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POLICY INTERPRETATION AND SENSEMAKING BY KZN PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS WITH REFERENCE TO THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL FUNDING

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A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Education

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As my family would say: “Kwavel’indaba”

DEDICATION

First and foremost I'd like to thank God's role and positive influence in my spiritual life. Furthermore within the spiritual realm I'd also like to highlight my celebration for my cultural heritage and giving thanks to my ancestors within the Majola and Ndimande clans.

This work is specifically dedicated to my first teacher, mentor and intellectual sparring partner, my maternal grandfather, Mr Ephraim "Mhlakazanhlansi zibashise", Jerome, Paraffin Ndimande. His intellectual imprint and influence in my thinking has always been my drive and ambition to enter the world of academia. Together with my late maternal grandmother, Mrs Thembalami Ndimande told me this in isiZulu, "uyishaye incwadi", roughly meaning, 'read voraciously'.

I thank my wife, Thobile Majola for never giving up while I went through very tough challenges in my personal and professional lives. Her motivation, guidance and constant belief in my capabilities gave me the will to stay the course until the very end.

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- To all the members of the Ndimande family, I thank each one of you for loving me always and your constant belief in my capabilities.
- To all the members of the Majola family, the journey has just begun.

Most importantly, I thank my late dad Sibusiso Hermon Majola for all the life lessons, humour, and inspiration.

DECLARATION

I Xolani Cleopas Majola declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.



_____

Xolani Cleopas Majola

Signed at Dekko Heights, Midrand, Johannesburg

On the 7th day of November 2016

ACRONYMS

DoE	Department of Education
HoD	Head of Department
ISASA	Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NAISA	National Alliance of Independent Schools Associations
NNSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
PAEPL	Provincial Average Estimate Per Learner
PED	Provincial Education Department
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme

ABSTRACT

Arguing for the understanding of policy and its implementation as a multi-dimensional process, this study explores how provincial officials interpret and implement policy. It uses the context of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) aimed at KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) independent schools to study what happens on the ground in relation to policy implementation.

The aim is to explore knowledge and experience residing within local implementation contexts. It presents policy implementation from an interpretive perspective highlighting how provincial officials receive, interpret and transmit policy meanings. This research was conducted using a qualitative methodology. It is based on a case study of three KZN provincial officials in head office and one in the district office, sampled on a purposive basis. The interviews were administered to elicit responses from participants. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyse data collected through interviews in order to discover among other things patterns, concepts, themes, and meanings.

Premised on the theory of sense-making in policy; the study concludes that how policy is interpreted or understood depends largely on the repertoire of skills, knowledge, and experience of its implementers (Spillane, 2002). The research makes three key recommendations for policy, implementation, and research:

1. Allow local knowledge to flourish by engaging more with local implementers of policy as intelligent individual sense-makers and contributors.
2. Decentralise the system by delegating some decision-making powers to district and circuit levels. For example, allow them to have the power to advertise posts; make appointments; and perform other related duties that will contribute towards efficient implementation.
3. Capacitate district directorates through constant training and support.

Chapter 1 introduces the study's historical foundations and explains the underlying factors that influenced its composition; chapter 2 presents a literature review; chapter 3 outlines the research methodology; chapter 4 describes the data collection; and chapter 5 offers a summary, discussion, conclusions and implications.

Key words: Interpretation**,** sense-making**,** cognition**,** implementation, policy, in-depth understanding.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study seeks to examine how KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Department of Education's (DoE) officials apply policy as part of their responsibility and job description. It sets out to investigate how policy is modified (re-contextualised) or distorted at the hands of mid-level managers. It focuses primarily on interpretation and how provincial officials make sense of and act on policy messages and how this influences implementation.

1.2 Background

According to the Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding (South Africa, 2006), subsidies are paid to qualifying, non-profit, low- and mid-fee independent schools serving poor to lower middle-income communities. Independent schools in the lowest socio-economic category depend on the subsidies for their existence as they constitute about half of their income (Hofmeyr & Lee, 2002).

The history of the Norms policy can be traced back to 2006 when the Minister of Education published the Amended National Norms. Section 7 of the policy deals with subsidies to independent schools and gives general guidance on the principles underpinning the granting of subsidies. It also gives a very detailed formula on how subsidies are to be calculated.

Based on this premise, the formula seeks to ensure that independent schools charging fees higher than an annually determined amount do not receive subsidies. A sliding scale is used to ensure that schools charging lower fees get the highest subsidy and schools charging higher fees (but below the cut-off level) get the lowest. Independent schools are awarded sums which are based on a percentage of what it costs a province to educate a learner in a public ordinary school (as opposed to a public special school). As a result, in provinces with the highest cost per public school learner, independent schools that charge fees in excess of R30 000 receive no subsidy (as was the case in Gauteng in 2012), while schools charging less receive (on application) subsidies on a sliding scale of fees charged related to the Provincial Average Estimate Per Learner (PAEPL) calculated for the year in question.

According to the National Alliance of Independent Schools Associations (NAISA) there has been lack of consistency in implementing the funding policy. NAISA observed the maladministration of certain Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) including KZN, which year after year struggled to implement properly the Amended Norms and Standards for School Funding, as promulgated in terms of section 48(2) of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b), read with section 29(4) and 126(2) (b) (i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996a).

KZN emerged as one of the provinces perceived to have had major challenges with the implementation of the funding policy (Ndaba et al., 2012). The funding policy in KZN led to dissatisfaction from affected subsidised independent schools and ultimately resulted in a Constitutional Court action instituted against the provincial DoE (Case CCT 60/12 [2013] ZACC10).

Working for the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) as a policy analyst, I took an interest in the constitutional case involving the NAISA (of which ISASA is a member) and the KZN DoE.

According to Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002: 392):

> *Policy messages are not inert, static ideas that are transmitted unaltered into local actors' minds to be accepted, rejected or modified to fit local needs and conditions. Rather, the agents must first notice, then frame, interpret and construct meaning for policy messages.*

Thus implying the fluidity of policy as a phenomena that is susceptible to change at any time or level; which means there is a high likelihood that the funding policy must have gone through a series of interpretations at lower levels of its implementation, perhaps leading to the outcry as expressed by NAISA.

As a researcher I felt the importance of bringing sense-making into focus because of its role in policy implementation. Furthermore, sense-making can be equated with Michael Lipsky's theory of 'Street Level Bureaucracy'. According to Lipsky (1980, quoted in Paudel, 2009), street-level bureaucrats are the real policy-makers because of their affinity with the recipients of policy at ground level. With their discretionary powers, street-level bureaucrats are able to make their own sense of policies and

implement them according to what they think will be best suited on the ground. Therefore, studying sense-making and interpretation will give insight into the concept of local autonomy and how it possibly contributes to the distortion or successful implementation of policy.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

It is not fully understood how people interpret or make sense of information they receive and the subsequent tasks they need to perform. This lack of insight to people's interpretation of their duties and responsibilities may sometimes lead to inconclusive judgements on their abilities and participation in the workplace.

For example, provincial administrators are expected to implement the national head office funding policy by setting minimum requirements, processing applications, and making subsidy payments to qualifying independent schools.

However, conflicting views have emerged about the implementation of the funding policy, pointing towards alleged inconsistencies regarding payment of subsidies to schools. While some subsidies have been delayed, others have not been paid at all, thereby adversely hampering the schools' ability to deliver optimally on their educational mandates (NAISA, 2012).

Policy directives from the national head office as expressed through the 2006/2008 NNSSF are clear and unambiguous. The expectation is that implementers would have a clear sense of the messages intended by the policy. In this instance the design of policy will give expression to directives which are clearly formulated and consistent, thereby leaving very little room for irregular implementation (Cuban, 1988).

1.4 Significance of the Study

De Clercq (2010) has remarked that education policy-making at provincial and district level is an area which remains seldom researched, in particular, how provincial and district officials strategise to mediate education policies. Building on the above statement, this study hopes to contribute towards increasing awareness on the impact

of local policy implementers at different provincial levels. The study aims to highlight the knowledge and skills of local implementers and how they can be utilised by policy-makers to produce policies that are suitable to local conditions.

1.5 Rationale

Studies undertaken on policy implementation tend to focus primarily on the technical, administrative aspects and give little regard to cognitive influences. Research into policy implementation has, for a while, focused on macro-level and institutional effects of policy implementation and has only recently begun to examine the role of sense-making (Spillane et al., 2002). Dyer (1999) strengthens this view by agreeing that very little is known about how policy implementers engage with their duties and responsibilities on a daily basis.

This study explores the interpretation and sense-making processes and their influence on how local implementers perform their daily policy initiatives. Wildavsky (1984: 177) notes “when we act to implement a policy, we change it”, implying the inevitability of adaptation of policy during its implementation.

Furthermore, the study aims to explore the nature and context in which KZN DoE mid-level officials make key decisions during the process of implementation, focusing on the knowledge and experience they bring into practice. The study examines how mid-level provincial officials use their own independent thought and discretion to interact with the demands of their local work conditions.

1.6 Key Research Question

How do local implementers interpret and make sense of policy messages as a basis for policy enactment?

