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MPUMALANGA SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES FOR IMPROVED CLASSROOM PRACTICE

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of Witwatersrand, as a 50% requirement for the degree of Master of Management (Public and Development Sector Monitoring and Evaluation)

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Abstract

In spite of the introduction of various teacher development policies and the investment of huge resources into professional and academic development of teachers in South African schools, poor learning outcomes still dominate the public schooling system. The purpose of this descriptive study was to describe the Mpumalanga secondary school teachers' experiences of professional development initiatives in terms of usable and transferrable knowledge and skills for improved classroom practice. One of the main findings of the research was that the professional teacher development initiatives, as experienced by the sampled teachers, have positive developmental effects on the professional growth of teachers in general. It was also established that the two main challenges that discouraged teachers from attending the initiatives were their non-involvement in planning and facilitation of the initiatives. Therefore, their experiences, whether positive or negative, are dependent, inter alia, on them being involved at the initial conception and implementation of such programmes.

Declaration

I, declare that this write-up is my own, unaided work. I have not submitted this write-up before for any other purpose apart from the course at the WITS School of Governance.

_____

Nephtal Dumisan Magagula

04 December 2021

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my late father and late brother for the unconditional support and encouragement. Even though we were from the poor family they kept the light on to enable me to pursue my interest in education; without them this would not have been realised.

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I wish to extend my appreciation to my supportive family especially my lovely wife for supporting and affording me the opportunity and time to concentrate on my studies.

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Glossary

Circuit Office

Local hubs of District Education Department and provide the vital lines of communication between the District Office and their respective education institutions and the public

Cloud Storage

A cloud computing model that stores data on the internet through a cloud computing provider who manages and operates data storage as service.

Curriculum Implementer

Official offering support and monitor the implementation of the national curriculum policy.

Deputy Chief Education Specialist

Official offering support and monitor the implementation of the national curriculum policy including management and administration.

District Office

Local hubs of Provincial Education Department and provide the vital lines of communication between the provincial head office and their respective education institutions and the public

External Hard Drive Storage

A hard disk that comes in a case that connects to a computer with a USB cable.

Interview Schedule

Another procedure under self- reporting technique of individual data collection

Purposive Sampling

A form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgement when choosing members of the population to participate in their surveys

Quintile

A quintile is a classification of schools in terms of socio-economic factors of the environment the schools are situated (Republic of South Africa, 1996)

Sample random sampling

A subset of a statical population in which each member of the subset has an equal probability of being chosen.

School Governing Body

A statutory body of parents, educators, non-teaching staff and learners (from Grade 8 or higher) who seek to work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the school community and thereby enhance learning and teaching

South African Council for Educators

The professional council for educators, that aims to enhance the status of the teaching profession through appropriate Registration, management of Professional Development and inculcation of a Code of Ethics for all educators.

Sub-district

Municipal areas in which circuit offices of the department of education are located

Type one development

Activities initiated personally by an educator to address his/her identified needs.

Type three development

Activities initiated externally from the school for the professional development l teachers by providers.

Type two development

Activities initiated by a school to address areas for development of teachers or enrichment on educational matters.

List of Abbreviations

CALM: Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality

CPTD: Continuing Professional Teacher Development

DBE: Department of Basic Education

DCES: Deputy Chief Education Specialist

FET: Further Education and Training

IPD: Initial Professional Development

MDoE: Mpumalanga Department of Education

NEEDU: National Education Evaluation Development Unit

PCK: Pedagogic Content Knowledge

PTDI: Professional Teacher Development Initiatives

SACMEQ: Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

SGB: School Governing Body

SMT: School Management Team

SACE: South African Council for Educators

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Across all nations, teaching is widely considered an essential profession because teachers perform a pivotal role in the education system and fulfilment of the objectives of a given education system. Learners are regarded as the future of the nation and for them to lead meaningful lives, they need a teacher to guide, develop and shape their future. Clearly, this is a huge responsibility that requires, amongst other things, specialist knowledge and expertise to do. To that effect, teachers should continuously develop their knowledge and understanding of how the teaching and learning processes are used for the benefit of a child. This is so because education is not static, it is continually adjusted and adapted in line with the changes at both local and global spheres of the knowledge economy. Therefore, teachers are seized with the responsibility to stay abreast of this development so that their intervention in the life of a child is helpful. To that end, they need to be continually subjected to updated and relevant professional teacher development programs, either through formal education rendered by universities or non-formally as is the case with in service training provided through seminars, webinars, conferences, workshops etc.

In-service teacher training programmes could make a significant contribution to the professional development and growth of both newly recruited and experienced teachers (Adler & Reed, 2002). According to Mizell (2010) continuing professional teacher development is an approach adopted by most education systems to improve performance of teachers and enhance learner success. Therefore, teachers should not depend, entirely, on education and training they went through at the beginning of their teaching careers. Rather, they should take initiatives to continually develop and update their pedagogical and didactic knowledge for enhanced, relevant and future-proofing teaching practices (Mizell, 2010).

To meet the goals and objectives of ongoing teacher development, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in South Africa (SA) has in the past two decades, devoted huge resources towards academic and professional development of teachers (National

Education Evaluation Development Unit, 2012). Despite such significant investments, learners are still performing at lower levels. For example, in the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality report iv (SACMEQ iv) it was found that most educators who teach Mathematics and Science could not pass the tests items that learners are expected to do (Department of Basic Education, 2017). Clearly, that indicates the lack of knowledge that these educators may have. Therefore, if teachers lack such basic knowledge and skills to teach mathematics, for example, how would learners be effectively assisted to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that are embedded in the different subjects.

The above observation could probably be associated to the findings of the National Education Evaluation Development Unit (NEEDU) where it is reported that professional teacher development programmes implemented in SA are ineffective and that has a direct bearing with the poor performance of the system in yielding future-ready learners who could demonstrate the necessary skills and knowledge (National Education Evaluation Development Unit, 2013).

Moreover, Makgato & Mji (2006) observed that learners' poor performance in SA is attributed to, among other factors, inadequate training and lack of knowledge and skills on the part of teachers. Notwithstanding the availability of professional teacher development programmes in SA, there is little or no substantial improvement in the pass rates, particularly, in subjects such as Science and Mathematics (Reddy et al., 2015). The view is that teachers who are subjected to effective academic, content and professional development will, in all likelihood, improve their teaching practices which could enhance the performance of learners in many subjects, including Science and Mathematics (Reddy et al., 2015).

It is against that observation that this report seeks to analyse the Mpumalanga Secondary School Teachers' Experiences of Professional Development Initiatives in terms of usable and transferrable knowledge and skills for improved classroom practice. This is motivated by the fact that the DBE uses various teacher development initiatives which, judged by the above finding, seem not able to produce higher academic performance in learners, albeit the myriad teacher development initiatives. Clearly, there could be different reasons

leading to this state of affairs. Our interests in this study, however, is to understand how teachers experience the different professional teacher development initiatives which possibly could shed a light on why learners continue to underperform, could associated to either a lack of performance or higher performance in learners

By studying teachers' experiences of the different teachers' development initiatives in some selected secondary schools in South Africa, the researcher would attempt to develop extensive understanding of the actual nature of the current professional teacher development initiatives with the sole aim of suggesting plausible recommendations for the benefit of educators and the South African education system.

1.1. Problem statement

Since the introduction of various professional teacher development policies and the investment of huge resources into professional and academic development of teachers in South African schools, poor students learning outcomes still dominate the public schooling system (National Education Evaluation and Development Unit, 2013). Therefore, it would seem both the professional and academic development programmes and the procurement of infrastructure including teaching and learning aids do not necessarily lead to heightened levels of academic performance in learners and this seems to affect many education systems globally.

In essence the life and health of any education system is gauged against its ability to yield higher achievement levels, mainly, in Science and Mathematics (Makgato & Mji (2006). The Mpumalanga Department of Education (2014) regards the attainment of higher number of "bachelor passes" (i.e. university entrance passes) as the determinant of the system's health and its performance. Therefore, if a system yields more bachelors, it is viewed as a successful system that responds to the ongoing needs of learners. To realise higher educational yields, amidst underperformance, the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDoE) targeted 34% of bachelor passes by the year 2020 in order to, at least, push its quality of performance to above 50% (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2014).

Amidst its qualitative underperformance, the MDoE is also not yielding quantitative performance. For example, the performance of the MDoE's grade 12 learners in the period 2015 to 2017, was at 78, 6%, 77, 1% and 74, 8% respectively and the associated bachelor pass rates, in the same period, were 24,5%, 22,9%, 23,4% (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2018). These results fluctuate every academic year and that symptoms of its continued state of health and ability to respond to ongoing development in this era of knowledge economy. Contrary to the efforts exerted to ameliorate this performance, the provincial bachelor pass rate is below 30%, although the target was set at 34% for the year 2020 academic year.

To address the continued underperformance of the system, the MDoE had in the period 2017 and 2018, provided content gap training workshops to more than 5000 teachers (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2018). However, since this endeavour, the outcomes of the system have not been satisfactorily. Apparently, the input factors in the form of procurement of dedicated professional teacher development programmes and other initiatives do not assist in the attainment of higher educational outcomes.

This research report, therefore, seeks to analyse the Mpumalanga secondary school teachers' experiences of professional development initiatives as these should develop usable and transferrable knowledge and skills for improved classroom practice.

1.2. Purpose statement

The purpose of this research was to analyse the Mpumalanga secondary school teachers' experiences of professional development initiatives that are designed to transfer usable knowledge and skills for improved classroom practice.

To that end, the researcher focused on the Mpumalanga Secondary Schools as it is in these schools where underperformance, especially, in mathematics and science, is more evident. To do that, the researcher describes the manner in which teachers attended the different professional teacher development initiatives and how that relates to the development of heightened teaching acumen which could lead to effective teaching. In other words, the researcher describes the experiences of teachers towards the different

PTDIs. The idea is that effective PTDIs could eventually lead to the development of usable and transferable knowledge, skills and competency for improved classroom practice.

1.3. Research question

This study addressed the following research question:

What are secondary school teachers' experiences of professional development initiatives in terms of usable and transferrable knowledge and skills for improved classroom practice?

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to review relevant and related literature on different PTDIs and how teachers experience them for improved teaching and learning experiences. To do that, the researcher studied related journals, articles, theses and other relevant literature on the topic. This chapter is organised in the following manner:

- Theoretical framework on professional teacher development
    - The concept of professional teacher development
    - Professional teacher development initiatives
    - The efficacy and relevancy of continuing professional teacher development (CPTD)
    - Modes of continuing professional teacher development
    - Theories of professional teacher development
    - Teachers' views and beliefs about professional teacher development
- Professional teacher development in South Africa (SA)
- Professional teacher development in some related Sub-Saharan African states (Namibia and Botswana)
- Professional teacher development in some related European countries [United Kingdom (UK)]
- Lessons learnt from the Literature Review

2.2 Theoretical framework on professional teacher development

2.2.1 The concept of professional teacher development

Professional teacher development is a programme with processes that seek to instill professional ethics and knowledge systems necessary for professionalism, operational, complex expertise for the development of teachers.

It is a vital process that a country could utilise to enhance the inherent professional skills to impart the educational values embedded in an education system (Ingvarson et al., 2005).

For Creemers, Kyriakides, & Antoniou (2012) professional teacher development is a process that aims to equip teachers with skills that are associated with student outcomes. Professional teacher development thus, is an important aspect for the acquisition of the required, basic knowledge, skills and instructional acumen for the enhancement of students' teaching and learning skills (Yurtseven & Altun, 2017). For Hardy (2012) it is one of the means with which the attainment of teaching and learning aims, objectives and outcomes of an education system could be instilled and realised.

In simpler terms, professional teacher development focuses its attention on training teachers for relevant, development orientedness, innovative academic and professional conduct for students' teaching (Yurtseven & Altun, 2017). It, thus, has two components, namely academic and professional development which are important ingredients to enhance classroom teaching practice for improved outcomes (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Ingvarson et al. (2005) envision professional teacher development to concern itself with both the development of professional ethics and pedagogic content knowledge systems.

These are essential elements that underscore a dynamic and progressive system of education at this time which could bring about higher performance of learners in most school subjects (Yurtseven & Altun, 2017). As a result, educators need to be trained on both professional development and pedagogic content knowledge to be relevant and respond to the needs of the 21st century.

The above definitions have one thing in common because they all view professional teacher development as a process aimed at developing teachers for the effective delivery of education leading to higher academic performance by learners. This is so because these definitions support each other in the context of acquisition of teaching and learning skills for enhanced student learning. Therefore, professional teacher development has a bearing with instructional approaches to teaching and learning for attainment of demonstrable learning and educative outcomes (Ingvarson et al., 2005).

However, the PTDIs are not the sole contributor to good performance of learners in schools. There are myriad and interdependent processes and factors that form part of good quality academic performance of learners at schools (Catherine, 2015). Amongst other factors, poverty and inequality, school governance and management, guidance and psychological wellbeing of learners contribute and mediate the attainment of educational goals resulting from quality teaching (Catherine, 2015).

Teacher development does not happen in vacuum. It is part of different teacher development initiatives that may be considered. It is, therefore, imperative to unravel the concept of PTDIs.

