule to a constitutional democracy also highlighted issues of justice, equality, non-racialism, fair and inclusive policies, and the need to address major challenges in education, youth empowerment, and other areas in terms of a future constitutional order (Liebenberg, 1988). The implications of the Constitutional Guidelines, if woven into a negotiated outcome, implied the close link between political leadership, visionary leadership, and future citizen participation in the policymaking praxis; in short, the mutual synergies of people, the government, and human agency as defined by the sociologist Anthony Giddens (Liebenberg, 1988).

At the onset of President Mandela's term, there was a strong government focus on healing the division of the past, but due to a negotiated state of democratic transition, there was also a great deal of politics of compromise. As Jansen (2006:6) aptly states, the democracy was not due to regime overthrow or regime substitution, but rather the "transplacement" of power from the one group to another through negotiation.

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[22] A pariah state is normally considered an international outcast. As Klotz (1995:75) points out, South Africa's pariah status was because South African racial repression "appeared more extraordinary than other governments' similar militarization, bureaucratic control and use of torture".

The negotiation process was fraught with many tensions. Protracted violence with the real possibility of a "full-scale civil war" caused negotiators to manage their conflicts and find common ground, amid apartheid tensions (The Presidency, 2014:9). The negotiated settlement was also fraught with tensions, particularly in the line between national and provincial departments. Although the national departments would set the initial policy direction, the implementation of such policy would be the responsibility of the provincial authority (Jansen, 2002:209). This self-imposed line of authority of national and provincial government is a great source of contestation between governments, even today (Ramokgadi, 2021).

The constitutional right (RSA, 1996c:14) of learners to receive education in their language of choice in any public educational institution where practically and reasonably possible has been problematic since the onset of democracy in 1994. This is one example of policy inconsistency and incoherence. In practice, the government wishes to provide people all the rights they did not previously have due to past discriminatory laws and practices of the apartheid era. Noting the symbolic practices of policymaking after apartheid, Jansen (2002:202) reflects that "sophisticated policy documents continue to make no or little reference to the modalities of implementation".

According to Sayed (2008:162), apartheid education resulted in an education system that is racially, regionally, and gender unequal, and characterised by a general lack of a culture of "learning and teaching in many black schools". This, with the 17 fragmented education systems created under apartheid with their unequal funding disparities, the post-apartheid government attempted to usher in democratic education.

In economic development and growth, which was a cardinal goal in post-apartheid South Africa, education, health, and economic policies are interrelated (Todaro & Smith, 2009). The government hoped for a more robust and competitive economy. The more productive a country, the greater the wealth it can create; the greater the wealth it can create, the better the living standards of its citizens. Moreover, the higher the productivity, the greater the returns on investment, especially in terms of infrastructure, and education and skills development that will in turn lead to greater economic growth. Also, the higher a country's economic growth, the more stable and resilient the economy will be in the face of uncertainty.

Initially, the institution of the RDP was welcomed by all political parties as it emphasised growth, redistribution, and, most importantly, nation-building within the ambit of development and growth. There was also a high degree of centralised state intervention (Maile, 2008:164-165). According to Davies (2021:56), a central argument of the RDP was that although economic development was desirable, "questions of sustainability and distributions of benefits were also critical". Furthermore, Davies (2021:56) mentions the heavy influence of neo-liberalism in the economic policy framework. Moreover, the RDP had enormous symbolic importance, as did the consensus it created after decades of apartheid (Jansen, 1999; Terreblanche, 1999:1). There was also an expectation that, given South Africa's great material wealth and how it achieved its political freedom, it would play a more active role on the African continent. This expectation was shared by both the international community and South Africa (ANC) (Solomon, 2010:132). The use of South African National Defence Force (SANDF) deployments in Africa led to the ongoing "guns versus butter" debate[23]. While these deployments are important for stability in Africa, critics argue that it would take money away from South Africa's own social development. Additionally, the foreign policy and the Defence Review of 1998 did not take into account the extended roles and responsibilities the SANDF would face; not only with the existing equipment and human capital, but also a shrinking budget since the money was needed for social development (South African Government, 1998a).

In order to address apartheid deficits for black South Africans, the government instituted a BEE policy that would allow for the upliftment of all non-white citizens to redress past imbalances. The affirmative action policies helped to facilitate job creation for a small portion of black Africans or "insiders", as termed by Terreblanche (1999:3), and had little effect on the approximate 60% African outsiders, which perpetuates inequality within the race group. According to Mosala, Venter and Bain (2017:336-337), the ANC ideology in its Freedom Charter and the National Democratic Revolution proposes racial, economic, and other transformation of society and the adoption of certain policies, which is in direct conflict with its macro-economic policies that are more neo-liberal in character. Furthermore, the BEE policy and other redress

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[23] See analysis by Williams (2002, in Williams, Cawthra & Abrahams, 2002). The guns versus butter debate is still ongoing, with all the deepening societal problems in South Africa.

legislation did not benefit the vast majority of non-whites as they only furthered the interest of and benefitted a small number of national elites (Terreblanche, 1999).

The RDP helped to democratise the state and placed nearly all the political power of the country into "black hands", except for the Western Cape (Terreblanche, 1999:3). Mosala *et al.* (2017:338) add that the status of all the ANC macro-economic policies, from the RDP to the NDP, indicates a party and state micro-economic policy that has a neo-liberal character. This is in stark contrast with the developmental state that the ANC proposes.

5.4   THABO MBEKI'S ADMINISTRATION: 1999-2008

When will the day come that our dignity will be fully restored, when the purpose of our lives will no longer be merely to survive until the sun rises tomorrow!

Thabo Mbeki

Prior to Thabo Mbeki's assumption of office in 1999, he was deputy president to Nelson Mandela. During this period, the Presidential Review Commission in 1998 recommended that the President's Office was "inadequately structured and resourced" (South African Government, 1998b). In addition, the Presidential Review Commission called for the office to be the core office for the coordination of governance (Jacobs, 2002:32). With respect to policymaking, centralising power to the Office of the Presidency left much to be desired within the ANC party lines (Jacobs, 2002) since it undermined democracy and the innate value of provincial departments in policy implementation. Moreover, it offered no avenue for meaningful engagement with the public.

