

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES IN WHOLE SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION.

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the degree Magister Educationis in Educational Management at the School of Educational Sciences at North-West University.

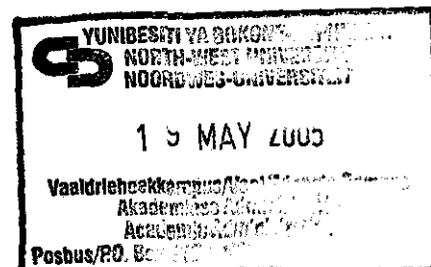
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2005



DEDICATION

**THIS DISSERTATION IS
DEDICATED TO MY DEAREST WIFE, MARIA MATSIETSI PHUTHA, WHO
INSISTED THAT I GET MY MASTER'S DEGREE, AND TO MY LATE
BROTHER, BETHUEL SPIRIT PHUTHA.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the following people whose interest and supervision have made the presentation of this dissertation possible:

- My supervisor, Dr N.J.L. Mazibuko, for his expert advice, patience and constant encouragement throughout the duration of this study;
- my co-supervisor, Dr M.I. Xaba, for encouragement and guidance;
- Mrs Denise Kocks for her patience in professional editing;
- the Vaal Triangle Campus (North-West University) library staff for their friendly and excellent service;
- Ms Siphokazi Kwatubana for her support and encouragement;
- my dearest mother, Agnes Mautu Phutha-Mokone, for being there for me concerning all my needs;
- my sisters, Mpho and Phomolo, and my brothers, Bethuel, Elias and William;
- my daughter Angela and my son Danny for their understanding and for their love through thick and thin;
- my extended family, colleagues at work and friends for their undying support; and
- my Heavenly Father who gave me strength and sustenance to complete this study through His Grace.

Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the phenomenon of Whole School Development at two township schools and, on the basis of the findings of both the literature study and the empirical research, make suggestions on what ought to be the role of the School Governing Bodies in Whole School Self-evaluation.

The literature review revealed that the key characteristic of effective Schools Governing Bodies (SGBs) is their ability to understand and to implement the distinctive contribution they can make to the governance and management of the school. It also indicated that the SGB has the strategic and direction-setting role and carries the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the whole school system through its accountability to the learners, educators, parents, communities and the Minister of Education. A Whole School Evaluation approach to school governance is thus essential if the goal is to understand and shape the development of school effectiveness. The Whole School Evaluation approach has value in explaining why some schools are performing better than others. It highlights the fact that success is determined by a range of environmental factors such as the infrastructure of the school, the socio-economic status of parents and communities, and so on.

The empirical research revealed that the few existing school policies and procedures at the school visited by the researcher were not appropriate or implemented effectively: the School Management Teams lacked clarity in dealing with management inefficiencies; the SGBs had not implemented training that they received concerning their roles and responsibilities; the quality of teaching and learning was negatively impacted by the educators' inferior lesson plans and presentation; teaching and learning time was not effectively used; assessment was confined to educators' observations and formal as well as informal tests;

recording of assessment was not formative; Developmental Appraisal Systems was not implemented; provision made for learners with special needs were inadequate; the curriculum was not supported by appropriate resources; some schools did not comply with the regulations and procedures to protect and ensure learners' safety, health and welfare; the standard of learners' progress was below average in all grades; and there was no control of educators and learners' work.

The study recommended that SGBs, together with School Management Teams (Heads of Departments, deputy principals, principals), must draw up a school development plan to monitor and evaluate the development of their school. The school development plan must be supplied to the parents/guardians of learners attending their school and to the community organizations for marketing purposes and financial support. In this case, the school development plan forms part of Whole School Self-Evaluation.

OPSOMMING

Die doelwit van hierdie navorsing was om die verskynsel van heelskoolontwikkeling aan *township* skole te ondersoek en, op grond van die bevindinge van die literatuurstudie en die empiriese navorsing, aanbevelings te doen oor watter rol Skoolbeheerliggame in die selfevaluering van die heelskool kan speel.

Die literatuuoroorsig het aangetoon dat die sleutelkenmerk van die effektiewe Skoolbeheerliggaam sy vermoë is om die eiesoortige bydrae wat hy kan lewer, in die beheer en bestuur van die skool te verstaan en te implementeer. Dit het ook aangedui dat die Skoolbeheerliggaam die strategiese en rigtingbepalende rol het en die uiteindelijke verantwoordelikheid dra vir die optrede van die heelskoolsisteem deur sy toerekenbaarheid aan die leerders, opvoeders, ouers, gemeenskappe en die Minister van Opvoeding. 'n Heelskool-evalueringsbenadering tot skoolbeheer is dus noodsaaklik indien die doelwit is om die ontwikkeling van skooldoeltreffendheid te verstaan en te vorm. Die heelskool-evalueringsbenadering het waarde en 'n verduideliking waarom sommige skole beter presteer as ander. Dit beklemtoon die feit dat sukses bepaal word deur 'n reeks omgewingsfaktore soos die infrastruktuur van die skool, die sosioekonomiese status van ouers en gemeenskappe, ensovoorts.

Die empiriese navorsing het onthul dat die paar bestaande skoolbeleide en procedures aan die skole wat die navorser self besoek het, nie geskik of effektief geïmplementeer is nie: dit het hul Skoolbestuurspanne aan duidelikheid ontbreek in die hantering van bestuursondoeltreffendhede; die Skoolbeheerliggame het nie hul opleiding teen opsigte van hul rolle en verantwoordelikhede geïmplementeer nie; die opvoeders se swak lesbeplanning en aanbieding het negatief ingewerk op die kwaliteit van die onderrig en leer; onderrig- en leertyd is nie effektief benut nie; verslae oor assessering was nie

vormend nie; voorsiening vir leerders met spesiale opvoedkundige behoeftes was ontoereikend; die kurrikulum is nie deur doelmatige bronne ondersteun nie; die skool het nie voldoen aan die regulasies en procedures om leerders se veiligheid, gesondheid en welstand te beskerm en te verseker nie; die standard ven leerders se leervordering was in byna alle Grade onder gemiddeld; en daar was geen monitering of kontrole van opvoeders en leerders se werk nie.

Die studie bevel aan dat Skoolbeheerliggame en Skoolbestuurspanne (Hoofde van Departement, Adjunkhoofde, Skoolhoofde) 'n skoolontwikkelingspan moet opstel om die ontwikkeling van hul skole te monitor en te evalueer. Die skoolontwikkelingspan moet aan die ouers/voogde van leerders aan hul skole en aan die gemeenskapsorganisasies gegee word vir bemarkingsdoeleindes en geldelike ondersteuning. In hierdie geval vorm die skoolontwikkelingspan deel van die heelskoolself-evaluering.

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Chapter 1

Orientation

1.1 Introduction and statement of the problem

The key characteristic of the effective School Governing Body (SGB) is its ability to understand and to implement the distinctive contribution it can make to the governance and management of the school.

The SGB has a strategic and direction-setting role and carries the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the Whole School System, through its accountability to the learners, educators, parents, communities and the Minister of Education (Department of Education, 1996c:4).

Strategic governance is influenced by a dynamic set of factors operating inside and outside the school. Understanding the linkages among the full range of influences and outcomes is crucial to identifying the barriers to and facilitators of strategic governance (Hargreaves & Hopkins, 1998:43). For example, in assessing the effects of a strategic governance programme, the SGB would typically look into the curriculum of the school and educators and learners' engagement with teaching and learning opportunities. But the learning environment may itself be influenced by the relationships among the educators, learners, parents and other professionals (for example, special education officials, speech pathologists, psychologists and school management developers) who provide services, the administrative policies relating to education management and leadership, family goals for learners' success at school, and cultural values of family and community members. A Whole School Evaluation (WSE) approach to school governance is thus essential if the goal is to understand and shape the development of school effectiveness (Bandura, 1998:48; Squelch, 2000:36).

The foregoing paragraphs necessitate the role of the SGB as starter and finisher of the self-evaluation of the development of the school. The OFSTED Handbook for Inspecting Schools (2003) stipulates that the main roles of SGBs are to:

- ❖ support and evaluate the effectiveness of the Whole School; and
- ❖ hold the school to account for the standards achieved and the quality of education delivered (Kraak, 1999:14).

SGBs that are effective in self-evaluating the development of the school share the following characteristics:

- comprehensive access to a range of performance data;
- the necessary skills to interpret the data;
- a strong committee structure;
- the confidence to challenge areas of under-performance; and
- a mutually open and trusting relationship with their school principals (Mayo, 2000:27; Anderson, 2000:44; Department of Education, 1999b:4).

This confirms the fact that Whole School Evaluation is a virtual necessity for SGBs to evaluate strategically what they value at their schools. If SGBs wish to achieve a useful self-evaluation procedure, they need to meet the following conditions:

- Firstly, there is an important place for the views of those who are involved at the very centre of the education process, namely: learners, parents and educators. There is also a place for information regarding attitudes, expectations and the degree of satisfaction of these stakeholders concerning the educational services the school is rendering (Ofsted, 2002:138; Martin & Holt, 2002:10; Gardner, 2000:49).
- Secondly, there must be an agreed conceptual framework consisting of indicators, standards and criteria of quality for evaluating schools. These indicators, standards and criteria of quality are embedded in the common key focus areas of school development (Tikly, 1998:177; Scmoker, 1999:2; Guskey, 2000:66). These “key areas” and indicators for school development are:
 - teaching and learning; support and guidance; school climate and/or ethos;
 - curriculum, management (which often covers self-evaluation and organizational aspects); and

- links with parents and community, as well as achievements of learners (Guskey, 1998:64; Chun, Brian & Heilbrunn, 2001:24).

Very little, if any, research has ever been conducted in South Africa on the role that SGBs should play in whole school self-evaluation. The questions that now come to mind are:

- What is the nature of Whole School Evaluation?
- What role should SGBs play in Whole School Self-evaluation?

1.2 Aim of the study

The aims of this research are to answer the above two questions by:

- investigating the phenomenon of Whole School Evaluation at township schools; and
- make suggestions on what the role of the SGBs should be in Whole School Self-evaluation, based on the findings of both the literature study and the empirical research.

1.3 Methods of research

Literature review and empirical research methods were used in this investigation.

1.3.1 Literature review

Current international and national journals, papers presented at professional meetings, dissertations by graduate learners and reports written by school and university researchers, as well as the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, providing information on how far research on school governance and Whole School monitoring and evaluation has progressed, were consulted and served as primary sources. Acts were consulted for governmental and departmental policy theoretical frameworks. Books on school governance, Whole School Development and Whole School Self-evaluation served as secondary sources.

1.3.2 Empirical research

In addition to the literature study, data were collected by means of qualitative research. The researcher personally visited two schools in the townships. The methodology involved interviews, observations and document analysis. These data were then analysed and interpreted.

The research was conducted as follows:

- The principals and SGBs of schools in the Northern Free State District were requested permission to conduct research at their schools where the researcher personally visited the two schools for the sake of phenomenological observation.

Phenomenological observation as a qualitative method of research was chosen because it does not have the burden of proof. There is only the world to experience and understand. Thorough examination of experiences offers great insight that might never be grasped in a controlled setting of the 'traditional' quantitatively oriented research.

The process of empirical research involved interviews with the principals and the chairpersons of the SGBs of the two schools that were selected for the sample population of this research, direct observations and analyses of written documents of the two schools. Data from observations consisted of:

- the functioning of the governing body;
- school safety and security;
- school infrastructure; and
- parents and the community.

This was necessary in order to highlight the general functionality of the two schools with a view to determining the role that SGBs can play in the Whole School Evaluation process.

1.3.2.1 Target population

All public schools in the Free State province were initially considered to be the target population.

1.3.2.2 Accessible population

As there are a large number of public schools in the Free State province, which would have taken a long time to visit, incurring huge financial implications, it was decided to limit the target population to two schools in the Northern Free State district only.

1.3.2.3 Sample

A randomly selected sample of two schools with enrolments of approximately 1300 learners was drawn. These schools were personally visited by the researcher who was given the opportunity and latitude by the SGBs and School Management Teams to observe the whole functionality of the schools, including access to school registers such as time registers for educators and class registers for learners' attendance. This helped the researcher to observe the processes of teaching and learning by visiting certain classes where educators felt comfortable in being observed by the researcher; by looking at the structures of leadership and management of the two schools; and by looking at the output of the learning and teaching processes.

1.4 Programme of research

Chapter 1 is primarily an orientation chapter, preparing the reader for the subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 2, a literature review on the school evaluation and school governance is explored.

In Chapter 3, the empirical design is motivated. The purpose of the research, method of research, the choice of the target group, and the qualitative method used in this research are discussed.

In Chapter 4, the research results are analysed and interpreted.

The concluding Chapter 5 provides a summary of findings from the literature study as well as the empirical design. Recommendations for further research and for practical implementations are also presented.

1.5 Conclusion

In Chapter 1, the orientation of the research. (in the form of the problem statement, the aims, and the programme of the research was discussed.

In Chapter 2, the literature review on whole school evaluation and school governance will be discussed.

