

**A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK  
TO EMPOWER THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM  
IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, Nozipho Prudence Khumalo, declare that the dissertation, “A professional development framework to empower School Management Team in Financial Management”, hereby submitted for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty.

I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my late loving parents, Mr VL and Mrs JJ Radebe. They always had confidence in me and offered me encouragement and support in all my endeavours. The foundation they gave me has been my strength and motivated me to appreciate the value of education. They taught me perseverance and prepared me to face life's challenges. I also dedicate it to my mother-in-law, Mrs CN Khumalo, who could not witness this dissertation being completed. She always motivated me and emphasised the importance of lifelong learning.

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to design a professional development framework to empower the school management team in financial management. In order to achieve this, the following specific objectives were devised to guide the study:

- To demonstrate the challenges and justify the need to develop a framework for the professional development of school management teams in financial management.
- To outline the possible solutions to the challenges faced by school management teams in financial management.
- To discuss the conditions conducive to the implementation of the framework.
- To delineate the possible threats that may hinder the implementation of a framework.
- To demonstrate the possible successes associated with the implementation of the professional development framework to empower school management teams in financial management.

The reviewed literature revealed that while the school governing bodies have an ultimate responsibility for the management of school finances, they play a minimal role and delegate the daily operational financial management activities to school management teams. As a result, the school management team has a responsibility of maintaining and managing school finances. However, some school management team members do not understand how a budget is drafted or even how financial reports are prepared due to a lack of knowledge and skills in financial management. Others have little knowledge of the South African Schools Act and the Public Finance Management Act. In some cases, the school management team and the school governing body are not working collaboratively because they do not know their roles and responsibilities in relation to the management of funds. These challenges are due to the fact that they are appointed on the basis of teaching experience and academic and professional qualifications, but knowledge of financial management is not a prerequisite. They are often provided with a one-off unaccredited and inadequate induction workshop; thereafter, their development is not monitored. This is a design research that seeks to find a practical and effective framework that will empower the school management team with the necessary

financial management skills and knowledge to manage school funds. This study expects to have a practical framework that will serve as a guide to empower school management teams to establish financial competencies and become better skilled financial managers. A total of 12 co-researchers were purposefully selected from two schools and a district office. The researcher worked collaboratively with co-researchers in order to find solutions to the challenges facing the school management teams in financial management. The theoretical framework adopted to underpin this study is social constructionism, which affirms that knowledge is constructed by humans through social interactions. The data were generated through discussion and information-sharing meetings between the researcher and co-researchers. In order to design a professional development framework, social constructionism was used concurrently with participatory action research as they both aim to promote learning, thus, to empower and to change. Participatory action research was used as it is emancipatory and works with real challenges to bring about change in the community. The data generated were analysed by means of critical discourse analysis, using textual, discursive and social analysis. Consequently, the co-researchers constructed a framework, implemented and reflected on it and improved and shared the transformation that took place during the process.

## ABSTRAK

Die doel van die studie is om 'n professionele ontwikkelingsraamwerk te ontwerp om die skoolbestuurspan in finansiële bestuur te bemagtig. Ten einde hierdie doel te bereik is die volgende spesifieke doelwitte ontwerp om die studie te lei:

- Om uitdagings te demonstreer en die noodsaaklikheid om 'n raamwerk vir professionele ontwikkeling van skoolbestuurspanne in finansiële bestuur te ontwikkel, te regverdig.
- Om moontlike oplossings vir die uitdagings van skoolbestuurspanne in finansiële bestuur te bespreek
- Om die voorwaardes wat bevorderlik is vir die implementering van die raamwerk te bespreek.
- Om die moontlike dreigemente wat die implementering van 'n raamwerk kan belemmer, te omskryf
- Om moontlike suksesse wat verband hou met die implementering van die professionele ontwikkelingsraamwerk om skoolbestuurspanne in finansiële bestuur te bemagtig, te demonstreer.

'n Literatuurstudie het aan die lig gebring dat, terwyl skoolbeheerliggame die verantwoordelikheid vir die bestuur van skoolfinansies dra, hulle 'n minimale rol daarin speel en eerder die daaglikse bedryfsfinansieringsaktiwiteite aan skoolbestuurspanne delegeer. Gevolglik dra die skoolbestuurspan die verantwoordelikheid om skoolfinansies te handhaaf en te bestuur. Sommige lede van die skoolbestuurspan verstaan egter nie hoe 'n begroting opgestel word of selfs hoe finansiële verslae voorberei word nie. Dit is as gevolg van 'n gebrek aan kennis en vaardighede betreffende finansiële bestuur. Ander lede dra min kennis van die Suid-Afrikaanse Skolewet en die Wet op Openbare Finansiële Bestuur. In sommige gevalle werk die skoolbestuurspan en die skoolbeheerliggaam nie saam nie omdat hulle nie hul onderskeie rolle en verantwoordelikhede rakende die bestuur van fondse ken nie. Hierdie uitdagings is te wyte aan die feit dat hulle aangestel word op grond van onderrigervaring asook akademiese en professionele kwalifikasie, terwyl kennis van finansiële bestuur nie 'n voorvereiste is nie. Hulle woon gewoonlik slegs 'n eenmalige nie-geakkrediteerd, onvoldoende induksiewerkswinkel by, met geen monitoring van hul ontwikkeling nie. Hierdie is 'n ontwerpnavorsing wat poog om 'n

praktiese en effektiewe raamwerk te vind wat die skoolbestuurspan met die nodige finansiële bestuursvaardighede en kennis sal bemagtig om skoolfondse te bestuur. Hierdie studie verwag om 'n praktiese raamwerk te hê wat sal dien as 'n riglyn om skoolbestuurspanne te bemagtig om finansiële vaardighede te vestig en beter geskoolde finansiële bestuurders te word. Altesaam 12 medenavorsers is doelgerig uit twee skole en die distrikskantoor geselekteer. Die navorser het saam met medenavorsers gewerk om oplossings te vind vir die uitdagings wat die skoolbestuurspan in finansiële bestuur ondervind. Die teoretiese raamwerk wat aangeneem is om hierdie studie te ondersteun, is sosiale konstruksie, wat bevestig dat kennis deur mense deur sosiale interaksies opgebou word. Data is gegenereer deur besprekings en vergaderings waar inligting gedeel is tussen die navorser en medenavorsers. Om 'n professionele ontwikkelingsraamwerk te ontwerp is sosiale konstruksie saam met deelnemende aksienavorsing gebruik aangesien beide beoog om leer te bevorder, dit wil sê, om te bemagtig en te verander. Deelnemende aksienavorsing is gebruik omdat dit emansiperend is en werk met werklike uitdagings om verandering in die gemeenskap teweeg te bring. Die gegenereerde data is ontleed deur middel van kritiese diskoersanalise met behulp van tekstuele, diskursiewe en sosiale analise. Voortspruitend daaruit, het die medenavorsers 'n raamwerk opgestel, geïmplementeer, daarop gereflekteer en die transformasie wat tydens die proses plaasgevind het, verbeter en gedeel.



## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
ETDP	Education and Training Development Practices
GAAP	Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
KZN DoE	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PDP	Professional Development Plan
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PLC	Professional Learning Community
SASA	South African Schools Act
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team

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# CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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## DECLARATION

To whom it may concern

I hereby certify that the English language of the following dissertation meets the requirements of academic publishing. This dissertation was linguistically edited and proofread by me, Dr. L. Hoffman.

### Title of dissertation

A professional development framework to empower school  
management team in financial management

### Candidate

Nozipho Prudence Khumalo



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15 March 2018

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the study was to design a professional development framework to enhance the management of finances by the school management team (SMT) in line with the developmental policies and standards required to ensure quality. This chapter presents the background and briefly reviews literature of the study in terms of the challenges faced by the SMTs in schools with regard to financial management, solutions to such challenges, conditions conducive for the implementation of the framework, threats towards it and its evidence of success. This is followed by the research problem, and the research aim and objectives are also outlined. Social constructionism, as the theoretical framework underpinning the study, is explained.

Participatory action research (PAR), as the research methodology for this study, is presented. The generated data are analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA). The chapter is concluded with the value of the study, the ethical considerations and the layout of the chapters.

#### **1.2 BACKGROUND AND SUCCINCT OVERVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

In terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), Sections 34-38, schools are afforded the mandate to manage their funds and to be responsible for the implementation of all the financial accountability processes, which is one of the functions of the SMT (South Africa, 1996:70-73). Therefore, SMTs should be trained to enable them to attain the relevant skills and to be kept abreast of a new understanding and proficiency in managing school funds (Chetambe, 2013:214). Financial management refers to the effective and efficient allocation of finances to achieve the best value for money. In schools, it refers to drafting a financial policy and having a sound bookkeeping structure with a goal of maximising utilisation, control and accountability for allocated funds (Wagithunu, Muthee & Thinguri, 2014:103).

The framework was critical in the sense that it aligned the training of the SMT with the policies, aims and strategic directions of the departmental and school plan in handling the financial matters (New South Wales Department of Education, 2015:3). The framework enhanced the SMT's perception of the legal framework guiding the financial school management, the funding of schools, financial planning (budgeting), organisation, control and reporting (Mestry, 2006:129). The SMT comprises the principal, the deputy principal, departmental heads and senior staff members delegated to perform school management duties in schools where there are no deputy principals and departmental heads (Department of Education (DoE), 2000:2).

The SMT encounters various challenges regarding financial matters, one of which is that some of the members are not properly equipped with how a budget is drafted. The financial reports are erroneously prepared and financial management principles are not correctly implemented (Beyers & Mohloana, 2015:343; Swartz, 2009:6; Sister, 2004:63). Some schools have even witnessed an escalation in expenditure and increased cases of financial mismanagement (Beyers & Mohloana, 2015:343; Chetambe, 2013:216). The SMTs are appointed based on education-related academic qualifications and teaching experience. These appointments result in insufficient knowledge, insufficient skills and less expertise in managing school finances (Kaguri, Njati & Thiaine, 2014:56; Motsamai, Jacobs & De Wet, 2011:106). On appointment, SMTs are often provided with a one-off unaccredited and inadequate training workshop (Chetambe, 2013:217; Xaba, 2012). In addition, Manamela (2014:2) and Van Wyk (2004:49) state that some SMT members have little understanding of the South African Schools Act (SASA) and the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) or are misinterpreting it; hence, the need to create a professional development framework to enhance the financial knowledge of the SMT.

There are various solutions that have been put in place to address the lack of financial knowledge among SMT members. The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011-2025 advocates the creation of the National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development and District Teacher Development Centres, which can provide

accredited continuous professional development (CPD) training in financial management (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). In England, they refer to these development centres as school leadership institutions (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008:126). The formulation of professional learning communities (PLCs) provided an opportunity for the co-researchers to share their financial knowledge; roles and responsibilities (see 4.3.4). The use of standards and frameworks to organise the content of financial management training programmes and maintain quality control is practised (Pont et al., 2008:117). The co-researchers organised an induction workshop on planning and budgeting as well as policies and legislation to prepare and equip the SMT members with financial skills to execute their financial management roles (Manamela, 2014:42; see 4.3.1; 4.3.5).

The study revealed that in order to ensure the successful implementation of the framework, conducive conditions must be considered. These conditions are as follows: adequate time, clustering of schools to centralise the venue and thus to encourage maximum attendance, and to monitor and evaluate the framework to ensure a transformational change in the school financial management (Manamela, 2014:84). The content of the training is aligned with the legal framework of the school financial management. The framework is cognisant of the following elements: real-life work experience, action learning, mentoring and diagnostic assessment (Pont et al., 2008:133). The framework should be relevant and specific in addressing the needs of SMTs (Miriti & Moses, 2014:136).

Various risks were revealed by both the co-researchers and the related, reviewed literature in the implementation of a strategy that enhances the financial knowledge among the SMT members. Traditionally, the professional development of the SMT is usually not sufficiently funded, both before they enter into service and during the service; hence, this leads to a lack of knowledge of financial matters (Carlson & Gadio, 2002:124; see 2.14.1). There is usually no planned system to evaluate the impact of the training. Therefore, it is necessary for the trainers to supervise and assess the implementation of the framework (Stannard, Matharu & Hayes, 2014:161). It was found that a one-size-fits-all training programme that does not consider their background, experience and prior knowledge may be irrelevant to

some SMT members participating in the programme (Timperley, Wilson, Barran & Fung, 2007:20; see 2.14.2; 4.5.2).