Firstly, the critics saw Mbeki's presidency as "elitist" (Mathekga, 2007:132). Secondly, the abandonment of the RDP and its replacement with the GEAR framework, with little to no public consultation, was unsatisfactory (Mulaudzi & Liebenberg, 2017). Such actions led to a rift between the Mbeki administration, the ANC, and the TA partners (Mathekga, 2007:143; Mkhize, 2015). According to Terreblanche (1999:7), the abovementioned actions were taken without consultation within the ANC, and some of the members within the ANC's top brass only saw the contents of the GEAR document at its public release.

In its policy document, the GEAR envisioned the following:

- A competitive, fast-growing economy that creates sufficient jobs for all work seekers;
- A redistribution of income and opportunities in favour of the poor;
- A society in which sound health, education, and services are available to all; and
- An environment in which homes are secure and places of work are productive (South African Government, 1996:1).

Maile (2008:166-167) reveals that the GEAR resulted in decreased education subsidies through strict "fiscal discipline" and limited state intervention. Despite the calls for "free education", the poor did not have the ability to attend better-resourced schools with their limited income. This inevitably led to inequality. In this regard, Terreblanche (1999:5) argues that the ANC did not make the required hard choices on the institutionalisation of the RDP's priorities and had to concede that it did not have the manpower or the state capacity to implement the RDP – a similar fate that was to befall the NDP implemented under former president Zuma's government.

Characterised by the rapid implementation of market-friendly policies, Mbeki's leadership style was generally perceived as "centrist, non-responsive, technocratic and illiberal" (Mathekga, 2007:131-132). It was also during Mbeki's term that protest action became commonplace as part of the political space (Reddy, 2016:3). According to Mathekga (2007:145), the key characteristics of Mbeki's two terms were the weakening of ANC structures, rising populism, circumventing the TA, and creating tensions within the party by favouritism-related appointments. Furthermore, the perceived ideological shift to a developmental state, with the selection of rapid market reform and economic policy that inadvertently exacerbated poverty and excluded most of the poor, alongside rising employment levels, seemed inconsistent.

The Mbeki administration recognised certain failures during his term of office. These include, among others:

- a weakening value system;
- increased inequalities;
- high youth unemployment;

- poor quality of social services; and
- economic exclusion.

These remained the fundamental challenges that the Zuma administration had to face and contend with (Maserumle, 2010:28).

5.5   JACOB ZUMA'S ADMINISTRATION: 2008-2018

We want to eradicate all mud schools. We are already doing so. We are not in a hurry because no one is going to rule but the ANC.

Jacob Zuma

Jacob Zuma's move to power was believed to have paved the way for corruption. Kondlo (2010:1) illuminates that, from the start, the Zuma administration battled, among others, a legitimacy struggle with effective governance of the country, as well as a struggle for social distribution. Zuma signified to the poor citizens a symbol of hope and improved service delivery.

During apartheid, service delivery protests were used as a tool to express dissatisfaction and for mobilisation to target ethnic-based institutions and mobilise society (Reddy, 2016:3). Mulaudzi and Liebenberg (2017:31-32) assert that the NDP was instituted at the same time when South Africa declared itself a developmental state. Key features of a developmental state are good functioning and organised structures that can effectively lead, efficient and capable administration, and selectively but smartly intervening in the market economy. Under the NDP, three main priorities were set for 2030: (1) increasing employment rates through faster economic growth; (2) improving the quality of education, skills development, and innovation; and (3) building the capability of the state, while the state plays a developmental, transformative role on all levels of government.

During the Zuma administration, protest action increased (Reddy, 2016:3). Also, according to Maserumle (2010:16-23), the Zuma administration had to contend with ideological infighting within the TA, with the ANC cadres preferring continuity, and the TA partners preferring a fundamental shift from the neo-liberalist approach to the real pursuit of a developmental agenda. This put tremendous strain on the TA partners. The key challenge for the Zuma administration was to build strategic capacity to implement the desired changes.

After 2009, there was a perception that the Zuma administration would support the developmental agenda and usher in policies that would support development and agrarian transformation, along with the establishment of the Department for Rural Development and Land Reform (Mayende, 2010:51-67). These policy shifts, as outlined by Mayende (2010), would have had the following effects at the household level:

- *Employment* would have been created to provide suitable conditions for generating an adequate income.
- Individuals would have been able to create a *surplus* and make a profit.
- Producers would have been integrated as part of the national economy as producers of good and services, and as taxpayers.
- *Agrarian transformation* would have taken place, which would have led to development, sustainability, and reduced inequality.

After 2009, an outcomes-based system was introduced in the government to strengthen and support medium-term planning. The ministers had to sign performance agreements with the president along set targets regarding deliverables in their respective positions. Clusters and cabinet ministers were tasked with the achievement of these set targets (The Presidency, 2014:30). Speaking at a South African Local Government Association conference, President Zuma urged municipalities to reflect on certain practices that relate to poor service delivery – particularly nepotism in hiring practices, particularly at the expense of required formal qualifications and skill, as well as the hiring of consultants to (sometimes) fulfil their specific roles. He mentioned expenditure totalling over R30 million in the hiring of these consultants (*Times*, 2015, cited by Reddy, 2016:5).

Nonetheless, widespread corruption, social protests, #FeesMustFall,[24] and the now infamous State Capture Commission[25] form the foundation of what Zuma's administration is known for, despite promises made at the onset.

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[24] The #FeesMustFall movement saw the Presidency (Zuma) commit billions to free higher education that cannot be sustained in the long run, with growing inequality rates. The cost of the damage was estimated at around R1 billion during the violent protests for equality in higher education (Business Live, 2016).

[25] The Judicial Commission of Inquiry Into State Capture (2020) tried to investigate the cost of corruption and the capturing of key institutions in South Africa, with over R1 billion used just for the enquiry alone since 2018. State capture losses are estimated at over R1.5 trillion over the second

According to Rossouw (2017), the key focus, after the Zuma administration, must be on:

- rebuilding public trust;
- eliminating all forms of corruption;
- which in turn, will restore public confidence in government institutions and the government itself.