Chapter 2

Literature review on School Governing Bodies and Whole School Evaluation

2.1 Introduction

As part of the transformation process in the South African education system, functions and responsibilities are being decentralised, giving SGBs increased responsibility in areas such as self-governance, assuring the quality of the teaching and learning system at schools; and the management of resources and accountability for results. These changes have necessitated the use of ecosystemic, self-regulative and school-based tools to monitor schooling. Whole School Evaluation has become one of these governance and management tools that the Department of Education in South Africa is utilising for an effective monitoring and evaluation process of the development and improvement of quality and standards of performance at schools (South African Act No. 27, 1996).

As cited from Yap, Aldersebaes, Railsburg, Shaughhnessy & Speth (2000:14), the only way for schools to achieve effective governance and management is by the process of self-evaluation and by defining the aims of the evaluation for themselves. A self-evaluating school is a developing and improving school.

This chapter presents a literature review on Whole School Development, school self-evaluation, Whole School Evaluation and strategic school governance. Firstly, the framework of these constructs is presented.

2.2 The philosophical foundation of Whole School Development, Whole School Evaluation and strategic governance

This section provides the ecosystemic approach to Whole School Development, Whole School Evaluation and strategic school governance.

2.2.1 An ecological systems framework

Guskey's (2000:19) conceptualisation of the ecology of human development provides a useful theoretical framework for research on the implementation of strategic governance at schools. He proposes that human development is influenced by factors operating at different levels within a broad ecological structure. These different levels exert reciprocal influences on one another, as depicted in Figure 2.1.

- **Microsystem**

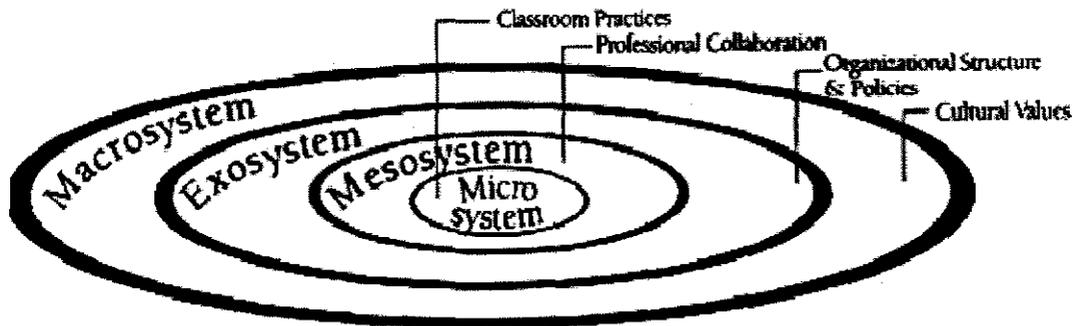


Figure 2.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological system framework

According to Kelly (1998:66), the first systems level, named the "microsystem," contains the factors within the school's immediate environment. These factors directly affect the school and, in turn, may be affected by the school.

- **Mesosystem**

The mesosystem encompasses the interrelations of two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates. For a child, this would be the relations between home, school and neighbourhood peer groups (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2000:74).

- **Exosystem**

Moving outward, the exosystem consists of settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect or are affected by what is happening in the setting containing the developing person (Department of Education, 1996a:8; Garmston & Bruce, 1999:33).

- **Macrosystem**

The macrosystem envelops the micro-, meso-, and exosystems. Kelly (1998:67) defines the macrosystem as "consistencies in the form and content of lower-order systems that exist at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief system or ideology underlying such consistencies" (Becta, 2001:25; Leask, 2001:37). All settings at each level operate within a cultural context.

The cornerstone of Whole School Evaluation is the parallel between ecological communities (ecosystems) and learning communities (schools) (Steinberg, Brown & Dornbush, 1998:15). To understand the theory of ecosystems and apply it to human communities, the SGBs need to learn the principles of ecology, which is the "language of nature." (Scmoker & Results, 1999:56). Daves and Ellison (1999:14), Sparks and Hirsh (1999:18) and Burke (1999:23) opine that SGBs need to become ecologically literate. Once they really understand the principles of ecology or the principles of community, which in this research is highlighted as interdependence, diversity, partnership, energy flow, flexibility, cycles, co-evolution, and sustainability, these principles of ecology can be applied as principles of education (Fullan, 1998:10).

The link between ecological communities and human communities exists because both are living systems, and this is where systems-thinking comes in. The parallel between ecosystems and human communities is not just a metaphor. It is a real connection, because both are living systems (Freiberg, 1999:16; Lafee, 2002:12). The principles of ecology are the patterns of life. To understand these patterns and living systems, there is a need for a new way of thinking in school governance. The fundamental change in school governors' way of thinking must be a shift of emphasis from the parts to the whole (Gutierrez, Crosland & Berline, 2001:91).

The emphasis on the parts is "mechanistic." This comes, of course, from "machine." In order to understand a machine, one needs to take it apart. This is Descartes' celebrated method of analytic thinking, introduced in the seventeenth century, which has been an essential characteristic of modern scientific thought

and has proved extremely successful (Collins, 1998:45; Horton, 2002:281). When one has a complex phenomenon or problem, one takes it apart, reduces it to a number of small, simple pieces that are easy to understand, studies the mechanisms through which they interact, and then puts them all together again, and understands the whole (Manganyi, 2001:68). This approach is also sometimes called reductionist thinking, because one attempts to understand the whole by reducing it to the study of its parts. But this cannot be done with living systems. If one takes a living thing apart, one kills it. So the mechanistic/reductionist approach is not appropriate for living systems (Davis, 1998:36; Poglinco, Amy, Bach, Hoved, Rosenblun, Marisa & Supovitz, 2003:2).

Cloete and Bunting (1999:16) argue that to understand the lessons of ecosystems and apply them to human communities, there is a need to learn the principles of ecology, the "language of nature" and to become ecologically literate. The emphasis on the whole has been called "holistic" thinking (from the Greek holos: whole) or "organismic" thinking, because an organism is one of the main manifestations of living systems. It has also been called "ecological" thinking, because ecology is the study of the living communities to which this thinking applies (Epstein, 2002:20).

Systems-thinking is a term that was coined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Around the 1930s and onwards, the holistic perspective became known as "systemic" and the way of thinking it implies, as "systems-thinking" (Stoll & Fink, 1996:21).

Systems-thinking emerged during the first half of the century, especially during the 1920s, simultaneously in several disciplines. It was pioneered by biologists, who emphasized the view of living organisms as integrated wholes whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller parts. This school of biology was called organismic biology (Lafee, 2002:46; Miller & Harrington, 2000:227). Systems-thinking was further enriched by psychologists in the new school of Gestalt psychology. Gestalt is a German word meaning "organic form." What these psychologists discovered was that living organisms do not perceive things in terms of isolated elements, but in terms of integrated perceptual patterns, that is, meaningful organized wholes that exhibit qualities that are absent in their parts.

This is what they called a Gestalt. The famous saying that “the whole is more than the sum of its parts” was actually coined by the Gestalt psychologists (Joyce & Beverly, 2002:11).

The third discipline in which systems-thinking emerged was ecology, which actually began as a science in those days. Ecology is a very young science. Its forerunners were the naturalists of the nineteenth century. Around the 1920s, the term “ecosystem” was coined, and with that term, ecology began as an independent science (Freedman, 2001:85, Stone, 1999:52; Dhar & Stein, 1997:42; Michell, 1996:16). Ecologists focused on the study of animal and plant communities, and again they encountered this irreducible wholeness. In particular, they observed networks of relationships, the web of life.

So biology, psychology, and ecology were the three fields in which system-thinking emerged. Finally, systems-thinking also emerged in the quantum theory, when physicists discovered that we cannot decompose the world into independently existing elementary units (Venesky & Davis, 2002:40; Motala & Mungadi, 1999:34). As attention is shifted from macroscopic objects to atoms and sub-atomic particles, nature does not show any isolated building blocks, but rather appears as a complex web of relationships between the various parts of a unified whole. By the 1930s, most of the key characteristics of systems-thinking had been formulated by organismic biologists, Gestalt psychologists and ecologists (Robb, 2000:57; Hall & Hord, 2001:32).

In all these fields the exploration of three types of living systems such as organisms, parts of organisms, and communities of organisms had led scientists to think in terms of connectedness, relationships, and context. And this new thinking was also supported by the revolutionary discoveries in quantum physics in the realm of atoms and subatomic particles (Van Wyk, 1998:12). The key characteristics of systems thinking are:

- **Shift from the parts to the whole.** The first and most general characteristic is the shift from the parts to the whole. According to the systems view, the essential properties of a living system—an organism or a community—are properties of the whole, which none of the parts have. They arise from the interactions and relationships between the parts.

These properties are destroyed when the system is dissected, either physically or theoretically, into isolated elements. Although we can discern individual parts in any system, these parts are not isolated, and the nature of the whole is always different from the mere sum of its parts (Wenglinisky, 2000:15; Diggins, Doyle & Herron, 1999:57; Castells, 1996:17). To give an example, when you go out into nature and study ecosystems, you find that the various species there are all interconnected. They form a community and are interconnected through feeding relationships. The main patterns you discover are cyclical patterns. Energy and matter move in cycles through the ecosystem; all substances are continually recycled. The food chains that ecologists originally talked about are really food webs (Lee, 2002:45; Beck, 2000:80; Hartshorne, 1999:37). They are networks, and there are cycles within those networks, which are feedback loops. All these are properties that can only be understood if you observe the whole ecosystem. If you split it into a number of species and make a list of those, you will never discover that there are these cyclical patterns that interconnect them. This is what is meant when it is said that the system as a whole has to be studied, that it cannot be reduced to the properties of its parts. The new way of thinking, then, is thinking in terms of connectedness, in terms of context, and in terms of relationships (Peterson, McCarthy & Elmore, 1998:49; Galton, Gray & Ruddock, 1999:19; Chall, 200:16; Telem, 2001:65).

- **Shift from analysis to context.** The second aspect of system-thinking, is thinking in terms of context. The whole enterprise of traditional philosophical thought has been mechanistic and reductionist, concentrating on the parts. The great shock of twentieth-century science has been that living systems cannot be understood by this method of analysis. This does not mean that analysis must be given up. It is still very useful in many ways, but it is limited. It has to be supplemented by thinking in terms of context. In a living system, the properties of the parts are not intrinsic properties, but can be understood only within the context of the larger whole (Solomon, Battistich, Schaps & Delucchi, 2000:55). Thus the relationship between the parts and the whole has been reversed. The new rule is that in order to understand something, it must not be taken apart; it

must be put into a larger context. For instance, if one looks around in nature and sees a bird or any other animal, one will see that it has feathers or fur, certain colours and certain other attributes (Kelly, 2001:39). In a living system, the properties of the parts are not intrinsic properties, but can be understood only within the context of the larger whole. In a truly integrated curriculum, the understanding of connectedness is the central purpose. Once one has acquired the skill of perceiving patterns and connectedness, one can apply it anywhere. To understand this, one needs to understand the animal in the context of its environment. One needs to know what its habitats and seasonal habits are, and so forth. Only then will one understand, for example, why a bird has certain colours. Then, if one knows something about evolution, one will know how these colours originated and evolved. So one will understand the properties within the context of the environment of this animal and within its evolutionary context (Sammons, Hillamn & Mortimore, 2000:14; Garet, Porte, Desimore, Desimore, Birman & Yoon, 2001:915).

Fullan (2001:96) asserts that systems-thinking is “contextual,” and this is the opposite of analytical thinking. Analysis means taking something apart in order to understand it; systems-thinking means putting it into the context of a larger whole. This means that meaningful governance is contextual.

- **Shift from objects to relationships.** When one looks at living systems and sees that the parts can only be understood in terms of the context of the whole, one can go a step further. This was the dramatic event in physics in the 1920s. Physicists discovered that ultimately there are no parts at all. What is called a “part” is merely a pattern in an inseparable web of relationships. It is very useful to define parts, but this definition is often rather arbitrary and approximate and needs to be flexible. Therefore, the shift from the parts to the whole can also be seen as a shift from objects to relationships (Lyons, 2000:72; Streifer & Philip, 2002:23). In the mechanistic view, the world is seen as a collection of objects, and the relationships between them are secondary. In the systems view, there is a realisation that the objects themselves—the organisms in an ecosystem or the people in a community—are networks of relationships, embedded in larger networks (Sweeney, 2003:45; Flecknoe, 2001:13; Chilsholm, Linda & Fuller, 1998:55). For the systems-thinker, the relationships are primary.