The study revealed various successes through the implementation of the strategy. The indicators of success were that the SMTs followed the correct accounting procedures in record-keeping and reporting (Beltrán, 2011:52; Mizell, 2010:10-16). The framework anticipated the effective management of school finances, such as correct preparation and implementation of budgeting (Kaguri et al., 2014:56; Nelly, 2008:4). SMTs established core financial competencies and achieved the consistency of financial management skills throughout their structures (Ndiang'ui, 2012:2). A strong working relationship was built between the SMTs and the SGBs as they clearly understood their roles and responsibilities in governance (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009:5). They were able to align their school policy to the departmental policies and recognised that public resources were limited and needed to be used wisely and well (Republic of South Africa, 2000:4).

### **1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The school management team (SMT) does not have adequate financial skills and knowledge, which results in challenges with regard to managing school finances. The reviewed literature revealed that SMT members are appointed based on their experience as teachers and academic and on their professional development, but a working knowledge of financial management is not considered a requirement for selection. Therefore, this results in financial management challenges (Kaguri et al., 2014:56; Motsamai et al., 2011:106).

### **1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study was embedded in the social constructionism as a theoretical framework, which affirms that knowledge is thoughts, ideas and beliefs created by humans through socialisation and a joint understanding of the world based on shared assumptions about reality (Raskin, 2002:9). The term “social constructionism” has been found to be significant in sociology for some time in the work of Mead, Marx,

Max, Schutz and Durkheim, but the major contribution is usually Berger and Luckman's book *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge* (1966). Their account of social life argues that human beings create and sustain all social phenomena together through social practices, contrary to the belief that everything has specific permanent sets of attributes that make them exist (Burr, 2006:7). In psychology, its emergence is found in Gergen's (1973) paper, *Social psychology as history*, in which he argues that all knowledge is historically and culturally related and that one needs not look for a once-and-for-all description of society since social life is ever changing (Burr, 2006:7-8).

Constructionists view knowledge as socially constructed, and this construction process is rooted in language (Andrews, 2012:40; Burr, 2006:22). They further argue that knowledge originates from everyday social life interactions and experiences. Therefore, in this study, the co-researchers took part in designing the framework through discussions and sharing their experiences (Yu & Kwan, 2013:275). The five principles of constructionism were followed, namely the principle of knowledge priority, historically and cultural inclusive, sustainable social relations, collaborations of social action and language manifestation (Floridi, 2011:300-301). DiSessa and Cobb suggest that "constructionism, like 'learning by designing' is classified as Framework for Action" (DiSessa & Cobb, 2004:82). Therefore, this paradigm was relevant to this subject as the aim was not only to study but to build a framework, implement it, reflect on it, improve it and share it (Floridi, 2011:302; Noss & Clayson, 2009:285). The co-researchers were actively involved in exploring and designing the framework.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The overarching research question is as follows:

*How does the professional development framework enhance financial management skills of school management team members?*

The subsidiary questions of the research study are as follows:



- What challenges do school management team faces that necessitate the design of a framework to empower them in financial management?
- What other strategies exist to empower school management teams in financial management?
- What conditions would enable a successful professional development framework?
- What potential risks to an emerging framework need to be anticipated and mitigated?
- What are the indicators that the framework is effective or not effective to empower school management teams in financial management?

## **1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

In order to address the above questions, the aim and objectives of the study are as follows.

### **1.6.1 Research aim**

The **aim** of the study is to design a professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management.

### **1.6.2 Research objectives**

The research objectives are as follows:

- To identify the challenges and justify the need to develop a framework for the professional development of SMTs in financial management.
- To explore the possible solutions to the challenges faced by SMTs in financial management.
- To discuss the conditions conducive to the implementation of the framework.
- To delineate the possible threats that may hinder the implementation of the framework.

- To demonstrate the possible successes associated with the implementation of the professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

The study is located in the qualitative research paradigm. This study has adopted participatory action research (PAR) as an approach. The study approach is a practical social process that was informed by the following principles: participatory, critical, emancipating and reflexive with aims to transform theory into practice, thus, involving learning about real-life material (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:277). The roots of PAR can be traced to Paulo Freire, who was concerned about the empowering of the poor and marginalised members of the society and thus believed that critical reflection was crucial for personal and social change (McDonald, 2012:37). Equal opportunity was created for information sharing and learning between the researcher and the co-researchers, and the ultimate aim was to empower and influence social change for the benefit of SMTs in gaining financial skills (McDonald, 2012:34; Watters, Comeau & Restall, 2010:6). The SMTs actively participated in designing and implementing the agreed solutions in their schools (Boyle, 2012:1; Crane & O'Regan, 2010:3-10).

The research followed a particular cyclical protocol, which includes planning, action and observing, reflecting, re-planning, action and observing again (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:278; see 3.11). It promoted knowledge building, which will help SMTs to empower themselves and, furthermore, produces evidence about ongoing processes of change (McGarvey, 2007:1).

### **1.7.1 Data generation**

The data were generated through meetings and team discussions with the co-researchers. In the first meeting, the nature and method of the research were discussed. Information sessions were held to discuss the purpose of the research and share the statement of the problem with follow-up meetings and brainstorming sessions. The discussions were on matters pertaining to the skills and knowledge of

financial management of the SMTs, as well as their challenges and training needs. The last meeting was held to reflect on the reports and presentations. After all the information had been consolidated, the co-researchers received a final report and were requested to make inputs, corrections, additions and amendments. Pseudonyms were used for the co-researchers who were directly quoted in the text. The data were recorded and stored on audiotapes. The researcher is the only one who has access to these.

### **1.7.2 Selection of co-researchers**

The study used purposeful sampling to select co-researchers. Purposeful sampling means the identification and selection of individuals that are well informed, experienced about the phenomenon and is likely to agree to take part in the study (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2013:533). Selecting co-researchers experienced and involved in school financial management assisted the study to construct a comprehensive understanding of professional development framework to empower SMT in financial management (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016:3).

The co-researchers in this study consist of SMT members from two schools in Altona Circuit, two SGB members, including the chairperson, one circuit manager, two district officials from teacher development and governance sections and one member of the District Training Committee. Twelve co-researchers participated in the study.