1.6.1 Research sub-questions

1. How are policy messages and instructions received, translated, and transmitted during policy implementation?

2. How policy implementation may be improved at local levels through an analysis of how implementers make sense of policy pronouncement

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1.7.1 Sense-making

Sense-making has been defined as “the activity that enables us to turn the ongoing complexity of the world into a situation that is comprehended explicitly in words and that serves as a springboard into action” (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005: 409). This description suggests that cognitive factors play a meaningful role in how policy is defined, understood and implemented; that how a local policy implementer frames an issue or policy, or how he/she defines problems influence how he or she proceeds with implementation (Coburn, 2001).

The research task of this study was two-fold. First, it needed to establish the likely source of conflict and inconsistent implementation emanating from the funding policy. Second, it needed to explore how provincial officials understood and interpreted policies they had to implement; how their existing knowledge and experience combined with their current work contexts framed their practices; and how this could elaborate on the disjuncture between policy and practice (Blignaut, 2008).

1.7.2 Norms and Standards for School Funding

Norms and Standards for School Funding can be defined as a funding mechanism that national government put in place for provinces to follow. It was developed in order to try and address inequalities in education financing. It required provinces to rank their schools from poorest to least poor, using a poverty ranking system that took into consideration physical conditions of the school, facilities, overcrowding and socio-economic status of the community in which the school is situated (RSA, 2006: section 102b).

1.7.3 Policy implementation

While there are other descriptions of policy implementation in the subsequent sections of this thesis, I have chosen to give a definition that simplifies it without delving deep

into many variables that constitute the term ‘implementation’. In its simplest form, policy implementation can be defined as an act of putting objectives or goals put into practice. It is the link between intention and the actual outcome (O’Toole, 2000).

1.8 Summary

This chapter presented the background of the study and the direction the researcher wishes to take. The study chose its conceptual departure based on the notions of interpretation and sense-making as key determinants when policy is translated into practice.

Although funding for KZN private schools was initially highlighted, it only features as an entry point to the key study of cognition in policy implementation. Chapter 2 will attempt to venture deeply into the concepts of interpretation and sense-making and present them in tandem with their influence in the process of implementation. The chapter will use literature to explain the multi-faceted dimensions of interpretation as a concept and show how policy can be interpreted and recreated during its implementation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 is divided into six sections, namely: description of literature review; definition of implementation; theoretical concept; conceptual framework; summary of research locally and abroad on policy implementation; and finally, a summary of the chapter.

The literature chosen is based on a cognitive approach to implementation which is in line with the focus of this study-interpretation.

Literature chosen on cognition will particularly be influenced by the work of Spillane whom I identified as the expert in the field. However, effort was made to draw from other sources in order to present a balanced view on the role of cognition in policy implementation.

2.2 Description of Literature Review

According to Kelley (2011), a literature review helps to identify what is known, and how it is known, so a researcher can appropriately frame questions around what is yet to be known. Hammersley (2004) defines a literature review as a summary of what is currently known about an issue or field on the basis of research evidence, and/or of what lines of argument there are in relation to that issue or field.

It is through a literature review that we are able to extrapolate on the purpose of our research studies. It allows the researcher to manoeuvre from the known to the unknown, the general to the specific, thereby narrowing the focus of study to a specific area of possible new discovery.

Essentially, it is an evaluative summary of the arguments, themes and issues of a specifically defined research topic obtained from the published (and unpublished) literature. It is an important element of research because it identifies what is already known about an area of study; identifies questions a body of research does not answer; and makes a case for why further study of research questions are important to a field.

In introducing implementation, the next section will begin by giving a definition of implementation from a cognitive approach point of view.

2.3 Definition of Implementation

In order to fully understand policy implementation one needs to understand its meaning and definition. Implementation can be defined in different ways depending on the angle from which it is approached. For the purposes of comparative analysis, I will use two different descriptions of implementation, one coming briefly from a rational approach and the other from a cognitive approach.

From a rational angle, implementation has been defined as "The carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually incorporated in a statute but which can also take the form of important executive orders or court decisions" (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989: 20). According to O'Toole (2000) policy implementation is what develops between an intention of the government to do something and its ultimate impact following action. It involves organisational systems, processes and actions of members in the organisation. Thus, from the descriptions above, implementation can be described as the process of transforming policy into practice. What this description does not do is highlight what happens between the act of receiving policy and putting it into practice.

To illustrate the above, Fullan (1989, quoted in De Clercq, 2002 suggests policy implementation is more a matter of making further policies than putting predefined policies into practice. Such a view gives credence to the theory of local adaptation of policy initiatives whereby policy implementers at local level use their inherited knowledge and experience to change policy from the top according to their understanding of it and its suitability on the ground. This process is called enactment, which Braun et al (2010) define as the process of interpretation and re-contextualisation.

Spillane (1998) defines policy implementation from the view of mutual adaptation which sees external policy being adapted to fit local conditions and for local conditions to be adapted in order to fit policy. Mutual adaptation refers to policies being construed in light of local visions. In other words, policies fitting local visions are embraced, whereas those that do not fit are modified or opposed (Spillane, 1998). Furthermore,

implementers of policy at ground level tend to rely more on their previous knowledge and accumulated experience as a lens through which their implementation occurs. Largely implicated is that implementers put policy into practice, understanding and transforming it as they move along (Spillane, 2002).

This view on policy implementation is amplified by Werts and Brewer (2014: 01) who define implementation as “a spatially inhabited practice involving negotiation and strategy, where local actor’s experience moderate and appropriate policy”. They go further to assert “most policy implementation studies do not invest in the richness of the local world; instead they look to circumvent local actors’ possible actions”. Focusing this study on interpretation will allow for a closer scrutiny of local policy contexts.

Therefore, from a cognitive perspective, as presented above, policy implementation is a multi-faceted process imbued with elements such as mutual adaptation, enactment, and mediation which indirectly contribute to how implementers interpret and make sense of policies they have been entrusted with. From the literature I have quoted on implementation, to which I have referred, one definitive point stands out – that pre-existing knowledge influences how implementers of policy enact it.

I will now discuss the theoretical concepts underpinning this study.

2.4 Theoretical Concept

In this section I briefly discuss conceptual approaches on policy and how they influence implementation.

Three major conceptual models relating to policy and its implementation were identified, the *liberal pluralist*, *interpretive,* and *political* approaches. Using a comparative analysis of the three models, the study will demonstrate how policy implementation happens within a context of competing ideologies and discourse. It will focus on the interplay of actors in a complex system and how this impacts and relates to the construction and implementation of policy (Lane & Hamann, 2003).

The first model for analysis is the *liberal pluralist* approach which speaks about the rationalisation of policy and defines it as a linear process that relies on hierarchical expression for its successful implementation. According to this approach, resource allocation, coherence and clear objectives constitute effectiveness (Sabatier, 1986). In other words, for policy to succeed there has to be structural order in place so its implementers can follow a sequential pre-designed process that can be evaluated, monitored and adjusted (Sutton, 1999). This approach assumes a top-down structure of implementation as a series of plans and goals to be achieved within a specified period of time.

Policies are established at higher levels in government and then communicated to subordinate implementers who are charged with the technical, managerial, and administrative tasks of putting policy into practice. This approach has been criticised for being top-down (macro-micro) and mechanical, while underplaying the influence of individuated sense-making and interpretation of policy, which is what Spillane et al (2002) and McLaughlin (1987) have tried to bring implementation studies to focus on. It moderates the possibility that policies may always change during implementation.

The second model, the *interpretive* policy analysis approach, considers policy to be a process whereby actors involved are autonomous individuals who take action on the basis of decisions borne out of contextualised interpretation, thereby influencing how policy is implemented. According to McLaughlin (1987), this approach focuses on situated cognition and individual interpretation as critical elements of the policy implementation process. It is here that the concept of contextualised understanding applies, where local implementers of policy use their knowledge of local conditions to influence how policy will be implemented (Spillane et al, 2002).

Furthermore, this process is also known as mutual adaptation whereby policy implementers reconstruct their understanding of policy meanings to suit their context (McLaughlin, 1987). As Lipsky (1980: xii) argues:

> *The decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively become the public policies they carry out.*

This implies the possibility that in each province, district officials may have developed their own customised interpretation of the funding policy (Norms and Standards), leading to varied implementation processes across the provinces. However, this approach has been criticised for paying less attention to the significant role of stakeholder management whereby different interest groups compete for power, influence and relevance.

The third model, the *political* approach to policy analysis, opposes the interpretive model by placing strong emphasis on the role of power and influence. It highlights the role of interest groups, collective bargaining actions and advocacy coalitions and the inherent power dynamics. Basically, this approach explains how policy is viewed as the product of bargaining and negotiation among interest groups. It reflects policy-making as messy and highly contested by competing groups with unequal power relations, thereby leading to policy situations being a temporary settlement. As Gale (2001: 386) suggests, policy contains "crises and other settlements in waiting". Embedded in this approach is the concept of power formations that are exercised and played out. Highlighted here is power struggle which is an indication of the fragility of the policy development process. This is further complicated by the presence of on-going socio-political conflicts and bargaining between interest groups.