The boundaries of the discernible patterns, that is, the “objects,” are secondary. The world is a world of relationships, and within these relationships we draw circles around certain patterns, and then it is said, “Well, this is what I call an object.” For example, this network of relationships between leaves and twigs and branches is called a “tree.” It is significant that when a tree is drawn, and psychologists sometimes ask people to do this as a test, most people do not draw the roots (Buenfil-Burgos & Nidia, 2000:34). Yet the roots are often as expansive as what is seen in a tree. If the relationships contained within the tree both above and below the earth are drawn, a very different picture evolves. This is just one example of the shift of perception from objects to relationships. It is an extremely important part of systems-thinking (Kraak & Nissar, 2001:20). Consider thinking about a learning community in terms of relationships. In the systems view, the realization is that the objects themselves, that is, the organisms in an ecosystem or the people in a community, are networks of relationships, embedded in larger networks. This vividly illustrates the importance of cooperative governance, such as the relationships that school governors have, that is, how they work together in the community—the parents, the educators, the administrators (Brown, 1999:134).

It boils down to competition or cooperation. The more one thinks about school governance as a community, the more one will think about relationships, because that is what a community is. Nurturing the learning community means nurturing these relationships (Schmoker, 1998:45; Joyce & Beverly, 2002:98).

- **Shift from hierarchies to networks.** Bird and Elliot (1996:43) argue that when schools look at these relationships and these networks within networks, they see that there are different levels. A striking property of living systems is their tendency to form multi-leveled structures of systems within systems. Therefore, another key characteristic of systems-thinking is the ability to shift one’s attention back and forth between systems levels. Take the human being as an example. At the smallest level it has cells, and each cell is a living system. These cells combine to form tissues, the

tissues form organs, and the organs form organ systems (e.g., the nervous system or the digestive system). The whole organism is a network of all these relationships. Then the organism as a whole exists within societal relationships, within social systems, and within ecosystems (Berends, Suan & Nataraj, 2002:40; Cox, 1997:56). At each level, human beings have systems that are integrated wholes, while at the same time they are parts of larger wholes. Throughout the living world, there are living systems nesting within other living systems. Since the early days of ecology, these multileveled arrangements have been called hierarchies (Hanson, 1997:55). However, this term can be rather misleading, since it is derived from human hierarchies, originally from the Catholic Church and now from the military and corporate worlds (Lyons & Gay, 2001:11). These have fairly rigid structures of domination and control, quite unlike the multileveled order found in nature. The view of living systems as networks provides a helpful new perspective on the so-called "hierarchies" of nature. Since living systems at all levels are networks, schools must visualise the web of life as living systems (networks) interacting in network fashion with other systems (networks). For example, they can picture an ecosystem schematically as a network with a few nodes (Guskey & Sparks, 1996:36). Each node represents an organism, which means that each node, when magnified, appears in itself as a network. Each node in the new network may represent an organ, which in turn will appear as a network when magnified, and so on. In other words, the web of life consists of networks within networks. At each scale, the nodes of the network reveal themselves as smaller networks under closer scrutiny. Human beings tend to arrange these systems, all nesting within larger systems, in a hierarchical scheme by placing the larger systems above the smaller ones in pyramid fashion (Hess & Frederick, 1998:12; Bodilly, 1996a:119). But this is a human projection. In nature, there is no "above," nor "below"; there are no pyramids and no hierarchies. There are only networks nesting within other networks. So systems-thinking, includes a shift from hierarchies to networks. This is not only a shift of perception, but also a shift of actual structures in a community. The school governing bodies need a shift in their organizational structures from hierarchies to networks.

If they want to create a sustainable community, it is important to make sure that there is a free flow within a network; that there is a network of relationships that is nurtured (Becta, 1998:43; MacDonald, 1998:76; Morris, 2001:87).

- **Shift from structure to process.** All the systems concepts discussed so far can be seen as different aspects of one great strand of systemic thinking, which may be called contextual thinking. Contextual thinking means thinking in terms of connectedness, context and relationships. Actually, the Latin root of the word "context" means "weaving together." There is another strand in systems-thinking that is of equal importance: process-thinking (Castells, 1998, 32; Kallaway, Glenda, Aslam & Gari, 1998:42). In the mechanistic framework of Cartesian science, there are fundamental structures, and then there are forces and mechanisms through which these structures interact, thus giving rise to processes. In systems science every structure is seen as the manifestation of underlying processes. Structure and process always go together; they are two sides of the same coin. Systems-thinking is always process-thinking (Bird & Elliot, 1996b:64; Kraak, 2000:9). Throughout the living world, living systems nest within other living systems. If a sustainable community is to be created, it is important to make sure that there is a free flow within a network; that there is a network of relationships that is nurtured. This does not refer to a process where governance is the goal. Governance is concerned with managing, facilitating, and guiding the process of change. This is very different from designing and mandating change, which has been shown not to work. It is facilitating the change process that works (James, 2000:65; Becta, 2003a:99).
- **Open systems.** Systems theorists have coined the term "open systems" to describe the situation. De Clerq (1998:1831) posits that all living systems are open systems, which means they need to feed on a continual flow of matter and energy to stay alive. In organisms, this flow of matter and energy is the process of metabolism such as taking in food, digesting it, using the energy to grow and maintain structures and to fuel activities, and discarding the waste products. In an ecosystem, there is a corresponding flow of matter and energy throughout the community of plants and animals (Kahn & Michael, 1998:281). In the process of photosynthesis, green

plants take up energy from the sun, transform it into chemical energy, and use it to build complex organic substances out of minerals and water such as proteins, carbohydrates, fats, and so on (Ensor, 2001:7; McCombs, 1998:50). These are then taken up by the animals feeding on plants and other animals, and finally the animals' organic wastes (and ultimately the animals themselves) are reduced to inorganic substances by microorganisms, ending up as minerals to be taken up again by plants (Becta, 2003b:24). Thus there is a continual cyclical flow through the ecosystem, each organism passing on matter and energy and each maintaining itself in a state of dynamic balance as matter and energy flow through it. If one looks at a bush out there, at its various leaves, one sees that there is a constancy of form; and yet substances flow through it all the time. There is a dynamic balance; a constancy of pattern, of form, while there is continual structural change (Newman & Wehlage, 1999:63). There are two kinds of change, and process-thinking applies to both. There are the cyclical changes, and then there are developmental and evolutionary changes. The new thinking in systems science is that evolution is not just an adaptive reaction to changes in the environment. This is often important, but development and evolution are much more. They are intrinsic properties of life. All living systems have the ability to create novelty (Crawford, 2001:53).

So the two big strands of systems-thinking are contextual thinking and process-thinking. Both are needed to understand the basic principles of ecology, the patterns of life (Fullan, 2000:34). Thus there is a continual cyclical flow through the ecosystem, each organism passing on matter and energy and each maintaining itself in a state of dynamic balance as matter and energy flow through it (Bernhardt & Victoria, 1998:37).

- **Human ecology theory.** Human ecology theory conceptualises the family or individual and their relationships and interrelationships with their near and far environments. The term "ecology" has its origins in several disciplines, particularly the biological research of Charles Darwin and his principle of natural selection (Berends, Susan & Nataraj, 2000:43). A key

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to this survival process is the concept of the *adaptation* of the organism to the environmental inputs. This concept was borrowed by Human Ecology theoreticians and remains as a central concept in the theory today. Zoologists, Kington, Harris and Lee (2001:17) were among the first to conceptualise ecological theory as it related to and was interested in an organism's relationship to its organic and inorganic environments (Timperly & Robinson, 2000:53). They articulated the concept that the organism was more than just a sum of its parts (Allison, 1999:287).

The concept of human beings and their well-being as a function of their relationship with their environment achieved a heightened interest during the latter part of the nineteenth century, during the Industrial Revolution when families and individuals moved from farming communities to urban areas and were sometimes caught in a web of poverty, isolation, disease, and difficult working environments (Newmann, Rutter & Smith, 1999:76). At that time, Spira (1998:54), a chemist and a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) graduate, utilized what she then termed as "oekology" as a means for applying the principles, methods and results of science to the improvement of people's lives and their environment. During the early years of the field of "home economics" as it was later termed, emphasis was placed on the effects of various impacts on the family such as air and water pollution; sanitation and waste disposal; preservation, storage and cooking of food; and clothing and furnishings for the family's safety, health and aesthetics (Ginsberg, Johnson & Moffett, 2001:99).

During the 1960s, the environmental movement renewed attention to the theory and the impact of humans on their environment and of the environment on humans, as an international audience focused on the issues of worldwide population growth and the depletion of fossil fuels and other resources. Later pioneers of the theory who focused attention on issues and individuals in the family were Berends, Chun, Schuyler, Stockly and Briggs (2002:71) who studied learners and their environments, and Bernstein (1998:5) who applied Human Ecology Theory to a Human Resource Management framework (Klein, Medrich & Perez-Ferreiro, 2000:223). Whelan (2000:66) at Cornell emphasised a contextual study of learners and their relationship to their environments. He conceptualised the Human Ecology Model as being "like a set of nested structures, each inside

the other like a set of Russian dolls.” Each of these nested systems comprises four levels of analysis:

- the microsystem;
- the mesosystem;
- the exosystem; and
- the macrosystem (O’Donoghue & Chalmers, 2000:889).

Whelan (2000:66) places the child firmly at the centre and envisioned the first environment, or centre circle surrounding the child as being the microenvironment, which consisted of the child and the family. This initial environment involves the direct and concrete impact on the developing child of significant others. The second circle, or environment, is the mesoenvironment, consisting of the school and day-care and their impact on the child. This second environment is conceptualised as being composed of two or more Microsystems (Brown, 1998:18). The third environment is the exoenvironment, which consists of larger institutions such as the workplace and social networks that indirectly impact the child. This third environment is one which affects the micro and mesoenvironments indirectly, but which has no direct impact on the child or focus of analysis. The last environment would be the macroenvironment, which would be the surrounding socio-cultural context (Ladson-Billings, 1999:65). Cushman (1996:65) also added another layer, the chronosystem as an outer circle, which consists of the life transitions or changes that are visited upon the child or family. Comber (2002:98) expanded the concept further in terms of another environmental layer that would consist of different world views or cultural systems (Berends, Chun, Schuyler, Stokly & Briggs, 2002:29). A-Plus communications (1999:20) have a similar, but slightly different model, which involves the family and the environments that touch the family, radiating outward from the centre. First, at the center is the built environment, then outside that is the socio-cultural environment, and then, finally, the outermost circle encompasses the natural/physical environment. They applied this basic Human Ecology model or framework to a model of Family Resource Management, which is basically a Systems Feedback Model. First, as an Input, they place the family and their varying characteristics (race, composition, socio-economic status, age and place in the life course) and the family’s mental frameworks (coping, decision-making, and personality) and that family’s relationship with the external environment or

inputs (Ball,1999:38). Then they conceptualise the throughput as being the decisions that the family makes with regard to the input or energy introduced into the system. Then the outputs are the actions that occur from the decisions that have been generated. Essentially there is a feedback loop from the output back into the input and into the throughput portions of the model (Chun, Brian & Heilbrunn, 2001:1).

This model, although traditionally applied to family decision-making processes, is useful as a conceptual model for school governance purposes because it conceptualises the unit of analysis and environments as having an interactive or two-way relationship with each other, rather than a static one-way impact of environments on individuals (Becta, 2003a:5). In portraying the family or unit of analysis as an adaptive system, the model takes the focus off the determinism and places the emphasis on the 17 varying degrees of control that the individual or unit has, relative to the environment (Collins, 1998:67).

Stemming from its biological beginnings, one of the core concepts underlying the Human Ecology Theory is that of survival (Anneberg Institution for School Reform, 1998:36). Other core values have been proposed that should drive the theory such as “human betterment” or an increase in what Bodilly, (1996b:56) calls “the ultimate good”. Four virtues contribute to the ultimate good and they are:

- something more than economic adequacy (riches in contrast to poverty, nourishment in contrast to starvation, adequate versus inadequate housing, and clothing, healthcare and other essentials for life);
- justice and equality in access to work, education and health;
- freedom in contrast to coercion and confinement; and
- peacefulness in contrast to war and strife (Baloyi, 2001:35).

Other virtues are included, such as education, health, loving and nurturing relationships, productive and healthy work and work environments, a sense of meaning and community, and the ability to develop into human beings that are generous, courageous and tolerant (Leask, 2001:23). These virtues mesh with the purpose of effective democratic governance, which is to facilitate a participatory leadership for the betterment of the school participants and

beneficiaries. These virtues are also congruent with the goal of “development” in general, which is to foster human development, learning and empowerment for the betterment of the general good (Noddings, 2001:2).

2.3 The concept of Whole School Development

Whole School (or comprehensive school) Development is a broad brush that covers a diverse set of programmes. In their most visionary expression, these development programmes are cross-disciplinary efforts that involve home, school and community in the intellectual development and personal nurturing of all learners (South African Act No. 27, 1996).

This approach, according to Hartshorne (1994:4), takes an integrated view of the development process. It is based on the concept that the way to improve school performance successfully is to change all elements of a school's operating environment simultaneously so as to bring each element into alignment with a central, guiding vision (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:17).