## **1.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

This study used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse the data generated. CDA analyses the data using text analysis, discursive analysis and social analysis (Janks, 1997:330). The data were discussed by considering the objectives of the study. CDA aims to reveal and analyse what is unspoken and obscure (Van Dijk, 1995:18). Wodak (2013:186) summarises the major tenet of CDA as a form of collective action that addresses social problems, constitutes society and culture and is historical. The analyses consisted of and referred to what the literature describes

as good practice. The data from the co-researchers were then compared to the expectations outlined in the reviewed literature to determine the extent to which they were being met. Critical discourse analysts highlight their views, perspectives, principles and aims within their discipline and society. The data were also analysed through the social constructionism lenses. CDA is multidisciplinary and especially focuses on the relations between discourse and society to study the challenges of SMTs in financial management (Van Dijk, 1993:253). The data generated from the analysis served as a framework and helped to bring change and improvement in financial knowledge and skills to SMTs (Fairclough, 2010:1).

## **1.9 VALUE OF THIS STUDY**

The study designed a practical framework that empowered SMTs in schools to be better skilled financial managers. The co-researchers all benefitted from the findings of the study. Their knowledge and skills were enhanced. They used the acquired knowledge to review their school budgets and amended and changed the school financial policies. The implementation of a professional development framework established financial competencies and consistency of financial skills.

## **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of the Free State and it was approved (**see Appendix J**). The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZN DoE) granted the permission to conduct the study in schools. The researcher ensured to avoid any form of harm to the co-researchers, such as physical damage, victimisation or the release of information that is taken out of context or misinterpreted. The co-researchers' identities would not be revealed in any publication and pseudonyms were used (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2011:6). First, they were given information on the study, after which they were requested to officiate their willingness to take part in the study voluntarily by signing a consent form. It was explained to them that they have the right to withdraw from participating at any stage of the study, should they need to do so. They were informed of the amendments to and during the research process (Bibby, 1997:12).

## 1.11 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

**Chapter 1: Overview of the study.** The background, detailing the rationale behind the study, is provided, which gives rise to the aims and objectives. A summation of the theoretical framework (social constructionism in this case), ethical consideration, the research design and methodology (PAR) and the way in which CDA was used to analyse the data are presented.

**Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and review of related literature.** The theoretical framework (social constructionism), the role of the researcher, the relationship with the co-researchers and its relevance to the study are outlined. Operational concepts are explained. A review of the literature, related to a professional development framework that has already been conducted in line with the five objectives, is discussed.

**Chapter 3: Research design and methodology.** The techniques, research tools and instruments for generating and analysing the data (PAR and CDA) are explored.

**Chapter 4: Analysis and interpretation of data, presentation and discussion of findings.** The analysis of the generated data, in line with the five objectives, are explored.

**Chapter 5: Synthesis of findings.** The findings, recommendations and limitations of the study are presented. A professional development framework to empower the SMT in financial management is detailed.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the focus is on the theoretical framework steering this study, which is social constructionism. The terms “social constructionism” and “constructionism” are used interchangeably. The discussion of social constructionism focuses on its essence, origins and development, tenets, features and principles. The relevance of the theory in designing a framework to empower school management teams (SMTs) in financial management is discussed as well. Operational concepts are defined from the best literature, encyclopaedias, dictionaries and the researcher’s personal understanding of the terms. Furthermore, in this chapter, the related literature, associated with the professional development of SMT in financial management, is reviewed and arranged according to the objectives of the study.

#### 2.2 ORIGINS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

##### 2.2.1 Historical origin

Social constructionism originated many years ago from the joint rationale of a number of North American, British and continental writers Mead, Marx, Max, Schutz and Durheim; therefore, it cannot be traced to a single source (Burr, 2006:9). This theory symbolises a perception about the art of learning and how human beings come to learn more effectively by constructing their own framework and reflect on it by means of debugging and sharing (Kynigos, 2015:305). On a different note, some scholars believe that constructionism emerged earlier and is associated with sociologists, such as Mead in 1934, who founded symbolic interactions that reflect the view that humans create their own and one another’s connection through everyday interaction (Burr, 2015:7). Furthermore, social constructionism is traced to many intellectual traditions, such as sociology, social philosophy and sociology of knowledge, and has been associated with the post-modern era in qualitative research (Cunliffe, 2008:124). Many of its fundamental assumptions have been alive and well in sociology for some time. However, the major contribution was taken from Berger and Luckman’s book, *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the*

*sociology of knowledge* (1966), where they argued that human beings create and sustain all experiences through social interactions. This concept emerged when their book was published (Burr, 2015:7). Society exists as both objective and subjective reality and is understood as a logical expression of views, ideas and opinions through a process of externalisation, objectivation and internalisation. This means that knowledge is humanly produced in an ongoing activity (externalisation); yet, it is objective as it affects people's lives on an ongoing basis and they have to learn about it (objectivation). People interpret the meanings of events and other people's subjectivities, as well as the identity of others, and, therefore, their own place and identity (internalisation) (Cunliffe, 2008:125).

In social philosophy, Schutz proposed, in 1960, that our personal experiences are influenced by socialisation and the use of language that is taken for granted. In 1973, Schutz and Luckman explored the implication of the position of knowledge (Cunliffe, 2008:125). Other authors who have made constructionist remarks in their writings are Vico and Kant (Owen, 1995:2). It can be traced in part to an interpretivist approach to thinking; however, while they share common philosophical roots, social constructionism is different from interpretivism in that it abides by the belief that language does not reflect reality, but rather creates it (Andrews, 2012:40).

The roots of social constructionism are found in existential-phenomenological psychology, social history, hermeneutics and social history, but have recently been found to be related to postmodernism (Watzlawick, 1984:15). Constructionism is also associated, in terms of its origin, with the field of psychology from Gergen's paper (1973). The concept of social constructionism was detailed in a book, entitled *Social Psychology as History*, in which it was argued that all knowledge is historically and culturally bound and that there is no point in looking for a once-and-for-all description of society since social life is ever changing (Gergen, 2001:23). It was introduced in the late 1960s and has since been by far the most utilised orientation (Gergen, 2001:16).

In light of the above, the researcher noted that social constructionism is relevant to the study since its aim is to empower and design the framework that assist SMTs

with financial management. Social constructionism has many different angles, such as identity creation, knowledge acquiring, sharing, social interaction and social life, that society needs to acknowledge and enhance. In the following section, the focus is on the conceptualisation of social constructionism and its ideology.