5.6 POLICY CONTESTATIONS AND ISSUES IN EDUCATION POLICY PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

As delineated in Chapter 1, policymaking in post-apartheid South Africa is a contentious terrain. From the onset, with the discussions around the institutionalisation of Curriculum 2005, and its well-known OBE, education policy was a controversial issue (Jansen, 1999).

The post-apartheid period was characterised by the enactment of a range of legislation to regulate school education, higher education, FET, as well as ECE and e-education. A key characteristic of these policies was the attempt to create a collaborative climate in all spheres of education by giving parents and caregivers rights and roles in the selection of the type of education they wish for their children to receive, although arguably in theory only. Participation and coherence of policy are extremely important, as the examples below will clearly indicate.

Quality education in South Africa is a very controversial issue. Many scholars and institutions, both domestically and internationally, acknowledge the unequal state of education in South Africa (Fleisch, 2008; Jansen, 1999, 2002; Reddy, 2006, 2016; Maile, 2008; Taylor, 2013; Van der Berg *et al.*, 2013; Van der Berg & Spaull, 2020; Spaull, 2013, 2015, 2019, 2020; Amnesty International, 2020). Solutions offered improved better school management (The Presidency, 2014:51), effective administration, the monitoring of teacher absenteeism, improved district management over schools, monitoring of curriculum coverage, teacher training, recruitment, and effective support.

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term of the Jacob Zuma administration. That is just short of the R1.8 trillion budget for 2019 (Merten, 2019).

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Increased accountability to the parent community for the performance of schools is imperative. This can be achieved by improving the parents' ability to hold schools accountable through SGBs (The Presidency, 2014:51). Yet, the Presidency (2014) fails to indicate the support needed to assist parents with how to be more active in these bodies, especially in poorer communities. Additionally, the societal characteristics of poorer communities require that parents are taught or made more aware of how best to support their children. SGBs should also be modelled on how effective and functioning schools operate, which does not necessarily require that these schools receive more funding.

On the one hand, the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995) made reference to commitment to the process of participation in curriculum development. On the other hand, the ANC's (1994:136) policy framework for education and training states that "the present curriculum is effectively controlled from within a small locus and with hidden processes of decision making despite the rhetoric of decentralisation". The lacking commonality in the proposals made by these two documents illuminates how they contradict each other. The latter is in direct contrast to the broad statement of other ANC documents, such as the ANC's (1992) document on policy (discussed in Chapter 1), which indicated that there would be a broad-based consultation in policy choices.

The White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995) held that education and training is a basic human right and that all citizens should have access to quality education. UNICEF (2000), as stated in Chapter 2, outlines various distinguishing features of quality education. UNESCO (2005:35-37) highlights five dimensions that influence quality in schools, namely learner characteristics, enabling inputs, teaching and learning, outcomes, and the context, which includes support. Evidently, education is a very complex environment and requires a great deal of concerted effort.

After 1994, curriculum development was intended to perform a multitude of roles, such as to unify a country and its constituents that have a deep, racially divided past, to offer quality education and equal education opportunities to a changed and diverse population, and to ensure a product (human resources) that is globally competent and competitive, among others.

In Chapter 1 it was noted that Jansen (1999) characterised the education policy in South Africa shortly after apartheid as marred with the following issues: participation without incorporation, little feedback or ongoing participation sought, and asymmetric inputs in terms of quality added to reports. Moreover, Jansen (1999) mentions belated participation and, perhaps worse, ex-post facto consultation, where participation and consultation are sometimes confused, as it is used to simply seek approval for final plans that are not modified based on consultative inputs received.

A lack of foresight and planning in terms of policy adoption should also be mentioned. The introduction of OBE in 1999 in classrooms across South Africa excluded teachers from the process and policy adaptation. Teachers' involvement in educational change is essential. According to Carl (2002:172), the successful implementation of a new curriculum depends on the extent to which all stakeholders are informed and have been prepared for the envisaged change, and whether they are also prepared to associate themselves with it. In a similar fashion, Fullan (1991) found that the level of teacher involvement in educational change is important to achieve education reform. Fullan (1991) further argues that teachers, as change agents, ultimately determine the success of the reform. In this regard, Garet, Desimone, Birman and Yoon (2001) argue that actively engaging teachers in meaningful discussions, planning, and practice, particularly how new curriculum materials and teaching methods will be used in the classroom, provides the opportunity to link initiatives of curriculum development with the teaching contexts in which teachers work.

In the South African context, Jansen (1999:146-147) argued as far back as 1999 that OBE would fail, by stating that, among other reasons, "the policy is driven in the first instance by political imperatives which have little to do with the realities of classroom life". Jansen (1999:146-147) further argued that the OBE documents did little to include the reality of the effects of the apartheid system in the quality of the teaching personnel to adequately bring about change in classrooms. Hofmeyr and Hall (1995) suggest that workshops provided inadequate support to these teachers with their ineffective educational background as relics of the apartheid system. To add, William Spady, the founding father of OBE himself, forewarned that OBE would not work in South Africa, with its sheer deprivation of resources and inherited inequalities (Jansen & Christie, 1999:11).

The subsequent 1996 policy of rationalisation and redeployment of teachers from white, better-resourced, urban schools to black, rural, and under-resourced schools was another ill-conceived policy. Teachers did not move from their better-resourced schools; in fact, poorer schools had to employ new teachers (Chisholm, 2004:7). Jansen (2002) questions the modalities of policy research in South Africa, with the inherited hierarchical knowledge sectors dominating it and their background not conductive to the interest of the ordinary citizen. This emphasises the importance of the role that those that will be affected by a policy need to play in the policy process, as they would ultimately be the people most affected by the policy implementation.

Although post-1994 educational legislation created the policy framework for the full integration of public schooling, social, economic, and demographic barriers limit the possibilities for full integration. For example, school fees in most of the former white schools are prohibitive for most black parents. The policy on school funding, the Norms and Standards for the Funding for Schools (DoE, 1998b; DoE, 2006b), divides the educational budget across provinces, and grants those with the highest number of needs the highest allocation, at least in principle. It can be logically inferred that those provinces also have the highest number of citizens who are illiterate, poor, reliant on grants, and within low tax brackets.