2.2.2 Professional teacher development initiatives

Most professional teacher development initiatives, usually, start with Initial Professional Development (IPD) which focuses on the initial development of teaching skills of aspirant teachers (Iqbal et al., 2016). They normally expose student-teachers to basic theoretical tenets and didactics of teaching which are critical for effective teaching and learning (van der Linden et al., 2012). It is at this level where rudimentary elements of the teaching and learning practices are developed for further nurturing or development in line with ongoing changes in the realm of the knowledge economy (Iqbal et al., 2016). Consequently, it is important for a country to meet its supply and demand needs so that the benefits of developing the teacher corps is felt. If this is not taken care of, a country could face huge challenges with regard to consistent availability of its teaching corps (van der Linden et al., 2012). This is so because it is at this stage that the etiquette and inherent skills are developed in young teachers. Their beliefs and attitudes about the teaching profession are developed and bolstered at this level of their development (Uslu & Bumën, 2012). Thus, their experiences of the benefits of a professional development programme or course is basically reliant on their first experiences of these programs.

Tertiary institutions, therefore, become critical service providers as they are the ones who are given the mandate to carry out the development programmes, thus developing positive learning experiences in aspirant teachers. Once, the student-teachers are certificated, it qualifies them to carry out the huge responsibility to teach and to also be

available for ongoing professional development (van der Linden et al., 2012). The IPD is therefore, important in laying out the playing field for further professional teacher development at the site of implementation. To that effect, the nature of the curriculum in the IPD seems to have long lasting consequences in the further professional development of practising teachers. van der Linden et al. (2012) concur that IPD is a foundation upon which all further teacher educational programmes are based and that determines to a large extent, their commitment to such programmes. In this way, IPD is an indispensable part of on-going teacher development and such programmes must, therefore, speak to the realities of the teaching fraternity for them to be effective (Iqbal et al., 2016).

Based on the above, IPD is not an end in itself, but Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) is an important aspect for on-going professional teacher development and provisions must be made for teachers to remain relevant and current (The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, 2007). In the light of that, the Department of Education (2007) concurs that teachers who do not develop themselves on an on-going basis are prone to be irrelevant and ineffective as they do not keep track of new and innovative ways of teaching. Moreover, subject content has a propensity to be influenced by what is happening in the academic world and that requires new knowledge that could be inculcated through CPTD. That influence informs the nature and trajectory of subjects as progress is made in curriculum development (South African Council for Educators, 2012). In other words, continuing PTDIs should be efficacious to yield the desired result.

In the next section, I discuss the efficacy and relevance of CPTD.

2.2.3 The Efficacy and Relevance of Continuing Professional Teacher Development

CPTD is a programme aimed at ensuring on-going teacher development for purposes of instilling the principle of lifelong learning so that teachers keep abreast of new development in the education fraternity (Khan & Khan, 2014).

CPTD is, basically, based on the premise that on-going teacher development enhances skills and expertise that lead to higher achievement by learners.

In agreement with that view, on-going professional teacher development is, therefore, an important input factor for the attainment of progressive educational goals. Progressive educational programmes are relevant for the continued development of the human capital that could bring about innovation in the manner in which education is delivered in a country (Khan & Khan, 2014). In this way, outmoded approaches are updated and made relevant for the benefit of learners.

According to Wang, Odell, & Schwille (2008) the quality of CPTD relies, mostly, on IPD activities which serve as a springboard for further professional teacher development. Therefore, the first years of teaching are a critical period for professionalisation of teachers as they serve as a base for on-going teacher development (Mangione et al., 2016). Likewise, the initial experience, either positive or negative, have a potential to influence the manner in which they could perceive further teacher development opportunities.

In that regard, effective induction programmes should, among other things, provide all new teachers with educative ethos, pedagogic and didactic teaching acumen that are necessary for further onsite continuing professional development (Jonassen & Land, 2012).

For effective development and implementation of CPTD programmes, it is, thus, important that the configuration of such programmes is looked into for determination to be made about their effectiveness to adequately prepare teachers (Minor et al., 2016). Minor et al. (2016) suggest that CPTD programmes should be developed with attention to the nature of the content it needs to have for enhancement of positive teaching experiences for the benefit of learners. Content – focused CPTD programmes are therefore helpful if they are configured with the nature of the clientele in mind. It is, therefore, important that the type of teachers for whom the programme is developed is taken into account.

Most studies suggest that content – focused CPTD programmes are most effective if implemented with the actual needs of teachers in mind, as that could make them adaptable and receptive to continual further teacher development opportunities (Hodges, Lee, Kulinna, & Kwon, 2017).

In as much as content – focused professional teacher development seems to have benefits for teachers, not all of them have positive effects on student performance. For it to have positive effects on student performance, students' needs must also be taken into account. This may include factors such as multiple intelligences, barriers to learning, socio-economic backgrounds and world-views (Mizell, 2010b). The consideration of such factors in CPTD programmes is important as it ensures relevant and current skilling of teachers for their enhanced development. The findings of a research study by Davidson, Fields, & Yang (2009) showed a correlation between content- focused CPTD programme and student performance. Therefore, CPTD becomes an important vehicle for the on-going professionalisation of teachers for the benefit of learners and the education system of a given country.

There are different models of CPTD, and to a large extent they link with the type and the intentions of the education system of a given country. In the next section, the different modes of CPTD delivery are examined. The intention is to determine their relevance in the development of certain experiences which are important buttresses for reception of ongoing teacher development opportunities intended to benefit the learner.

2.2.4 Modes of Professional Development (Mode of CPTD delivery)

CPTD programmes are implemented in various ways. Some are undertaken at schools where teachers teach, while others are organised in central venues (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2015). The different contextual approaches have a potential to instill different learning experience which could impact on their readiness to embrace ongoing teacher development learning opportunities for enhancement of both their skills and attitudes (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2015).

The different approaches may require different modes of delivery, configuration and duration which could, in return, inculcate certain values and attitudes in these teachers (Uslu & Bumën, 2012).

For positive learning experiences, professional teacher development programmes requires, inter alia, proper planning, relevant materials and early identification of teachers' needs (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2015). Without proper identification and assessment of teachers' needs, any development plan is likely to fail as it may not address issues that teachers are in need of and that may generate certain feelings about the programme. Thus, the plan should, preferably, be informed by the nature of the clients at hand. Moreover, their previous knowledge must be used to match up with the current developmental needs of teachers for their meaningful learning experiences.

To that effect, the planning process of the professional teacher development may require the direct involvement of teachers so that it may adequately accommodate their views, feelings and experiences. That could best be done, if further involvement of stakeholders such as principals, the School Management Teams (SMTs) and departmental officials is considered, as they are important role players in the development of certain attitudes and values towards any professional development initiative (Employment of Educators Act, 1998). This involvement could ensure a buy-in so that the developmental programme could, adequately, respond to the real needs faced by the school community. For example, principals, as stewards of schools, are given an important role in initiating certain professional development programmes.

According to Wieczorek (2017), development of appropriate teacher ethos and acumen for effective teaching is, mostly, dependent on the manner in which the leadership component of the school dispense leadership and create positive teaching and learning climate in their institutions. In other words, it is important for teachers to operate in an environment where clear and well-articulated methods of operation are utilised.

As a result, aspects such as classroom management, pedagogical and didactical approaches, content knowledge, the administration of assessment, recording and reporting are influenced, inter alia, by the manner in which teachers experience the

leadership and management of the school in terms of feedback given after monitoring and support of their work had been done (Wieczorek, 2017). Such an approach, underscores the notion of cooperative professional teacher development, as all the interested parties in the development of the teacher interact to inculcate certain values and experiences based on how it is done (Uslu & Bumën, 2012; Wieczorek, 2017).

Therefore, it is important to unravel theoretical aspects upon which the development of positive or negative experiences about teacher development programmes are based. This could assist us to understand why certain feelings are developed and how those feelings impact on teachers' abilities to enhance learners' performance based on teaching and learning deliverables.

2.3 Theories of professional teacher development for improved classroom practice and how that impact on teachers' experiences

Learning has always been informed by various developmental theories whose aim, among other things, is to instill a broad range of understanding in order to fulfill the objectives of the curriculum at stake (Tomei, 2009). Some learning and teaching theories are old, but they remain relevant even today. This is so because learning is a complex process that requires, inter alia, the application of learnt, acquired, and practical knowledge, skills and values towards attainment of educative goals (Jonassen & Land, 2012). Moreover, these theories do not approach professional teacher development from the same angle and that could shed a light on how the different approaches could potentially impact teachers' experiences for enhanced classroom teaching practice.

The different approaches are informed, inter alia, by the prevalent schools of thought at a given point in time, the political climate, socio-cultural aspects, language, economic needs and the broader challenges that are faced by a country (Tomei, 2009). For the purposes of this study, the researcher delves on the theoretical outlook of the constructivist, social-cognitivist and andragogy learning theories as they seem relevant for professional teacher development and inculcation of certain learning experiences (Jonassen & Land, 2012).

2.3.1 Constructivist views on learning

The constructivists' school of thought believes that knowledge is made or formulated by the interactions between the learner and the learning environment in which they find themselves and that has a tendency to shape the manner in which learners or teachers, in this case, will experience the learning program and how it is delivered (Tomei, 2009). In other words, learning takes place when a person comes into contact with the abstract world which is mediated by content enriched subjects enabling the learner to develop certain experiences about it and it is dependent, inter alia, on the manner in which they experience or perceive the value of such teaching (Zaraté et al., 2008).

In this regard, the role of perceptions is clearly expressed as it depends on the individual's view of what to learn and for which purpose that learning is meant. According to Amineh & Asl (2015) different perceptions, feelings and views of reality are more pronounced during the teaching and learning process because it is where different learning paces and strides are experienced. Thus, the usefulness of that which is taught, depends, inter alia, on the extent to which learners attach meaning and value to the learning material (Jonassen & Land, 2012). In other words, the usefulness and relevance of the learning content may inspire change in attitudes and values enabling them to benefit from the learning programme they are subjected to.

That is why Zaraté et al. (2008) view learning as an individualistic endeavour which requires, among other things, the application of values laden skills and knowledge systems that may eventually determine the extent to which learners' knowledge, skills and attitudes are changed. To that effect, previously stored experiential knowledge systems play and active role in preparing the schemata to encode or decode newly acquired skills, knowledge, values and attitudes which are important in the learning process.

Therefore, if teachers are subjected to a learning program which they view in a negative light, the likelihood is that they will not benefit from it. In the same way, if teachers lack the foundational knowledge, skills and attitudes, the professional teacher development programme may not be well experienced which could deepen inefficiencies in teaching learners. The result, therefore, could be sustained underperformance of the system of

education. Had their experiences been changed by previous encounter with initial teacher development programme, incoming and continuous programme could find a fertile ground to thrive.

To better understand the above, it is prudent that we interrogate some constructivist basic assumptions of learning.

Proponents of the constructivists' school of thought proffer the following assumptions:

Table 1:The assumptions of the constructivist views on learning

The assumption	Significance
All knowledge is constructed and all learning is a process of that construction.	Learning could not take place if meaning is not attached
Knowledge is content dependent, so it is important to situate learning in an authentic, relevant and realistic contexts	Learning content must be infused with stimuli to enable the ever engagement with the environment for learning to take place.
All human learning is constructed in a context where some type of mediational means, tools and/or signs, are used.	The teacher's role should be crafted in such a way that the learning content in that environment scaffolds for meaningful learning. Teachers are equipped with pedagogic content knowledge with which such could be done.
Members of a culture may create a tool or sign to solve a problem, but the development of this tool or sign changes their participation within the culture.	Learning is not static as it depends on the learning matter at hand. One mechanism that could be applicable in one situation could not help in another situation based on the same content.
Previous experiences and exposure play a major role in effective learning of new things.	Learning does not take place in a vacuum

Adapted from Duffy & Jonassen (2013)

Based on Table 1 above, it is clear that learning is viewed as an interactive process aimed at developing basic and complex knowledge systems which could ensure the success of future learning endeavours. In order for human beings to make sense of their world, learning of one sort or another should take place and the success thereof is greatly influenced by the manner in which basic learning had taken place. In other words, positive initial learning experiences could enable learners to confidently continue learning when such opportunities are availed in the future. Most importantly, that learning could enable them to further assist learners to inculcate demonstrable learning outcomes embedded in the different subjects. This theory, therefore, assumes that teachers could be effective if they had been subjected to positive initial professional development opportunities.

In essence, the environment (learning content, values, skills, attitudes, people etc.) interacts with a person's perceptions or worldview to formulate his/her personal mental representation of the world and its meaning (Amineh & Asl, 2015). So, the person's inner worldview interacts with the socio-cultural milieu to make meaning and the nature of the meaning is dependent on the person's experiences about it. Therefore, learning could only take place if the content of what is to be taught makes sense to the learner or inspires positive and useful changes in the learners' experiences of the world. So, there has to be coherence between what a person knows and what he/ she needs to explore depending on the aim of the subject matter at hand.

In essence, learning takes place when knowledge is constructed through the medium of content in the form of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes embedded in the subject matter of different subjects or modules. The subject matter could not, on its own, cause learning to take place. It has to be mediated by trained facilitators so that the curriculum could be traversed. The success of this facilitation, on the other hand, is, greatly, dependent on how these teachers have experienced their learning at the outset and how they view the value of ongoing professional teacher development programmes.

Flowing from the above, the content may need to be simplified and specified in line with subject's learning objectives and outcomes so as to defuse bombardment of unrelated pieces of content to learners for positive learning experiences. The teacher or facilitator would then play a pivotal role in mediating and supporting delivery of content for easy

assimilation and accommodation. The success of this learning is, greatly, reliant on how the teacher is professionally supported, developed and nurtured to effectively teach learners. In other words, the success of teaching could only be realised if teachers have embraced a positive growth mindset and are ready to view changes as opportunities for further learning.