This study will apply the interpretive approach to explore how provincial administrators interpret and make sense of policy and how their understanding influences implementation. This approach was chosen because it embodies key concepts such as cognition, learning, sense-making, and autonomy which form basic themes for this research. Interpretive studies assume that people construct and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the world around them. Thus interpretive researchers attempt to understand phenomena through accessing the meanings participants assign to them (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). Meaning is the key concern of this study, therefore, the focus is on how participants perceive their own conceptions of practice. Hence, the selected conceptual framework developed in this study supports evaluating participant perspectives and sense-making.

The unsuccessful implementation of policies can be drawn from a synopsis given by Spillane et al (2002) that the role of human sense-making can easily contribute to unintentional failures of implementation. Therefore, by implication, policy

implementers can fail, not because of their unwillingness to implement, but perhaps because their ability to implement is hampered by their understanding not aligning with the policy-maker's intentions (Brynard, 2010). Additional to this unintended failure was the assumption that upon close scrutiny of policy implementation in the KZN DoE, there may have been other unexplored elements beyond managerial competence or lack thereof.

The calculation of the Funding Norms is left entirely in the hands of PEDs as expressed in terms of section 48(2) of the Amended Norms and Standards for School Funding (RSA, 2006). They use their own interpretation and discretion to apply policy and construct the implementation process of the funding policy so that it expresses their own understanding (mutual adaptation) at provincial and district level.

Elmore (1980) refers to discretion as an adaptive device that individuals will use to understand and act upon policy. Such individuated interpretation could also be the leading influence to policy recontextualisation at each point of its implementation (McLaughlin, 1987). This suggests that individual interpretation leads to adjustment in how policy is implemented. It indicates a possibility that national education department's understanding of the Funding Norms is fundamentally different from how provinces interpret and implement it at local level.

Closely linked to the interpretive approach is the concept of bounded rationality which conceives of individual rationality as concerned with actors trying to adapt to external situations and building and refining their ability to use heuristics (adaptive toolbox) based on past experience (Lane & Hamann, 2003). The assertion here is that individual actors use their previous knowledge and experience of similar situations to inform the decision-making process (Gigerenzer & Selton, 2001, cited in Lane & Hamann, 2003). Therefore, it is vital to note that the concept of understanding plays a crucial role in the implementation of policy.

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which the provincial implementers of policy may have struggled or understood implementation. The study explores this challenge from an interpretive point of view because it gives insight into how individuals within complex policy systems interpret their situations. Very often when policies fail, expertise and capabilities of implementers are called into question, as

Khosa (2003: 49) clarifies “the discrepancies between policy and implementation are largely caused by unrealistic policies and a lack of managerial expertise ” This view is further sustained in what Jansen (2001) and Sehoole (2005) describe as a policy-practice gap in education departments, their weak administration, limited implementation plans and strategies, and poor capacity and resources.

The gap identified in the literature stems from limited theoretical frameworks that thoroughly explain how humans gravitate from sense-making to action and decision-making in a complex environment (Lane & Hamann, 2010). The study makes a brief attempt in presenting the view of policy implementation from an interpretive and cognitive perspective with the belief that with more annotated literature resources the study will be able to look deeper into this issue.

It is important to flesh out the conceptual pathway in which this study is located. The chosen conceptual framework for this study, sense-making, will be discussed in the following section in order to expose the multiple foundations that inform it.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Current usage of the terms ‘conceptual framework’ and ‘theoretical framework’ are vague and indefinite. These terms have in the past been used interchangeably with little variation. In this study, conceptual framework is defined as “a network, or ‘a plane’ of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena” (Jabareen, 2009: 51). A critical discussion of key ideas or concepts will help to explain the central concept of the research. A conceptual framework allows for understanding instead of prediction and will allow me, as the researcher, to modify and expand my knowledge base as I analyse different concepts linked to my study.

This study will use the concepts of interpretation and sense-making in policy implementation as preferred concepts because they adequately cover the discursive nature of policy as a process of on-going interpretation and negotiation that happens among individual actors at different levels of the education system (McLaughlin, 1987; Spillane, 1998). With a slight deviation and reference to bounded rationality and situational awareness, the study aims to explore how individuals make rational

decisions based on their previous knowledge, understanding and experience, and how all this impacts on the implementation process.

Not enough has been written on the topic of sense-making in implementation. As a result, there has been a significant shift from an interest in macro-level and top-down analyses (Rational Choice Theories) that focus on organisational and bureaucratic functions, to accounts that are premised on the role of the individual as an interpreter or sense-maker in the process of policy implementation (Spillane et al, 2002).

Spillane et al (2002: 392) aptly capture the essence of sense-making in policy:

> *Policy messages are not inert, static ideas that are transmitted unaltered into local actors' minds to be accepted, rejected, or modified to fit local needs and conditions. Rather, the agents must first notice, then frame, interpret, and construct meaning for policy messages.*

This study uses sense-making as a blanket conceptual framework that will embody policy formulation, enactment and implementation. The study focuses on implementation as it impacts on organisational systems, processes and actions of individuals within the organisation. The study highlights the importance of policy content, its interpretation and how it relates to implementation, moving away from treating implementation as only an administrative process from the top that ignores the expertise of local implementers (Top-Down Approach).

Key to this study is finding out how governance mechanisms such as grants, contracts and agreements can be affected by the capacity of implementing agents by attempting to make links between their understanding and their practice (Coburn, 2001). The chosen theoretical framework for this study presents the individual implementing agent based on understandings from individual cognition: sense-making.

To firmly locate the concept of sense-making, the study will give descriptions of policy and policy implementation, as well as explicate on the barriers to implementation.

Various disciplines and literature have tried to give descriptions of what policy is and very much like an elephant, policy can only be recognised when seen, making it very difficult to explain in a singular definition (Bowe, Ball & Gold, 1992). Although the

standard academic expectation for quoting scholarly work requires a researcher to refer to recent works, I felt this particular perspective, although pronounced in 1992, spoke to the essence of my thinking and approach around policy as a sense-making process. Policy by its very nature is not what gets done to people, but rather "education policy in the form of legislated text is re-contextualised through different kinds of interpretations" (Bowe et al, 1992: 9).

Flowing from this thinking is the implication that policy is not about implementers following policy text blindly, but also that policy is "a constantly changing series of texts whose expression and interpretation vary according to the context in which the texts are being put into practice" (Bowe et al, 1992: 10). By implication this definition means that changing of text through interpretation necessitates the process of sense-making whereby policy implementers make sense of information at their disposal and connect it with information they have accumulated previously for the purposes of understanding a new situation or phenomena.

Therefore, policy implementers are not silent purveyors of legislated information but are also active thinkers and interlocutors of legislated information ensuring that it reaches its users as originally intended. However, there is another view that presents policy as a series of contrasts, competition, and power struggles, giving the impression that policy is open to challenge and potential instability. Ozga (2000: 2) views policy as:

> *A process rather than a product, involving negotiation, contestations or struggle between different groups who may lie outside the formal machinery of official policy making.*

This study is founded on the role of sense-making in policy and its implementation. My definition of implementation, therefore, will have implied elements of cognition and interpretation because, as Spillane et al (2002: 395) note, "The role of human sense-making can easily contribute to unintentional failures of implementation". This unintended failure can, according to Spillane et al (2002), be influenced by the extent of implementers' understanding which might not be in line with that of the policy-makers' intent and purpose. The role of interpretation determines the likelihood of implementation of policy or not. How implementers weigh the importance of policy is

influenced by their accumulated experience. It is this accumulated experience which implementers rely on as a framework through which their thinking flows. Therefore, any new information that falls outside the implementer's frame of reference runs the risk of rejection, i.e. the understanding of policy is influenced by the process of cognition which ultimately impacts on implementation.

As per Spillane's synthesis of cognition and implementation, policies that fit the interests of implementing agents are more likely to be implemented, which brings in the issue of funding for independent schools and what this theory possibly implies. Regarding the policy of Norms and Standards for School Funding, what is the chance that implementers may have interpreted such a policy with its strong bias for independent schools differently? This policy may not have interested the public officials who felt their mandate was primarily to serve public schools.

2.6 Summary of Research Locally and Abroad on Policy Implementation

Post-1994, the South African policy landscape has produced exhaustive materials and studies focusing on policy practice gaps. Because policy is highly-contested conflicts arise with arguments ranging from policy as text and temporary policy settlements to gaps created through implementation capacity, limited resources, and district expertise (Sayed, 2002).

De Clercq (2010), in her assessment of the South African policy spectrum, notes that there was a high degree of expectation post-1994. It was hoped that policies generated during this period would bring relief, promote quality, equity, and redress.

However, Gumede (2008: 20) in his assessment of the South African policy landscape in a post-1994 era concludes, "there are still many challenges, particularly those that relate to capacity in the public bureaucracy and the functioning of state institutions". Special attention is given to bureaucratic competence as the nerve centre of all government implementation.

Brynard (2005) is of the opinion that while western countries went through different phases of policy implementation research, South Africa post-1994 seems to have been stuck in the implementation era. This view is shared by Khosa (2003) who notes

that implementation challenges experienced in South Africa emanate from lack of managerial expertise and unrealistic policies.