Although the designs have differing emphases, they share several characteristics:

- They aim to help all learners reach high academic standards.
- They are comprehensive in their approach, address all core academic subject areas, all types of school organization, all grade levels, and align all resources (human, financial, and technological).
- They incorporate best-practices research and are the subjects of ongoing evaluation aimed at continuous improvement.
- They provide the school and community with a shared vision, focus, and organizing framework that shapes and directs transformation efforts.
- They provide high-quality professional development for educators and administrators.
- They offer innovative and effective ways to involve parents and the community in schooling (Becta, 2002:13; Venezky & Davis, 2002:65; Greene, Lee, Springall & Bemrose, 2002:43).

As with all efforts to improve schools, success is not automatic. Schools where educators, learners and parents feel that they adopted a design without fully understanding it or that they were forced to adopt a design, show lower levels of implementation than schools that were well-informed and had freedom of choice (Kyriacou & Stephens, 1999:20).

Measurable success comes at schools that:

- have stable leadership that strongly supported the designs;
- are free of political crisis;
- have a culture of trust between schools and the local district office of education;
- provide some school-level autonomy in such matters as budgets and the appointment of educators; and
- provide more resources for professional development and planning (Male, 1999:254; Bodilly, Susan & Mark, 1999:111; Yap, Aldersebaes, Railsberg, Shaughnessy & Speth, 2000:50).

Failure of Whole School Development, as well, can be traced to several issues such as:

- financing;
- leadership;
- commitment to the school development programme;
- perceptions of the general public, parents, and learners about governance and management of the school;
- staffing;
- curriculum;
- political pressures;
- racial problems;
- insufficient facilities; and
- problems of management and scheduling learners and staff communication (Guskey, 2000:32; Lyons & Gay, 2001:78; Ofsted, 2002:7; Polglinco, et.al., 2003:64).

Success, then, depends on many factors. Newmann and Wehlage (1999:45) says that successful SGBs and management teams must:

- share a common image of a different and more rigorous kind of schooling;
- be able to deal directly with difficult and often controversial issues; and
- be willing to accept and act on critical feedback from external sources (Guskey, 1998:54).

In addition, the SGBs and school management teams must have or develop self-analysis skills to monitor data on school culture. Involvement of parents is also crucial.

2.4 Literature review on school self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is, in this study, conceptualized as the process by which SGBs review their schools' organizational behaviour, processes of teaching and learning, structures for leadership and management and outputs of processes of teaching and learning for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating their schools' performance. It is based on evidence regarding the standards achieved by learners, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leadership and management (Easthope & Easthope, 2000:18).

The role of the self is central to the monitoring and evaluation of the Whole School performance (Traub, 2000:67). Whole School Evaluation has a high potential to assess school performance when used for self-evaluation, self-reflection, self-assessment, self-review and self-appraisal.

- Self-evaluation is outcome-oriented, but formative in nature, as there is feedback that is used for improvement and development. It addresses the question: "How can the school improve by receiving external feedback on specific requirements?" (Berends, et.al., 2000:13).
- *Self-assessment* is process-oriented and formative. There are dynamic changes reflecting various stages of professional improvement. It addresses the question: "What can the educators do to improve aspects of

- their professional competence that they have personally chosen?" (Collins, 1998:15).
- *Self-review* is outcome-oriented and summative. The question it addresses is: "What can the educator do in a controlled situation?" Self-review is used
- when the teaching portfolio is associated with external evaluation (certification or promotion) (Leask, 2001:346).
- *Self-appraisal* concerns the choice of evidence of professional competence that an educator presents without having been asked to do so. It addresses the question (when seeking employment or promotion): "What aspect of an educator's professional competence should he or she choose to present for external evaluation?" (Sammons et al., 2000:66; Newmann & Wehlage, 1999:54).

Appropriate self-evaluation lies in the SGBs' ability to control, organize, plan, lead and staff the schools themselves, rather than outsiders controlling, organizing, planning, leading and staffing the schools for them. Such governance involvement is the ultimate demonstration of self-accountability and self-regulation (Garmstin & Bruce, 1999:66).

School governance self-evaluation responds to particular institutional needs and is intended to generate policy options to guide future school practice. The fact that the evaluation is the result of the school's own initiative usually stimulates a commitment among SGB members, which is a guarantee that findings and recommendations will be acted upon. Self-evaluation appears to reduce the element of threat that is sometimes associated with external evaluation (Miller & Harrington, 2000:6).

Motala, Vally and Modiba (1999:66); Stiggins (2001:131) and Robb (2000:12) assert that, in an open society, any stakeholder group should expect and receive the opportunity to provide input into an evaluation that affects it, and should exercise some control on behalf of its own interests. Whole School Evaluation has the value of effectively involving all stakeholders in the development of the school. Since information means power, and the product of evaluation is information, the evaluation procedure is empowering, and those responsible for the procedure maintain the power. Stakeholders are the potential users of the

information derived from evaluation, if they can see the relevance of this information to their claims, concerns and issues. These claims, concerns and issues arise from the particular construction that this group has formulated and reflect their particular circumstances, experiences and values (Spencer, 2000:6; Becta, 2001: 77).

Sweeney (2003:34) makes the same connection between evaluation, threat and control when he indicates that evaluation is both a threatening and a political activity. Being governors, he argues, SGB members need to formulate and practise evaluation as an educative activity in itself, and as a service to the educative intentions of others. He sees self-evaluation as a process of empowerment through self-knowledge of individual and of social groups (Chilsholm et al., 1998:46). He argues further that adopting the self-evaluation approach means that efforts are more likely to be sustained to reflect the actual experience of school governors and to lead to quality control, which is in the hands of those who have the prime responsibility for governing schools. He sees self-evaluation as an integral part of governance practice.

The notion of school-evaluation emerged in the late seventies as the result of audit data required to meet accountability demands from the public, and to facilitate administrative influence over curricular aims and the performance of schools (Hall & Hord, 2001:6). Educators, fearful that such demands might deprofessionalize schools, saw in school self-evaluation a means both to protect schools against reductive pressures and to provide a stimulus for reflective practitioners (Visscher, Wild & Fung, 2001:5). The interaction in this case is between the school and the public, and within the school itself.

Emphasizing the procedure of self-evaluation, the "curriculum development movement" generated the idea that the school itself should be the source and site of innovation (Fullan 1998:10). This stressed the fact that the school should be seen as the major unit of social change and the focus of development efforts.

Anderson (2000:5) argues that it is vital for schools to evaluate what they value, and that a self-evaluating school is an improving school. The only way for the

school to achieve this is by the process of self-evaluation and by defining the aims of the evaluation for itself.

For schools to achieve a useful self-evaluation procedure, certain conditions must be met:

- Firstly, there is an important place for the views of those involved in the centre of education process, that is: learners and educators, and there is
- also a place for information about attitudes, expectations and the degree of satisfaction of parents and SGBs about the quality of education schools render to their children (Cox, 1997:22; Whelan, 2000:6; Telem, 2001:360).
- Secondly, there must be an agreed conceptual framework consisting of indicators, standards and criteria of quality for evaluating schools. These indicators, standards and criteria of quality are embedded in the common key focus areas of school development. These “key areas” and indicators for school development are teaching and learning processes (The frequently used indicators are teaching and learning; support and guidance; school climate and/or ethos; and curriculum); management processes (The indicators are management which often covers self-evaluation and organizational aspects and links with parents and with the community); and output (The indicator “Attainment and Achievement of Learners” is the most popular) (Male, 1999:54; Department of Education, 1999:76; Yap et al., 2000:75).

While carrying out the procedure of school self-evaluation, the following critical questions need to be addressed:

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- What is the purpose?
- For whom is it done?
- Who will carry it out?
- What measurements will be used?
- Who will be consulted?
- Will the evidence be accurate, fair, reliable and valid?
- How much time, energy and resources will be required?

Ownership of the criteria and of the process is crucial if lasting and sustainable improvement and development of the school are to occur as a result of such self-evaluation (Becta, 2003:23; Corbett & Megahey, 1999:329; Mitchell, 1996:12).

- The evaluation criteria and the whole process of school self-evaluation should have a convincing rationality, reflect the key priorities of the school and of the provincial and national departments of education, enable all the stakeholders to participate, allow for the participation of a “critical friend” and lead to action (Martin & Holt, 2002:11).

Schools can use different approaches and methods to gather the necessary information for the self-evaluation process. The most common methods are:

- questionnaires administered to parents, learners, staff and committees at the school;
- analysis of statistical data;
- observation of teaching and learning;
- interviews and discussions with parents, learners, staff and advisors;
- tests of learner performance; and
- staff meetings (Taylor et al., 1999:65).

Schools can report in different ways on the outcomes of the self-evaluation process. The main types of reports are described in the following paragraphs:

- Compulsory reports, including self-evaluation outcomes. Schools are required to write a compulsory report on the self-evaluation outcomes or a wider report that includes the self-evaluation outcomes. In this report, schools publish their own standards and quality report based on their own self-audit. This report or summary is based on a self-evaluation process that addresses target-setting and progress in implementing the development plan and attaining targets. It is provided to staff, parents and the SGB through the school plan and school prospectus (Badat & Saleem, 1998:33).
- School reports on self-evaluation outcomes serve as a starting point for meta-evaluation, that is: evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation. Here, the school performs an internal audit and reports on the results to their staff. This report is the preparation for a quality-

assurance external evaluation. The documents on the outcomes of the self-evaluation and of the school development process are used by external evaluators or verifiers to conduct a meta-analysis to check the quality of these processes (Department of Education, 1996b:9). However, these documents remain confidential to the individual school. These can also be used, possibly with some amendments, for the purpose described in the next paragraph. The external verifiers or evaluators will check the school's quality-assurance system and evaluate the reliability and validity of the school's self-evaluation outcomes (Ginsberg et al., 2001:90).

- Reports that are meant for external evaluation, but not for meta-evaluation purposes. The external evaluators use this information to provide support and advice on the next steps of school development and self-evaluation. The schools are requested to complete a self-evaluation profile in the unscheduled external evaluations (Horton, 2002:97).
- A form of internal reporting to the relevant stakeholders within the school itself, including parents. Self-evaluation outcomes are reported to the relevant stakeholders at meetings and in planning documentation (Van Wyk, 1998:19).
- Finally, leaflets, brochures and informative portfolios about the school are distributed to the wider public. Schools report on the self-evaluation outcomes in a leaflet presenting the school, its characteristics and its accomplishments.
- Schools also compile an Annual Report each year, containing a description of events and activities organized by the school, or events and activities the school has participated in. Very rarely (only when the results are favourable for the school) are the self-evaluation outcomes reported in the Annual Report (Brown, 1999:11).

Collins (1998:20) asserts that one aspect of governing the school self-evaluation process is the need to include all stakeholders (learners, educators and parents) in such a way that they feel a sense of "ownership" in relation to the Whole School Development Plan and thus become committed to its implementation.

Squelch (2000:313) adds to this notion by stating that educators, learners and parents in a self-evaluating school must learn to measure what they value, rather than valuing what they can easily measure. Knowledge is acquired on site. According to this paradigm, authority shifts from outside the school to inside, from one or a few appointed people to a group of people who are willing to get involved, and the immediate school environment is their main concern. The power of each participant increases by acquiring his/her own knowledge, and at the same time the group's power is strengthened (Whelan, 2000:56).

2.5 Literature review on Whole School Evaluation

The post-1994 Department of Education (DoE) has developed the National Education Policy on Whole School Evaluation (WSE) (1996) which introduces an effective monitoring and evaluation process that is vital to the improvement of quality and standards of performance at schools. The main purpose of WSE is to:

- facilitate improvement of school performance through approaches characterised by partnership, collaboration, mentoring and guidance among parents, educators, learners and education department officials;
- evaluate the overall effectiveness of a school, as well as the quality of teaching and learning;
- ensure that all learners are given equal opportunities to make the best use of their capabilities, as well as being supportive and developmental rather than punitive and judgmental;
- facilitate improvement of school performance through approaches of partnership, monitoring and guidance;
- evaluate the effectiveness with which such initiatives are being implemented and provide information aimed at strengthening their contribution to school development and improvement;
- ensure a high level of accountability among stakeholders within the education system;
- strengthen the support given to the schools by district professional support service;

- provide, at the end of implementation, feedback to all the stakeholders as a means of achieving continuous school development and improvement; and
- identify aspects of excellence within the system, which will serve as models of good practice, and aspects of effective schools by improving the general understanding of what factors create effective schools (Guskey, 2000:14; Kelly, 1998:43).

WSE is a systematic, coordinated, focused and mutually empowering process which is based on looking at schools individually and holistically, in order to provide both systemic and tailor-made mechanisms whereby every school can be supported and developed on an on-going basis (Republic of South Africa (RSA) Act No. 27, 1996). The WSE has the value of explaining why some schools are performing better than others (Anderson, 2000:34). It highlights that while learning is central to education and training, its success is determined by a range of environmental factors such as the infrastructure of the school, the socio-economic status of parents and communities and so on. This implies that for the WSE to succeed, there is a need to identify key factors at schools, which have to be developed in order to improve school effectiveness.