The mediation and facilitation may not be confined to rote learning, in which learners passively regurgitate demonstrated knowledge without attachment of their individual meaning. Rather, it promotes the unlocking of content for learners to make their own individual understanding being guided by the teacher/ facilitator. In this regard, the teacher is not a bearer of knowledge, but serves to stimulate the learning environment towards achievement of learning goals and for that to happen, a positive mindset must guide the process. The process is not necessarily simplistic as it would seem. For instance, collaboration and co-operative learning dynamics come to play and facilitators must epitomise those values for meaningful teaching and learning to take place in the classrooms (Zaraté et al., 2008).

Closely linked with the above, culture, as a bearer of knowledge systems to be interacted with for the development of sustained and progressive attitudes and value systems, should be appreciated as it serves as a cushion for meaningful learning experiences that are also necessary facilitators of learning (Jonassen & Land, 2012). To keep abreast of these changes and to inform further changes, learners should be encouraged to effectively and realistically attribute experiential and cultural meaning to their abstract world.

Clearly, the process of interacting with the learning environment and the resultant development of meaning does not happen automatically, the learner should have had some experience of learning of one kind or another and that prepares him/her for ongoing positive and successful learning opportunities.

In this context the school setting is required to provide relevant resources for the teachers and learners, in order to integrate the knowledge systems with resources. Schools as a center of learning requires a variety of components that are supporting effective learning within and without the classroom (du Plessis & Maestry, 2019). In that way schools should

be equipped with recreational centers, sporting facilities, laboratories, ablution facilities, enabling grounds and enabling environment (such as governance, management, and finance).

This enabling environment within the school, requires programmes that are changing with the time and recognises the milieu of culture. Those programmes require drivers of knowledge with skills, expertise and those that stay current with global changes, ensure they are updated with the latest changes in curricula and pedagogy (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013).

This would be so only when the education system has good teachers who are made by quality training, prior joining the profession and on practicing it. In that way, learners would be stimulated to formulate their own model and integration of the abstract subject contents (du Plessis & Maestry, 2019) which could develop teachers' expertise and relevant knowledge for effective teaching and learning.

The above discussion illustrates the value of interaction and reciprocal relationship between the teachers, content and social environment in the development of cognitive understanding of the world typical for effective teaching and learning. Below is a discussion on the social-cognitivist theory of learning as it seems relevant towards understanding the experiences of learners in various contexts.

2.3.2 Social-cognitivist views on learning

Proponents of the social - cognitive theory of learning believe that effective learning experiences happen as a result of interactions between learners and their environment (Zaraté et al., 2008). According to Zaraté et al. (2008) the environment is the embodiment of content that learners need to be socialised in for better understanding of the world and consequently inculcation of meaningful learning experiences. Lange, Kruglanski, & Higgins (2011) view the social - cognitive paradigm as an appealing theory of developing meaningful learning experiences because the social environment is the subject of inquiry and learners find themselves fascinated by their relationships to it.

Accordingly, the environment encompasses everything that social beings come into account with for learning to be possible. In other words, the social environment presents

a stimulus that prompts a person's cognition to make meaningful experiential associations for meaningful learning. Therefore, if the social learning content and the content in which it is facilitated is enabling for learning to effectively take place, learners will have positive learning experiences that could eventually lead to practical implementation of that which they were exposed to. In the context of developing teachers, it, therefore, means that, successful identification with the professional development programme is, largely, dependent on the content and the context in which the content is facilitated. Plainly, if the content is perceived to be useful to them, the likelihood that positive learning experiences will be achieved is high. In addition to that, it could also mean that, the environment in which teacher development programmes are run is critical in the development of useful and practical skills for the development of enhanced teaching and learning experiences in learners which are pivotal to enhance the general performance levels of learners as discussed in our problem statement above.

This view seems to resonate with the constructivist views on learning because both theories emphasise the role of interpretative learning prompted by environmental stimuli. For instance, the constructivists believe that learning is imminent when the learner uses his/ her previously stored knowledge, be it positive or negative, to interpret and make sense of the impending reality or the metaphysical world (Zaraté et al., 2008). On the other hand, social cognitivists' theorists believe effective learning takes place as result of interaction between the learner and the environment which may prompt either negative or positive learning experiences depending on the context in which it takes and the interpretation of those for whom it is intended. Lange et al. (2011) posit that the role of a person's mental strata to interpret and make sense of the social environment is directly related to his/her previous experiences of similar or different learning content in different previous contexts. In essence, both theories propagate the interaction between the learner and the environment. However, their basic theoretical tenets are not based on the same dispositions.

For example, the constructivists lean more on constructing meaning out of the physical world. The social- cognitivists, on the other hand, propagate for the role of thinking and

interpretation of the social reality as an important impetus towards learning. In that way, the social -cognitivists are based on the following theoretical assumptions:

Table 2: Social-cognitive theory of learning's assumptions

● Reciprocal Determinism ● Behavioural Capability ● Observational Learning ● Reinforcements ● Expectations ● Self-efficacy

Adapted from (Lange et al., 2011)

According to Lange et al. (2011) reciprocal determinism takes account of the importance of dynamic and symbiotic relationship between the learner and the environment to affect some sort of learning that could be seen through behavioural change. In the same light, meaningful learning of teachers based on the professional teacher development programmes could best be understood in the context of how they interpret those learning programmes. In other words, they may bear positive fruits if teachers perceive them to be helpful in their discharge of their responsibilities in classrooms. Therefore, it could depend on how they view the intention of these programmes, their value in their teaching experiences/practices and how they are delivered. That interpretation could determine, to a large extent, their usefulness in classrooms, even in teaching teachers. If teachers could embrace and derive value from them, their teaching practice could be bolstered and learners may benefit out of that teaching.

In this way, the change in the outside behavioural traits of the learner signifies the thrust of the learning process and that could also explain the extent to which teachers may have learnt or developed their understanding of key concepts in the different subjects they are responsible for. In this learning, cognitive processes assume an important role because the teachers would need to interpret and see value in the learning content for enhanced intervention in the learning process of their learners.

As a result, the social-cognitivists view behavioural capabilities as another aspect that that signals effective learning to have taken place. Behavioural capability is realisable when learners learn from consequences of previous behaviour (Lange et al., 2011). This process of learning encompasses the inculcation of knowledge and skills in order to perform certain behaviour. In other words, a person could exhibit certain behavioural traits typical to the context in which he/she finds him/herself. In this way, a person should know what needs to be done in a given situation and act in tandem. The teacher development programmes are designed precisely to expose teachers to latest and challenging topics that they need to harness for effective teaching resulting in enhanced learning in the classrooms (South African Council for Educators, 2012).

This behaviour and thinking patterns could be influenced by observation of an enacted behaviour and display of thought processes that could be modelled by the learner (Yurtseven & Altun, 2017). If the learner models the behavioural traits in her/his own way, it signals some sort of learning and that would have been prompted by the social context and the content at play.

This is so because good or bad practices are not merely reproduced from what the stimuli display, but the learner engages in the process of thinking that influences the exhibition of changed attitudes, knowledge, values and skills. In this way, the appreciated behaviour would have been observed by the learner from people either within or outside the learner's learning environment. Therefore, this would be shown by unique "modelling" the behaviours (Lange et al., 2011).

The above endeavour requires, among other things, responsibility on the part of the learner (adult) to identify with. So, if the learner achieves, the likelihood is that the task would be attempted in the future with more vigour.

The furtherance and pursuance of the task is, thus reinforced as the learner would follow the positive output yielded out of their attempts. According to Lange et al. (2011) reinforcements are necessary to ignite and sustain a particular behaviour because of the value that it has to the learner. The learner should value the set learning goals to expend effort towards their attainment.

In the attainment of such goals, the learner would display their own unique way of displaying the outcome and output. The outcome, therefore, would be as a result of positive or negative responses emanating from internal or external responses of a person's behaviour or the environment (Lange et al., 2011).

The expectation could be positive or negative and that either propels or retracts the effort towards the achievement of associated outcomes. These expectancies derive their niche from the thought outcome and value placed on its success before the successful completion of the behaviour (Yoo, 2016).

In order to pursue a task or an activity and succeed in its pursuance, the pursuit must have certain belief systems. Most importantly, the learner should believe in their abilities to perform the task (Shava, 2016). These self-beliefs have a tendency to match tasks-difficulty with the value of the attempt exerted to accomplish a task (Tondeur et al., 2016). In other words, the learner should enhance his/her task-orientedness to accomplish a task.

Therefore, a learner should have high levels of self-efficacy to steer his/ her attention towards attainment of tasks and that needs the understanding of the dynamics of the tasks at hand. Certain factors are therefore, at play and they involve, inter alia, the capabilities of an individual learner and the environment within which the learner finds him/herself.

In this regard, learning takes place differently and many factors are involved. This view is corroborated by the large range of theoretical persuasions with different dispositions in the manner in which learning takes place.

Following the assumptions explained above, schools are a place to foster cognitive development of learners through initiatives or programmes focusing on attitude, behaviour, values and beliefs, motivation and psychosocial support (Kapur, 2018). If they have positive attitude and good mental health, they will devote themselves wholeheartedly towards learning. In the same way, teachers are exposed to ongoing teacher development programmes with an aim of instilling contemporary pedagogical approaches for effective teaching leading to achievement of higher educational

competencies in learners through enhanced teaching competencies (South African Council for Educators, 2012). Therefore, behavioural change in their pedagogical teaching approaches is dependent on the extent to which they positively derive value from such programmes.

Most South African schools lack this important support (i.e. educational psychologists) which also affects the performance of the system, in the contrary these can breed violence, absenteeism, late coming, truancy and sometimes dropouts (Mouton et al., 2013). This could also explain why most professional teacher development programmes do not yield the results. The environment where learners find themselves is similar to the one in which teachers teach. Therefore, the same environmental factors could affect the extent to which professional teacher development programmes could be used for effective development of teachers.

However, young learners learn differently from adult learners, even if they find themselves in the same environment. The factors involved in the facilitation of effective learning could be the same, but they learn differently. Their contexts and reasons for learning differ. For instance, educators learn in order to keep abreast of latest development in the knowledge economy and to sharpen their teaching skills for the benefit of learners. Learners, on the other hand are basically taught to develop the rudimentary building blocks for effective lifelong learning in their different careers once they exit the basic education system.

Below is a discussion on the dynamics of andragogy as it relates to the constructivists and social – cognitive theories.

2.3.3 The Andragogic views on learning

Andragogy is viewed as that type of learning that takes place among adult learners (Merriam & Bierema, 2013). As such, andragogy has its own theoretical assumptions that seek to project the process of adult learning.

Table 3 below contains the assumptions as propagated by Knowles, Holton III & Swanson (2011).

Table 3: Andragogy: The core adult learning principles

Assumption / principles	Andragogic Model
Learners need to learn	Learner needs to know why something is important prior to learning it.
Self-Concept of learner	Learners are responsible for their own decisions
Prior experience of the learner	The learner's experience has great importance.
Readiness to learn	Learners become ready to learn when they see content as relevant to their lives.
Orientation to learning	Learners expect life centered content.
Motivation to learn	Learners are motivated primarily by internal forces

Adapted from Knowles, Holton III & Swanson (2011)

According to the above model, learners' needs are the objects of learning. By implications, the learners (teachers) find himself/ herself in a situation where learning is required and there is a wish, on the part of the teacher, to do so.

Adult learners in the process of learning may enthusiastically develop an interest to know the content that they are required to learn. Among other things, this requires the pedagogical dynamism of facilitators to understand and address the need that the learners may be keen to know (Noora et al., 2012). In other words, if the learning content or the approach used for that learning, is not in keeping with the needs of this adult learners, the likelihood is that effective learning may not take place, as they may not see the need to continue or benefit from such learning. An effort, on the part of the learning program developers, is required to consider the circumstantial factors that adult learners find themselves in and for them to clearly understand the reasons for such learning. That could only be done if educators take part in identifying their learning needs and for consideration of teaching approaches that are akin to the nature of adult learners.

In essence, knowing the importance of what is to be learnt, adult learners may have to develop a sense of self-reliance, self-discipline and responsibility in making own decisions about commitment to the learning process.

In line with the above, the role of prior experience/ knowledge of the learner plays an important role in the learning process. Prior learning places a base on which new knowledge systems could be encoded. Encoding, therefore, needs inter alia, interpretation of new information with already existing pockets of content (Noora et al., 2012).

This encoding and decoding assist adult learners with unique skills to self-propel and heighten the learning process. This would, thus, inspire them to view the content as important to their lives and attachment of meaning on their learning (Noora et al., 2012).

The attachment of meaning on what learners come across in the learning space requires, among other things, a certain kind of orientation to learning (Knowles et al., 2011). According to Knowles et al. (2011) orientation to learning is expected, therefore, to impel learners to identify with the content as part of what talks directly to their needs for current and future use. On the contrary, uncoordinated orientation may, thus, discourage adult learners from undertaking the learning content as part of their life.

Closely related to life-oriented education and learning, effective learning could also take place if there is adequate support that learners get from their learning environment. According to Merriam and Bierema (2013) effective learning could take place if learners are mostly motivated intrinsically. Intrinsic motivation encourages adult learners to be self-regulated and thus reap the benefits of self – efficacy, as this is an important aspect of adult learning (Noora et al., 2012). According to Knowles et al. (2011) adult learners are usually motivated and their life experiences stimulate their zeal to learn, which is a positive thing if they were to effectively interact with the professional-teacher development programmes they are subjected to. These life encounters could come as a result of the interaction between factors such as socio-economic status, social amenities, work conditions, career pathing opportunities, personal characteristics, political conditions and so forth.