The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE, 2006a:5) contains the teaching values that underpin the policy of the Norms and Standards for Education (2000). It outlines the professional and personal qualifications and values educators need to have to teach in the South African education context. The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (ELRC, 2003) is a teacher evaluation policy that was designed to determine teacher competence, assess strengths and areas for development, and provide support and opportunities for development to ensure continued growth, promote accountability, and monitor the overall effectiveness of institutions. Still, the policy holds that no sanction can be brought against a teacher for non-performance without evidence of the provision of "meaningful development opportunities" (ELRC, 2003:2). Of note is, however, that NEEDU (2012) conducted a review of the IQMS and found no evidence that it would be able to serve as an effective accountability mechanism.

NEEDU (2012) reports:

> The IQMS criteria for evaluating teacher performance do not address universally agreed upon effective teaching. The failure of the IQMS points to the need for developing a new teacher evaluation policy in South Africa.

In South Africa, one of the key institutions for policymaking, including monitoring, evaluation, and long-term planning, is the Policy Coordination and Advisory Services (Policy Unit) in the Presidency, which comprises five main policy sectors, namely "economic, social justice, crime prevention and security, international relations, and governance and administration" (Gumede, 2008:11). Reddy (2016:6) highlights many issues at the local government level that have a direct impact on policy analysis, which include "compliance, respect for law", and poor policy formulation and implementation, especially crucial problems regarding expenditure and revenue related to debt collection and credit control.

The South African School Progression Policy states that learners can only be retained once per school phase, i.e., the Foundation Phase (Grades 1 to 3), the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4 to 7), the Senior Phase (Grades 8 to 9), and the FET Phase (Grades 10 to 12), even if they do not meet the achievement criteria for grade promotion. Given the results from any test or benchmark, it can be logically argued that there are learners in high schools who will still be functionally illiterate and innumerate. Yet, Van der Berg, Wills, Selkirk, Adams and Van Wyk (2019:59) point out that the cost of grade repetition in the public education system is estimated at just over R20 billion per year, and takes up countless resources that are much needed in the education system.

According to Van der Berg *et al.*'s (2019) study results, as well as other related studies, socio-economic factors play a significant role in the repetition rate in South African schools. The repetitions mirror the inequities in the education system. Van der Berg *et al.* (2019) therefore emphasise the need for good and reliable administrative data from which comparisons can be made, so that struggling learners can be identified early as a warning system.

The NPC's (2011) Diagnostic Overview highlights that progress in improving the implementation of the NDP has sometimes been undermined by overly frequent changes in policy approaches and organisational design. While the NPC (2011)

highlights that these changes are sometimes necessary, they can also be destabilising and divert attention away from the steps needed to achieve longer-term objectives (The Presidency, 2014:30). Efficiency is plagued by what Taylor *et al.* (2008:64) term the "absence of strategic leadership and management across the sector". These sentiments are echoed and supported by the South African Presidency (2014:31), which states that under-expenditure of budgets for social infrastructure such as schools and clinics are all usually symptoms of managerial weakness rather than budgetary constraints. Furthermore, poor audit outcomes, non-payment of legitimate invoices within 30 days, and large debts owed by national and provincial departments to municipalities are compounded by a lack of coordination between government departments. Businesses also complain of a lack of policy clarity due to the division of responsibilities between government departments.

In addition, Mulaudzi and Liebenberg (2017:40) maintain that squabbling and infighting within the ruling party and on the different levels of administration divert energy away from policy oversight, monitoring, and evaluation. For instance, Munzhedzi (2014:701-703) indicates that the placement of Limpopo under administration by the national government was done for reasons that included supply chain management violations, dysfunctional budget sections, poor asset management, and irregular and unauthorised expenditure. This was perceived by some as motivated by the interplay of party politics on the national and provincial level. Despite the intervention, Munzhedzi (2014) notes that there was no marked improvement, but rather signs of regression of provincial outcomes.

Furthermore, surveys conducted by Stats SA (2013; 2014; 2015) show that learners reported a lack of textbooks, overcrowded classrooms, a lack of teachers, poor facilities, teacher absenteeism, and unaffordable fees. Moreover, the surveys show that a number of females did not attend educational institutions over the three-year period due to "family commitments" such as getting married, minding children, and pregnancy. Indicating their reasons for not attending education institutions, some learners stated that they thought education was useless, while others abandoned their schooling due to illness and disability. Additionally, there were difficulties in getting to school, some learners struggled to complete schooling (academic performance), and others were working at home. Learners also indicated that there were other reasons for not attending academic institutions that were not specified. All in all, it is a

disconcerting matter that is worthy of investigation by future studies, as well as for inclusion in policy drafting.

School management requires skilled and suitably educated personnel. In post-apartheid South Africa, the practice of promoting skilled classroom teachers to managerial positions without management or administration training now appears to have been counter-effective (Hofmeyr & Hall, 1995:33). It is apparent that the rationalisation policy and exit of teachers to further BEE and affirmative action left many senior positions open for black teachers, particularly in the management sector of schools. Given the shortage of teachers and the practical effects of the rationalisation policy, it is a logical conclusion that qualified mathematics and science teachers would also have taken severance packages.

The NPC (2012:15) highlights many factors that contribute to the lack of quality education in poorer schools. The report contends that improvement in the performance in poorer schools rests significantly on the presence of a "good school principal". Furthermore, it states that collusion and nepotism in the recruitment and promotion of staff have created "institutional dysfunctionality" (NEEDU, 2012:68).

Additionally, the Schools Act places considerable power in the hands of SGBs to make decisions in terms of what would be in the best interest of their school communities; thus assuming that SGBs best understand their communities and learner profiles. However, the new legislation begins to address the long-term consequences of educational stratification in South Africa by providing a growing, albeit limited, proportion of urban black learners with access to better-resourced facilities. Yet, even the schools that are beginning to desegregate retain a racialised character.

Education White Paper 5 (DoE, 2001b) outlined the South African government's plans to institutionalise public provision of Grade R as part of primary education in South Africa. It aimed to have 100% of children in the relevant cohort by 2010 entering Grade R. Despite this goal, Grade R receives substantially less government funding, which hampers the possibility of ever attaining this ideal.