Various researchers have highlighted that Whole School Evaluation:

- encapsulates school self-evaluation;
- provides for schools to receive advice and support in their continuous efforts to improve their effectiveness;
- does not interfere in any way with existing activities of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) and Systemic Evaluation;
- focuses on internal monitoring, that is, self-evaluation by the school and therefore forms the base of external evaluation which involves mentoring and support provided by the district-based support teams;
- calls for an approach that is built upon interactive and transparent processes, whereby all stakeholders such as educators, parents (in the case of primary schools) and learners (in the case of secondary schools) are involved;

- places particular emphasis on the need to use objective criteria and performance indicators consistently in the evaluation of schools;
- is less punitive and more supportive and developmental in nature, with a feedback mechanism that enables schools and their support structures
- (for example, SGBs) to agree on improvement targets and developmental plans; and
- is a collective transparent process of passing judgement on the holistic performance of schools that is measured against agreed national criteria (Fullan, 2001:33).

Whole School Evaluation is built upon inclusive, interactive and transparent processes, such as school self-evaluation, ongoing school-based support, monitoring and development and external evaluations conducted by the supervisory units of the Department of Education. It places particular emphasis on the need to use objective criteria and performance indicators consistently in the evaluation of schools (RSA Act No. 27, 1996). The focus is primarily on the school as a whole, rather than simply on individuals and their performance. The multi-sources of evidence that are used in evaluating the systems of schools enables valid and reliable judgements to be made and sound feedback to be provided to SGBs, educators, school management teams of schools, (Heads of Departments, deputy principals and principals) as well as the parents. The findings are used to re-orientate efforts towards improving the quality and standards of individual and collective performance. The Whole School Evaluation complements other initiatives to improve the work of schools, such as developmental appraisal for educators. This makes the model less punitive and more supportive, with a feedback mechanism that enables schools and their support structures to agree on improvement targets and developmental plans.

Whole School Evaluation ensures and sets out the legal framework for school evaluation, its purposes, what is to be evaluated and who can carry out evaluations. It also provides guidance on how evaluations should be conducted. It further indicates how the evaluation process should be administered and funded. The WSE policy (RSA Act No. 27, 1996) indicates ways in which very good schools should be recognised and under-performing schools supported. It makes

clear the links between those at national and provincial level who are responsible for the quality of education, and supervisors, schools and local support services.

This WSE policy (South African Act No. 27, 1996) is aimed at improving the overall quality of education in South African schools. It seeks to ensure that all learners are given an equal opportunity to make the best use of their capabilities. As a process, the Whole School Evaluation is meant to be supportive and developmental rather than punitive and judgmental. It is used as a coercive measure, though part of its responsibility is to ensure that national and local policies are complied with. Its main purpose is to facilitate the improvement of the school's performance through approaches characterized by partnership, collaboration, mentoring and guidance. The Policy also contains a built-in mechanism for reporting findings and providing feedback to the school and to various stakeholders, namely, the National and Provincial Education Departments, parents and society generally, on the level of performance achieved by schools.

WSE policy (South African Act No. 27, 1996) is supported by national guidelines, criteria for evaluation and instruments that have to be used by trained and accredited supervisors in order to ensure consistency in the evaluation of schools. These also provide the means by which schools can carry out self-evaluation and so enter into fruitful dialogue with supervisors and support services.

Whole School Evaluation is not an end in itself, but the first step in the process of school improvement and quality enhancement. The National Policy on Whole-School Evaluation is designed to achieve the goal of school improvement through a partnership between supervisors, schools and support services at one level, and national and provincial governments at another.

2.6 Literature review on strategic school governance

Schools have a special place in every community, and it is through their governing bodies that they establish links with their community and reflect that community's interest in education. The SGB acts as the local agent of

accountability for the quality and standards of teaching and learning at the school, and through the SGB the school is accountable to those who established it and who fund it, namely, the parents, the wider community it serves and the Department of Education (Schmoker & Results, 1999:54)

The duties and responsibilities of SGB, according to the law, are to determine the aims and overall conduct of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. In practice, this means working with the principal to determine how the school develops to improve its standards and developing policies, plans, targets and procedures which have been formulated within the school to support that development (South African Schools Act, 1996; Department of Education, 1996).

The principal, who is the *ex officio* member of the SGB, is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of what has been agreed to by the SGB and for the managing and running of the school (South African Schools Act, 1996; Department of Education, 1996).

The SGB also has a continuous role to play in assessing the quality and standard of what has been achieved. To do this, the SGB must receive reports on the results of implementation and monitoring from the schools management team. On the basis of these reports, the SGB then reviews the policies, plans, targets and procedures and agrees on the changes needed to secure further improvement of the school (SASA, 1996).

The strategic role of the SGB applies equally to all the particular legal responsibilities of governing bodies for the school budget, the curriculum, staffing and a range of other areas of school activities (SASA, 1996).

From the fore-going paragraphs, it is clear that the role of the SGB is to:

- provide overall guidance on the direction and character of the school;
- ensure that the school fulfils its legal obligations;
- hold the school to account for the quality, standard and effectiveness of the teaching and learning it provides; and

- ensure that adequate plans are formulated and that targets and objectives are achieved.

These are broad tasks and SGBs need to distinguish between the strategic decisions which are properly theirs and the day-to-day management decisions which belong to the work of the teaching and management staff (Manganyi, 2001:13).

Illustration of these principles and their application is best afforded by the following examples of questions which relate to the concept of strategic governance:

2.5.1 What sort of school do we want it to be?

All the school's activities should stem from its mission statement. The SGBs should therefore spend some time considering and identifying these aims and objectives and should revisit them from time to time. It is not an easy task and will involve consultation with parents, staff, pupils and the wider community. The result should be a powerful statement, which succinctly sums up what the school is about (Yap, *et.al.* 2000:45).

2.5.2 How do we achieve it?

Such a question demands that the school formulate a development plan. The development plan is formulated from the aims statement (cf. paragraph 2.2.1 above). The plan must include certain legal duties and show how the objectives are to be achieved, and the timescale involved. The SGB does not have to give this plan in writing, but will be closely involved in its creation. The preparation of the initial plan may be delegated to the professional staff. The SGB should discuss the resulting draft plan to ensure that it reflects the aims and priorities agreed upon and does so within the constraints of the school budget (Davies & Ellison, 1999:90). The plan will also include monitoring procedures, a timescale for reporting to the governing body and provision for an evaluation cycle to establish the effectiveness of the plan.

2.5.3. How do we support the Plan?

The SGB must then generate a school policy. The SGB must maintain certain policies stipulated by law. Others arising from the development plan, need to be created. The SGB should carefully distinguish between those policies that are strategic in nature, namely those that have a direct bearing on the character and direction of the school, and those required for day-to-day management. SGBs will find the advice of the principal essential in such areas (Department of Education, 1999b:13).

After discussing the broad thrust of these policies, SGBs may then put them in writing. through the school principal. The committee might consider the resulting text and recommend acceptance by the full SGB. It should be noted that SGBs are not required to write such policies themselves (Hess & Frderick, 2003:21; Guskey & Sparks, 1996:54). They have carried out their legal obligations by causing them to be written. In fact, there are examples of model policies that might be adopted after due consideration and modification if required by the SGB and staff (South African Schools Act, 1996).

2.5.4 Monitoring

How must the progress of the development plan be reported? What will be used as evidence? What are the criteria of success? What is the timescale laid against each intention? (Hanson, 1997:8)

2.5.5. Evaluation

How will the governing body judge the success of the development plan? What is the mechanism for updating the next plan in the light of experience gained? The key areas of evaluation are:

- basic functionality of the school;
- leadership, management and communication;
- governance and relationships;
- quality of teaching and learning, and educator development;
- curriculum provision and resources;

- learner achievement;
- school safety, security and discipline;
- school infrastructure; and
- parents and community (Fredman, 2001:109; Comber, 2002:43).

Evaluation is based on indicators covering inputs, processes and outputs. Inputs are what the school has been provided with in order to carry out its task (Venezky, 2002:24). The input indicators include the main characteristics of each grade of learners, the school's infrastructure, funding and professional and support staff. For example, the main characteristics of each cohort of learners when they arrive at the school are:

- socio-economic background;
- attainment at entry;
- range of languages;
- numbers by age and gender per school and class;
- physical resources such as classrooms; common purpose rooms and areas; external premises; and teaching aids, materials and equipment;
- professional and support staff such as numbers according to gender; qualifications and experience, educator development and capacity building; and
- funding, for example ministry, province, learners and other sources (Galton & Ruddock, 1999:32; Stiggins & Hirsh, 1999:120).

Process indicators show how well the school seeks to achieve its goals. These include the effectiveness with which schools try to ensure effective governance, leadership and management, safety and security measures, and the quality of teaching (Schmoker, 1998:34). For example:

- What does the school do to ensure that it functions smoothly?
- How are the leadership and management of the school directed to achieve the school's goals?
- How is school governance conducted?

- How does the school ensure quality teaching, curriculum planning and effective assessment of what learners are learning?
- How willing are all school staff members and governors to carry out any responsibility they are given conscientiously and effectively?
- What is the school's success in encouraging learners to carry out any responsibility they are given conscientiously and effectively, including attendance and punctuality?
- What does the school do to ensure security and safety? (Beck, 2000:33; Timperly & Robinson, 2000:13)
- What is the language of instructions?
- What support and guidance does the school provide to help learners develop intellectually and personally?
- What does the school do to appraise staff and to help them develop their skills and effectiveness?
- How does the school seek to encourage parental and community involvement?
- How does the school manage its resources?
- What does the school do to ensure the use and development of information and communication technology for both curriculum and management purposes?
- How effective are the guidance and counselling? (Bernstein, 1998:78; Morris, 2001:1)

According to Bodily (1996:45), output indicators (what the school achieves) include achievements in academic standards, standards of behaviour and rates of punctuality and attendance. For example:

- learners' standards of attainment at the end of each stage of their education;

- what progress learners have made while at school;
- the quality of learners' response to teaching and to the school's general provision;
- learners' standards of behaviour;
- the orderliness of the school;
- the condition of school accommodation and furnishings and the effectiveness with which they are used (Fullan, 1998:33);
- the commitment to the school and its learners, parents and the community;
- the efficiency with which the school uses its resources/funding; and
- the provision made to ensure safety and security (Becta, 2003:34; Collins & Whitmore, 1996:43).

Allison (1999:369) posits that the overall school performance can be rated by using the following scale:

- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------|
| 5 | ® | Outstanding |
| 4 | ® | Good |
| 3 | ® | Acceptable |
| 2 | ® | Needs improvement |
| 1 | ® | Needs urgent support |

Where it is not possible to give a rating, 0 can be used.

The Whole School Evaluation cycle includes:

- pre-evaluation surveys/visits to the school;
- school self-evaluation;
- detailed on-site evaluation;
- post-evaluation reporting; and

- post-evaluation support.

An evaluation should result in a published written report and contain recommendations designed to help the school continue to improve (Davis, 1998:12).

2.5.6. Accountability

A questioning approach will lead schools to become more conscious of the accountability to which they should be held. In turn, the SGBs will be able to deal effectively with its role. However, SGBs should subject their own performance to similar scrutiny as part of the review cycle and ask rigorous questions of themselves (Berens et al., 2002:37). The questions should reflect the ability of the governing body to operate as an effective decision-making organization, should challenge its success at reaching decisions and should tease out its weaknesses. This will identify the needs that the governing body itself has for further development and improvement, including training (Easthope & Easthope, 2000:43).

Whole School Evaluation is the cornerstone of the quality assurance system at schools. This approach provides the opportunity for acknowledging the achievements of a school and for identifying areas that need attention. Whole School Evaluation implies the need for all schools to look for ways of improving continually, and the commitment of SGBs to provide school development plans designed to support their efforts (Streifer & Philip, 2002:131).

Effective quality assurance within the National Policy on Whole School Evaluation is to be achieved through schools having well-developed internal self-evaluation processes, credible external evaluations and well-structured support services (Fullan, 2001:437). The Policy is based on the following principles:

- The core mission of schools is to improve the educational achievements of all learners. The Whole School Evaluation, is therefore, designed to enable, supervisors and support services to identify to what extent the school is adding value to learners' prior knowledge, understanding and skills (Kelly, 2001:34).

- All members of a school community have a responsibility concerning the quality of their own performance. Whole School Evaluation intends to enable the contribution made by staff, learners and other stakeholders to improve their own and the school's performance, to be properly recognised (De Clerq, 1998:5).
- All evaluation activities must be characterised by openness and collaboration. The criteria to be used in evaluating schools, must therefore, be made public (Whelan, 2000:13).
- Good quality Whole School Evaluation must be standardized and consistent. The guidelines, criteria and instruments must ensure consistency over periods of time and across settings (Venezky & Davies, 2002:55).
- The evaluation of both qualitative and quantitative data is essential when deciding how well a school is performing. For this reason, Whole School Evaluation is concerned with the range of inputs, processes and outcomes. These are associated with, for example, staffing and physical resources, human and physical, the quality of leadership and management, learning and teaching, and the standards achieved by learners (Crawford, 2001:169).
- Staff development and training are critical to school improvement. A measure used by Whole School Evaluation in judging a school's performance is the amount and quality of in-service training undertaken by staff and its impact on learning and standards of achievement. In this way, Whole School Evaluation will make an important contribution to securing well-focused development opportunities for school staff (Bandura, 1998:227).
- Schools are inevitably at different stages of development. Many factors contribute to this. A basic principle of this policy is to seek to understand why schools are where they are and to use the particular circumstances of the school as the main starting point of the evaluation. The policy recognises that schools in disadvantaged areas, for example, must not be

disadvantaged in terms of Whole School Evaluation (Cloete & Bunting, 1999:33).