Similarly, the social - cognitive learning theory, as discussed above, envisions a symbiotic relationship between the learner and the environment and it attributes learning to the interaction thereof. According to this theory, teachers learn from past experiences and should shape their teaching in sync with the attainable teaching outcomes.

Furthermore, it is important that teachers attach reasonable meaning to the content of the PTDIs for enhanced understanding that could translate to higher educational yields. Meaning attachment promotes deeper processing of learnt content and that is important for practical application of knowledge in different contexts. Without such learning, effective teaching and transfer of knowledge and skills become impossible and it renders any professional and academic development of teachers ineffective.

Lastly, professional teacher development programmes are mainly designed for adult learners in the form of current and aspiring teachers and their beliefs about professional development (Doherty, 2011). This plays a critical role towards the success of such programmes. Therefore, effective implementation of these programmes could change teachers' perceptions and beliefs about such programmes leading to the enhancement of the ability to reap positive experiences from them.

2.4 Teachers' views and beliefs about professional teacher development

Teachers' beliefs about professional development have a direct bearing with the possible successes of any professional teacher development programme a country could implement (Cameron & Woods, 2016). Professional teacher development is viewed as any skill related education offered to teachers with an intention to upgrade their educational acumen and thus achieve the aims and objective of an education system (Doherty, 2011). The improvement in their skills and qualifications would invariably change the character and the nature of education delivered by a school.

Therefore, the development of any school, largely depends on factors such as the teachers' level of education, Pedagogic Content Knowledge (PCK), instructional approaches, commitment, and dedication (Yusuf & Fashiku, 2016). These factors,

therefore, have a bearing with the performance of teachers and that could influence the performance of both learners and school.

In addition to these factors, Doherty (2011) identifies teachers' regular attendance of classes, lesson delivery, completion of the syllabus and effective classroom management as salient factors that enhance the performance of both teachers and schools. Yusuf and Fashiku (2016) agree and further argue that positive attitudes towards professional teacher development programmes could enhance effective delivery of education in schools.

Pointedly, professional teacher development plays a role in the quality of outputs the education system could yield. Essentially, the outputs of an education system are dependent, inter alia, on teacher's job- satisfaction while the success of a professional teacher development programme depends on their beliefs and attitudes (Doherty, 2011). Therefore, teachers' attitudes and beliefs about professional teacher development programmes are important and any development programme should take them into account for them to succeed (Uslu & Bumën, 2012).

If supported, teachers' belief and attitudes have a tendency to change after attendance of an education programmes (Tondeur et al., 2016). Tondeur et al. (2016) view teachers' beliefs and attitudes of an education programme in a cause – effect kind of a relationship, in that beliefs determine the success of a programme and the programme could change their beliefs and attitudes.

Therefore, the structure and configuration of a professional teacher development programme should consider these aspects in its design.

In view of the above, the aspects discussed on the effectiveness of the professional teacher development and the inherent theories would be used to review the different models of professional teacher development in the different countries.

To effectively do that, the South African model will be compared with professional teacher development initiative in some Sub – Saharan African (SSA) countries and some Western countries that have similar professional development programmes.

2.5 Professional teacher development in South Africa

The current initiatives by the South African education system rely on the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) and CPTD. These programmes are enunciated by the provisions of the National Policy framework for Teacher Education Development in South Africa (NPFTEDSA), Integrated Strategic Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED), and the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM).

These initiatives approach professional teacher development from different but complimentary angles. For instance, the PAM provides for eighty (80) hours of professional teacher development (Employment of Educators Act, 1998) while the ISPFTED engenders the use of Professional Learning Communities for the professional development of teachers (The Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training, 2011) and the NPFTEDSA promotes a multi-pronged approach which focuses on Initial Professional Education of Teachers (IPET) and the CPTD (The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, 2007). Both the ISPFTED and NPFTEDSA seek to augment on the shortcomings of IQMS.

IQMS came to the fore after the failure of the Development Appraisal System (DAS) as discovered by the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) in its resolution 4 of 1998 (Developmental Appraisal, 1998). Despite these policy regimes, professional teacher development in SA is still a challenge, judged by learners' performance in various Regional and International studies (Reddy et al., 2015).

According to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS), South African teachers fair badly in subjects at the grades they teach (Reddy et al., 2015). In other words, they fail the mathematical sums and scientific concepts they are purported to teach. This happens amidst the prevalent PTDIs as stated above. Currently, the CPTD seeks to bridge the gaps by encouraging three types of teacher development initiatives, namely, type 1 (teacher initiated), Type 2 (school initiated) and type 3 (external initiated) (South African Council for Educators, 2012).

The intention is to blend the development initiatives of IQMS by allowing the teachers to play a critical and leading role in his/ her development (South African Council for Educators, 2012).

Moreover, substantial resources have been devoted to the development of teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning (National Education Evaluation and Development Unit, 2013). Despite such significant investments, poor performance of learners features prominently in most South African schools (National Education Evaluation and Development Unit, 2013). This suggests that professional teacher development programmes implemented in South Africa are ineffective and that could probably be related to the inability of these programmes to instill positive learning opportunities which consequently could enable them to effectively guide learners in their learning experiences for enhanced performance in a number of critical subjects.

Interestingly, the challenges that SA faces are not exclusive South African problems. Certain countries in Sub – Saharan African (SSA) face similar challenges. Below is a discussion on some of the Sub-Saharan African States in the same league as South Africa (SA) in as far as professional teacher development is concerned.

2.6 Professional teacher development in some SSA Countries

2.6.1 Botswana

Studies conducted in Botswana on professional teacher development show that there are insufficient structures for the implementation of professional teacher development programmes (Macheng, 2014). The structures that are in place do not, efficiently, assist teachers in their development endeavours and they are mostly meant to support the physical infrastructure resources, enforcement of punctuality, accountability and control of teachers' work with the belief that these resources may eventually assist with the performance of these schools (Mphale, 2014). It thus, places the importance of the teachers' growth and development to schools (Botswana, 1994).

According to Mphale (2014) the placement of teacher growth and development to schools is highlighted in their Revised National Policy of Education of 1994 which places the following responsibilities to schools:

- Strengthening of a probation system to ensure proper induction of teachers into the teaching profession, and over the period of probation new teachers should be assigned an experienced teacher to work with;
- A school head as an instructional leader to take responsibility for in-service training of teachers;
- In-service education officers should visit schools to supplement the school-based service training; and
- In-service training should be made accessible to all teachers at various levels to ensure continued professional and academic development" (p.23)

This policy seems to ascertain the principle of meaningful and relevant Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD). In essence, the policy seems to recognise that for effective teaching and learning to take place in schools, teachers' knowledge and skills must be continuously given consideration.

Despite the above, a study has found that teachers in Botswana are still performing poorly in Mathematics and Science (Reddy et al., 2015). According to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) report, Botswana in both Mathematics and Science in grade nine (9), is rated amongst the last five of the 39 (thirty-nine) participating countries. This observation is, almost, similar to the performance of teachers who teach mathematics and science in SA. This suggests that the CPTD programmes in Botswana and SA are not effective. This is so because both countries could not fair at the required levels in both Mathematics and Physical sciences.

Evidently, there is a link between effective implementation of professional teacher development programsmes in these two countries which could explain the achievement levels of their education systems.

To give more context, below is a discussion of similar aspects related to the effects of teacher development programmes in Namibia.

2.6.2 Namibia

Namibia pursues a centralised model of professional teacher development and it is supported by occasional and supportive school visit by designated supervisors (Akpo & Jita, 2013). Amidst the enforcement and support of the Namibian professional teacher development initiatives, studies have found that teachers' mastery of content is still at the lowest levels (American Institutes for Research, 2006). For instance, subjects like mathematics and science perform poorly and teachers who teach these subjects are continuously developed, but that development does not yield the desired results (Akpo & Jita, 2013). In general, teachers could not pass assessment activities of the grades and subjects they are responsible for (American Institutes for Research, 2006).

The above observation demonstrates the fact, not only monitoring of teacher development programmes, could yield positive results. Both SA and Namibia have their type of teacher development, but such programmes do not necessarily assist with the attainment of higher educational competencies in, especially, Mathematics and Science. This observation is almost similar to findings made by TIMSS on the performance of teachers who teach mathematics and science in SA. The only difference is that Namibian teachers are inadequately trained and their qualifications in mathematics do not accord them the necessary and requisite skills to impart the necessary and basic mathematical and science concepts. Therefore, a need for an effective professional teacher development programme is necessary and such a responsibility could not be given to teachers to fend for themselves.

Teacher qualifications are, actually, important for them to embrace ongoing professional teacher development programmes for enhancement of their teaching of PCKs which consequently could lead to attainment of higher educational outcomes. A study conducted on the relationship between qualifications and experience on Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) Mathematics in Namibia, has found that, the moderate qualification and experience

of teachers for mathematics and science is actually contributing to the moderate achievements in these subjects (Akpo & Jita, 2013).

The above is, primarily, caused by the inadequate teachers' training, especially in content and pedagogical knowledge, in terms of school-relevant subject content, and the inefficiency of the teaching method advocated for mathematics and science. The results concerning teachers' perspectives on the influence of professional development were strongly in favour of an on-going, school-based form of professional development in which all teachers participate. This is interesting as it shows that educators in Namibia are aware of their inability to effectively teach mathematics and science and this need could best be used by educational officials to intervene by providing ongoing teacher development learning opportunities for enhancement of learner attainment in these subjects.

Below is a discussion of a country which performed within the top fifteen (15) amongst the thirty-nine (39) participating in the TIMSS 2015 report.

2.6 Professional Teacher development in the United Kingdom (UK)

In the UK, especially England, teachers are expected to attend five of the 195 (one hundred and ninety-five) days of schooling, for professional teacher development per annum. The five days are set aside for non – teaching activities including professional teacher development (European Union, 2010).

The five days are solely meant for professional teacher development, however, attendance at such development sessions is usually low as most teachers do not turn up for the prescribed five days. A study in England shows that participation in the number of continuing professional teacher development activities was high in 2013 (Sellen, 2016).

Although, there are poor quality professional teacher development initiatives, but the education system is performing remarkably high (Micklewright et al., 2014). This observation, therefore, indicates a weak correlation between the quality of teacher development programme and educational outputs. The UK system yields greater

achievement levels amidst reluctant teachers to attend professional development programmes. This brings up another element in the equation, as the initial finding inferred that teacher development programmes could actually lead to higher achievement levels in educators leading to higher educational achievement by learners. Probably, there could be other reasons why UK teachers still perform albeit their reluctance to attend professional teacher development programmes. The reasons could range from the quality of initial teacher education experiences and the working environment they find themselves in on daily basis (European Union, 2010).

The UK education system, however, acknowledges the value of teachers attending continuous teacher professional development initiatives, as it remains firm in the belief that higher educational yields could be attained through these programmes. In other words, the achievement that UK attains is not actually at the level that the UK system aspires for.

As a result, Micklewright et al. (2014) argue that the quantity of the professional teacher development activities in the UK needs to be addressed for improvement of the impact of teacher effectiveness. The professional teacher development effectiveness may be determined by learners attaining higher knowledge and skills in a range of subjects which is something that has not yet been achieved by all the schools in UK (European Union, 2010).

2.7 Lessons learnt from the literature review

Equipping teachers with skills that are associated with students' needs is important because if the skills are not addressing the students' needs, then teaching and learning may not attain their original objectives. Professional teacher development programmes are not the sole contributor towards performance of learners in the different subjects. Other factors may, as well, be responsible. However, professional teacher development seems to be the major contributor towards cultivation and development of PCKs that are necessary towards attainment of higher educational yields. It could depend on how teachers attained their initial educational qualifications. Theorists such as the

constructivists and social cognitivists value existing or previously learnt experiences as impetus towards on-going learning by both learners and teachers.

Therefore, the certificates that teacher are awarded with after completion of their initial training educational programs is not necessary a good measure for ongoing and adaptive learning in the future. Seemingly, it depends on how these teachers have attained their initial training in the different higher education institutions. It is evident above that teachers who experienced positive professional education and training opportunities at the beginning of their careers are most likely to positively embrace further and ongoing professional teacher development opportunities, and that could bear positive fruits in learners' academic performance in subjects such Mathematics and Science. Therefore, proper and inclusive planning for professional teacher development programmes could necessitate the achievement of higher educational goals, as it could consider the current levels of preparedness, in terms of, current knowledge and skills, attitudes and educational dispositions, which could be used to encode ongoing or envisioned educational opportunities.

2.8 Conclusion

Professional teacher development is an important aspect for enhanced performance of schools across the globe. Theories of learning such as the constructivists, social-cognitive and andragogy are essential in the development of professional teacher development programmes. It has been discussed above that, professional teacher development is dynamic and requires understanding of different but relevant theories in its formulation. The above theories could then form the basis for the development of effective and reality bound professional teacher development programmes.

In essence, there is a belief that good professional teacher development programmes could yield better performing schools. This attests to the notion that not only teachers' professional growth is associated with the better performance of learners but also the consideration of other related factors involved in the school settings.