5.7   PROGRESS TOWARDS EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Educational quality, by any measure, was always going to be an ideal that is difficult to achieve in a context such as South Africa, with its unique societal characteristics and deficits. According to Waghid (2004:531), the education system in 1994 had to contend with many constraints, including a large proportion of adult society that had received no schooling at all, 92% of which were black Africans at the time (from a 1995 survey). The legislative reforms ensured that South Africa has a near universal enrolment rate for school-going children, which also displays gender parity (Mouton & Taylor, 2013:453-455). In the context of other developing countries, South Africa has one of the highest enrolment rates for school-going children (Department of Government Communication and Information System, 2001:179).

The National School Register of Needs was instituted in 1996. It highlighted the physical infrastructure and needs of all public schools. In 1997, at an ANC caucus, it was reported that there were many schools with dilapidated infrastructure and a lack of water and electricity (ANC, 1997). These inconsistencies have to some extent been addressed with many classrooms and facilities that were upgraded, and schools were provided with water and electricity (The Presidency, 2014:105).

In addition, the NSNP was instituted after 1994 and provides daily meals to an estimated nine million children across 20 000 public schools across South Africa. The results of an evaluation of the NSNP and a concurrent breakfast programme found positive results in relation to malnutrition, a reduction in the number of wasted[26] and underweight children, and related school absenteeism (Devereux *et al.*, 2018:1-19).

The NEIMS was also established along with the National Schools Register to provide information and indicate progress made in terms of infrastructure progress in public schools across South Africa. The DBE developed the initiative to eliminate all backlogs in schools by 2014. Given the needs and current problems within the system, progress has been slow but is addressed to a large extent.

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[26] "Wasted children", according to the WHO (2020), refers to children who have a low weight-for-height that is caused primarily by lack of adequate food or an infectious disease that caused "recent and severe weight loss".

Apart from the above, the introduction of Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy short courses has also been an attempt by the state to increase strategic leadership and management ability in the public sector, from where the decision makers for policy are drawn (Maserumle, 2010:29). In essence, this is also to improve service delivery.

5.8 PROPOSING A WAY FORWARD: THE EASTONIAN FEEDBACK LOOP

The political system is dynamic and entails viewing the policy process as dynamic, complex, and influenced by many things. The Eastonian feedback loop (Parsons, 1995:23-24), as depicted in Figure 5.2, asserts that feedback enables the capacity or longevity of a political system's survival in the long term.
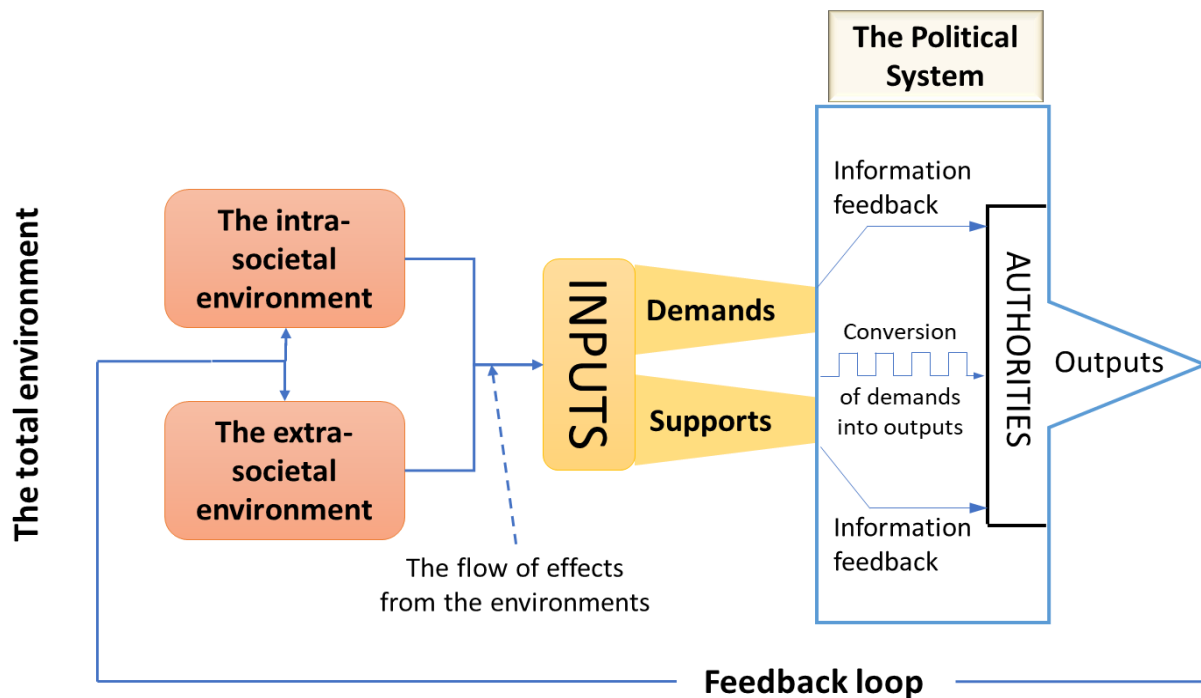

Figure 5.2: The Eastonian feedback loop
Source: Parsons (1995)

The feedback loop is important in ensuring that purposive corrective action is taken. The Presidency (2014:27) identifies processes frequently organised as isolated events without proper feedback loops as a key stumbling block to participatory democracy. Additionally, Kondlo (2010:2) considers the vastness of policy formulation and implementation in South Africa as a fundamental challenge. The pronouncement of policy and its implementation do not facilitate real government practices, thereby

failing in its transformative agenda. This is partly due to a lack of synchronisation and coordination.

The NDP (NPC, 2012) and the South African Presidency (2014), as well as NEEDU's (2012) evaluation, highlight the unevenness in capacity that leads to an imbalance/unevenness in public service delivery and performance. This is also demonstrated in the different provincial departments of education. The causes of these imbalances relate to tensions in the political and administrative domains (and factionalism in the ruling parties), instability of political leadership, the absence of a culture of continuous improvement, a lack of managerial accountability, and pervasive, unprecedented high levels of fraud.[27] The Public Protector Report of 2018-2019 indicated that more than a substantial amount of ineffectiveness, corruption, and maladministration exist in the different sectors of government, which is a critical challenge that needs to be addressed.