Whole School Evaluation approach, according to Kington et al., (2001:67), is designed to help schools measure to what extent they are fulfilling their responsibilities and improving their performance. The means of achieving this are through:

- school-based self-evaluation;
- external evaluation by the supervisory unit personnel trained and accredited to evaluate schools (Joyce & Beverly, 2002:16);
- adequate and regular district support leading to professional development programmes designed to provide assistance and advice to individual staff members and schools as they seek to improve their performance (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:13);
- an agreed upon set of national criteria to ensure a coherent, consistent, but flexible approach to evaluating performance in the education system; and
- published written reports on the performance of individual schools (James, 2000:19);

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a literature review on Whole School Development, school self-evaluation, Whole School Evaluation and strategic school governance. The framework of these constructs was, also, presented. The next chapter will present the empirical design of this research.

Chapter 3

Empirical research design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative research method that was used in this study. It includes an overview and justification of the phenomenological research method that was used to collect empirical data, which is an explanation of how the observations were conducted at the schools that participated in this research. The use of the findings at the schools that participated in this investigation is regarded as the most appropriate and practical technique in reaching the aims of this study, which are to:

- investigate the phenomenon of Whole School Evaluation in two township schools; and
- make suggestions on what the role of school governing bodies in Whole School Self-evaluation should be, based on the findings of both the literature review and the empirical research.

3.2 METHOD OF RESEARCH

The research was conducted by means of a literature review and empirical research.

3.2.1 Literature study

Current international and national journals, papers presented at professional meetings, dissertations by graduate learners, and reports written by school and university researchers as well as Act 84 of 1996 providing information on how far research on school governance and whole school monitoring and evaluation has progressed, were consulted and serve as primary sources. Acts were consulted for governmental and departmental policy theoretical frameworks. Books on school governance and the Whole School Self-evaluation serve as secondary sources.

The information gathered from primary and secondary literature sources was utilised to construct a measuring instrument that the researcher used in collecting data on the structures of leadership and management at schools.

3.2.2 Empirical research

The empirical investigation was solely qualitative in nature and was conducted by means of interviews, observations and document analysis in order to gather information about the functioning of SGBs, school safety and security, school infrastructure, and parental and community involvement at schools situated at the townships.

An interview checklist was developed by the researcher in order to guide him during his interviews, observations and document analysis at the schools that participated in this research. This included:

- the type of school;
- perusal of the minutes of the SGB;
- perusal of school policies and procedures;
- perusal of Financial Analysis;
- an interview with the chairperson of the SGB on their strategic governance;
- the functioning of the SGB
 - What the school does well
 - Areas that the school needs to develop;
- school safety and security
 - What the school does well
 - Areas that the school needs to develop;
- school infrastructure
 - What the school does well
 - Areas that the school needs to develop; and
- parents and the community
 - What the school does well
 - Areas that the school needs to develop

The data obtained from the empirical research and the findings of the literature review were used to make suggestions on what should be the role of SGBs in Whole School Evaluation. The study uses a qualitative phenomenological research design. The phenomenological method of research was employed in this research because of its potential value to offer experiences that provide great insight into the subjects of the research and the context in which it operates. That is where the ecological and systems theories (see Chapter 2) can be effectively applied in order to solve the problems of the subjects selected for the sample of the study.

3.2.3 Phenomenological research designs

The term phenomenology has become so widely used that its meaning has become confusing. Sometimes phenomenology is viewed as a paradigm, and at other times as a philosophy or as a perspective, and it is sometimes even viewed as synonymous with qualitative methods or naturalistic inquiry (Best & Kahn, 1993:220). In its broadest sense, phenomenology refers to a person's construction of the meaning of a phenomenon, as opposed to the phenomenon as it exists external to the person. The phenomenon experienced or studied may be an event, a relationship, an emotion, or even an educational programme. In the area of achievement motivation, Bourque (1995:3) describes the importance of understanding the individual's phenomenological perspective: "The Individual's personal and subjective self-perceptions are important for future achievement behaviours, regardless of the 'accuracy' of the perceptions in terms of their match to grades."

Phenomenology is defined in this study as a research method that attempts to understand the participants' perspectives and views of social realities.

3.2.4 The purpose of phenomenological research

Phenomenologists attempt to understand what a specific experience is like by describing it as founded in actual situations and appearing to the people who are living it. Attention to experiences and intention to describe experiences are the

central qualities of phenomenological research (Tuckman, 1994:216). In addition, the researcher often has a personal experience with the phenomenon and aims to heighten his/her own awareness of the experience while simultaneously examining the experience through the eyes of other participants. Simply put, phenomenologists hope to gain a better understanding of the meaning an experience has for others, as well as for themselves.

In this study, the researcher visited the schools to investigate the effectiveness of the structures of leadership and management in order to observe and experience the practices of Whole School Evaluation at selected two schools.

3.2.5 Case studies

Case studies are a type of qualitative research in which the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon (the case) bounded by time and activity (a programme, event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time (Burns & Grovel, 1997:12). Almost any phenomenon can be examined by means of the case study method. Whereas some researchers focus on the study of one case because of its unique or exceptional qualities, other researchers study multiple cases to make comparisons, build theory and propose generalizations.

Two schools formed case studies of this research.

3.2.5.1 The purpose of a case study

A case study is undertaken to shed light on a phenomenon, be it a process, event, person, or object of interest to the researcher. A case constitutes a single instance of the phenomenon. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1996:549), researchers generally do case studies for one of three purposes: to produce detailed descriptions of a phenomenon, develop possible explanations of it and evaluate the phenomenon.

The purpose of the two case studies of this research was to investigate the

phenomenon of Whole School Development in township schools and on the basis of the findings of both the literature review and the empirical research, to make suggestions on what ought to be the role of the SGBs in Whole School Self-evaluation.

3.2.5.2 The process of a case study

After defining a specific focus for their studies, case study researchers typically spend an extended period of time on-site with their research participants. A substantial amount of data is gathered from a wide variety of sources to present a description of the phenomenon or experience from the perspective of the participants. De Vos (2000:54) and Grinnell (1993:54) describe the process as "watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms." Case study researchers often assume an interactive role with their participants, becoming personally involved with the people and the phenomenon being studied.

The researcher visited the two schools for a period of three weeks, each visit with the sole purpose of observing the structures of leadership and the management at the two schools which formed the sample of this research.

3.3 Data collection

Data gathered in case studies can be in the form of words, images or physical objects. Some case study researchers also collect quantitative data such as achievement scores, time-on-task and census data. Fieldwork is typically a part of the data collection effort as it enables the researcher to engage in informal conversations with the participants and to observe and understand the phenomenon *as they experience it*. It is important that a case study researcher analyse the data, as what is learned from data collected at one point in time is often used to determine subsequent data collection activities.

3.4 Data analysis

Grinnell (1993:16) differentiates between interpretational, structural and reflective

analyses and case study data. Interpretational analysis refers to examining the data for constructs, themes and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon studied. Structural analysis refers to searching the data for patterns inherent in discourse, text, events or other phenomena, with little or no inference made to the *meaning* of the patterns. Reflective analysis refers to using intuition and judgment to portray or evaluate the phenomenon.

This research used interpretational data analysis.

3.4.1 Communicating findings

A case study final report often takes the form of a rich, descriptive narrative that attempts to reconstruct the participants' reality. Nojaja (2003:381) recommends that case study researchers use a style of writing that draws the reader so closely into the subjects' worlds that these can be palpably felt. Researchers who have used reflective analysis techniques, defined above, are more likely to use the style advocated by Adler and Adler. They may even employ familiar literary structures such as poetry, drama and satire to bring the case to life for their readers.

From the foregoing paragraphs it is clear that qualitative data analysis tends to be primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories (Ary & Razavieh, 1990:479). Although there is no standard procedure for qualitative analysis, this does not mean it is not systematic or rigorous.

3.4.2 Validity and reliability issues in qualitative research

Although qualitative researchers do not agree about how to address the traditional topics of validity and reliability, they express some general consensus regarding how the credibility of one's findings might be ensured. A few of these suggestions are presented here. Notice the absence of any single, commonly accepted standard for judging the validity and reliability of a qualitative study.

Creswell (1994:17) discusses four types of interpretive validity that should be

used to judge the validity of qualitative research:

- *Usefulness* refers to whether the research report enlightens those who read it or moves those who were studied to action.
- *Contextual completeness* refers to the extent to which a comprehensive view of the situation is provided. Completeness can be achieved by including information about the history of the phenomenon; the physical setting; the activities, schedules and routines of the participants; as well as their individual perceptions and meanings.
- *Research positioning* refers to researchers' awareness of their own influences (both subtle and direct) in the research setting. These influences (for example beliefs, values, biases) must be made explicit so that readers can determine for themselves the credibility of the findings. Finally, a researcher's choice of *reporting style* has a noticeable effect on a study's credibility. The researcher's reconstruction of participants' perceptions must be perceived to be authentic.

Burns and Grove (1997:123) discuss eight additional strategies commonly employed to achieve "trustworthiness" in a qualitative study:

- *Triangulation*, used in all types of qualitative traditions, refers to the process of using multiple data collection methods, data sources, analysts or theories to check the validity of the findings. If similar themes are noted in data collected from a variety of sources, the credibility of the interpretation is enhanced.
- *Member checking* refers to the process of having participants review your research report for accuracy and completeness. This process is used to corroborate your construction of the participants' perspective and can lead to corrections, revisions or additional insights. Establishing a strong *chain of evidence* among research questions, methodology, raw data and findings is also believed to strengthen the validity of a study. If readers can follow the researcher's reasoning, they can determine whether the conclusions offered are logical or not.
- *Outlier analysis* refers to examining those cases that differ markedly from the majority of individuals or situations examined. These extreme cases can actually be used to strengthen the findings by determining what is present or absent in them as compared with the more common

examples.

- *Pattern matching* is appropriate when a qualitative study is designed to study the effects of an intervention, as in many quantitative studies. If the observed behaviours or patterns of benefits match those that were expected in a specific case, the validity of the study is increased.
- A *representativeness check* is conducted to determine whether a finding is typical of the site from which it was obtained or whether it is an artifact of the persons who were interviewed or dependent on the presence of the researcher.
- *Long-term involvement* is used to increase the reliability of findings. If data are collected over long periods of time, the researcher is in a better position to distinguish situational perceptions from more consistent trends.
- A *coding check* involves having more than one researcher code the data obtained from field notes, interviews and documents to calculate interpreted reliability coefficients. A high level of agreement between raters suggests that the coding process was highly reliable.

3.5 Description of the population

All schools and their SGBs falling under the jurisdiction and control of the Free State Department of Education were initially considered as the study population. However, if all schools in this area were to participate, this could have resulted in serious financial implications for the researcher, as well as caused delays in the process of this study. Therefore, after careful consideration of these two factors, the researcher and the supervisor decided on the inclusion of only two schools in the Northern Free State district and their SGBs for participation in this study. The schools were based in the Parys and Sasolburg areas. One primary school and one secondary school formed part of this study.

3.5.1 Method of random sampling

Samples like cluster and random sampling were considered for use in this investigation. After much deliberation regarding the advantages and

disadvantages of each of these methods, random sampling was selected to ensure that the sample is representative of the population. A list of all public schools from the Northern Free State district was obtained and schools for investigation were randomly selected from the list. Only two schools and their SGBs were chosen.

3.5.2 Procedure

With the permission of the school principals and the SGBs, the researcher visited the two selected schools over a period of three weeks each on a daily basis.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the research design process was discussed. The next chapter provides the analysis and interpretation of data collected during the empirical research.

Chapter 4

Analysis and interpretation of the results

4.1 Introduction

The aims of this research were to investigate the phenomenon of Whole School Evaluation at township schools and on the basis of the findings of both the literature review and the empirical research, to make suggestions on what should be the role of the SGBs in Whole School Self-evaluation. The investigation involved interviews, observations and document analysis in order to gather information about:

- the functioning of SGBs;
- school safety and security;
- school infrastructure; and
- parental and community involvement at schools situated in the townships.

This chapter contains an analysis and interpretation of the results of the empirical research in a narrative form. For ethical reasons, the names of the schools which the researcher visited could not be used and the researcher decided to refer to the primary school as School A, while the secondary school is referred to as school B.

4.2 Results of the research

This section provides the findings of the interviews, scrutiny of official school documents and personal observations.