CHAPTER THREE

3 RESEARCH STRATEGY, RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN, PROCEDURE AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies and explicates the research strategy, design, procedure and methods, strengths and limitations employed in the research report. The chapter is sub-divided into research strategy (section 3.2), research approach (3.3), research design (section 3.4), procedure and methods (section 3.5). Further, it details the strengths – trustworthiness and authenticity of the research (section 3.6), and the weaknesses - limitations of the research (section 3.7) and conclusion (section 3.8)

3.2 Research strategy

There are several paradigms which a researcher can employ in research. These paradigms include the, positivist, post -positivists, and transformative, constructive and post-colonial paradigms, to mention a few. This study had considered the constructive/ interpretive paradigm and its philosophical underpinnings which briefly described the nature of reality (ontology) and the construction of knowledge (epistemology).

3.2.1 Ontology

This research is based on the premise that there is an intangible reality that is constructed about individual experience on the efficacy of professional teacher development initiatives in many contexts (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). In other words, teachers have developed different meanings and interpretation of how PTDIs in the area of study are implemented. They may also have their own individual views, experiences and perceptions of how these programmes could best be implemented. This valuable information could easily be accessed if the researcher interacts with the selected participants as that may elicit the required data about their experiences of such programmes. That is prompted by the view that meaning of reality depends, inter alia, on individuals or group – shared experiences of that which they interact with in their lives. Ontologically, reality does not change, however, the meaning human beings attach to it differs and that depends, inter alia, on

their dispositions and experiences of it (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012). This study seeks to understand the experiences of Mpumalanga secondary school teachers on PTDIs for improved classroom practice.

Interestingly, the researcher also comes with his own pre-dispositions of such programmes and these may also assist him to understand what the respondents may indicate as their experiences of such programmes. What the respondents gave as responses to the interview questions is interpreted by the researcher in an attempt to answer the research question stated in chapter 1 of this study. Therefore, ontological theoretical tenets are relevant in enabling the researcher to determine how teachers feel about these programmes as implemented in the area of the study.

3.2.2 Epistemology

The knowledge gathered through this research is subjective to the context of the individual participant's experiences within their schools and district (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, the knowledge involved in this study includes interpreted body of knowledge related to the efficacy of the teacher development initiatives in the affected schools. To derive this data, the researcher interviewed the respondents as it is through interviews that they accurately expressed their feelings about such programmes. The interview technique was chosen as it is buttressed by the chosen research approach to be further discussed in this chapter.

3.3 Research Approach

There are different research approaches to conducting research and they largely depend on the philosophical underpinnings of the study, its purpose and nature. Commonly, there is quantitative, qualitative and mixed research strategies or approaches used in conducting social science researches (Bryman, 2016; Wagner, Kawulich, & Garner, 2012). The choice of the relevant research approach to be used in a study is informed by the research question, the purpose and the topic of the study, to mention a few important considerations.

In this study, the researcher studied how the sampled teachers experience the professional teacher development initiatives implemented in the area of the study for

improved classroom practice. The fact that it deals with experiences simply points to the nature of the relevant research approach used in this study.

The researcher used the qualitative research approach, as perceptions, views, feelings, attitudes etc. are involved, and these attributes are dependent on the interpretations of those that are involved with the phenomenon at a given point in time (Creswell, 2014).The usage of quantitative research approaches became irrelevant because this type of research approach requires, among other things, determination of cause and effect relationship between the units of analysis and the exposition of objective reality without personal attribution of meaning to the phenomenon (Bryman, 2016). All these approaches are informed by the inherent research strategy, partly, alluded to above.

Bryman (2016) describes qualitative research approach as “a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (p.294). Furthermore, Nieuwenhuis and Smith (2012) posit that, this research strategy concerns itself with the processes of understanding, interpreting and shaping certain behavioural patterns through social and cultural contexts.

In this study, the Mpumalanga Secondary School teachers’ experiences of professional development initiatives for improved classroom practice was described. A qualitative research approach is considered a suitable approach when describing the experiences from their natural environment (Bryman, 2016). Broadly, the qualitative research approach is used as a suitable inquiry (research design) in the collection of data from the participants.

3.4 Research design

The qualitative research approach is supported by research designs which are used as a line of inquiry to collect and analyse interpretive data (Maree, 2016). Broadly research designs identify and describe a method that is used in collecting and analysing the data in line with the research topic and questions, guided by the theoretical framework and the research approach. Bryman (2016), specifically, describes a research design as a framework that guides the researcher with different methods in the collection and analysis of data about the phenomenon under investigation. The study sought to actually describe

the manner in which the respondents' experience professional teacher development initiatives implemented in some secondary schools of Gert Sibande district of the Mpumalanga Department of Education for attainment of enhanced educational outcomes. In this way, the study uses some elements of the phenomenological research approach because it describes the different views that the respondents have developed towards the different teacher development initiatives (Nieuwenhuis & Smith, 2012).

Furthermore, Christensen et al. (2010) posit that the primary objective of phenomenological study involves the explanation of the meaning, structure and most vital part of the lived experience of a person or group of people around specific phenomenon. Pointedly, Moustakas (1994) describes the principles of phenomenology as to:

> Determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived, in other words, the essences of structures of the experience (p.13).

3.5 Research procedure and methods

3.5.1 Data collection technique

In a phenomenological research design, a researcher may choose to use one or a combination of different techniques, namely, interviews, observations, field study, focus groups and document analysis to collect the required data (Maree, 2016). In this study, the researcher used the interview technique to collect data because lived experiences of the respondents were required. Nieuwenhuis and Smith (2012) describe an interview as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks questions in order to collect data about the respondents' experience, ideas, belief, views, feelings, opinions and behaviour.

However, the process is purposively arranged, otherwise it could go out of hand, leading to wrong conclusions reached about the phenomenon being studied. In order for it to be done properly, there are guidelines that the researcher should adhere to.

The researcher considered the guidelines elucidated by Nieuwenhuis and Smith (2012) and that was done as follows:

- Ensured the participants were holders of the required information
- Made sure consent was acquired from the participant
- No imposing of ideas on the participant was done
- No judgment or criticizing of the participants was administered

For the purpose of this study, an interview schedule (Annexures 1) was developed in order to guide how the interviews were conducted. The interview schedule is grounded on the following principles, as proposed by Nieuwenhuis and Smith (2012), i.e., that it has to have an introduction (that includes ethical issues), main questions and concluding statement. The main questions covered the different basic questions which are the background (demographic) questions, knowledge questions, experience and behaviour questions, and opinion and evaluative questions (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). To that effect, the interview questions incorporated those salient features for a balanced view of the phenomenon under investigation. To effectively, derive the required data, only teachers were interviewed.

For purposes of data collection, semi-structured interview questions were used. The choice is based on the fact that semi-structured interviews have a potential to enable the researcher to probe and explore deeper meaning about the phenomenon being studied. That is done because participants are allowed to express their true experiences and interpretation of the world (social context) they live in and how they regard the situation from their own point of view (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

According to Fraenkel & Wallen (2009) semi-structured interviews are effective when they are conducted for an hour, as that may enable participants not to lose focus and eventually yield unrelated and unwarranted responses. In this research, however, the interviews were structured to last for about twenty-five minutes per participant. The type and number of questions became suitable for that time period. Each interviewee took his/her own time within the stipulated time limit to express his/her views, experiences and feelings about the implementation of the teacher development initiatives in the area of the study.

In piloting the interviews, respondents took an average of 27 minutes to answer the questions. This informed the allocation of 30 minutes per session for each interviewee.

The interviewees were subjected to twelve questions which were informed by the problem statement and the research question. That enabled the researcher to only focus on what the whole study is all about, in order to eliminate unnecessary confounding factors from creeping in. Confounding factors have a potential to influence the outcome of a research study.

3.5.2 Target population and Sampling

This study was conducted in the Gert Sibande Education District in South Africa's Mpumalanga province. The district comprises 19 circuits accommodating 126 secondary schools. The circuits are organised in terms of sub-districts for operational purposes and they are Chief Albert Luthuli, Standerton and Ermelo. This research project was conducted in Chief Albert Luthuli (CAL) sub-district, particularly in the Badplaas and Mashishila circuits. The CAL sub-district was chosen because it has a high number of quintiles 1 to 3 schools. According to Lehohla (2012) the Statistician General, depicts that CAL sub-district has a high rate of unemployment and illiterate adult residents. Therefore, the CAL sub-district houses quintiles one to three schools which are charactrised by low levels of socio-economic development. The population, therefore, are predominantly are at low-income levels which may explain the level of support that parents could provide and the amount of accountability that these parents could demand from teachers.

This is so because the schools are situated in the areas where there are many low-income earners and high unemployment rate, lack of libraries in the community and also schools which were affected by inequality and poor socio-economic background. In that way, the schools sampled are from the similar and same surrounding.

To effectively draw the samples, a sample frame was developed using the names of the schools from the identified circuits. Similarly, a simple frame for the teachers from the selected schools was also developed. The Mashishila Circuit Office frame had nine (9) Secondary Schools and Badplaas Circuit eight (8) Secondary Schools. Two schools were

selected from Mashishila Circuit and three from Badplaas Circuit. All in all, 10 teachers were selected for this study.

In selecting the schools, the researcher used two hats containing their names in terms of the two circuits. They contained pieces of papers with names of the potential schools as explained above. The researcher used the Chief Administration clerks responsible for these circuits to draw the names of participating schools. This was done to eliminate possible bias that may creep had the researcher did it himself.

3.5.2.1 Sampling procedure

In qualitative research, researchers may use either non-probability or probability sampling methods depending on the nature and purpose of the study (Bryman, 2016). In this study, the researcher used elements of both probability and non-probability sampling. For purposes of this study, the researcher used the probability sampling procedure, particularly, the stratified sampling method so as to ensure the inclusion of schools and teachers as separate groups. Within the stratified sampling procedure, the researcher further used simple random sampling approach to actually select teachers and schools. In doing so, all selected schools and teachers stood an equal chance of being considered.

When conducting research, it may be difficult to reach out to the whole population required by the researcher. This is not only time-consuming but also requires financial resources, travelling long distance which could prove practically impossible to do (Wagner et al., 2012). To minimize travelling expenses by participants, the researcher conducted the study at the various schools.

To successfully conduct the study, the researcher ensured adherence to required ethical considerations. In the next section, the researcher discusses the ethical considerations applicable to the study.

3.5.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are an important aspect that is observed throughout the research process (Wagner et al., 2012). This protects the participants from deception, non-consideration of confidentiality and harming of participants (Bryman, 2016).

Further, ethics do not only protect the participants also protect the researcher, when accessing the schools where the study is conducted.

In that way, the researcher may not be accepted at the schools which the research is conducted. Therefore, the researcher was compelled to solicit permission from relevant authorities in the MDoE.

Following the permission, the researcher was required to obtain informed consent from each participant (see Appendices 2 & 3). The consent letter clearly reflects the rights to anonymity, confidentiality and welfare of the participants (Bryman, 2016; Wagner et al., 2012).

The purpose of the research was clearly articulated in the consent letter for the participants to know why and for whom the study was being conducted. Accordingly, in knowing who and why the study is conducted, positionality becomes a factor in the entire process. Merriam et al. (2001) argue that positionality in research is solely determined by where the researcher stands in relation to the participants. Clearly, the position of the researcher, as a senior official in the workplace, may have an influence on the research project. Being a senior official in the department means, amongst other things, is to cause educators to account. Accordingly, my focus is on whether the school accounts for the various programmes that the department expects schools to do. This may then affect the establishment of rapport with the teachers if the objectives of the study are not clearly explained. To minimise any potential negative influence, the researcher was clear about the objectives and motive for the collection of data (Bourke, 2014).

3.5.4 Data collection process and storage

For the effective conduction of the interviews, a venue was requested from the school which allowed the participants to narrate their story without any disturbance and prejudice. An interview schedule that indicated time, the venue and the date for the interviews was shared with all the participants. To fulfill the requirements of research ethics, the participants gave consent to be recorded (Wotela, 2017). They actually signed consent letters allowing the interview process to be recorded.

The researcher also indicated that, if for any reason, they felt uncomfortable during the process, they were free to withdraw.

After the actual interviews, the recorded clips were labelled, dated and stored on external hard drive and cloud storage. That data was unaltered to ensure safe keeping of originality (Bryman, 2012).

Below is an explanation of the process followed in analysing the collected data.

3.5.5 Data processing and analysis

Data processing can be taken as the means to manage the raw data (Bryman, 2016). Wagner et al. (2012) describe it as the process of preparing the data for analysis. Both descriptions regard data processing as the preliminary measure undertaken before data is analysed and that process involves the reduction of data to make meaning of it (Bryman, 2016).

In qualitative approach the processing of data is done after it has been collected. In this study an interview technique was used as a method of collecting data. It is, therefore, important that after the completion of the interview, a transcript is developed to process the data. According to Bryman (2016) a transcript is "described as a text version of a recorded interview or focus group session" (p.551). The researcher, therefore, transcribed the audio recorded data into a text copy. In the process of transcribing the audio recorded version into a text version (data processing), the researcher ensured that the written text reproduces the exact words as expressed by the interviewees. In ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher allocated pseudo- names for all the participants with T-1 representing the first teacher interviewed. Accordingly, the transcript assisted in a process of organising the data for better analysis (Kawulich & Holland, 2012).

According to Bryman (2016), organising data includes grouping, coding and introducing of such into a computer software for its analyses or manual coding and categorising into themes. For purposes of this study, the researcher relied on manual coding of audio recorded data. To do that, audio data was transcribed and printed into a paper. This enabled the researcher to identify units of analysis which consisted of similar and different words, phrases, sentences and non-textual data in line with the topic being discussed

when triangulation is done during data processing (Kawulich & Holland, 2012). Similar descriptive words expressed by interviews were identified and put together for possible conclusions to be reached about their meaning.