In order for the system to work, it will require the following:

- The needs of the people (parents, students, and teachers) must be brought into play. The government should be aware of these needs for suitable policy in a particular context. This is known as the input level.
- The conceptualisation of policy should involve broad consultation in the form of Green and White Papers, to allow for expert involvement.
- Legislation of policy (parliament) should then follow.
- Subsequently, policy should be implemented on the required levels, such as national and regional/provincial levels.
- Feedback should then be given by those who are supposed to benefit from the said policy (students, teachers, parents, and educationists). This is known as the feedback loop.

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[27] Various reports from the Public Protector highlight the decay in the public sector; from investigative reports and numerous irregularities reports, as well as annual reports on the magnitude of corrupt activities, which are available at http://www.publicprotector.org/.

Mayende (2010:80) asks the following fundamental questions about genuine public participation in the crafting of policy and the policy process:

- Are communities involved in the entire policy process or only a part of it?
- Are political leaders involving communities in questions about their needs?
- Are policy prescripts and proposed project designs fed back to the community for endorsement before implementation?
- Are communities truly and honestly in a position to convey their inputs and recommendations without fear of intimidation, and will it be taken seriously?

All other discussions on poverty and education in this thesis have shown that there is scientific evidence that poverty impacts learning tremendously, whether indirectly or directly. Poorer municipalities and districts simply cannot, with their budget allocations, bring the standards of schools up to the level of the wealthiest provinces. This is confounded by controversy around some key appointments, fraud, and other well-documented challenges in South Africa that impede the provision of quality education. The Presidency (2014:165) contends that although there has been significant progress in certain areas, inequality remains unsustainably wide and much work is required. It also admits that, despite the mistakes made, there is a great interest to address these challenges.

5.9   CONCLUSION

Education policymaking after 1994 was heavily influenced by an array of factors. The legacy of apartheid ensured that there were many social ills in the population, as well as many backlogs that the post-apartheid government had to tackle upon taking office. After years of exclusion from the international community, there were also increased international commitments and expectations. The negotiated transition to constitutional democracy also meant that there had to be much negotiation and "give-and-take" policymaking choices in South Africa.

One legacy of apartheid was the so-called expectations of equality and economic freedom for all. However, the shift in political leadership did not mean that there was a shift in economic power in the country since economic power was still vested in the white minority race group in the country. It is important to realise that education policy cannot operate in isolation and is influenced by a variety of international and national

developments and economic and health policies. South Africa post-apartheid, and still today, reflects a deeply divided society with high unemployment, poverty, and inequality. The post-apartheid government should be credited for some improvements; however, a great deal of work remains to be done. South Africa has experienced high levels of instability in the top levels of administrative leadership. This has been a particular challenge during transitions between administrations, when the arrival of new ministers and Members of the Executive Council (MECs) led to sudden changes in senior management as new ministers and MECs often prefer to appoint their own heads of department. These are but some of the associated complexities.

CHAPTER 6:
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The only real mistake made, is the one that we learn nothing from.
Henry Ford

6.1   INTRODUCTION

Thus far, much attention has been paid to the benefits of quality education, both for the individual and society at large. The pitfalls were identified and expanded upon. The results from national and international tests pointed out the benefits that education holds, as well as how the education system fares with assessments. During the course of the study, it became clear that the best investment is to address the high poverty and inequality rates that plague South African society, both in service of quality education and through quality education. Education is one of the best vehicles to ensure less intergenerational poverty among predominantly black, coloured, and Indian South Africans. Currently, poverty and inequality predictions, as described in Chapter 2, indicate that things will not improve for the black (black African, coloured, and Indian) majority in the country, particularly those in the previous homelands and designated rural areas created during the apartheid regime.

Addressing poverty and healthcare in South Africa is not enough to secure equitable socio-economic prosperity. As discussed in Chapter 2, quality education encompasses many factors, such as quality teaching and well-cared-for and supported learners who are part of a culture of learning. These factors need to be informed by well-conceptualised and reflected-upon national goals of education. The vision is a collaborative society that combines various strengths to improve access to education and equitable, quality education in South Africa for all, even the most vulnerable of learners. While mindful of South Africa's past and the transition to democracy, the aim of the study was to determine three matters, as contained in the research questions: (1) the constraints of quality education provision in post-apartheid South Africa, specifically in South African public primary schools, (2) how policy changes in this context influence the provision of quality education in public primary schools, and (3) what recommendations can be made to improve the provision of quality education and learning opportunities from a policy perspective. This was done

in tandem with using the UNESCO (2005) framework for assessing quality education, as well as examining what needs to be present in a society for educational quality to exist.

A content/documentary analysis and a descriptive approach complemented each other during the research process. It is clear from the range of literature consulted that South Africa, despite having a unified DBE, in fact has two vastly differing education systems, which mirror the two broader societal realities of poverty and wealth, and associated unacceptably high inequality in education. In constitutional terms and as derived from the Bill of Rights and the existing educational system, South Africa's educational situation seems to be in order. This, however, is not where it ends in practice.

The *de facto* existence of "parallel educational communities" spawned many challenges. Extensive assessment of its quality of education through participation in national and international tests/studies indicates that South Africa has not progressed well when compared to other developing countries. The large number of remedial steps seem not to have registered matching success. Evidently, a great deal of work still needs to be done to achieve the provision of equitable quality education.

6.2   OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

In Chapter 1, the context was set for the study through the problem statement and emphasis of the importance that education holds for an individual, for schools, and for society. The rationale, limitations, purpose, and significance of undertaking this study were outlined to provide a clear picture of why and how this topic was selected. In addition, the three research objectives the study aimed to achieve and the three research questions it set out to address were presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2 outlined the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that guided this study. This included the concept of quality education, as well as the guiding framework from UNESCO (2005) that highlights what must be present to provide quality education, as well as what influences it. Policy frameworks and models of public policy were provided to discuss how public policy is meant to be drafted and to introduce the different approaches available. The literature review discussed the complexity and consequences of apartheid education as an important starting point in the discussion

regarding the kind of legacy it held for the incumbent democratic government in 1994. With the end of apartheid rule and consequent transition to a constitutional state, the new government had to try to correct the imbalances created by an unjust system that largely furthered the interests of one minority group at the expense of the vast majority of the population. An important starting point was the societal characteristics and demographics of the population following democratic rule. A discussion of poverty and inequality in South African society became imperative as these factors continue to translate to the type of education people receive in South Africa. It was highlighted that inequality and poverty beget continued inequality and poverty if perpetuated by a low quality of education, which portends very low prospects for growth and change of the status quo.