Brynard (2005) broadens the debate on policy implementation by making a comparison between developing and industrialised countries, claiming that local conditions between the societies are substantively different and therefore hard to compare. In addition, there is very little interaction between scholars who study policy implementation locally and those internationally (2005).

While there is validity in these arguments, Brynard (2005: 655) concedes that 'even though specific factors such as political, cultural, and social might impact implementation at local levels, the broad clusters of factors that impact on implementation of social policy are likely to be similar'.

2.7 Summary

This chapter looked at literature around the concept of sense-making, its place within policy, and how it relates to implementation. It expanded on key issues around the role of cognition and its influence over implementation, looking at how previous experience of implementers contributes to the construction of their new understanding which they use to complement their roles in the organisations they serve.

Theoretical framework employed in this study grounded and narrowed down my study into specific categories that allowed me to develop relevant research questions. I was able to determine what the key variables in my research were. Furthermore, the chosen theoretical framework assisted me to develop specific viewpoints that I took in analysing and interpreting data sourced. Literature review allowed me to explore how scholars have addressed my research problem in the past. Therefore, I was able to build new knowledge based on understanding concepts and variables which allowed me to challenge current and historical theoretical assumptions on my study.

The next chapter seeks to consolidate on the concept of sense-making by trying to locate it within the preferred research methodology. It will introduce the concept of qualitative research, case study method, sampling, data collection instruments, issues of validity and reliability, ethical considerations, data analyses, and possible limitations to the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Definition and Use of the Qualitative Research Approach

Research methodology is a way to find out the result of a given problem on a specific matter, which is also referred to as a research problem. Different sources use different types of methods (Goddard & Melville, 2004) in order to systematically solve the research problem. It can also be referred to as a discipline of studying how research is done scientifically. Various steps adopted by the researcher in studying his research problem, along with the logic behind them, are studied (Gomm, 2004).

A qualitative research methodology, which concerns subjective assessments of attitudes, behaviour and opinions, will form the basis of this research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

In giving a brief outline of a qualitative methodology, Wilson (1977, cited in Tuckman, 1988) says it is about events that are studied in natural settings and these events cannot be understood unless one understands how they are perceived and interpreted by the people who participate in them. Qualitative research makes it possible for the collected data to be enriched by describing the context, circumstances, and feelings of the people involved in the study (De Vos, 2002).

Likewise, Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004) define qualitative inquiry as a research approach that has the ability to convert raw empirical data into a thick description that gives an account of the phenomenon. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), qualitative research seeks to explore a specific group of participants and does not generalise the results over the whole population. Furthermore, Henning et al (2004) say qualitative studies usually aim for depth rather than quantity of understanding.

Guba (1981: 76) suggests "it is proper to select that paradigm whose assumptions are best met by phenomenon being investigated". This study is about human learning and the importance of context and its influence on how people understand and make sense of situations. It is also generally recognised that qualitative researchers are concerned with processes rather than simply the outcomes or products.

When the understanding of an event is a function of personal interaction and perception of those in that event, and the description of the processes that characterise the event, qualitative approaches are more appropriate than quantitative designs to provide the insight necessary to understand the participants' role in the event, and their perceptions of the experience.

In light of the descriptions above, it is sensible for this study to use a qualitative approach because of the nature of the research questions:

1. How do local implementers *interpret and make sense* of policy messages as a basis for policy enactment?
2. How are policy messages and instructions *received, interpreted and transmitted* during policy implementation?
3. Are there any *contextual factors* experienced by provincial policy implementers which might influence how policy is implemented at micro level?

This study aims to look into sense-making and how provincial officials, particularly those at mid and lower levels, 'interpret' and 'understand' their duties and responsibilities during implementation. In essence, the study aims to find out, through an interpretive analysis, how provincial officials engage with policies using their prior knowledge and experience as a basis through which to implement policy.

Because the study is located within the qualitative research methodology, it will be difficult to use alternative methods like quantitative methodology. Qualitative methodology will allow for the exploration of individual cognition and rationalisation as well as providing a deep insight into the world of others by exploring their experiences and viewing those experiences from their point of view (Schwandt, 2000). The guiding principle from a constructivist approach is that, the construction of knowledge is a social activity of people in the research process, therefore, concessions have to be made in accommodating their voices and inputs.

3.2 Case Study Method

A case study formed the basis of this research as it allowed for a complete description of a phenomenon within its context (Rule & John, 2011). A case study has been

described as the collection and presentation of information that provides descriptive detail of a phenomenon by examining it through the eyes of the people who populate the unit being studied (Cohen et al, 2007).

Another description of a case study refers to it as “an umbrella term for a family of research methods having in common the decision to focus on inquiry around an instance” (Adelman et al, cited in Bell, 1993: 8). McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 344) refer to the case study as “an in-depth analysis of a single entity”.

Given the interpretive position adopted in this study and the nature of the research question, the case study methodology was the most suitable approach to use because it provided a systematic way to collect data, analyse information, and report the results, thus allowing for an understanding of the research problem in great depth. It helped to focus the study on a single phenomenon and allowed me as a qualitative researcher to elaborate on the complexities of the settings under which the study occurs because human actions are influenced and interpreted on the basis of the context in which they are located (Brown, 2008).

The aim of using a case study methodology was to gain an in-depth understanding of how provincial implementers of policy interpreted their roles and dispensed with their duties. This methodology assisted me as the researcher in investigating participants as ‘real people within their real life context’ (Yin, 2003: 13).

In discussing limits inherent in this methodology, Yin (2003), cautions about the need to master the intricacies of the study’s substantive issues while being patient and dedicated to collecting data carefully and fairly. In other words, it is important not to get lost in mountains of data and lose sight of substantive and critical elements of one’s research. On the contrary, in cases where a case study is not thoroughly conducted, the potential to produce a thin description that only describes a series of events without deeper investigation of issues exists (Henning et al, 2004).

Further limitations involve the issues of generalizability, reliability, and validity. As Hamel (1993: 23) notes, “The case study has basically been faulted for its lack of representativeness and its lack of rigor in the collection, construction, and analysis of the empirical materials”. This lack of rigor is connected to the problem of bias which is likely to be introduced by the researcher’s subjectivity and others involved in the case.

In a critique of randomised controlled trials in educational research, Shields (2007: 12) argues for qualitative case studies:

> *The strength of qualitative approaches is that they account for and include difference ideologically, epistemologically, methodologically and most importantly, humanly. They do not attempt to eliminate what cannot be discounted. They do not attempt to simplify what cannot be simplified. Thus, it is precisely because case study includes paradoxes and acknowledges that there are no simple answers, that it can and should qualify as the gold standard.*

3.3 Sampling

Sampling involves making decisions about which people, settings and behaviour one wishes to employ for the purpose of the research. The chosen sample was picked to satisfy a specific purpose as well as for being familiar with the application of policies at schools; working directly in the education policy environment and in-tune with the independent schools sector (Cohen et al, 2000).

The sample of the study is purposive because the four chosen participants selected from the KZN DoE possess a rich and intimate knowledge of departmental implementation processes and policies.

The chosen sample includes:

- Director: KZN DoE
- Deputy Director
- Circuit Manager
- Assistant Manager.

These people were key to this study because they were the link between schools on the ground, mid-level processes, and higher echelons of power in the province involved in policy formulation. They are what Lane and Hamann (2003) call policy intermediaries, people who are responsible for coherency of policy messages across the system.

The purposive sampling technique, also referred to as judgement sampling, was the deliberate choice of selecting informants due to the qualities the informants possess. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2002).

3.4 Research Instrument for Data Collection

In collecting data, the study uses semi-structured interviews because they are effective for consulting and discussing with key participants – both those involved in making or influencing policy, as well as those impacted by policy. Regarding data collection, Merriam (1998, in Brown, 2008) notes that interviews are the most common source of data in case study research.

This method of interview takes both structured and unstructured forms and therefore uses both closed and open questions. As a result, it has the advantage of both methods of interview. Semi-structured interviews allow for in-depth engagement which in turn leads to more detailed information shared than would have been available through other data collection methods like surveys or questionnaires. The flexibility provided through unplanned questions allows for dynamism and sensitivity towards participants' need to express their opinions without hindrance.

Furthermore, the cordiality provided through interviews allows for spontaneous collection of information in a relaxed atmosphere as opposed to when people are required to complete a survey form.

In order to be consistent with all participants, the interviewer had a set of pre-planned core questions for guidance such that the same areas were covered with each interviewee (Clough, 2002). The standardisation of some of the questions may have led to an increase of data reliability. These interviews gave the KZN PED officials a chance to express their own version of the truth as they experienced it, which was subjective and uncontaminated by my interference as a researcher (Henning et al, 2004). As the interviews progressed, the interviewees were given the opportunity to elaborate or provide more relevant information if they opted to do so.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

According to McMillan & Schumacher (2010) validity is about generalizability of the results. It is a way of finding out if the study was right. Validity attempts to show if the study captured and interpreted the meaning of the phenomenon accurately and to what level it explored what it set out to explore (Vithal & Jansen, 2006). To address validity, it was important for the study to follow the guiding procedures provided by Cohen et al (2007) to report honestly, ensure quality of the participants interviewed, provide in-depth reporting, ensure rich, thick data is collected, and remain objective throughout the study.