## **2.2.2 Evolution of social constructionism in social sciences**

### **2.2.2.1 *Constructionism versus constructivism***

The term “construction” has a static and dynamic aspect. The static aspect indicates a reality as it is shown and given (Eberle, 1992:498). The study takes a dynamic state which refers to the process of reality construction as it emphasises the complexity of how knowledge is created in social interactions. It is believed that knowledge and meaning are not stable; they are co-constructed in interaction with others, and modified and shifted (Marecek, Crawford & Popp, 2004:203). This means that to understand what is taking place in the management of school funds, the researcher has to listen to the views of the co-researchers as the people who are directly involved. This study recognises the importance of intersubjective connection. It thus opposes the objectivity of the researcher and the co-researchers. It acknowledges that the co-researchers are influenced by the people around them (Owen, 1995:2).

The main characteristic of constructionism is that social knowledge of reality is socially stabilised by social structures and therefore is not the responsibility of a single individual. Social constructs are socially derived and intersubjectively shared and enacted. Social constructionism has also been associated with the hermeneutics tradition, where there is no knowledge beyond an individual’s subjective and intersubjective interpretations of reality (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009:30).

Constructionists strongly oppose the subjective constructivism that Watzlawick (1984) and others defend (Eberle, 1992:498). Constructivism is historically and socially based. However, it proposes that each person constructs his or her world of experience through the reasoning process based on experience of his or her surroundings (Young & Collin, 2004:374). It assumes that individuals or discourse



communities have a relatively stable form and existence, while social constructionism takes a view that the words of a language carry different meanings at different times. Constructivism focuses on that the individual's mind represents a mirror of reality. However, constructionism is focused more on relations and sustains the individual's role in social construction of realities (Garfinkel, 1967:326). The study used social Constructionism as it aims to emphasize information sharing, discussions, and joint understanding of the professional development framework to empower SMT in financial management (Stam, 1998:199).

#### ***2.2.2.2 Social constructionism as a radical perspective***

Social constructionism holds strong convictions that emancipation from traditional forms should be the guiding ideal, that social life should be understood largely in terms of the social construction of knowledge and that learning emphasises the development of critical discourses. The use of social constructionism in the study aims to develop more specific social visions consistent with the value of emancipation to determine what organisational changes must be made to schools and to identify the financial development needs of SMTs (Newmann, 2012:1). Social constructionism became a fundamental direction which helped to reveal reality and pave the way for new interpretations. Furthermore, social constructionism as a radical perspective focuses on individual knowledge in relation to his or her environment. Co-researchers construct, modify and interpret the framework in relation to their practical experiences (Luckmann, 1973:144). Berger and Luckmann were the supporters of a practical sociology of knowledge which investigates the ways in which reality is socially constructed. The role of the researcher is to outline social actions and the findings as they are, and not to state their own political stances of how things should be (Berger & Luckman, 1966:15). In practice, an empirical description uses practical examples that are embedded in different systems. Therefore, Schutz revealed in analysis that to see existing constructions on different premises may enlighten how they are constructed (Schutz, 1962:12).

#### ***2.2.2.3 Postmodernism versus social constructionism***

Social constructionism has been associated with postmodernism, which may be true, although one should highlight that their roots and basic tenets are different

(Alvesson, 2009:15). Postmodernism has its centre of gravity in architecture, art and cultural and literature studies. It symbolises the inquiry and denunciation of modernism, but symbolises the assumptions behind the intellectual and artistic life that has been in existence since the period of enlightenment. The Enlightenment Age searched to find more understanding of the true scenery of reality by applying reason and rationality (Albrow, 1987:167-168). During the mediaeval period, the church was the sole focus for matters of truth and they were responsible for discovering the truth and making decisions about matters of morality. Science was born in the Enlightenment Age, when an individual person became the focal point in the subject of morality and truth. The people were responsible for judgements about appropriate morals for humans to live by (Hamilton, 1992:23). Postmodernism rejects that there is an ultimate truth and that the world is as humans see it; rather, it is the result of many underlying factors and unseen constitutions. It is also against the viewpoint that the world can only be defined in terms of divine command theories, but rather calls attention to the existence of a multiple and diversity of situation-dependent ways of life. People no longer reside in the humankind that is defined by only one system of knowledge but in a variety of available kinds of knowledge (Becvar & Becvar, 2012:9). It contests the belief that change is a matter of finding and altering the ideal meaning of social life by the application of imposing theories insists that they reflect reality and that reality must only fit their assumptions. These ideas have been absorbed by constructionism in the social sciences; therefore, it is a movement that has risen from a variety of disciplines (Foucault, 2007:202).

### **2.3 JUSTIFICATION OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF CHOICE**

Social constructionism is of the view that knowledge is constructed through communication between individuals within the society. It argues that identity originates from the social realm and not from within people (Schwandt, 2000:191). Social constructionism is a theoretical framework that affirms that knowledge is not to be regarded as the conviction of reality of other people's perceptions, but instead it is a common understanding constructed by a group of individuals through socialisation (Baltag, Moss & Solecki, 2016:790). Constructionists view knowledge

and truth as constructed through language and are not discovered; however, they both match up with something that is in existence. It focuses on a shared understanding, rather than an individual perception (Yu & Kwan, 2013:26). There is a connection between individuals' meanings and the meaning of others (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008:394).

The study adopts a relativist position in that it aims to search and discover facts by accepting that there are other ways that exist that may be used to empower SMTs in financial management. The findings of this research are not definite, but are believed to be one of many discourses that exist in research. Social constructionism generates debates that lead to change. The aim is to produce knowledge that may be useful in bringing transformative change; however, nothing can ever be known as definite (Crane, McWilliams, Matten, Moon & Siegel 2008:142). Social constructionism is used as a point of departure for discussions and debate (Alvesson, 2009:16) in this study. The research outcomes are useful in that they establish financial competencies and consistency of financial skills, and the findings benefit the schools in the province (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015:279).

DiSessa and Cobb (2004:82) suggest that constructionism, similar to "learning by designing", belongs to a category that is called "framework for action". Therefore, this paradigm is relevant to this subject as the aim is not only to study but to build a framework, implement it, reflect on it, improve it and share it (Floridi, 2011:302;, 2015:306). A good way of apprehending understanding and knowledge is to be directly active in circumstances, rather than watching and observing them from a distance; that is, connectedness is a powerful way of learning, rather than separation. The ultimate goal of this study is not only to explore the challenges faced by SMTs in managing school funds but to be able to develop a useful framework that empowers SMTs to master financial management. The study encourages the co-researchers to be relational; therefore, they are actively involved in exploring and designing the framework (Eden & Ackermann, 2013:8-9).