To effectively do the necessary codes, the researcher marked or labelled the textual data using representative alphabets for easy processing. According to Bryman (2012), it is important for collected data to be marked, sequenced and coded to avoid its unnecessary repetition, as that may jeopardise the trustworthiness, dependability and credibility of the study. Practically, the researcher operationalised and identified similarities, differences, and relative units of analysis. Largely in this project, constant comparison of data was done on all the interview transcripts for similarities and differences (Bryman, 2012). More on this aspect will be explained in chapter 4.

The coded data was therefore further categorised into patterns (themes) for interpretation, explanation, and understanding of the findings (Kawulich & Holland, 2012) based on how the participants constructed meaning on the topic and answering of the research question. The process of how this assisted the researcher to arrive at plausible conclusion about the phenomenon being studied is explained in chapter 4.

3.6 Research strengths

In ensuring the integrity and the quality of the study, it is important to be prudent about the methods, data collection and analysis procedures as that may enhance the credibility of the study (Bryman, 2012). Trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity are some of the measures used as criteria to assess the quality and integrity of the study (Bryman, 2012). Table 4 describes the criteria which are consistent with the trustworthiness of the study.

Table 4: Criteria for trustworthiness

Criterion	Description of assessment
Credibility	In this criterion the multiple accounts of data collection methods are considered (triangulation). However, the study employed the semi-structured interviews. In that way the process and procedure of

	interviews were followed extensively to ensure the credibility of the study.
Transferability	The interviews are conducted at the settings (context) of the participants. In this study the schools sampled were used as the social settings. The findings were akin to the context of the study.
Dependability	After the interviews, the records of all the processes followed in the undertaking of the study are kept safe for presentation if (are) required on the later stage. In this study, the un-analysed and analysed data were kept safe on different reliable storages.
Conformability	In conducting the study, all the ethical considerations were taken into account at each step of the process. Caution was exercised throughout the study ensuring that ethical issues are heeded to.

Adapted from Bryman (2012)

Authenticity

Table 5: Authenticity criteria

Criterion	**Description of assessment**
Fairness	Fair representation of the views of the participants were taken into consideration.
Ontological authenticity	The research help members arrive at better understanding of the social milieu.
Educative authenticity	Help members to better appreciate the perspective of other members of their social settings.
Catalytic authenticity	Helping members to engage on action to change their circumstances. Some of the questions revealed short comings on the organisation of the PTDIs.
Tactical authenticity	Help empower members to take steps to engage into action. This study presented the implications and recommendations to the readers and recipients.

Adapted from Bryman (2012)

Accordingly, the interviews were piloted with two teachers to test the length and relevancy of the interview sessions. In that way the credibility was pre-tested and some technical and administrative weakness of the interviews processes were corrected before the actual interview sessions.

3.7 Limitations

Stangor (2011) posits that there are some of the limitations which are encountered in undertaking any research study. According to Stangor (2011), these limitations are reactivity, instrumentation and statistical regression. Reactivity refers to the participants' consciousness towards the study, which influences the way they respond to the research questions (Stangor, 2011).

This has been observed when the respondents responded to some of the questions. Some provided faulty information that could not be corroborated by other colleagues in the same school. For example, some claimed to have followed the process as intended in policy, whereas, others indicated that the school had challenges with the implementation of the programme. Seemingly, they got carried away and attempted to please the researcher.

Instrumentation, on the other hand, occurs when there is a change on the dependent variable which may give unexpected results of the results whilst statistical regression on the other hand occurs when the instrument for collecting the data is not properly administered (Stangor, 2011).

In this study, the instrumentation and statistical regression aspects are not taken into consideration. This is because in qualitative data measurement and numeric data were not used. The limitations can be a combination of administrative and technical limitations.

To illustrate, the Mashishila and Badplaas circuits have more than 600 teachers and 60 schools. The study was conducted at the five selected schools and it involved only the sampled teachers (Bryman, 2016). Therefore, as common with studies of this nature, the findings are applicable to the research participants and not to the population of teachers as a whole.

3.8 Conclusion

A qualitative research strategy was used in this research project. The strategy was appropriate because it needed the experience of the respondents who attended the PTDIs. The technique in the collection of data was the interview technique. Both non-probability and probability sampling method were used to ensure equal opportunity for the sampling of the participants and also including the judgement of the researcher for a particular information.

The study was conducted at Mashishila and Badplaas Circuits. The respondents sampled were relevant to the topic because they were from the secondary schools. Finally, the strengths and limitations of the study were identified and presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the findings obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted to determine the experiences of Secondary School Teachers on Professional Teacher Development Initiatives.

4.2 Analysis of the interview Schedules

The research project had one group of respondents. Effectively, the teachers responded to twelve questions. The questions covered the following sections: Background, Experience, Knowledge, Behaviour, Opinion, and own evaluation of the professional teacher development programmes.

4.3 Analysis of the responses of the interview responses

The interviews were scheduled on different dates and times. The interviews plan stretched for eight months, as Covid-19 regulations and restrictions had to be taken into account. In essence, this was done in order to allow schools an opportunity to accommodate the schedule for the research.

Processing of data was done immediately after each interview session for a particular school. In organising the data, the responses were coded and themes were identified on an on-going basis. All responses given by the respondents were considered and that led to the analysis to be further discussed in the tables below.

The overall codes were collapsed into themes so that judgement on them could be made through identification of common characteristics depicted by the processed data. Practically, the themes were analysed based on each question and all the related responses to the questions. The themes are as follows: Benefits of PTDIs, Learners' performance as a result of the implementation of PTDIs, Scope of the needs identified for PTDIs, facilitation of the PTDIs, Support and Leadership provided during implementation of PTDIs, evaluation of the PTDIs and stakeholder involvement.

The findings are summarised below.

4.3.1 Benefits of PTDIs

Table 6 : Benefits of PTDIs

Respondents	Responses	**Theme**
Teachers: 10 respondents	Majority of respondents seemed to demonstrate having benefited from professional teacher development initiatives. Only few respondents indicated having not benefited from the professional teacher development initiatives.	Benefits of professional teacher development initiatives

The findings indicate that the majority of respondents benefited from the professional teacher development initiatives. Their benefit seems to be related to the form of subject contents and topics treated in the workshop which directly link with what they would do in the classroom. They further mentioned that they benefited in getting new information and understanding of the changes in the curriculum, in the form of abridged curriculum policy statements, setting of balanced question papers to accommodate all levels of intelligences and efficient marking of scripts of learners.

In that way they further attested that attending the professional teacher development initiatives assisted them to become better teachers. According to Hodges, Lee, Kulinna, & Kwon (2017) there is a direct link between attendance of relevant and well-organized teacher development programme and enhanced capacity to deliver curriculum for the benefit of learners in classrooms.

The expressions of some respondents who claimed not to have benefited are outlined below.

T-2 (personal communication, February 26 ,2021) said,

> yah it does (ND:Okay) it does some (ND: okay) workshops (I: workshops, okay) but eeh in some it does not because you find that this person who is conducting the workshop is just a lazy person ehh he should, (ND:Mhhm) he or her prepared for the conduct , to conduct the workshop but he or she did not do that and then eh and this trend will continue and continue and continue and when you call people sometimes they say ah I won't go there Mr Magagula is playing with us you find that there are two people yah all workshops, (ND:Mhhm) because they are reflecting on your on your what on your interaction you make people to go to Witbank for nothing you see that happens ,that I reflect myself to say Magagula's workshop I will not go (ND:Mhhm) yah, even if he comes to Sphumelele he is just playing, in some people who call workshop you find full people there because they know that they are going to benefit(ND: Okay) in.

T-9 (Personal communication, February 25, 2021) said,

> ...and mostly we just move on , just get information and move on , so we don't normally review on , if we taught you how to set a question paper let us see the question paper let us see the mistakes you make , you set the question paper against these guidelines that is mostly really is lacking, but after teaching in the same circuit for about 10 years in the FET particularly in grade 12, ai (no) its constant the the I am not sure but the department seems to be focusing more on the FET particularly grade 12, because the circular would normally say grade 10, 11, 12 but you attend the workshop is mostly grade 12 centered, so that is where a lot of attention maybe the results put the department under pressure but down there is not so much attention I am afraid.

These initiatives are some of the workshops that are organised to capacitate teachers on certain aspects related to their daily teaching practice. The above two respondents are referring to the workshops that focused on different grades and those who facilitated the workshops. The former associated the challenges to lack of skills in running the workshops and the latter attributes it to the exclusive attention given to the grade 12 content, at the expense of grades 10 and 11. This happens, amidst, the fact that all teachers responsible for grades 10 to 12 are invited to the same workshops. As a result,

those who teach grades 10 and 11 would idle, probably, because the content is irrelevant to them.

Clearly, the objectives of the workshop could not be reached for some and that is, partly, related to the fact that the content was irrelevant as it treated content for grades they are not assigned to teach. This view is shared by Minor et al, (2016) where they argued that workshops conducted for irrelevant and unhelpful subject content are prone to fail, as they are viewed as a waste of time. Therefore, the involvement of participants at the initial stages of planning is of paramount importance if workshops are to be viewed as helpful. This involvement may enable planners of workshops to determine the real needs of these teachers. That could enhance active participation in order for the workshops to reach their intended objectives.

The respondents also indicated that there is another form of initiatives, wherein curriculum implementers would visit schools and educators for purposes of monitoring and support. This, then, shows that workshops are not the only mechanisms for the development of teachers. Visitations to schools and invitation of experts by schools to develop teachers usually given an opportunity for teachers to get individual attention on relevant aspects of curriculum. In the study, the findings show that all the participants received this form of initiatives. This is corroborated by the social cognitivists who claim that the meaningfulness of a teaching program is dependent upon previous experiences of those for whom it is intended (Kapur, 2018). Therefore, initial training experiences could determine the extent to which a learning program could be received (Akpo & Jita, 2013; European Union, 2010).

Beyond the visitation initiative and workshops that departmental officials conduct, teachers also have a responsibility to take own initiative for their own development so that they keep abreast of latest development in their subjects, in terms of new content, requirements for assessment and prioritised content for external assessment, amongst other initiatives encapsulated in the CPTD programme. According to the American Institutes for Research (2006) teachers could not be left to fend themselves for their professional teacher development initiatives because they may not have the necessary inner drive to embrace the programme and that could contribute to its failure.

Some of the respondents (teachers), however, indicated that they also take self-initiative to develop themselves on various aspects of curriculum. They, however, rarely rely on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), at school level, for acquisition of practical skills related to informed curriculum implementation. Only one participant valued furthering studies with higher learning institutions as a viable option for self-development. This collaborates the fact that a clear programme that start by analysing teacher needs could enable them to attend these developmental programmes, as they may view them as intervention strategies conceived with them (American Institutes for Research, 2006)

The participant related the importance of studying further as follows:

T-2 (personal communication, February 26 ,2021) said,

> okay in terms of ehh I will start by educational development (ND: Okay), therefore going to classroom practice(ND: No problem) ehh as a person I value ehh personal development in terms of education(ND: Yah) because education broaden your perspective(ND:Mhhm) and then something that you may not realize that is important you may get it (ND:Mhhm) when you study, for example eehh I studied for a coarse (ND: Okay) ehm with Gail College of Education and then uhm it was under supervision of WITS university.(ND: Okay) so we were assessed from WITS University,so when I completed I worked for a while and then re enrolled again with the Northwest university, and then I did the honors degree with Northwest university(ND: Mhhm) and I graduated in 2014 and then it was on management(ND: Okay) … so when I studied there I realised that there are so many things that I did not know (ND:Mhhm), I did not know that it exists or you discover new information(ND: Mhhm) you may be, you may be teaching for 20 years but to find only to find that eish (ND:Mhhm) ay this information is new to me , so uhmm that degree opened my horizon in this field of education…

The CPTD programme provides for the utilisation of three types of professional teacher development initiatives, namely, the self-initiated, school initiated and external initiated (South African Council for Educators, 2012). All these initiatives are touted as important

milestones for broad development of teachers ensuring their relevance to the ever-changing contexts following constant evaluation of the system (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

The effectiveness, efficacy and efficiency of the professional teacher development initiatives is seen through the outcomes of the learners and the performances of the school in the different subjects.

Learner performance is discussed below.

4.3.2 Learners' performance as a result of the implementation of Professional Teacher Development Initiatives

Table 7: Performance associated with PTDI

Respondents	Responses	Theme
Teachers: 10 respondents	All respondents indicated that learners' performance is indeed related to the implementation of Professional Teacher Development initiatives. No respondent indicated to the contrary.	Performance in relation to the PTDI

The study focuses on the teachers' experiences of professional teacher development initiatives for improved classroom practice. They all agreed that PTDIs benefited them as the programmes added value to their abilities and skills to better teach the subjects. Essentially, they all indicated that they were equipped with skills and knowledge to teach the content and to tackle the challenges the different subjects may present during teaching and learning.

In their responses, however, they all dealt with general improvement in the subject without being specific on how that performance is attained in terms of subject averages. Additionally, some teachers associated the performance of learners to consistent attendance of PTDIs. For example, one participant said,

T-10 (personal communication, June 18 ,2021) “The results of the school show that Teacher development is working and also, they encourage teachers to take their work seriously and also develop academically (okay) yes”.

Evidently, this enhances the support in the performance of learners as stated in the problem statement.