Whilst an attempt was made to ensure the study was valid, I was aware that the study could not be 100 percent valid (Cohen et al, 2007). Since I was using one instrument for data collection, namely interviews, there had to be a fairly strong adherence to interpretive validity. As the researcher I reasonably tried to ensure that the key elements to be covered in the research were fairly representative of the wider issue under investigation and that the elements chosen for the research sample were themselves addressed in depth and breadth (Cohen et al, 2007).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are defined as a set of moral principles that offer rules and behavioural expectations about correct conduct (De Vos, 2005). McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 117) define ethics as being “concerned with beliefs about what is right or wrong from a moral perspective”.

To fulfil the ethical requirements, the four fundamental concepts of *anonymity, right to withdraw, confidentiality,* and *informed consent* were adhered to in order to ensure strict ethical compliance.

1. *Anonymity*: To guarantee anonymity, pseudonyms were used to protect the true identity of interviewees.
2. *Right to withdraw*: They (interviewees) were informed of their right to withdraw from the interview process should they deem it necessary to do so.

3. *Confidentiality*: Research always has to guarantee the protection of participants through confidentiality. Confidentiality was guaranteed as all information obtained will be unavailable, other than for what it was intended.
4. *Informed consent*: Informed consent was a key feature in this research process as it allowed interviewees to make up their own minds about participation. The purpose of the research was explained to the participants prior to their involvement, and they were then asked to sign a consent form as a sign of their wilful participation. No one was forced to participate.

Before I conducted the interviews I applied for the issuing of ethical clearance. This was granted by the University of the Witwatersrand Ethics Committee. In addition, the KZN DoE granted me prior permission to conduct research using four members of their staff.

3.7 Data Analyses

Interpretive researchers attempt to develop their data through direct interaction with the phenomenon being studied. A critical aspect of data analysis in a qualitative case study is the search for meaning through direct interpretation of what is observed by the researcher as well as what is experienced and reported by the subjects. Bogdan and Biklen (1998:145) define qualitative data analysis as “working with the data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesising them, and searching for patterns”.

The data was coded paying particular attention to recurring themes. I used qualitative content analysis to analyse data collected through interviews, this involved: beginning with open coding, reading through the entire text to form a global view of the content; moving to segment units of meaning through sentences or phrases; labelling these units of meaning, grouping them into codes; and finally into categories. The final task was to try and see the whole and use that as a basis for the study findings (Henning et al, 2004).

The prime objective of analysis of qualitative data is to discover among other things patterns, concepts, themes, and meanings. In case study research, Yin (2003) discusses searching the data for ‘patterns’ that may explain or identify causal links in

the database. In the process, the researcher focuses on the whole data first, then attempts to take it apart and re-construct it again more meaningfully. Categorisation helps the researcher make comparisons and contrasts between patterns, to reflect on certain patterns and complex threads of the data and make sense of them.

The above-mentioned phases of data analysis were used to answer the following sub-questions:

- The role of provincial leadership and how it impacts on organisational and bureaucratic norms and its influence on policy implementation at local level.
- The role of the individual implementers as interpreters in the process of policy implementation and their involvement during policy formulation.
- Multiplicity of roles, professional background, departments, accountability as it relates to the diversity of implementers, and its impact on policy outcomes.
- Implementers' perception on professional development and accountability.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

While a case study offers deeper insights into the context and behaviour of the studied phenomena, it is rarely generalizable and is bounded (Brown, 2008). A further limitation of this study may be around issues of dependability of government officials as they can provide limited or false information to protect the integrity of their institutions.

3.9 Summary

This chapter described the research methodology used in this study and highlighted the geographical area where the study took place, as well as the study design, population and sampling. In addition, the chapter outlined the data collection instruments and how these were used to maintain issues of validity and reliability. Chapter 4 looks at how data was collected, analysed, and presented; this will be attempted through analysing research participants by comparing their thoughts with the nature of the research questions and purpose of this study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA COLLECTION – PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This study investigates how policy is interpreted by different government officials at different levels of operation. It seeks to ascertain the role of cognition as a contributory factor towards decision-making processes that took place at each level of the provincial bureaucracy. The study looks deep at how each official interviewed made sense of policy text, their attitude towards it, and their subsequent implementation of it.

This chapter tries to match what literature says about cognition with the researcher's own findings from research, looking at how participants related with the concept of cognition and sense-making as foundational concepts contained in this study.

4.2 Restating Aims and Objectives of the Study

This study aims to contribute to an understanding of the interpretive processes that provincial education officials possibly undergo when they implement the Norms and Standards funding policy. Using the construct of cognitive sense-making, this study explores how education officials at provincial level interacted with policies in order to match the contexts in which they worked and how this influenced the outcomes of policy.

Two major objectives contained in this study are:

1. To explore implementers' understanding of policy messages and their approach to implementation.
2. To determine the nature of the attitudes of KZN DoE district officials towards the implementation of policies in schools, particularly independent schools that receive government subsidy.

4.3 The Key Questions of the Study

The key research question of the study is: How do local implementers interpret and make sense of policy messages as a basis for policy enactment?

This question suggests there is potential for local officials to understand policy messages in different ways, and not necessarily those that state policy-makers had intended. Implementers act and construct meanings on the basis of their previous interpretations and knowledge of local conditions.

4.3.1 Research sub-questions

1. How are policy messages and instructions received, interpreted and transmitted during policy implementation?
2. How policy implementation may be improved at local levels through an analysis of how implementers make sense of policy pronouncement

4.4 Summary of Data Collection

According to Brown (2008) the process of data collection focuses on the skills of the investigator. It includes the ability to ask questions, to listen actively, to adapt to unforeseen circumstances that may arise, to grasp the issues being addressed, and to identify personal bias. Based on this definition, it was expressly difficult at times for me as a researcher to listen actively while internally my thoughts were brewing with prejudicial questions and stereotypes I had formulated prior to my interviews. There were various unforeseen circumstances that I had to contend with, including the last minute unavailability of targeted interviewees which at times gave the impression of resistance. However, despite all the challenges, the actual process of data collection unfolded well with few disruptions. The participants that I interviewed were of a high calibre as will be demonstrated in the following sections.

4.5 The Research Participants

The research participants were drawn from different levels of operations and responsibilities in order to reflect different cognitive strengths and abilities imbued in

each provincial operational level of implementation. The participants had access and were exposed to all sorts of provincial policies which they had to execute in one way or the other. Therefore, all participants had the opportunity to express their understanding of policies and their implementation from a unique and personal perspective as influenced by their authority and responsibilities.

The four research participants were drawn from the provincial head office, different divisions within the head office, as well as circuit management on the bottom level of provincial bureaucracy. This choice allowed for the exposé of different attitudes, interpretation and implementation capacity of each provincial implementation strand and offered varied inputs as well as converging views on how policies were interpreted and implemented.

4.5.1 Educational background of participants

While this was unintended, the educational background of participants played an indirect role in the entire interview process. This was evident as each participant spoke with relative ease and grasp of issues under discussion. Such understanding led to each participant speaking with authority and articulation. Their grasp of issues raised and experience in the education sector contributed to what qualitative researchers call a 'thick description' whereby our interaction during interviews yielded the kind of responses that were deeply thought through and carefully worded. Almost all participants in the research highly value the role of education and the consequent importance of their jobs.

4.5.2 Age and experience of participants

All interviewed participants are above 40 years of age. Participant 1 has been in the education environment for 23 years. Participant 3 has a Master's in Education and has been working at the provincial office for over six years; prior to that he was principal, deputy principal and Head of Department (HoD) before working for KZN DoE. Participant 4 started out as a teacher, then HoD, deputy principal, principal, circuit manager, has Master's in Education, an MBA and is currently studying for a Doctoral degree in Education. Participants 3 and 4 have also been in the education environment for over 23 years. These are people with wide-ranging educational experience and expertise from human resources, curriculum development, to leadership and

management. Again, their experience and maturity contributed towards the richness of our conversations.

4.6 Description of the Collected Data

It was quite evident from the research how officials interviewed understood policy and how perhaps their understanding influenced its subsequent implementation. Initially, I picked one area of policy as it related to KZN independent schools and used it as a single point of entry into the KZN provincial offices. I suppose, influenced by my background as an employee in the independent schools sector, I had assumed that somehow there would be an obvious link between late payment of grants and organisational and bureaucratic competence. Admittedly, I had hoped for some discovery pointing towards technical competence.

As it turns out from the research, there were far more deeply entrenched meanings and implications embedded in the provincial bureaucratic system. I noted how each area of operation (as expressed through participants) was heavily laden with politics, power dynamics, and different interpretations of duties and responsibilities. This was particularly noted when participants at provincial head office did not see the need to extend their roles and functions beyond their own parameters. They had a firm belief that each layer of provincial operation was capable and sufficiently resourced to deal with issues pertaining to it. This view is closely linked to the rational choice theories that assume policy to have a coherent intent (Lane & Hamann, 2003).

Of great significance was to note agreements among participants on the need for capacity development and decentralisation of power in order to eliminate contextual constraints, which ranged from leadership empowerment, lack of funding (for extended programmes), to limited communication.