Social constructionism supports the fact that change is a result of human actions, and when people work collectively as a team, they can be a driving force for change. Social constructionism assists humans to adapt easily and deal with transformation

(Crane, McWilliams, Matten, Moon & Siegel 2008:144). SMT members are taking part in designing the framework through discussions and sharing their experiences. From the constructionists' viewpoint, human development is characterised by a joint construction of a three-part analytic unit, consisting of constructing a person, a structured environment and purposive social others. Both the constructing person and purposive social others are capable of changing their goal orientations (Valsiner, 1996:65).

In constructing a professional development framework to empower the SMT, the study uses principles and guidelines of social constructionism. There are two approaches, in different directions, to social constructionism: the viewpoint of subjective or intersubjective realities and an objectified realism. This study will take the subjective or intersubjective approach to reality. Intersubjectivity lays the groundwork for human existence and interdependent relationships between the subjectivities involved in the shared activity (Valsiner, 1996:75). The co-researchers discuss and reach an agreement on the professional development framework within the social scenery. They each have their opinions based on their perceptions, meanings and experiences of financial management in their schools. Human beings' understanding of things comes into sight as they continue to interrelate with others. There is no "I" without "you"; every person is because of others, whether they are around or not. The focal point of discussion is not the realism of financial management because there is no permanent or unanimously shared understanding, but it depends on how the meaning is shaped among people (Weick, 2015:190). From this approach, both the researcher and the co-researchers learn by sharing their experiences through conversations in order to have understanding and insights (Cunliffe, 2008:127).

Constructionists use the concept of positioning as a procedure through which human beings and their identities as humans come to be shaped by socially and culturally available dialogues. However, they also see persons as having a choice within those discourses. They understand the fundamental role of language and communication and bear by the belief that language does not reflect reality, but rather constructs it (Andrews, 2012:41). Berger and Luckman (1966:39) uphold that discussion is the

most important means to preserve, modify and reconstruct subjective reality by means of internalised social objectivations and typifications, stabilised by routines, institutionalisations and legitimations.

Discussions with co-researchers are held in a language that is understood by all since the uses and effects of language are of central importance. In this study, SMTs are being thought of as beings capable of changing themselves. Their views are accepted and respected because when a study is located within this theory, it is not easy to say that some information or ways of thinking of others are correct or incorrect (Eberle, 1992:498-499). The perspective of social constructionism is that a human being's life exists like it does because of social discourse and because it occurs among personal influences. It, however, does not deny the power of inborn inheritance, but focuses on social influences and that all knowledge is linked to our social constructions (Alvesson, 2009:16; Owen, 1995:1). The researcher and the co-researchers project their ideas and feelings as a means to learning. Communicating one's ideas makes them substantial and sharable, which results in shaping our thinking and helps us communicate with others through our expressions (Eden & Ackerman, 2013:2). This is done through language; it predates accounting concepts and provides the meaning of financial concepts and principles (Crane, McWilliams, Matten, Moon & Siegel 2008:141).

## **2.4 PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM**

Social constructionism is a very broad and multifaceted perspective; therefore, the following objectives are important to conduct this study through its lenses (Gergen, 2009:23). These principles are used to argue for a strategy that aims at enhancing the SMT in financial management.

### **2.4.1 Knowledge priority**

Empowering the SMT with school financial management knowledge is important therefore should be prioritised. It is taken for granted that humans know the world around them and that knowledge lives in their mentality (Warmoth, 2000:1). Social constructionism cautions the study against assumptions about how other financially

related matters appear to be and about taking experiences at face value. It suggests that the usual understanding of the world may be misleading at times (Gergen, 2001:124). The formation of habits and routines happens continually in human beings. They develop these habits and a certain way of acting can be repeated in similar situations. This brings the argument to the matter of institutionalisation, which is a reciprocal typification of habitualised actions (Allen, 2005:36). Knowledge and the world are continuously constructed and reconstructed through individual life experiences. Social constructionism affirms that each person is an active agent in creating his or her own worlds of meaning (Witkin, 2011:14).

#### **2.4.2 Historically and culturally inclusive**

The manner in which financial management concepts are understood is in relation to history and culture; therefore, it should not be assumed that one culture is necessarily better than another and that it is naturally given. Conversations or dialogues, which are historically formed, function as repositioning the initial starting point and the definitions used in financial management, as they give meaning to their prior knowledge (Charmaz, 2014:330). The study provides the opportunity for the co-researchers to strive to organise and make sense of their experiences in relation to the professional development framework that exists to empower SMT in financial management (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2014:89).

#### **2.4.3 Sustainable social relations**

SMTs construct knowledge of financial management between themselves through meetings and discussions, and the framework is the end result of their information-sharing interactions. However, the collaboration developed during these interactions should be able to enhance sustainable working relationships among the SMTs and SGBs. Knowledge is seen as something that people do together, rather than something that a person has or does on his or her own (Marecek et al., 2004:216). The common understanding of financial concepts and accounting principles is constructed by the researcher and the co-researchers as the product of a social process. It promotes wisdom that is accepted and respected by others in the world they live (Andrews, 2012:39). SMTs need to maintain good communication with others in order to acquire more knowledge on financial matters.

#### **2.4.4 Collaborations of social action**

Everyday life experiences build up into a collection of knowledge, which is gained through the process of socialisation. Different constructions bring out different kinds of actions from human beings. Papert (1991) believes that being in situations and connecting with the environment, rather than looking at them from a distance, are a powerful means of gaining understanding and learning (Sawyer, 2005:1). SMTs are engaged in learning from their personal experiences, gaining understanding from cases of the financial mismanagement of other schools. The ultimate goal is to build a framework together that will help them master financial management better (Eden & Ackerman, 2013:9).

#### **2.4.5 Language manifestation**

Reality refers to things that are constructed through language because it is at the core of knowledge construction (Marecek et al., 2004:216). It brings people into being and gives them a way in which they structure their experiences of the world; the concepts they use, are made possible by language. The knowledge that is constructed by the co-researchers and a researcher is the result of building their social encounters and relationships. Using language understood by all co-researchers is, therefore, important in gaining knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:56).

### **2.5 FEATURES OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM**

The tenets mentioned below contain a number of features which make social constructionism different from traditional psychology and social psychology.