Chapter 3 positioned South African learner performance in international and regional cross-sectional surveys and indicated the ranking of the South African education system on important international indices. Alarmingly, what all these test results have in common is that no matter the quality factor of education measured, South African learners consistently performed poorly across the assessment spectrum.

Chapter 4 considered the research design and methodology utilised in the study. The selection of the documentary analysis method for analysing data collected during this study was emphasised. Epistemological and ontological considerations were discussed, the choice of research design was explained, and the limitations to these approaches were acknowledged.

Chapter 5 comprised a theoretical exploration of policy conceptualisation in South African education. Certain characteristics of the different administrations were brought into perspective, as education, health, and economic policy influence one another. The emphasis placed on various matters during the different administrations were illuminated. This was necessitated by various changes in international and national developments, as well as the beliefs/ideology of the party leader and party members. Furthermore, public participation was discussed using the ANC's framework for public participation. Not deviating from the framework of UNESCO (2005), the complexities associated with specific education policies were highlighted, which indicated, among others, a lack of foresight, coordination, and poor implementation and participation, which are indispensable for effective policymaking.

Finally, Chapter 6 contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

6.3   SUMMARY

Education, as a fundamental human right, holds many benefits for an individual, the immediate community, and society. It is the best vehicle through which intergenerational poverty may be reduced and eventually eradicated. In an attempt to attain quality education, UNESCO (2005) argues for the presence of many factors that constitute quality education, such as well-resourced schools, homes, communities, etc. However, after almost three decades since the abolishment of apartheid in South Africa, these are not the realities of millions of people in South Africa.

South African education policy frameworks provide for both public and independent schools that are labelled according to national quintiles, based on the relative poverty of the surrounding community. These quintiles are intended to assist with the funding that, in principle, should bring all schools up to a reasonable/good quality. That has proven very difficult over the years in the South African context.

According to the World Bank (2018), a survey of 149 countries indicated that South Africa is the most unequal country "by any measure". Another key finding in the report was that poverty levels in South Africa are most concentrated in previously disadvantaged areas or former apartheid-determined homelands. The schools in these poorer areas are the primary responsibility of the government, which must fulfil learners' democratic rights to equitable education as contained in a plethora of policies and policy documents.

This study illuminated the characteristics of poorer or dysfunctional weak teaching methods, limited time spent on teaching, poor infrastructure, a poor culture of teaching and learning, and low performance on international, national, and even regional tests (Spaull, 2012; 2013). It also became evident that children spend less time reading, teachers spend less time teaching, and too much time is spent by teachers on non-educational activities such as administration and understanding and codifying policies. As the NPC (2011) and Jansen (2018) put it, these schools are suffering from "transformation fatigue".

Additionally, it was found that there is less parental involvement in poorer schools (Munju & Ncube, 2018) in, for instance, student performance and SGB activities. The research also pointed out that certain teacher biases inform teachers' beliefs about and attitudes towards parents and their involvement in school activities. Importantly, these learners and parents, who make up the largest proportion of the school education landscape in South Africa, are predominantly black and coloured. Ignoring such a critical cohort of South African society's input and incorporation in school practice is done at the peril of all concerned.

International literacy and numeracy tests point to resources that need to be present in well-functioning schools to enable quality education. It is rather disquieting to find that these resources are largely absent from the majority of public and/or no-fee schools in South Africa. Moreover, while language through literacy is indicated to play an important part in educational achievement at all levels, it is not clearly defined or addressed in the language policy for schools in South Africa.

Over and above that, the shortage of teachers both currently and in the projected future of education is a clear threat to the education system. The clear misalignment between the number of qualified teachers needed, especially in the scarce skills subjects, and the number of teachers who are in fact qualified for the same subjects must be of paramount importance to the DoE. Some recommendations indicate how teachers in oversupply in certain regions may be attracted to take up positions in lower-quintile or resource-deprived schools in disadvantaged, rural, and other communities.

An important starting point would be to take decisive action to enhance quality in schools. This calls for greater transparency at all levels, stakeholder honesty, and collaboration as initially envisaged in post-apartheid South African education policy. Although many great tools, bodies, and programmes have been instituted to improve the conditions of all South African schools, accountability is not an essential condition thereof. Accountability should be integral to every system to ensure improvement at all levels, such as the IQMS of teachers. The social ills faced by poor and disadvantaged communities need to be addressed as a matter of urgency to enable the equitable provision of and access to quality education.

Without proper evaluation and planning, problems in government related to poor leadership ability, limited coordination among departments, a lack of adequate

participation, corruption, and various other issues highlighted in Chapter 5 will in all probability inhibit proper changes on the ground. It can be concluded that in the absence of decisive action, accountability, synergy, participation, and coordination between government departments and society, no fundamental shifts will occur to assist in transforming the education system.

6.4   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The components of both education in general and quality education *per se* are broad. It was therefore not possible in a study at this level to include everything available on the subject; i.e., factors that could probably affect quality education in the South African context. Material for such a topic is widely available, as this is a topic that continues to be publicly debated, particularly since the consequences of a poor-quality education for mainly black South Africans will manifest in and beyond the completion of schooling and entry into the higher education environment and the world of work.

During the course of the study it was observed that one major obstacle that prevents the achievement of quality education was the increasing bureaucratisation of the educational system. This is not a uniquely South African phenomenon as it has been observed in similar educational settings elsewhere (Schaefer, 2005:384-385).

6.5   CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of this section is to inform how the research objectives that guided the study were achieved. The aim of the study was to critically discuss and analyse the role and influence of policy changes within South African basic education during the period 1994 to 2018 in the provision of quality education in public primary schools. The study utilised the UNESCO (2005) lens and framework to determine the conditions that are conducive for quality education. It was revealed that quality education involves all facets of learners' lives, including well-resourced schools, competent teachers, and being healthy and well nourished, among others. Research indicates that South Africa is highly unequal by any measure, poverty levels are deeply entrenched, and the legacy of apartheid caused and left lingering many challenges in the education system. To some degree, the need simply outweighs the resources, and schools and communities are just not in the position to utilise resources effectively.