4.2.1 Analysis and interpretation of the governance phenomenon at School A

The interviews, scrutiny of official school documents and personal observations at this school revealed the following:

4.2.1.1 Functioning of the SGB

- **What the school does well**

The SGB has full membership and meets regularly with proper minutes and decisions recorded. This is an indication of some measure of commitment on the part of SGB members.

- **Areas that the school needs to develop**

- The SGB is not properly trained for its roles and responsibilities and as a result it does not provide a clear strategic governance direction to the school. This suggests some measure of incapacity on the part of the SGB to operate and function effectively.
- The treasurer of the SGB, who happens to be chairperson of the financial committee and signatory of the school cheques also, is not a parent and therefore this is a violation of the Departmental guidelines (see South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996, section 29). This could be an indication of ignorance concerning the stipulations and the letter of the South African Schools Act and also an indication of illegal conduct of the SGB.
- The SGB has not been involved in the formulation of the existing policies at the school and is therefore ignorant of their existence. This shows lack of collaboration between the SGB and the School Management Team.
- The SGB has no system in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of education provided by the school. This is an indication of the absence of a strategic approach to school governance, leadership and management.

- ***Reasons that account for the above judgments***

- Although there is evidence of one attempt by the School Management Team to train the SGB, most members regarded this endeavour as an information session since no materials were handed to them in their own languages for reinforcement. This is an indication that the School Management Team lacks the will to develop and empower members of SGB to function effectively.
- An educator on the SGB has been elected as treasurer and chairperson of the financial committee, which is a violation of the departmental

guidelines (see South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996, section 29). This could indicate ignorance concerning the stipulations and the letter of the South African Schools Act as well as illegal conduct of the SGB.

- The SGB does not have knowledge regarding the existence of policies found at the school. This shows lack of collaboration between the SGB and the School Management Team.

- Only the chairperson of the SGB has, on occasions, visited the school to monitor the situation, but there is as yet no programme or system in place yet to evaluate the quality of education provided by the school. This shows lack of common vision between the School Management Team and SGB members concerning strategic development of the school.

4.2.1.2 School safety and security

- **What the school failed to do**

From the information gathered, no strength was identified. This is an indication that the school has no policy or strategic plan for the safety and security of learners and educators. This could be hazardous to the school.

- **Areas that the school needs to develop**

The school does not comply with the rules, regulations and procedures to protect and ensure learners' safety, health and welfare in that :

- ❖ they are not equipped with a first aid kit;
- ❖ have no emergency procedures;
- no fire extinguishers;
- ❖ no Latex gloves in classes; and
- ❖ the fence is not intact.

4.2.1.3 School infrastructure

- **What the school does well**

- The services of a volunteer were secured to assist the school with the running of the library with approximately 500 books. It is interesting to note that schools are providing libraries for the improvement of learner literacy.

- **Areas that the school needs to develop**

- An outstanding amount of R7 538.00 has not yet been retrieved from staff loans. This is an anomaly which borders on misappropriation and embezzlement of school funds.
- The old section of the school that is occupied by the Foundation Phase is in a state of dilapidation. This is another hazard to this school.
- The financial administration of the school lacks efficient control. This is an indication of negligence and dereliction of duties.
- The school grounds are polluted with paper, plastic, building material and tyres. This impact negatively on the creation of a positive learning environment. This is a health hazard issue and impacts on the development of aesthetic values in learners.
- Educators use the same toilets as learners as the educators' toilets are out of order. This is another health hazard issue at this school.
- **Reasons that account for the above judgments**
 - Staff loans to an amount of R10 280.00 were approved according to the 2001 and 2002 financial statements while of only R2 742.00 has been repaid. The practice of staff loans is not in line with section 37 of the South African Schools Act.
 - The following serious deviations were found in the financial administration:
 - ❖ Correctional fluid was used to erase entries in the Analysis Book (January 2004).
 - ❖ There were no entries for receipts in September 2003 in the Analysis Book.
 - ❖ Entries in the Petty Cash Book were written in pencil.
 - ❖ The control of the school's assets is not in line with departmental prescripts, Government Gazette 154 of 2001.
 - ❖ The parent component of the SGB is not involved in the school's finances such as the issuing of cheques.
 - ❖ The accounting officer does not monitor and control the financial records on a regular basis.
 - ❖ The SGB members have not implemented the initial training they received, as they do not monitor the school's performance in any way.

4.2.1.4 Parents and the community

- **What the school does well**
 - Regular parents' meetings are held with a published agenda where issues such as finances and budget, exemption from school funds and general parental involvement are discussed. This is an interesting finding which shows commitment on the side of the SGB to involve parents and community members in school matters.
 - The school maintains good links with other schools in the area to help with logistical matters. This is an indication of commitment on the part of the school to build partnership with other schools.
 - The school provides parents with relevant guidance on educational policies and helps to promote their welfare through interpretation of policies in other public departments. This is an interesting finding which shows commitment on the side of the SGB to involve parents and community members in school matters.
- **Areas that the school needs to develop**
 - There are no SGB committees in place or other related appropriate committees so that parents can contribute to the management of the school. This is an indication of the lack of strategic planning and a school development plan.
 - The majority of parents are reluctant to offer voluntary services to the school without any remuneration or compensation. This an indication that parents are not fully committed to the development of the school.
 - No sectional parents' meetings are held to engage them in the education of their learners. This could suggest an absence of close links between educators and parents.
 - There are no effective links with the structures of the community (except for the adopt-a-cop campaign in conjunction with the police) that can elevate the status of the school as a centre for the promotion of community life. This implies the absence of any strong collaboration between the school and the community.
- **Reasons that account for the above judgments**
 - Parents do not attend meetings and they are not conversant with important issues regarding budgets and exemption from school funds *etcetera*. This

- suggests a lack of commitment on the side of the parents and could be affecting poor parents who should be well informed about the policy concerning indigence which could exempt them from paying school fees.
- There is interdependence between the school and other neighbouring schools. This is good for strong inter-school relationships.
- The school helps to educate parents in important policy matters and also helps parents to complete forms for the application of social grants. This shows commitment on the part of the School Management Team to involve parents in school matters and to offer social and community service.
- Parents are not represented in the existing committees, except for the financial committee. The school lacks inclusiveness in dealing with important matters that affect all its stakeholders.
- Parents do not have the opportunity of interacting with educators concerning the progress made by learners. The school is not effectively accessed as a centre for the promotion of community life. The school lacks openness and accessibility to the community.

4.2.2 An analysis of data observed at school B

The interviews, scrutiny of official school documents and personal observations revealed the following:

4.2.2.1 Functioning of the SGB

- The school has a well-developed constitution and vision and mission statement, which has been communicated to and adopted by the newly appointed SGB. This is an indication of the existence of strategic, projective and self- regulative planning.
 - The SGB has full membership, holds regular meetings and keeps appropriate records thereof. This is an indication of commitment on the part of SGB members to be fully involved in school matters.
- **Areas that the school needs to develop:**
 - The SGB does not give strategic governance direction to the school in that it has no knowledge of the school development plan and, as a result, fails to contribute towards improving, maintaining and ensuring the effective use

of the school's resources. This is an indication of a school without a school development plan.

- The SGB does not control the finances regularly to ensure that expenditure is in line with the budget. This is an indication of negligence and of dereliction of duties. This could lead to misappropriation and embezzlement of school funds.
- The finance committee as well as other SGB committees recently received training from the Department of Education. However, according to the chairperson of the SGB, it was inadequate in helping them to offer strategic governance direction to the school. This indicates a lack of commitment on the part of the Department of Education to develop and empower SGBs to function effectively in their strategic governance duties.
- **Reasons that account for the above judgments:**
 - The school has relevant school policies and procedures in place, which are communicated to all stakeholders.
 - The SGB meetings are held once a term, and emergency meetings as the need arise.
 - There is only one SGB member serving on the finance committee and most committees are not fully functional.
 - Through interviews with the chairperson of the SGB, it became apparent that although they were orientated concerning their roles and responsibilities, they require further training. The SGB also indicated that the principal is solely responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the buildings and school premises. This is an indication that principals could at times stifle the strategic involvement of SGBs in school matters. The upkeep and maintenance of the buildings of the school should be the joint engagement of the SGB and the School Management Team.

4.2.2.2 School safety and security

- **What the school does well**
 - The school has an appropriate HIV/AIDS policy, which creates awareness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
 - The school has regularly serviced fire extinguishers and is equipped with two first aid kits to be used for the safety and health of the learners.

- The school security system, with regard to the burglar alarm and fencing, is in good condition.
- **Areas that the school needs to develop:**
 - The school has not implemented all aspects of the policy on supervision.
 - The school's safety committee is not functional and therefore unable to implement important safety measures identified in the School Development Plan.
 - There are huge cracks in the walls of the school's ablution blocks that pose a threat to the safety of the learners.
- **Reasons that account for the above judgments:**
 - No minutes of the school's safety committee were available to the researcher to monitor whether important strategies identified in the School Development Plan have been implemented.
 - The chairperson of the SGB confirmed that the safety committee is not functional.
 - There are huge cracks in the walls of the ablution facility on the eastern side of the school premises.
 - The fire extinguishers were serviced in May 2004 and the school is equipped with one first aid kit for the use of the school and one to be used during school visits.
 - The alarm system in the administration block is in good working order.
 - The school fence is intact all around the schoolyard.

4.2.2.3 School infrastructure

- **What the school does well;**
 - The school has enough professionally qualified educators to enforce the curriculum at the school and non-educator staff to assist with the administration and maintenance of the school.
 - The financial resources of the school are used effectively financial records are kept satisfactorily.
 - The school has an asset register and stocktaking is conducted annually.
 - The school has neatly kept gardens at the entrance of the school and between the classrooms to enhance the teaching and learning atmosphere and surroundings.

- **Areas that the school needs to develop;**
 - The school does not have sufficient classrooms for the number of learners.
 - The ablution facilities for the learners and ladies are not in a satisfactory condition.
 - The school does not conduct a monthly reconciliation of the school's finances.
 - The school does not have a policy to guide the recording, distribution and retrieval of L/TSM and to ensure that all learning areas have sufficient resources.
 - The school does not have a media centre and multi-purpose classrooms to assist learners in carrying out their tasks.
 - Sport facilities at the school are not well maintained.

- **Reasons that account for the above judgments;**
 - The school has 54 educators, two secretaries, a cleaner and three gardeners.
 - The school has 25 classrooms for 1 282 learners (an average of 52 learners per classroom).
 - There are huge cracks in the walls of one of the ablution facilities and some of the toilets are used as storerooms.
 - One of the ablution facilities for boys is not currently in use, because it is not in a working condition. Some of the toilets for ladies are also not in working order.
 - A financial inspection was conducted at the school during November 2003.
 - The report indicates that financial records are well kept and that the school is endeavouring to create an orderly financial record system. According to the financial inspection report, the compilation of a monthly reconciliation statement is an area for development.
 - The school fees of R52 per learner per annum do not sufficiently contribute to the departmental subsidy for the maintenance and upgrade of the school grounds and buildings. The learners have indicated in the questionnaires that the school distributed in January 2004 that there is a need for a media centre at the school.
 - The school has a soccer field and a netball court that are not well maintained.

- One of the key activities in the School Development Plan of the school is to establish a committee to develop a policy for Learning and Teaching Support Material (L/TSM) to ensure the effective recording, distribution and retrieval of L/TSM. This committee had to be established by 16 April 2003. An interview with the principal revealed that this committee has not yet been established.

4.2.2.4 Parents and the community

- **What the school does well:**
 - Parents are positive towards the school and attend meetings in great numbers.
 - The school is in constant communication with the neighbouring schools by forging and sustaining effective links.
 - Open days are arranged for parents to allow them to check the progress made by their learners.

- **Areas that the school needs to develop:**
 - Parents do not receive regular reports regarding progress made by their learners.
 - There is no functional parent committee to assist with fundraising.
 - The school does not provide any education for parents to enable them to assist the learners with homework.
 - There are not enough regular meetings with parents to involve them in school matters.

- **Reasons that account for the above judgements**
 - Attendance during parent meetings is excellent.
 - None of the classrooms can accommodate parents, due to their overwhelming support.
 - The school liaises with nearby schools in many respects including borrowing books for the newly introduced Grade 12.
 - The school failed to communicate the progress made by learners during the first term regardless of its intentions to implement the decision quarterly.
 - During interviews with the chairperson of the SGB, it became clear that the SGB does not have a strategy to initiate any fundraising projects. Parents still feel that fundraising is the responsibility of the educators only.

4.2.2.5 School infrastructure

- **What the school does well**

- The school has an approved budget for 2004 based on input from all stakeholders.
- The administration block and some classrooms were painted as part of the *Letsema Project*.
- A well-equipped school library has been developed to improve the literacy skills of the learners.