#### **2.5.1 Non-essentialism**

A feature that makes social constructionism different from other disciplines is the belief that no essences exist within things or people that make them what they are. Social constructionism neither states that one's cultural background has an influence on one's mind-set nor does it state that one's situation is a product of environmental rather than natural factors (Allen, 2005:38). Therefore, the lack of financial skills in SMTs does not define them to be inadequate managers.

### **2.5.2 Non-realism**

It might be that the understanding of financial management principles is constructed by each individual, but social constructionism does not agree with the fact that knowledge is a direct perception of reality. There can be no such thing as objective truth; constructionists derive their knowledge from looking at the world from a certain perspective (Craib, 2015:19). Social constructionism views the reasoning and what is regarded to be true and based on facts as the main beliefs in discourses that are realistic only for certain people in certain situations (Hjørland, 2004:17).

### **2.5.3 Historical and cultural specificity of knowledge**

If all types of knowledge are historically and culturally bound, it will even include the knowledge created by other social sciences. Therefore, explanations and theories of psychology cannot be taken as a definite description of the human nature. This view that knowledge is historically and culturally specific is the work of the French philosopher, Foucault (Burr, 2015:5). Cultural beliefs and action systems all provide reasons for and an understanding and explanations of the world or what is appropriate, normal, desirable and expected of the SMT in managing the school finances (Owen, 1995:3).

### **2.5.4 Language as a precondition**

The way in which financial management is understood does not come from the objective reality, but from other people. The financial concepts and principles, as well as the acts governing the management of school funds used in the system, already exist. They are developed by people through language (Allen, 2005:36). Language is a necessary precondition for thought and important for gaining financial knowledge. Therefore, during discussions co-researchers will communicate through the language that they all understand.

### **2.5.5 Language as a social action**

When SMTs interact through discussion meetings, they produce knowledge. Constructionists see language as constitutive of the creation of selves and the conception of meaning. Humans make and manage social reality together through



the use of language (Talja, Tuominen & Savolainen, 2005:89). Foucault (2007:202) also stresses the constructive power of language and the important role it plays in expressing thoughts, beliefs and emotions. When co-researchers interact, the framework for their development in financial management will be constructed. The use of language is, therefore, regarded as an action which is regarded by constructionists as a “performative” role of language as their focus of interest (Van Niekerk, 2005:63).

### **2.5.6 Interaction and social practice**

In traditional mind-sets, the explanation of social phenomena is explored inside the person by hypothesising the existence of cognitions, motivations and attitudes. They believe they are the reason for what individuals do and say. Sociology is of the view that the behaviour of an individual is influenced by social structures (Koltko-Rivera, 2004:3). Constructionists oppose both these positions; they are of the view that the explanations behind the behaviour of people are neither found in the personal psyche nor in social structures, but in the interactive course of action that takes place among humans. Some categories of knowledge exist because people strategically agreed to act as if they are real (Pinker, 2002:202).

### **2.5.7 A process and context dependency**

Constructionists highlight development more than structure. The aim of the study is moved from questions regarding the society towards considering how the forms of knowledge are achieved by people through social interaction. The social constructionism approach deals best with what people create as a collective and how this construction process develops (Charmaz, 2014:397). The interest is in how individuals engage in a conversation with other peoples’ artefacts and their feelings and how they influence self-directed learning, thus facilitating the construction of new knowledge for human development (Eden & Ackerman, 2013:1). The knowledge remains grounded in contexts and is essentially “situated”; thus, it should not be separated from the circumstances in which it is constructed and actualised (Floridi, 2011:300-301).

## **2.6 EPISTEMOLOGY OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM**

Epistemological assumption is concerned with the relationship and the active connection between the researcher and the co-researchers. Knowledge is historically and socially bound in a complex, cultural context; therefore, respect and trust building are critical (Mertens, 2007:215-216). Social constructionism focuses on the power of knowledge convinced that people's lives and beliefs are defined and influenced by their cultural identification (Dickerson & Zimmerman, 1996:80). The epistemology of social constructionism questions how people know and understand the world. It seeks to know the connection between the researcher and the co-researchers. Epistemology entails a principled, moral position towards the world and the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:427). Discourse analytic studies and epistemological constructionism seem to avoid going further than language (Edwards, 1997:204). It is believed that all knowledge develops gradually in communities between people through ongoing conversation with others, which leads to individuals developing identity and an internal influence (Charlotte, 1991:5). The researcher and the co-researchers learn from one another through engaging in discussions about financial management.

## **2.7 ONTOLOGY OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM**

The ontological assumption is concerned with the nature of reality, meaning how we understand that something is real. Most of the activities relating to school financial management are performed by the SMTs; therefore, they should be developed in order to have the knowledge and skills relevant to the management of school finances. There are various realisms that are created by societies; therefore, it is necessary to be clear and unambiguous about the financial values that define good governance (Mertens, 2007:216). The social constructionism perspective does not imply that 'anything goes', meaning the framework to empower SMTs in financial management does not exist out there as a ready-made set of theories and practices that are regarded as reality. It is constantly constructed and reconstructed by the scientific community. The study, therefore, emphasises that the SMT members needs to be trained in financial management with skills that they do not have (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009:29). Social constructionism rejects that there is an unbiased reality that can be known and takes a stand that a researcher's goal is to

understand the various social constructions of knowledge (Schwandt, 2000:197). It is evident in some cases that SMTs lack financial management skills; therefore, it is imperative that there is a professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management.

## **2.8 ROLE OF RESEARCHER AND CO-RESEARCHERS**

The social constructionist approach makes the assumption that the production of knowledge is always positioned and reality is multiple and constructed under certain conditions and a process that emerges from the interaction with the co-researchers. Social constructionism takes the researcher and the co-researcher's position as they are the constructors of knowledge, which is a product of the research process. Their words of language, when engaging in discussions, do not carry meaning that are stable, but are perspectives dependent on the argumentative nature of language use (Talja et al., 2005:90). Social constructionism assumes that researchers and co-researchers construct categories of data and aim to achieve simple explanations and generalisations devoid of context and an interpretive understanding of the studied phenomenon that counts for context (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008:402).