In many cases, the resources are simply not sufficient to bring schools to a standard where quality education provision is possible. Other important challenges such as teacher incompetence and poor quality of teaching and ineffective school management, both because and despite of the current composition and functioning of SGBs, further deepen and worsen these problems, at the expense of learners and all related societal impacts.

The first objective of the study was to critically discuss the features/constraints of quality education provision in post-apartheid (1994-2018) South African public primary schools. The apartheid legacy of ineffective black/African teacher qualifications in particular regions and schools, compounded by poor teacher education and ineffective remedial short courses, along with changes in the curriculum, non-critical and hasty decision making, and the exclusion of teachers from the curriculum development process greatly hindered the collaborative climate as envisaged in education policy. The disjuncture between educational policy, macro-economic policy, and the constraints within the ANC have caused the sphere unprecedented damage.

The second objective was to determine how policy changes in post-apartheid South Africa (1994-2018) influenced the provision of quality education in public primary schools. Education policy cannot be drafted in isolation from other critical factors that are essential in the context of creating quality education for all citizens, despite a backlog of centuries of inequality. Chapters 2 to 4 dealt with the current status of educational quality based on the UNESCO (2005) lens, societal characteristics, and what is available, while Chapter 4 also indicated how inequality in educational outcomes was further perpetuated by ineffective participation, coordination, skills, as well as the disjuncture between policy and ideology and how it is not conducive to quality education for all.

The final research objective was to search for and make recommendations to improve the provision of quality education learning opportunities from a policy perspective. There are many approaches available for policy to be enacted and implemented. South Africa has some of the most progressive education and other policies in the world; however, in terms of being useful, collaborative, and accountable structures, they do not in reality function in all provinces and administrations.

6.6   RECOMMENDATIONS

The study highlighted the importance of public participation in policymaking. However, it also showed that in the South African context of education policymaking, this does not happen. Attempts towards citizen engagement in post-1994 South Africa includes the institution of *imbizos*; yet, a much more serious effort regarding public participation is imperative. Participatory spaces need to be established with a focus on critical citizen engagement to involve the most vulnerable societies, especially those found in rural areas where poverty and unemployment are very pervasive through targeted information sessions.

Given the crucial role of teachers and other role players in the learning process, South African education departments also need to finalise the policy on teacher and educator accountability. This study highlighted the dire consequences of apartheid for teacher qualifications, teacher ideology, and subsequent teacher retention. However, given how teaching is conducted in schools (see Chapters 2 and 3 regarding the quality education evidence in South African schools), it is imperative that an accountability framework be developed and finalised.

It is further recommended that the ANAs be brought back under more favourable circumstances. An independent verifier (such as the HSRC in 2011) should be appointed again. It is impossible for teachers to administer the test, prepare the learners for the test, and be the verifier of the results as well.

There also needs to be accountability in all spheres of government. Structures for accountability, competence, and consequences are indispensable for any initiative to work. The public participation model (South African Parliament, 2019), as discussed in the preceding chapter, speaks to the importance of cohesion, collaboration, and challenges that, if not addressed, will not lead to any improved conditions in providing quality education for all in South Africa. The triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment are of such a nature that, if not dealt with decisively, they will hinder real change on the ground.

Since education policies have been adapted, some virtual new versions added, and several changes made over decades, one may argue that due to different subjective interpretations and applications of policy directives, an element of policy confusion is

the status quo. This could lead to uncertainties and the non-implementation of policy, partial implementation of policy, or skewed implementation, especially in terms of direct regional and local application of policy and follow through of implemented policies. Focused attention will have to be paid to the clarification of policies from top to bottom, nationally and regionally. One may wish to refer to the serious reflection on and standardisation of policy. This could be undertaken by task teams – assuming public concerns are attended to. Grassroots consultation with stakeholders, i.e., parents, teachers, students, and SGBs, is relevant here. Moreover, taking heed of the policy feedback loop and addressing specific issues derived therefrom will pay off.

The role of performance evaluation in national and regional (provincial) levels remains of great importance and should continue since it provides valuable data for what one can call policy correction. However, it is imperative that the advice and recommendations given through performance evaluation activities are followed up and implemented to add value to clear-cut policy, as well as clarity for those implementing and executing the said policies on the ground level. Clear communication on performance evaluation feedback should be provided, as well as monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

Interaction with various non-governmental organisations and the private sector (the latter especially where financial assistance is involved) remains important and should receive consistent attention to optimise policy and ground level implementation.

6.7   FUTURE RESEARCH AREAS

Given the arguments put forward by various scholars, the complexity of South African society, as well as the complexity of the policy processes, this study proposes certain areas as a starting point for future research, as presented in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Proposed areas for future research

Learning deficit registers	Citizen education	Real spaces for public participation	Accountability structures
A tool could be developed for the identification of struggling learners who become lost in the system. It is imperative that such a tool be developed on the national level and be coordinated on all provincial levels. Various discussions (participation) can be held to benchmark what this tool should look like.	A great deal of misinformation exists on what constitutes citizen participation in democracy. It is imperative that citizens be taught how important their role in participative democracy is.	Building on previous discussions, participatory spaces need to be revitalised for citizens to see that their participation, inputs, and needs are important in the creation of quality education for all. It can also help to legitimise the leadership in South Africa.	Accountability in terms of performance is by far the most important aspect. Appropriate structures should be created for the assessment of performance. Since decisive, ethical leadership is required, it is imperative that there should be serious consequences for non-performance, especially as it concerns teachers, leaders, etc.

Additionally:

- More research is needed on how the policy feedback loop can be better utilised and turned into positive action.

- How the interaction between government stakeholders, funders (both private companies and non-governmental organisations), and those who stand to benefit from policy practice (the learners) can be enhanced deserves more research and reflection. In this regard, both generalised research and case studies, and where applicable, comparative studies, may reveal important data and insights.

- Strategies for additional training (and/or re-training) of teachers through workshops may also be of help. While this is already and continuously happening, further research in this area may lead to recommendations on how this can be made more effective and efficient on the ground level.

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