In as much as the purpose of PTDIs are aimed at broadening content, for them to have positive effects, students’ needs must be taken into account and delivery modes need to adjusted in terms of the content needs of these teachers. This may include consideration of factors such as multiple intelligences, barriers to learning, socioeconomic backgrounds and world-views (Mizell, 2010b). The consideration of such factors in CPTD programmes is important as it ensures relevant and current skilling of teachers for enhanced development of learners. The findings of a research study by Davidson, Fields, and Yang (2009) showed a correlation between content- focused CPTD program and students’ performance.

As teachers attend PTDIs, the performance of learners and that of the school is always critical and may not be isolated from the entire process, as jointly, they influence the effectiveness of the schooling system. This is in agreement with the assertion that the CPTD is based on the premise that on-going PTDIs have a huge potential to enhance teachers’ development that leading to higher achievement by learners (South African Council for Educators, 2012).

It has also been revealed from few participants that constant pressure from departmental officials for high performance is not well received and that contributes to apathy and reluctance. They indicated that good performance is expected without considering the learners’ needs.

Some of the concerns are as follows:

T-9 (personal communication, February 25 ,2021) said,

> …but ehhh there is there is ehh a challenge though is too much in grade 12 where the school set the bar this is what we are expecting even if you not do well

at least you must able to reach here in your performance and you don't get there with this kids there is pressure, you have group dynamics with one group it's easy for me to even perform way more than ehhmm the the bar but with another group no matter how hard I try I really struggle I am saying this because there is a teacher ehhmm who was hospitalised because learners didn't do well.

T-5 (personal communication, March 10 ,2021) said,

…and I don't think that is helping us in terms of developing us as the teachers and the ehhh the the other thing that we need to talk about that I have seen as a ehhh young teachers when you get employed they just they just take you and make you feel the form I think is edu 6 or something from there you just grab the textbook and and any teaching material they show you the classroom and expect ukuthi (that) teachile (you taught) without having exposed you at least inducting you for a week or two weeks before you can officially go and teach those learners. So, it is exposing us a lot because you find that when you come from universities you are just coming with that content but in this exposure, you are have not really had it. In as much as you get it via the ehhh, you get some experience via the teaching practices and the staff but is not enough, yes. Because the other thing is that you also have to being orientated around other things ehhh the issues of of of of finances, there is no one who is doing that for us as the new professionals entering into the pro ehh the teaching profession, you just learn them on the streets those ones, they are very very important, because they also help us in terms of staying long in the profession.

Yes, so there are those aspects the issues of spirituality, you know the issues of having to understand the work environment generally to be ehhh orientated along the work environment. What is it that is expected from us as professional teachers, yes? Remember, we are just coming in some of the things we don't know that they are forbidden in the profession (ND: yeah), yes because no one told us about those things. So, if we could have an orientation program professionally dealing with professional, the ethics dealing with the issues of of of of the subject at that particular level, yes.

Based on the above, the scope of PTDIs is important to interrogate, as it has the potential to enable teachers to effectively benefit from such initiatives.

4.3.3 Scope of the needs identified for Professional Teacher Development Initiatives

Table 8: Scope of PTDIs

Respondents	Responses	Theme
Teachers: 10 respondents	All respondents indicated that they are not involved in identifying the needs for PTDIs.	Scope of PTDI

Based on findings in Table 8 above, it is evident that all the participants are not encouraged to take part in identifying and analysis of their Professional Teacher Developments' (PTD) needs. It would seem that PTD's needs are identified with little or no involvement of teachers. Therefore, they feel aloof of the programme and that may contribute to their inability to adequately benefit from the prgramme.

The participants painted a picture that the PTDIs' are organised quarterly, i.e., four times a year by Curriculum Implementers responsible for the different subjects that are offered. That top-down arrangement seems to deprive them of an opportunity to inform its objectives based on their actual teaching experiences. For example, participants further revealed the fact that participation in PTDIs is mostly determined by the CIs. Thus, CIs issue invitations and determine the agenda for such meetings. It was evident from their responses that they, actually, do not play an active role in organizing such initiatives.

Some of the participants had the following to say.

T-5 (personal communication, March 12 ,2021) said,

"The process we normally receive an invitation (ND: Okay) an invitation (ND:Mhhm)

N.D. Magagula (personal communication, March 12, 2021) "where is that invitation from?"

T-5 (personal communication, March 12 ,2021) “It is from the region (ND: the region), cluster (ND: cluster) I can say from cluster because we have got groups of cluster leaders (ND: Okay) mmhm”

N.D. Magagula (personal communication, March 12 ,2021) “So that invitation specifies who should attend? (Mr T-5: who should attend) okay”

T-5 (personal communication, March 12 ,2021) “Even the purpose of the meeting is indicated in the communication (ND: Okay) yes”

N.D. Magagula (personal communication, March 12 ,2021) “Okay given all what you are saying Mr K were you consulted about your own developmental initiatives now, to say Mr T-8 where can we help”

T-8 (personal communication, March 12 ,2021) “Never”

N.D. Magagula (personal communication, March 12 ,2021) “Never?”

T-8 (personal communication, March 12 ,2021) “No”

Based on the above responses, it is evident that participants have no significant role to play in determining how, where and what should be included in the envisaged PTDIs. On the contrary, researchers agree that a successful professional teacher development programme requires, inter alia, joint planning, identification of relevant materials and early identification of teachers’ needs (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2015). Without proper identification and assessment of teachers’ needs, any development plan is likely to fail as it may address issues that teachers are not having a challenge on (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2015).

The planning process of the PTDIs may require the involvement of teachers in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. Thus, team-work and social collaboration have a tendency to enhance the effectiveness of professional teacher development programmes (Uslu & Bumën, 2012; Wieczorek, 2017). Therefore, these aspects need to be considered in any professional teacher development initiative. However, in this study, we are not going to deal with those factors. There is, merely, to determine teachers’ experiences of professional development initiatives for improved classroom practice. They may have expanded their responses to cover various aspects related to the programme, but we only delved on the ones that directly spoke to the topic of the study. For example, some participants claimed that teacher development initiatives are mostly

addressing subject content, learner's assessment (marking skills, question paper and memorandum setting, and moderation), policy changes, and policy implementation. That provided invaluable information to shed a light on why certain things happen the way they do.

One of the participants bemoaned the conspicuous absence of effective orientation programme for new teachers to instill basic skills and knowledge on how best a classroom could be managed and how challenges of practical teaching could be addressed. If this is true, it implies that teachers, despite the fact that they were trained to do their work at tertiary education institutions, they lacked practical experiences on how to do their work in real life situations.

Another participant raised his concern about the difficulties they usually experience when they are expected to integrate technology in their daily teaching. It is believed that technology is increasingly becoming necessary for enhanced productivity, however, their schools are not adequately equipped to fulfil this need. This is worsened by the rapidly changing world and the disruptions that are brought to bear by the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which is, ostensibly not adequately been given attention in the professional teacher development programmes in their current form. This view is supported by how the respondent below responded to the question.

T-8 (personal communication, March 12 ,2021) said,

> …I am a young teacher so you know in university I was using technology, so the transaction from using a computer to a chalkboard is very difficult, so I have only a few teacher development ehhm (ND: Mhhm) initiative (ND: Mhhm) but ones for subjects but nothing out of the ordinary which personally I would prefer for me if that CPTD one (ND: Mhhm) was more because technology is the one that make these kids interested. They get bored when you write on the chalkboard and you writing notes facing the other way, not paying attention to them they start talking, so I think initiatives such as bringing in computers into the classroom maybe projectors (ND: Mhhm) would bring some bit of concentration …

4.3.4 Support and Leadership provided during the implementation of the PTDIs

Table 9: Support and Leadership

Respondents	Responses	Theme
Teachers: 10 Respondents	All respondents indicated that they usually receive monetary support for attendance of workshops.	Support and Leadership

Based on the above responses, it is evident that all participants are financially supported by their school management for attendance of workshops. This is necessary as workshop venues are held far from most schools. They are usually held at central venues which may require many educators to travel.

Interestingly, the CPTD programme does not only provide for one type of development initiative. Schools could also run their own development of teachers and this could be done in schools where they find themselves (SACE, 2011). According to SACE (2011) PTDIs could be delivered by schools on site, as is the case with Type 2. In addition, teacher could also initiate their development in line with the provisions of Type 1 professional teacher development initiative. Lastly, external stakeholders such as Teacher unions, officials of the Department of education at various levels and other accredited service providers could also provide PTDIs under the aegis of Type 3.

Ostensibly, this shows the fact that most professional teacher development initiatives are arranged by curriculum implementers. Schools, seldom organise their teacher development workshops, probably, because they lack extensive knowledge of subject content, exposure to current and relevant pedagogical approaches including best assessment practices. As a result, they exclusively depend on programmes initiated by curriculum Implementers.

On the contrary, school-based support, in the form of school and teacher initiated professional teacher development initiatives, could go a long way in empowering educators with contextual skills and knowledge to implement curriculum. Practically, it is

easy to create an educational support climate with colleagues in your subject as you are familiar with them and may also share same experiences (Lange et al. 2011). That may offer ongoing support, instead of the episodically and disjointed support offered by curriculum implementers at different times for various reasons, which may be irrelevant to the real needs of the educator.

In addition to the above, educators may not only need professional and academic support, they may also need psychosocial support which could enable them to attain job-satisfaction in carrying out their different responsibilities (Doherty, 2011). To find meaning in what they do at work may act as a springboard to venture uncharted territories thus enhancing your job performance (Jonassen & Land, 2012). Therefore, it is important to support educators towards attainment of job satisfaction as that may change their beliefs and attitudes towards PTDIs motivating them to embrace and benefit out of the programme (Doherty, 2011).

On the other hand, one of the respondents touted wellness-support as an important aspect needed for the growth and development of personal teaching skills, enhancement of motivation and honing of required skills to effectively manage conflict in the workplace. Provision of such services at most schools is nonexistent and teachers end up being overwhelmed with work. It is worse if those in authorities could not provide such support.

T-2 (personal communication, February 26 ,2021) said,

> …some principals make enemies every day yah or hurt people around in the process discourage the motivation and effectiveness of their, of some teachers eh for example being autocratic can be very problematic being undermining people eh not able to resolve issues eh not able to engage participation of educators not able to make them feel part of the school teaching community. Ehh!!, they don't even provide psychosocial support to educators who experience vocational stress.

Essentially, principals are critical in the creation of conducive environments for teamwork, intra and inter-collaboration between teachers, and the provision of psycho-emotional support to all educators for efficient realisation of PTDIs and other programs. Therefore,

they supposed to assume a leading role in the cultivation of proper educational ethos, attitudes and values which may inculcate a sustainable culture of self-regulatory posture towards PTDIs (Wieczorek, 2017). For instance, Wieczorek (2017) posits that principals' professional development ethos are contagious and they are largely based on their experiential knowledge of human resource management for them to better help educators to discharge their responsibilities.

Yusuf & Fashiku (2016) agree that effective professional and academic development of teachers is, largely, dependent on factors such as the teachers' level of basic education, PCK, instructional approaches (didactics), commitment and dedication. This view acknowledges the fact that often, if PTDIs are initiated at the district level, they may, probably, make most teachers to perceive them in a negative light, though they claim to benefit from them. There are many factors that could be attributed to the above scenario. Chief amongst such issues, is the ability to facilitate the training prgramme. Below, we will look at how facilitation becomes a factor in the broader scheme of things,

4.3.5 Facilitation of the PTDIs

Table 10: Facilitation of the PTDI

Respondents	Responses	Theme
Teachers: 10 respondents	Respondents had mixed views on the facilitation of PTDIs.	Facilitation of the PTDI

Based on the above responses, it is evident that the respondents had different views on the manner in which the facilitation of the PTDIs are conducted. The participants expressed mixed feelings about their experiences of the manner in which the PTDIs they attended were facilitated. The respondents indicated different factors to be at play and that included personal expectations of different teachers, the characteristics of the facilitator, the subject being facilitated, methods used, knowledgeability of the facilitator etc. It was further discovered that expectations could either be positive or negative and that has a potential to propel or retract efforts towards the achievement of associated outcomes. These expectancies, probably, derive their niche from teachers' anticipations

before the successful completion of training (Yoo, 2016). It could happen that their expectations are not met by the manner in which the workshops are facilitated.

Interestingly, they seem to hold a view that PTDIs become more effective if they are facilitated by their fellow colleagues targeting certain curriculum aspects, especially classroom teaching approaches on certain topics and subjects. This is so because, it is believed, their fellow colleagues possess current knowledge and relevant skills to empower others, precisely, because they are involved with classroom teaching for the better part of their professional life. For example, the respondent below responded as follows:

T-7 (personal communication, June 18 ,2021) said,

> …I would really love mmmhmm to see more being done than what is happening currently mmhhm I would like to see more teachers mmmhm being given the platform to share their views (yah) than to be given all the methods by the former one who have good result…

Based on the above response, it is apparent that some educators have a strong yearning to be developed by fellow educators on certain aspects of curriculum delivery, especially classroom teaching. This view is based on the perception that these educators feel comfortable in the midst of their colleagues. This is only applicable when they deal with specific aspects of content that would have been treated in their workshops conducted by curriculum implementers. The aim would, therefore, be to give effect to what the curriculum implementers treated.

It cannot be disputed, though, that facilitation of the professional teacher development initiatives by curriculum implementers requires, inter alia, responsive and differentiated facilitation skills so as to, adequately, understand and address the needs of the teachers (Noora et al., 2012).