According to participant 3, there was a glaring need to capacitate officials (especially those in authority) in all levels of their zones of enactment. Participant 3 felt the whole implementation model needed a review, which would allow for different departments within the KZN DoE to work in conjunction to achieve key objectives aimed at the core business of the KZN DoE, i.e. teaching and learning. Participants 1 and 2 concurred with this view, calling for a sharper focus on the need for separation of powers, such

as with the judiciary, administration and legislature. They felt that over the years such powers have been convoluted leading to contestation rather than fluidity of implementation. Sometimes some departments were perceived to be more powerful than others, thereby nullifying their operational influence and impact.

There was also a need for top organisational leadership to recognise and reward talent. Participant 2 felt the institutional knowledge of long-serving members of the department needed to be rewarded accordingly. The feeling from participant 2 was that those who had served different political and government dispensations needed to be used thoroughly for their accumulated knowledge, skill, and expertise because their understanding of policy and its implementation had rich historical background that current management could tap into.

Participant 4 felt there was a greater need for decentralisation of power in order to allow districts and circuits to use their own discretion when making day-to-day decisions without referring them to head office. He felt that at circuit level, government officials needed to exercise their own authority which in his view would strengthen policy practice. His call for leadership empowerment was stimulated by the belief that circuit and district leadership had the capacity to interpret their responsibilities in line with intended policy outcomes, not just the regurgitation of facts. This view is similar to that espoused by Spillane et al (2002), focusing on situated cognition and individual interpretation as core elements when one looks at the policy implementation process. Furthermore, participant 4 felt that over-concentration of power in one area had propensity for underperformance, because in his view undisputed power that is not democratically dispensed with might attract despotic elements during the implementation process.

4.7 Data Efficacy and Limitations

The data for this study was collected directly from different sources and levels within the KZN DoE resulting in information gathered being appropriate for the study. In other words, the source of the challenge came from within the KZN DoE as well as the solution for that challenge. The use of purposive sampling seemed to have assisted me as the researcher to focus directly on the source of the problem by using people

who had insight into the nature of the problem presented to them. This participant insight allowed for focused and productive engagement with the topic at hand. The participants were knowledgeable about the organisational structure of the KZN DoE and its wide range of policies. Their experience, expertise and knowledge of the KZN DoE contributed to valuable exchanges of rich data during interviews.

A limitation of the study is the issue of generalizability. The study was based in KZN and within a small number of participants. However, this does not mean the information shared could not be similar to other departments in other provinces with similar issues.

During the preparation for the interviews unmitigated changes occurred. I could not get the original people I had sought to interview and there were last minute changes that almost frustrated the whole data-collection process. There was a sense that perhaps the untimely changes could negatively influence the substance of data I would receive from participants. At some point there was a prejudicial sense on my part that perhaps I was given junior members of staff who would not be able to deal with the elaborate nature of the research conducted. However, as it turned out, I ended up with participants who had a glaring understanding of issues raised.

Furthermore, I had anticipated finding a stand-alone department that dealt specifically with policy. It turns out there are different structural arrangements that necessitated interviews with personnel from other departments, which seemed unrelated to my study. Upon close scrutiny, however, it became evident how these departments contribute to policy implementation. For example, I could not fathom the role of human resources in policy, meanwhile performance management and monitoring sits at the heart of all implementation within the KZN DoE. Therefore, I had to deal with the reality that the KZN DoE has different structural and organisational arrangements that are not familiar to an outsider like me. In terms of my research, I found myself having to reorganise my line of questioning in order to align it to the purposes of my study in the wake of new research participants.

4.8 Sub-question 1: Data Presentation and Analysis

How are policy messages and instructions received, interpreted and transmitted during policy implementation?

It was evident from the data collected that in terms of policy implementation there were structures in place within the KZN DoE that gave expression to it. Obvious was the fact that implementation of policy followed a supremely top-down approach whereby the provincial head office was the only place where it was initiated and sub-divisions underneath had to follow it through. As participant 1 expressed it, “policy is a guide that should be followed by everybody, it is a tool that prevents everyone from doing their own thing”. This statement shows there is a bureaucratic attitude that looks at policy as a mechanism to control the behaviour of people in an establishment

However, of great interest to me was participant 1’s subsequent view of her understanding of policy. Further to her previous assertion, she made an example of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing scenario to show the complexity of policy. She asserted that the policy of RDP was meant to alleviate the issue of housing shortage in South Africa. Yet within the same policy there were gaps that left those employed people who did not qualify for an RDP house also not earning enough to qualify for a bond. Participant 1 therefore surmised, “Policy does not allow you to deal with the situation in front of you because you will be in conflict with it”.

Interesting enough was the description and understanding of policy as pronounced by participant 2. She described policy as “a tool developed to solve a problem”. According to this view, policy is largely developed to address a need or a prevailing situation. This view was marginally different to that of participant 1 who looked at policy as “a guide”. These two responses showed that although these participants may be placed in similar workspaces, their understanding of policy was different which in part was likely to influence how they would implement it in their respective portfolios.

Regarding the issue of policy transmission or communication there was agreement that before any policy could be developed or implemented there was a need for thorough consultation. However, as participant 1 pointed out “due to the high volume of employees in the KZN DoE not everyone would be expected to attend policy

consultations except those who held critical positions in the hierarchy". Participant 1 further elaborated that once senior people had attended such consultations it was in their discretion whether or not to report back to various constituencies. A point echoed by participant 3 who felt there was not enough consultation made by senior officials, such as directors.

This lack of proper consultation according to participant 3 weighed heavily on those beneath such senior officials (deputy directors). As a result, there was a strong perception from participant 3 that deputy directors were made to take on responsibilities including implementation of policy without thorough communication and exchange of information. At times this would lead to delayed performance or none whatsoever, thereby leading to unfulfilled objectives and promises.

Participant 4 felt there was need for improved communication between the provincial office and circuits. The summation given was that issues brought up from school and circuit levels took long to reach head office as they would first be attended to at circuit level and then passed on to district level before finally reaching head office. In most cases the original situation would by then have changed.

A classic example given by participant 4 was that of teacher employment, "teaching posts should be advertised locally at circuit level and allow people there to make their own decisions". He felt that advertising posts in the provincial bulletin was a long and cumbersome process that was plagued with inherent delays. He pronounced, "by the time the circuits are allowed to submit their chosen candidates the wait would have been too long and then negatively affecting the teaching and learning processes in the affected schools".

4.9 Sub-question 2: Data Presentation and Analysis

How policy implementation may be improved at local levels through an analysis of how implementers make sense of policy pronouncement

The salient role of political constraints experienced by implementers was one key characteristic that emerged in my discussions with participants. It is the same consciousness I carried as the researcher as I approached the KZN DoE for

permission to conduct interviews. This does not imply that my political consciousness determined the outcome of my research, neither does it imply there were frugal answers given by the participants for fear of political backlash. However, there was a high degree of intellectual interaction that, among other things, acknowledged the eminent role and influence of politics in policy.

This politics I refer to above is not only about party politics but more about organisational politics as it relates to the power individuals hold in their positions. Power politics was seen as a barrier in the sense that top officials held hereditary powers that traditionally allowed them to dispense with their duties in a manner that made them unchallengeable. Their impenetrability limited constant interaction with their subordinates, which in turn impacted negatively on the flow of information between leaders at the apex of different departments and their subordinates at the bottom. If any interaction did happen it would still be determined by the level of authority that each person carried and less on expertise and input shared.

Participant 2 highlighted the importance of funding as a contributory factor to successful policy implementation. Previous issues I raised regarding insufficient communication sometimes emanated as a result of the shortage of funding. According to participant 2, at a practical level, limited funds meant that officials were limited in their mobility. Due to cuts in budgets, travelling and accommodation became restricted, thereby making it hard for officials to spend sufficient time interacting with their subsidiary offices that may be located in faraway places. For example, there would not be enough in the budget to allow officials to run a series of workshops for a number of days for sufficient training on a particular policy.

4.10 Summary

This chapter explored the nature and essence of collected data by analysing and aggregating inputs made during research and attempting to align it with the original study objectives. Chapter 5 will further explore the implications of the study by way of the summary and conclusions that I as a researcher reach.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

As a point of departure, this particular study sought to explore the role of sense-making (cognition) in policy by looking at its influence and impact during implementation. Literature reviewed indicated a strong connection between how policy is interpreted initially and its subsequent implementation. To understand all of this, I will now share my own synthesis of the processes I went through, discussions that developed, implications and conclusions reached.

5.2 Summary of the Research

The study made an attempt to highlight an area of research in policy that I believe remains least explored; and that is the area of sense-making in policy. The findings proved that implementers of policy are generally thinking people with their own ideas who need to be given a supportive platform through which to find expression. The aforementioned supportive platform could be enacted through good leadership. It is hoped that evolved leadership structures would allow policy implementers an opportunity to exercise their options and enjoy space to take the initiative without being wary of any form of backlash.