- **Areas that the school needs to develop**

- The assets register does not comply with the prescribed format as stipulated in sections 3.2 and 8 of the Provincial Gazette 154 of 2001 and the petty cash is not kept as stipulated in sections 3.6 and 6.
- The school does not comply with the provisions of Section 21 of financial records to Head Office. The work is not done in time and this affects the functioning of the school.
- The school's financial policy states that parents and former learners should be charged a fee for the school's assistance with filling in forms, for example, for child support grants and identity documents.
- Nineteen percent of the educators are not on REQV 13, with two educators that are not enlisted in the compulsory programme of the Human Resource Development Directorate to improve their qualifications.
- The school environment is not conducive to teaching and learning and the general maintenance of the school needs urgent attention.
- The doors and windows in the classrooms are broken, gardens are overgrown with tall grass and weeds, the toilets and a septic tank overflows continuously and the fence that allows 24 hour access to people and animals poses health hazards to both educators and learners.

- **Reasons that account for the above judgement**

- According to the minutes of the SGB, the school went through all the necessary stages to approve the budget for 2004.
- The school is still in the process of painting the other classrooms.
- All the classes have been allocated a certain time period to visit and use the library up to the end of the second quarter of 2004.

- The school has been allocated section 21 functions according to the South African Schools Act, but received a letter from Head Office dated the 2/9/2003 indicating the withdrawal of this status, therefore it does not comply with the provisions of the Act and no teaching and learning resources such as educators manuals and learners' books have been ordered in 2003 to support the execution of the curriculum.
- The school records indicate that 19% of the educators are not suitably qualified and during an interview with the SMT it was stated that some of these educators are not enrolled with approved institutions.
- DAS was started in 1999, but since then it was not resuscitated to enhance the professional development of educators.
- The lack of maintaining the school leads to conditions that are not conducive to effective teaching.
- During interviews and the perusal of documents, no systems were found in place to monitor the use of the resources of the school.

4.2.2.6 Parents and the community

- **What the school does well.**
 - The school holds regular general parents' meetings with published agenda, invites individual parents to discuss learners' problems and holds quarterly sectional meetings.
 - Parents attend their general meetings in large numbers and show interest in their learners' education.
- **Areas that the school needs to develop**
 - Parents are not orientated concerning new curriculum developments and are not involved to the committees to contribute in the management of the school.
 - The majority of parents do not pay school fees in time and therefore they shy away from being involved in school projects.
 - The school maintains effective links with local, social and welfare structures.
 - No efforts are undertaken to encourage learners to respect the local environment.

- **Reasons that account for the above judgments**
 - Parents attend their general meetings in large numbers, ranging from 104 to 109 parents for the recorded meetings since January 2003 to date.
 - Parents are not given education concerning the latest developments such as, Curriculum 2005, HIV/ AIDS, the Revised National Curriculum Statement and the role of parents in the development of the school and the education of their learners.
 - Most parents pay school fees when they collect their learners' reports at the end of the year.
 - There are no established links with the police, the welfare or social services.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented an analysis and interpretation of the results of the empirical research of this study.

The next chapter presents the conclusion, findings and recommendations.

Chapter 5

Findings, conclusion and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the findings from the literature study, as well as from the empirical research are presented.

Recommendations for the practical implementation of these findings and for further research are also included.

5.2 Findings and conclusions of the literature study

- Findings from the literature study reveal that Whole School Evaluation is a systematic, coordinated, focused and mutually empowering process purpose of which is to facilitate the improvement of school performance through approaches of partnerships, collaboration, mentoring and guidance. It evaluates the overall effectiveness of a school as well as the quality of teaching and learning; ensures that all the learners are given equal opportunities to make the best use of their capabilities as well as being supportive and developmental rather than punitive and judgmental; facilitates improvement of school performance through approaches of partnership, monitoring and guidance; evaluates the effectiveness with which such initiatives are being implemented and provides information aimed at strengthening their contribution to school development and improvement; ensures that it increases the level of accountability among stakeholders within the education system and strengthens the support given to the school by district professional support services; provides, at the end of implementation, feedback to all the stakeholders as a means of achieving continuous school development and improvement; and identifies aspects of excellence within the system, which will serve as models of good practice and aspects of effective schools, and improve the general understanding of which centrally involved in the education process, that is, learners, parents and educators, and there is also a place for information about attitudes, expectations and the degree of satisfaction of these

stakeholders about the governance services the school is rendering (see paragraph 1.1).

The literature review highlighted the fact that the cornerstone of Whole School Evaluation is the parallel between ecological communities (ecosystems) and learning communities (schools). The link between ecological communities and human communities exists because both are living systems, and this is where systems-thinking comes in. The key characteristics of systems-thinking are a shift from the parts to the whole; a shift from analysis to context; a shift from objects to relationships; a shift from hierarchies to networks; and a shift from structure to process (see paragraph 2.2.1).

5.2.2 Findings and conclusions of the empirical research

The interviews, scrutiny of official school documents and personal observation revealed the following at school A:

- The SGBs are not properly trained for their governance roles and responsibilities and as a result, they do not provide a clear strategic governance direction to the school.
- An educator in the SGB has been elected as treasurer and chairperson of the financial committee, which is a violation of the departmental guidelines (see South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996, section 29).
- The SGB does not have knowledge regarding the existence of school policies at the school.
- Only the chairperson of the SGB has, on occasions, visited the school to monitor the situation, but there is no programme or system in place yet to evaluate the quality of education provided by the school.
- The school does not comply with the rules, regulations and procedures to protect and ensure learners and educators' safety, health and welfare in that it:
 - ❖ is not equipped with a first aid kit;
 - ❖ has no emergency procedures;
 - ❖ has no fire extinguishers;
 - has no Latex gloves in classes; and
 - ❖ the fence is not intact.

- Staff loans to an amount of R10 280.00 were approved according to the 2001 and 2002 financial statements, with an amount of only R2 742.00 having been repaid. The practice of staff loans is not in line with section 37 of the South African Schools Act.
- The following serious deviations were found in the financial administration:
 - ❖ Correctional fluid was used to erase entries in the Analysis Book (January 2004).
 - ❖ There were no entries for receipts in September 2003 in the Analysis Book.
 - ❖ Entries in the Petty Cash Book were written in pencil.
 - ❖ The control of the school's assets is not in line with departmental prescripts, Government Gazette 154 of 2001.
 - ❖ The parent component of the SGB is not involved in the school's finances such as the issuing of cheques.
 - ❖ The accounting officer does not monitor and control the financial records on a regular basis.
 - ❖ The school governors have not implemented the initial training they received, as they do not monitor the school's performance in any way.
- Parents do not attend meetings and they are not conversant with important issues regarding budgets and exemption from school funds etcetera.
- Parents are not represented in the existing committees of the school, except in the financial committee.
- Parents do not get the opportunity of interacting with educators on the progress made by learners. The school is not effectively accessed as a centre for the promotion of community life.

The interviews, scrutiny of official school documents and personal observation revealed the following at school B:

- The school has a well-developed constitution and vision and mission statement, which is communicated to and adopted by the newly appointed SGB.
- The SGB has full membership, holds regular meetings and keeps appropriate records thereof.

However:

- The SGB does not give strategic governance direction to the school in that it has no knowledge of the School Development Plan and, as a result, fails to contribute towards improving, maintaining and ensuring the effective use of the school's resources.
- The SGB does not control the finances regularly to ensure that expenditure is in line with the budget.
- The finance committee, as well as other SGB committees, recently received training from the Department of Education. However, according to the chairperson of the SGB, it was inadequate in helping them to offer strategic governance direction to the school.
- Through interviews with the chairperson of the SGB, it became apparent that although they were orientated in their roles and responsibilities, they required further training. The SGB also indicated that the principal is solely responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the buildings and school premises.
- The school's safety committee is not functional and therefore unable to implement important safety measures identified in the School Development Plan.
- No minutes of the school's safety committee were available to monitor whether important strategies identified in the School Development Plan have been implemented.
- The chairperson of the SGB confirmed that the safety committee was not functional.
- There are huge cracks in the walls of the ablution facility on the eastern side of the school premises.
- The school does not have sufficient classrooms for the number of learners.
- The ablution facilities for the learners and ladies are not in a satisfactory condition.
- The school does not conduct monthly reconciliation of the school's finances.
- The school does not have a policy to guide the recording, distribution and retrieval of Learning and Teaching Support Material and to ensure that all learning areas have sufficient resources.

- The school does not have a media centre and multi-purpose classrooms to assist learners in carrying out their tasks.
- Sport facilities at the school are not well maintained.
- Parents do not receive regular reports regarding progress made by their learners.
- There is no functional parent committee to assist with fundraising.
- The school does not provide any education for parents to enable them to assist the learners with homework.
- There are not enough regular meetings with parents to involve them in school matters.
- The assets register does not comply with the prescribed format as stipulated in sections 3.2 and 8 of the Provincial Gazette 154 of 2001 and the petty cash is not kept as stipulated in sections 3.6 and 6.
- The school does not comply with the provisions of Section 21 of financial records to Head Office. The work is not done in time and this affects the functioning of the school.
- The doors and windows in the classrooms are broken, gardens are overgrown with tall grass and weeds, the toilets and a septic tank overflows continuously and the fence that allows 24 hour access to people and animals pose health hazards to both educators and learners.
- The lack of maintaining the school leads to conditions that are not conducive to effective teaching and learning.
- During interviews and the perusal of documents no systems were found in place to monitor the use of the resources of the school.
- Parents are not orientated concerning new curriculum developments and are not involved in the committees to contribute to the management of the school.
- The majority of parents do not pay school fees in time and therefore they shy away from being involved in school projects.
- No efforts are undertaken to encourage learners to respect the local environment.
- Parents are not given education concerning the latest developments such as Curriculum 2005, HIV/AIDS, the Revised National Curriculum Statement and the role of parents in the development of the school and the education of their learners.

- Most parents pay school fees when they collect their learners' reports at the end of the year.

There are no established links with the police, the welfare or social services.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The study may have suffered because of the following limitations:

5.3.1 Language medium

The respondents were Sotho speakers while the interviews were conducted in English, with translations for some of the difficult concepts such as strategic governance, policies and Whole School Self-evaluation. It would have been better if the interviews' checklist was developed in Sesotho. The assumption can be made that respondents, especially the chairpersons' may not have understood some of the questions very well, hence they failed to provide relevant answers to some of the questions on the checklist.

5.3.3 Measuring instrument

With relation to instrumentation, it would have been better if a standardized questionnaire was utilized because it would have given the participants of this research more time to respond to items in a uniform manner.

5.3.4 Available literature

As not much research has been done in the role of SGBs in Whole School Self-evaluation in South Africa, there were not enough research documents to refer to.

5.4 Recommendations

The findings of both the literature review and the empirical research have led the researcher to make the following recommendations for SGBs' involvement in Whole School Evaluation:

Since SGBs are responsible for the strategic governance and direction of the school, it is necessary that they evaluate and monitor the following strategic dimensions of their schools:

- their own strategic functionality at schools;
- the general safety and security of learners, educators and parents;
- school infrastructure; and
- parental and community involvement at schools.

When evaluating and monitoring the above-mentioned dimensions of their schools, SGBs should ask themselves strategic questions such as:

- “Where are we now?”
- “Where do we want to be?”
- “How do we get there?”.

In answering this question, they need to apply the “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities Threats” analysis strategy and principles in order to identify their strengths, the weaknesses, opportunities and threats at the school. This can be a start to solving weaknesses of the schools and threats to learners and educators’ safety and security as identified in paragraphs 4.2.1.2 and 4.2.2.2. SWOT analysis can also provide them with an opportunity to reinforce their strengths as identified in paragraphs 4.2.1.1 and 4.2.2.1. Such a strategy requires SGBs to be proactive, projective and self-regulative in their planning for school development.

SGBs, together with School Management Teams, must therefore draw up a School Development Plan. The School Development Plan will provide the framework for SGBs proactive, projective and self-regulative engagement in the development and general functionality of their schools. The School Development Plan must be jointly developed and designed by parents, learners and educators (in the case of secondary schools) and parents and educators (in the case of primary schools). It is also imperative that the School Development Plan should be supplied to the parents / guardians of learners at schools and to the appropriate authorities with an interest in the development of the school such as the local District Office of Education. It should form part of Whole School Self-evaluation. The involvement of all stakeholders in the development and design of the school development helps in ensuring ownership of the plan and effective strategic, proactive and self-regulative implementation of the School Development Plan.

5.5 Conclusion

This research included a literature review on Whole School Self-evaluation and strategic school governance and, through the qualitative empirical research, investigated the phenomenon of Whole School Development at two township schools, with a view to making suggestions on what should be the role of the SGBs in Whole School Self-evaluation.

It is hoped that the suggestions that the researcher made will help schools to involve SGBs fully in their strategic development.

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Appendix A

Interview and observation checklist on Whole School Evaluation

- Type of school
- Perusal of the minutes of the SGB
- Perusal of school policies and procedures
- Perusal of Financial Analysis Book
- Interview with the chairperson of the SGB on its strategic governance
- Functioning of the SGB
 - What the school does well
 - Areas that the school needs to develop
- School safety and security
 - What the school fails to do
 - Areas that the school needs to develop
- School infrastructure
 - What the school does well
 - Areas that the school needs to develop
- Parents and the community
 - What the school does well
 - Areas that the school needs to develop.