This, therefore, requires a certain degree of determination and commitment to iterate and continue to exert effort resulting in the attainment of educative goals. In essence, knowing the importance of what is to be learnt, requires, among other things, that teachers develop their sense of urgency to fulfill their expectation and responsibility to attend workshops.

Attendance of workshops is also expedited by the value that these workshop holds for the educators.

As in many programmes, evaluation is of utmost importance for programmes to achieve their intended purpose. Below is a discussion on how teachers experienced evaluation of PTDIs.

4.3.6 Evaluation of the PTDIs

Table 11: Evaluation of PTDIs

Respondents	Response	Theme
Teachers: 10 Respondents	All respondents indicated that there is no form of evaluation linked to the implementation of PTDIs	Evaluation of the PTDI

According to Table 11 above, all participants felt there was no method that is being followed to evaluate the successes and failures of PTDIs they have ever experienced. Had there been any form of evaluation, some participants would have vouched for it, as they would have gone through it. Participants may have their own suggestions on how the PTDIs could be improved, but there is no opportunity for them to make such recommendations. It is during evaluation that they would have been able to indicate how they experienced the process. Therefore, whatever some people may say about the process would be their own individual opinions and done through a formal process of evaluation.

To corroborate for the above observation, one of the participants responded as follows:

T-8 (personal communication, March 12 ,2021) said, “To be honest no, (ND: okay) there has never been an evaluation (ND:okay) on workshops ehhm its allowed and I think that is one of the reasons why we never gonna improve so much because we do not evaluate...”

Constant evaluation of any intervention programme is important to ensure that it meets its intended objectives. According to Kusek & Rist (2004) evaluation is defined as “… an

assessment of a planned, on-going or completed intervention to determine its relevancy, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The intention is to incorporate lessons learned into the decision-making process" (p.114). Therefore, any programme whose intention is to bring about change in people's lives in terms of job- performance and enhancement of skills in order to perform maximally, among other things, requires on-going monitoring and evaluation (Kusek & Rist, 2004). That would then guide and inform further execution of the programme based on feedback gathered during the project evaluation process.

The absence of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of any programme is likely to result in dullness, stagnation and no feedback to the system and that may render it ineffective and irrelevant (Kusek & Rist, 2004). Eventually, the system may not perform as expected, not because it lacks human resource, precisely because it does not do on-going monitoring and evaluation of job-performance. It is worse if that happens in the education sector, as it may adversely impact on the lives of future generations and the country may bear the brunt.

Any system exists because of its human and financial resources, founding principles, infrastructure, stakeholders etc. Each element of the system has its unique contribution and the system is judged by the joint contribution of these elements (Kusek & Rist, 2004)

The next theme, then, discusses the involvement of stakeholders

4.3.7 Involvement of stakeholders

Table 12: Involvement of stakeholders

Respondents	Response	Theme
10 respondents	All respondents indicated that stakeholders are involved in the implementation of PTDIs No respondent indicated to the contrary.	Involvement of stakeholders

Based on Table 12, all participants expressed appreciation of the involvement of stakeholders in the implemetation PTDIs. For example, some participants acknowledged

the involvement of stakeholders such as Teacher unions, Education, Training and development Sector Education and Training Authority (ETD-SETA), Publishers of Textbooks etc. in training educators on various aspects of the curriculum. Another participant, identified SACE as one of the bodies that oversees the general professional development of educators to ensure continuous upholding of ethical and professional behaviour in schools.

Furthermore, they identified curriculum Implementers as custodians of teacher development, particularly related to the different subjects they are responsible for. Curriculum implementers are facilitators of different professional teacher development initiatives to ensure that teachers are developed and enabled to enhance teaching and the learning process in the different classrooms (Employment of Educators Act, 1998).

There was also reference to the school management team as one of the stakeholders who support them on the implementation of the on-going development of teachers. However, this type of development is merely on issues of procedures, communication, budgeting, the administration and running of different school departments, liaison with outside bodies etc. This type of training has elements of professional teacher development as various aspects of professionalism are touched on. It may not, extensively, deal with methods for practical classroom practices. However, it focuses on other related aspects, as indicated

4.4 Conclusion

The study was conducted in Gert Sibande Education District, specifically in Mashishila and Badplaas Circuits of the Mpumalanga province to determine the experiences of teachers in the implementation of PTDIs for improved classroom practice. The collected data in respect of the research question was qualitatively analysed, presented and discussed.

The findings show that teachers benefit from attending PTDIs. However, the degree to which they benefit varies, but the majority confirmed that they actually benefit from PTDIs. Notably, the majority of teachers believed PTDIs were beneficial to them as they have a potential to enhance their classroom practice if well implemented.

Factors such as preparedness of those who run the programmes, clarity of focus of the goals to be achieved, involvement of educators in the planning process, a lack of continuous monitoring and evaluation of the programme etc. were some of the factors to be considered for a more effective programme to be implemented. Therefore, the areas for envisaged benefit vary and are, largely, dependent on myriad of factors including the ones mentioned above.

In the next chapter, the researcher provides the summary of the findings, recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, the implications of the analysed data, suggestions for further study and the conclusions made through the study. It will also present a brief review of the research question and the problem statement including the procedure employed in conducting the research.

Summary of the findings

The research project was guided by an attempt to answer the following research question:

- What are secondary school teachers' experiences of professional development initiatives in terms of usable and transferrable knowledge and skills for improved classroom practice?

In answering the research question, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data about the participants' views and experiences in undergoing professional teacher development initiatives for enhanced skills of transferring knowledge and for improved classroom practice.

The transcripts were analysed using content based – themes approach. The researcher identified seven themes that are relevant to answering the research question. As discussed in the chapter 4, all participants expressed their views and feelings pertaining to the implementation of the PTDI in the area of the study. That sought to determine whether they are actually benefiting from it or not. In essence, their experiences of the manner in which PTDIs are implemented become the area of focus. In essence, that unraveled the phenomenon of PTDIs in terms of its worth in the promotion of professional growth, enhancement of understanding of the different subject dictates, administration of

assessment, and their views on the need to continuously develop themselves, among other things.

The summary of findings on the themes is presented below.

Theme 1: Benefits of professional teacher development initiatives (PTDIs)

The PTDIs seems to have benefited the respondents in doing their duties with diligence and it has contributed to their professional growth. All participants have expressed that the PTDI are effective.

Theme 2: Learners' performance as a result of the implementation of PTDIs

All participants indicated that the PTDIs added value to their performance and that of the learners. Therefore, all the participants associated their enhanced performance to attendance of PTDIs, especially, those conducted by curriculum implementers.

Theme 3: Scope of the needs identified for PTDIs

All respondents indicated that they do not play a role in planning for the initiatives and therefore, could not inform what should be covered.

Theme 4: Facilitation of the PTDIs

On this theme, there were mixed experiences as some respondents expressed concerns on the way the programmes are facilitated. There are those who also appreciated the manner in which the PTDIs were conducted. This is so because the programmes were facilitated by different curriculum implementers.

Theme 5: Support and Leadership provided during the implementation of the PTDIs

All participants indicated that there was support and leadership provided at their schools. Schools usually finance various activities that schools are engaged in. However, funding for onsite teacher development in line with PTDIs is scarce. In line with that, most of the participants indicated that there was absence of professional development initiatives at their schools.

Theme 6: Evaluation of the PTDIs

All participants indicated that there was no clear method of evaluation of the PTDIs. They did not have opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of the initiatives.

Theme 7: Stakeholder involvement

All participants indicated that there were different stake holders on their path to professional development. The curriculum Implementers, principals, and departmental heads in their respective roles are involved.

5.3 Implications and recommendations

From the findings discussed in chapter 4, it is clear that PTDIs are relevant for the continued development of the human capital for purposes of enhanced capacity to deliver education of a higher quality. In essence, PTDIs could, therefore, bring about innovation in the manner education is delivered. Educators found a link between PTDIs and their capacity to deliver curriculum as required by the system. In other words, PTDIs help educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the curriculum according to policy, thus assisting with the development of learners in the system.

This is in agreement with the findings of a research study by Davidson, Fields, and Yang (2009) that revealed a correlation between content- focused CPTD programme and students' performance. So, CPTD becomes an important vehicle for the ongoing development of teachers for the benefit of learners and the education system of a given country. The on-going PTDIs require more than short term intervention. Rather, it requires a sustained programme that focusses on different aspects of teachers and learners needs.

Based on that, the researcher is of the view that more time is needed for effective implementation of PTDIs, as the current arrangement. In addition to that, the involvement of the participants (beneficiaries) in crafting their professional teacher development programme is of utmost importance for the initiatives to be fully supported. Their involvement would ascertain that their true needs are taken into account. That could be

an opportunity for them to inform the content and how the programme could be structured to address their true needs.

The school based PTDIs are proven to be effective if conducted at schools where teachers teach. It is felt, workshops or programmes conducted away from the real teaching and learning environment have a potential to hinder effective learning of skills. This is mainly because workshop venues are not the same as the arrangements in different classes of many schools. Therefore, the knowledge and skills they may acquire may not easily and readily be applicable to schools. Schools have different contextual factors that inform the delivery of curriculum and that also informs how teachers should actually do their work.

What is learnt from this study is that more research on facilitation, imparting and transfer of information and knowledge in different contexts is required.

5.4 Conclusion

The findings in this study concur, to a large degree, with those made by many studies in the field of teaching and learning. Clearly, teaching and learning is a human phenomenon that derives its importance from the expectations and needs of communities, institutions and individuals it is designed to serve. Flowing from that, it means therefore, that the PTDIs have to be updated on an on-going basis in keeping with human experiences of reality. PTDIs as vehicles of updated and practical skills programmes whose aim, amongst others, is practical acquisition of skills for betterment of the teaching practice.

It is also apparent that effective implementation of a programme requires on-going and systematical evaluation to determine its relevance and efficacy. If programmes are implemented with little or no monitoring and evaluation, they are prone to lose their meaning and usefulness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

THE RESEARCH PROJECT: Mpumalanga Secondary School teachers' experiences of professional development initiatives for improved classroom practice

OPENING (NONE- PRINCIPAL)

(Establish Rapport) My name is _____ I am a student at WITS, School of Governance. I am doing a Master of Management.

(Purpose)I invited you to take part on my research project. The aim of this study is to find out the Mpumalanga **Secondary School teachers' experiences of professional development initiatives for improved classroom practice.**

(Motivation) I hope the use of the information would assist me to complete my degree and the experience of teachers on the professional development initiatives for improved classroom practice. Your personal details and the data collected in this interview will not be shared with anyone but only for my degree task.

(Time Line) The interview should take for about 25 minutes. Are you available to respond to some questions for this time?

BODY

1. Which subject and grade are you teaching?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience of teacher development initiatives?
3. How regularly do teacher development initiatives typically take place?
   Probing: What types of initiatives?
4. Based on your own experience, what have you found to be the most valuable aspects of the teacher development initiatives?
   Probing: how do they address your classroom challenges?
5. What are the processes and systems used for choosing participants to attend the teacher development initiatives?
6. In your view, what informed the teacher development initiatives?
   Probing questions: Where you consulted about your developmental needs?

7. In your observation what could encourage teachers to attend the initiatives?
8. Can you tell me about the support from the school (principal involved) on the initiatives?

9. How do you communicate with the facilitators (designers)?
10. What observation and comments do you have with regard to the facilitation of the teacher development initiatives that you participated in?
    Probing questions: Was it done in a right way?
    : Was the person relevant?
    : Did it address some of your developmental needs?
11. Can you take me through the process of reflection on how well or not the teacher development initiatives are working?
    Probing questions: Were the suggestions considered in other workshops?
12. What do you think can be done differently?

CLOSING

(Maintaining rapport) Is there anything else you think can be helpful for me?

(Concluding) I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Thank you.

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Participant information sheet

Dear Sir / Madam

I am a student at Wits University, School of governance. My name is Nephtal Dumisan Magagula doing my Master of Management.

As part of my studies, I have to undertake a research project and I am investigating the Mpumalanga Secondary School teachers 'experiences of professional development initiatives for improved classroom practice under the supervision of Prof. Pundy Pillay. The aim of this study is to find out the experiences, views, opinions and feelings towards the developmental initiatives for improved classroom practice.

I invite you to take part in the interviews that would be conducted at your school on the scheduled date and time. You will not receive any direct benefits from participating from the study, and there is no disadvantages or penalties for not participating.

You may withdraw anytime or not answer any question if you feel not comfortable. The process will be completely confidential and anonymous to third party on personal details.

The interview process will take you about 25 minutes to complete and the data will be only be used for the requirements of the degree. If you may have any questions afterwards, feel free to contact me. This study will be written up as a research report.

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrec-medical.researchoffice@wits.ac.za

Thank you for your participation

Yours sincerely

Nephtal Magagula

Email : 1393402@students.wits.ac.za

Cell : 072 893 3041

Supervisor : Prof. Pundy Pillay

Email : Pundy.Pillay@wits.ac.za

Contact : 011 7173808

Appendix 3: Consent form

Title: Mpumalanga Secondary School teachers' experiences of professional development initiatives for improved classroom practice

Name of Researcher: Magagula Nephtal Dumisan

I …….. agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous **YES** **NO** (please circle)

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report **YES** **NO** (please circle)

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded **YES** **NO** (please circle)

…… (Signature)

…… (Name of participant)

…… (Date)

…… (Signature)

…… (Name of person seeking consent)

…… (Date)