While the study made mention of private schools as a point of entry into the world of policy implementation in KZN, there was automatic consensus from research participants that emerged showing that such schools needed to be treated collectively as part of the system and not as an isolated domain. This does not denounce the importance of having a sector that deals with private schools in particular. During the interviews, it became clear that the need for independent thought and space to exercise it counted more than payments made or not made to subsidised private schools. In other words, the preliminary need among implementers was that of duty flexibility and less on established bureaucratic systems.

Furthermore, there was evidence emanating from interviews pointing to the role of cognition among implementers I interviewed and how they were able to use their

intelligence in performing their designated roles and responsibilities. The actual interview process assisted the researcher in digging for information which showed that while the province may have been implicated in legal wrangling with private schools, on the ground there are highly intelligent men and women performing their duties with absolute care and diligence.

While the study may have been positioned in a pre-emptive trajectory that hoped for results located within private schools, the process unfolded in a manner that shifted towards other areas that were not anticipated by the researcher. There were significant findings that emerged during the course of the study which will be discussed in the following section.

5.3 Discussion of Emerging Findings of the Research

This study investigates the role of sense-making in policy. From my interactions with research participants there was an emergent pattern which I would like to present in a model that will show what I see as the key elements of sense-making in policy. The elements include:

(i) People's own dispositions: The participants interviewed were generally content with their jobs and responsibilities. This was evidenced by the length of time which some of them had served in the DoE, for example participants 1, 3 and 4 had each served more than 20 years in their respective designations. Despite the intrinsic politics, all participants felt they were making a contribution to the education sector in general.

(ii) Their work environment: Their professional context was defined by political undertones that permeated throughout their work environment. While there was a prominent bureaucratic feature to their responsibilities, there was also an innate political presence that was indicative of the governing party's policies, interests and agendas. Therefore, as employees they had to develop an ambidextrous approach to their work, which would allow them to fulfil their job requirements (technical) within a highly politicised ethos.

(iii) The way the policy is communicated: The KZN DoE like any other arm of government is a bureaucratic institution, information always comes from the top and

cascades downwards. Each level of operation in the provincial structure receives information through its higher echelon of power and distributes it to lower ranking levels. Therefore, policy is communicated from top to bottom through senior personnel responsible for carrying-out such functions.

(iv) The pressures around implementation: It is vital to note that although the participants served under the similar authority (the KZN DoE), their conflicting views on implementation of policy reflected on how they performed their duties. In other words, how these officials interpreted policy could be associated with their pre-existing knowledge, which effectively influenced their practices. How they interpreted, adapted and transformed policy messages impacted on how policy was enacted (Coburn, 2001).

Policy was enacted differently at each level of its implementation. A point raised by participant 3 who felt there was no congruency between directors at the top and their deputies. According to this participant, from time to time directors would not sufficiently capture and transmit information from meetings to their subordinates. This insufficient flow of information created a possible gap in implementation, thereby affecting policy outcomes.

Sometimes pressure was created due to delays in implementing some of the duties at district and circuit levels. As participant 4 highlighted, there is the need to have full disciplinary processes implemented at local level. For example, by the time the district or HoD responded to the suspension of a learner the matter was long overdue and a new situation had arisen.

5.4 Key Conclusions of the Research

Bowe & Ball (1992: 22) have what I regard as a perfect summary for my study about interpretation and re-contextualisation of policy. Pin-pointing to the fact that interpretations of policy are created from personal, subjective frames of reference, they note:

> *Practitioners do not confront policy texts as naïve readers; they come from histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own, they have*

> *vested interests in the meaning of policy. Policies will be interpreted differently as the histories, experiences, values, purposes and interests which make up the arena differ. The simple point is that policy writers cannot control the meanings of their texts. Part of their texts will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, responses may be frivolous, etc.*

One of the more significant observations coming from my research is the need for recognition of the individual policy implementers, specifically at local level, as sense-makers of policy. This thinking comes from a school of thought that says in order for policy to succeed it must be implemented by active and involved participants. Coburn (2001) argues that leaders who gave their staff an opportunity to be involved through participating in social processes of interpretation and adaptation, as well as shaping access to policy ideas, were more likely to experience successful implementation of policy.

The excerpt from Bowe & Ball (1992) points to the reality of policy implementation as a multi-dimensional process that relies on its implementers to be active and engaged participants. Therefore, in the policy dialogues at national level there has to be strong advocacy for the voice of local implementers to be heard. Such presence will neutralise the current over-bearing role of political influence and bring in the element of practicality (as experienced on the ground) at planning stages.

Context of policy is an important feature that needs consideration during policy design and subsequent implementation. People in these contexts need to be given the power to transform policy objectives into measurable outcomes. The effectiveness of policy lies in the hands of empowered intermediaries and strong leadership from the top. Devolution of power will help to strengthen every level where policy is implemented. Matland (1995) identifies two levels of implementation, macro and micro implementation. The former is where the centrally located actors devise a government programme; while the latter is where local level actors react to these plans and develop their own plans and implement them. In this study, all four participants unanimously agreed to the need for autonomy that will allow central actors to take authority and decisions that will suit their local context.

What is my study saying about the role of local policy implementers as sense-makers? There are three important areas of focus that must be noted in order for locality of action to be effective:

1. Allow local knowledge to flourish.
2. Decentralise decision-making powers (advertising posts/appointments).
3. Capacitate district directorates (training and support).

Intellectual autonomy, power dynamics and development were identified as key areas that need attention in order to allow for individual brilliance to emerge within the confines of legislated structures and processes.

Private schools are part of the whole not an isolated element that should be given specialised treatment. Although this may be the case, there is evidence to suggest that some private schools together with former model C schools are advanced in their operations and therefore do not need to be co-opted with schools that require extra support. In other words, private schools need to be given room to manoeuvre and excel, and provincial government needs to ensure (as they would to everybody) that such schools are treated fairly within their constitutional rights and responsibilities.

5.5 Reflections on the Research Process

Research is a lengthy and unpredictable process that can lead you as the researcher on an unplanned journey. Initially when I began the study I was influenced by a particular set of thoughts which as I approached the end had completely changed. I found that while I had read up and explored the literature, it did not compare to my interaction with the participants. They were prolific in their thinking and their views were not bound by literature. I found myself having to originate my own thoughts around the issues that were raised during the interviews.

This thesis is on sense-making in policy. I realised indirectly I was going through the exact processes I was trying to investigate. I spent a lot of time trying to figure out the essence of the data I had collected and trying to make sense of the information in front of me. In other words, as a researcher I also became a sense-maker.

Research is an open-ended process that always leaves room for further investigation. While a researcher can reach conclusions, it is patently clear that those conclusions are temporary and not static. A particular challenge for me as a novice researcher was trying to reach finality. What I did not realise was that in research you hold temporary conclusions that will change in the wake of new information.

In addition, the intimacy of the actual interviewing process leaves both you and the participants vulnerable. This vulnerability was experienced as the participants openly and honestly shared their views with me through the trust they gave me. I felt their sincerity and at times I found myself acceding to it and slightly forgetting my main focus and objectives, which was, to extract as much information as I honestly and adequately could.

Research is a dynamic process. No amount of preparation can prepare you for how it (research) unfolds. There is a certain lack of control as you interact openly with research participants. While at times as a researcher you are expected to be in control, true engagement with the study forces you to leave the room for what I call intellectual honesty, a process that develops out of deep engagement with the study without interrupting its value through controlled interventions.

5.6 Key Implications of the Study

5.6.1 At policy level

There is a pressing need to revise how policy is designed so that it will allow for more fluidity in its implementation. Currently, policy is designed to promote bureaucracy and administration. In most instances policy is simply posited as a set of procedures and outcomes that barely consider the role of sense-making and impact of the actual interpretative processes during implementation.

I observed in my study how some of the participants viewed policy as a formal authority that must be followed without question. Such reverence for policy helped to preserve its rigidity and regulatory character with less consideration given to it as it constantly evolved at each level of implementation.

First, it has to be acknowledged that policy development happens within a highly political environment fiercely contested by different interest groups and power brokers.

Second, policies can no longer afford to remain regulatory tools aimed at controlling practices. Provisions should be made to fuse the top-down character of policy development with its bottom-up equivalent.

Third, the central role of the provincial DoE cannot be the only key source of influence in policy implementation, but allowances should be made to draw significantly from the knowledge and expertise of those at local practice (bottom up). Therefore, sense-making of policy can no longer be the sole reserve of those at the top but a symbiotic process between policy-makers, implementers and recipients at school level.

5.6.2 At implementation level

There is a level of dynamism that needs to be prevalent in the implementation of policy highlighted by the presence of situational expertise and individual experience (Levinson & Sutton, 2001). There has to be high degree of vibrant authority enjoyed by mid-level policy intermediaries because at their level, “Policy is being made as it is being administered and administered as it is being made” (Anderson, 1975, in Van Wyk, 1999: 116).

This means that mid-level policy intermediaries make sense of policy as they implement it. They develop strategies that allow them to adapt policies imposed from the top thus making it bearable for them to cope with multiple challenges inherent in their line of work. Such vibrancy can be experienced through devolution of power and capacitation of mid-managers of policy to take more responsibility and authority of operational issues without constantly referring them to head office for final approval.

There has to be more acknowledgement given to the role of what Lipsky (1980) calls street-level bureaucrats – government officials tasked with the actual delivery of policy into practice. In reference to this study, all participants in my research could be deemed street-level bureaucrats because they occupy positions at district and circuit levels which are lower on-the-ground levels that deal directly with recipients of policy – schools.

5.7 Implications for Further Research

It became evident during the course of my research that it is necessary to make further probes on the issue of sense-making in policy drawing largely from the knowledge and experience of local implementers. Such a study will be particularly beneficial to policy-makers and education authorities who undertake policy formulation and supervision of implementation.

The proposition to advance this study to national level means there will be involvement of other provinces. It will be an interesting dynamic to look at contextual issues of other policy actors in different provincial scenarios and use their experience to formulate sizeable conclusions on the role and impact of sense-making during the policy process.

In supporting my assertion for further study in understanding policy from local contexts, I will quote Smit (2003:29) who asserts, “micro level understanding of policy implementation may narrow the gap between policy as theoretical text and policy as practice”.

5.8 Concluding Remarks

This study intended to explore local contexts and the role of individual cognition (sense-making) during the process of policy implementation. It was an exploratory study that searched for possible sources of implementation challenges that are experienced by a wide variety of local policy actors at different levels of operation. As McLaughlin (2000, quoted in Blignaut 2008) aptly put it, whatever happens as a result of a policy depends on how policy is interpreted and transformed at each point in the process and also on the response of the individual at the end of the line.

Emerging from this research was the discovery which confirmed that implementers of policy in my study were thoughtful and active individuals with a strong understanding of policy implementation processes. To confirm this assertion, in a separate study conducted on district administrators’ sense-making, it became evident that they interpreted and adapted state instructional policies in ways that were influenced by

their own understandings about subject matter and appropriate instruction (Spillane, 2000a, 2000b; Spillane & Callahan, 2000, quoted in Coburn, 2001).

McLaughlin (2000, quoted in Blignaut, 2008: 117) supports this view by claiming, “Policy can’t mandate what matters because what matters requires local capacity, will, expertise, resources, support, and discretionary judgement”. Therefore, in order to improve policy practice there will have to be a healthy measure of empowerment of local policy implementers by creating an enabling environment, characterised by:

- Collegiality – allowing professional interaction among policy implementers at different levels of local governance structures.
- Allowing local implementers the freedom to make contributions towards operational decision-making.
- Supportive leadership at provincial and district levels.
- Creating opportunities for professional growth and nurturing individual development.

As participant 4 aptly put it, “structure influences performance”. There was a mild concession from some of the participants that how things are currently organised leaves certain processes (including policy implementation) exposed to lack of rigour and pre-planning. This was in part attributed to the absence of effective leadership amid a highly politicised work context.

This is not to imply that the entire provincial leadership is weak, but rather that there is a need to strengthen leadership roles and functions in tandem with implementers’ expertise on the ground and in the whole system of governance. This leadership overhaul could happen if knowledgeable bureaucrats and implementers are given sufficient authority to deal effectively with issues that directly affect them in their local practices.

Whilst there was acknowledgement that policy is highly contested (De Clercq, 2010), there was also realisation that its contestation needs to leave room for effective implementation. In other words, there needs to be a separation of powers and responsibilities so that political influence will allow legislative authority to impact effectively on operations. As pointed out by participant 1 there does not seem to be

separation of these powers and roles which has the negative effect of allowing politics to infiltrate the realm of implementation.

It appears that while there are many challenges facing the provincial leadership, according to participants 1 and 2, there is a lot that needs to be positively acknowledged. For example, a change in politics has ushered in a new narrative in policy implementation aimed at finding corrective measures to undo systemic damage inflicted during the apartheid era. Furthermore, the province is well-endowed with experienced policy implementers who have accumulated a lot of skills and expertise which can contribute to the province's collective intelligence. There are also opportunities for the much-needed transfer of skills between new and old implementers.

Moreover, this rich repertoire of skills and expertise within the provincial structures needs to be matched by comparative leadership that will unleash the best results from implementers at all levels of operation. This view was strongly shared by both participants 3 and 4 who were adamant about the role of professional autonomy but within fair and reasonable parameters. This professional space will result in operational efficiency as implementers will be free to adopt or adapt policy into their local practice.

All the factors previously mentioned are dependent on transformed leadership. By transformed leadership I mean leaders who themselves are on par or work collaboratively with their subordinates and who will create sufficient opportunities for staff development. These are leaders who will ensure a consistent flow of information and the creation of development opportunities for employees based purely on technical abilities that need to be upgraded outside the political milieu.

The separation of powers from political enclaves inherent within the provincial structures will lead to enhanced opportunities for staff development. Of greater importance is the need to invest in people who are the main drivers of implementation, because governments die or succeed through the services they offer or fail to offer. Strong leadership, in my view, will operate from a pre-emptive angle which constantly anticipates problems before they multiply into insurmountable challenges; and that is

why it is important for policy-makers to work collaboratively with implementers at the bottom.

In conclusion, the argument advanced by this study points to the recognition of local policy implementers (at different levels of their operation) as individual sense-makers who must be given authority and space to put into practice their own interpretations of policy duties and requirements. It is hoped that autonomy granted to implementers will allow them to better understand the nature of changes sought by policy-makers.

The study made a concerted effort to show the role of sense-making during the process of policy implementation. In the traditions of interpretivist paradigm, the study allowed me to explore sense-making as co-created by research participants. The purpose of the study was not to generalise but to explore different interpretations placed by research participants on the subject under investigation.

Conclusion that could be drawn from the study suggests that how policy is interpreted has a significant bearing on how it is implemented. Therefore, implementation of policy becomes a flexible process of an individual's interpretation of policy text rather than mere following of instruction.

Sense-making is a multi-dimensional process influenced by multiple thought development processes that occur among individuals. Such cognitive constructions lead to diversity of interpretations occurring at once during the process of policy implementation. This intellectual freedom as expressed during policy implementation encouraged high degree of discretionary judgement among implementers.

This freedom of thought and interpretation allowed empowered policy intermediaries to function as reflective practitioners who were enabled to transform policy objectives into measurable outputs.

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Appendix A: Written consent



PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called: **Policy interpretation***: A case study of how KZN provincial officials apply the Norms and Standards for School Funding in KZN independent schools.*

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO

Permission to be interview

I would like to be interviewed for this study	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

Appendix B: Information letter to directorate participants



Directorate Participants

DATE: 11 August 2014

Dear Participant

My name is Xolani Majola and I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am doing research on Policy Interpretation: *A case study of how KZN provincial officials apply the Norms and Standards for School Funding in KZN independent schools*

My research involves running semi-structured interviews with relevant personnel to ascertain their understanding of the policy environment in which they work. These interviews will give the KZN DoE officials a chance to express their own version of how they understand and experience policy, which will be independent of my subjectivity or interference.

I was wondering whether you would mind if I conducted a brief interview with you so that I could get a full understanding of your role, interpretation and impact on the implementation of policy within your scope of work. My study intends to ensure that all voices are heard and given expression within the policy implementation realm.

Your name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Your participation is voluntary, so you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and you will not be paid for this study.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

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Xolani Majola (Researcher)

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Appendix C: Interview schedule on directorate participants

Interview Schedule

To: Senior managers and related staff

Biographical details

1. What are your professional / academic qualifications?
2. How long have you served in this position?
3. Which position did you hold before this one and how long were you there for?

Institutional knowledge and understanding

4. What do you understand to be the role of policies in the department (What purpose do they serve)?
5. Is there effective communication between yourself, senior managers in your department and other senior people at provincial level (as it relates to departmental policies)?
6. How often do you hold meetings in this department and what are they usually for?
7. What is the procedure during crisis situations, in other words, how does your office deal with crisis management?
8. How does this department deal with the sharing of information from the province? Elaborate.

Personal skill, knowledge and experience

9. What was your motivation for taking up this position?
10. What type of challenges have you had since being in the position? Elaborate.
11. How do you keep yourself up-to-date with the latest developments within your portfolio?

12. Can you describe the working relationship between yourself, people who report to you and those you report to?

13. What characteristics does someone in your position need to have?

Attitudes towards policy and policy implementation

14. What do you think is the role of senior (provincial) management in the implementation of policies?

15. What kind of support does provincial management give to districts on the implementation of policies?

16. What is the district process used to ensure that staff make sense of policies as they are transferred from the provincial office?

17. How are staff kept motivated in implementing policies at district level? Give examples.

18. Why do policies sometimes don't get implemented? Elaborate.

19. How do you monitor the implementation of policies in your department?

Attitudes and understanding towards policy of Norms and Standards for School Funding and implementation

20. What do you think the policy of Norms and Standards is about in general?

21. Do you think it's been a worthwhile policy to have so far? Elaborate.

22. Do you think private schools should benefit the same way as public schools do from the policy of the Norms and Standards?

23. In your view, should policies be adjusted or perhaps implementers must stick to the original mandate of the policy? Explain.

24. In your own assessment, are you satisfied with how both districts and provincial offices have been able to handle their implementation tasks?

25. If you were to change or innovate on the implementation of policies, which areas would you change and why?