The researcher and the co-researchers are encouraged to be innovative and develop new understandings that promote a better way of managing finances in schools. The researcher engage in dialogue with the co-researchers and thus actively contribute to the knowledge production, rather than studying what the co-researchers know about financial management and the experiences they have (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008:431). The researcher and the co-researchers scrutinise the research findings and take decisions and directions by thinking about what they are doing, as well as how and why they are doing it. In this process, the researcher will be part of the process (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008:403). Furthermore, social constructionism acknowledges the equal engagement of the researcher and the co-researchers as co-creators of the framework (Van Niekerk, 2005:69).

When the co-researchers, with their subjectivity, communicate with one another, the actual form of intersubjectivity is constructed by transcending their experiences of financial management. Intersubjectivity is thus a metaprocess, a situation-redefining

process, which constantly leads to creating, maintaining and changing the persons' sense backgrounds of the dialogical activity (Valsiner, 1996:75-78). The construction of knowledge takes place within interpersonally, differentially meaningful environments by sharing ideas. Sharing ideas helps the researcher and the co-researchers to jointly construct ways to overcome the challenges of financial management in schools. The influence, based on personal feelings in the consciousness of the co-researchers, commonly shapes the processes of socialisation, sustained and transformed in our relations (Eberle, 1992:493).

## **2.9 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS**

In this section, the operational concepts that inform the study are defined from four perspectives, namely literature, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and personal definition. These terms are professional development, framework, school management team and financial management.

### **2.9.1 Professional development**

Professional development refers to a number of elements of educational expertise related to an individual's work. Educators, engineers, human resource practitioners, lecturers, doctors, accountants and a wide variety of professions and businesses participate in professional development to learn new techniques and apply them to improve their productivity (Mizell, 2010:5). It is the process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017: para. 1). The term "professional development" is used referring to a wide range of specialised training, formal learning or higher specialised learning, planned to help the educators to improve their qualified knowledge, competence, skill and effectiveness. Professional development activities are financed by the district, school or government budgets and programmes, or supported by sponsors. They vary from day workshops and two-week workshops to one-or-more-year programmes (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014: para. 1). In this study, professional development refers to all the activities and programmes undertaken formally and informally to enhance professional career growth. It also refers to all the systems put in place to strengthen the performance levels of SMTs in financial management. In

some instances, it is referred to as workshops and capacity-building activities or programmes.

### **2.9.2 Framework**

The framework provides a guide for the professional development of the SMT and guides the other role players, such as district officials, networks in higher education and training, curriculum developers, policymakers and the council of student representatives, to be able to plan, develop and be engaged in professional development activities (National Forum, 2016:2). The framework refers to a plan of ideas or facts that provides support for something; it defines the knowledge, ability and attitudes correlated to expertise levels. It classifies the levels of training, namely information and understanding, principles and commitments, and capability and competencies (Merriam-Webster's Learners Dictionary, 2006: para. 1). According to the Business Dictionary (2010), the framework is regarded as a broader outline or skeleton of items linked to one another to support a certain approach to a specific objective and serves as a lead that can be adjusted as required by increasing or removing other items. It is a structure for supporting or enclosing something – a skeletal support used as the basis for something being constructed (Free Dictionary, 2017: para. 1).

In relation to this study, the framework refers to a logical structure that is established into groupings and categories as a policy document that makes it easier for SMTs and departmental officials to understand and plan their professional development in financial management. It indicates and outlines the kind of training programmes needed in order to empower SMTs in financial management. The professional development framework refers to the activities, knowledge, skills and behaviour required for the development of SMTs in financial management. It provides a filter through which the teacher development directorate can design their workshops and programmes with the goal of preparing knowledgeable and effective financial governance and evaluating the success of those efforts.

### **2.9.3 School management team**

The SMT consists of the principal, the deputy principal and the departmental head or heads. It is the highest, executive decision-making structure in the school. The nomenclature “school management team” is somewhat misleading in that it suggests that this body only performs a management function, and yet it is expected to play an equal leadership role (Chikoko & Khanare, 2012:25). An SMT is a group of managers, educators and other senior staff members who take important decisions in a school and who guide and organise school development initiatives (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014: para. 1). This study refers to SMT members as all persons occupying supervisory posts and who are engaged in the management activities of the school, such as the principal, deputy principal and departmental heads. In schools with principals only, SMT members may be any other senior staff members who are involved in the management of the school.

### **2.9.4 Financial management**

Financial management is about analysing financial positions, taking decisions, setting objectives, planning to achieve the goals and providing the successful coordination of financial control to ensure the plans progress in order to attain the set goals (Brigham & Houston, 2012:10). It also pertains to the fruitful management of the school’s finances, such as accomplishing the objectives of the organisation. It is the specialised responsibility that is directly involved with the SMT. Different experts in the field have different definitions of financial management. It includes how to allocate the acquired capital, for instance, budgeting. This includes long-term budgeting and short-term resources, such as current assets, for example, the cash float, cash in the bank, loans and liabilities (Investopedia, 2012: para. 1).

Financial management deals with how to plan, organise, direct and control the financial activities, such as the procurement of goods and services and the utilisation of the cash of the organisation (Business Dictionary, 2010: para. 1). It has to do with the application of general financial management standards to the school’s financial resources (Management Study Guide, 2008: para. 1). In relation to this study, financial management refers to the responsibilities relating to the financial aspects of schools, with the aim of achieving quality education, carried out by the SGBs and

SMTs. It forms an important part of resource management, recording, preparing and making financial reports and planning to ensure that expenditure is directed towards achieving good value for money.

## **2.10 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.10.1 Rationale for the study**

According to the South African Schools Act, 1984 (Act No. 84 of 1996, Section 21), schools are responsible for controlling the funds allocated to them as they are disbursed directly to them (Republic of South Africa, 2006:24). The KZN DoE issued a School Funding Norms Policy Implementation Manual for Public Schools to be used as a parameter within which decisions and actions can be taken. It serves as a guide for SMTs to be able to standardise best practice in the financial management environment in a structured and integrated fashion. It stipulates that the minimum requirements are met to comply with the preferred best practice (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2010:4).

The financial function in this context is a responsibility of all the members of the school governing body (SGB), the SMT and staff who have a role in the functions that have a financial impact on the school. This financial framework and practical management templates and checklists further strengthen the SGBs and SMTs and came into effect on 1 January 2014 (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2010:6). SGBs have a significant responsibility for the management of school finances; however, it is a common practice for them to delegate the daily operational financial management activities of the school to the SMT (Clarke, 2008:288). SGBs are also entrusted with the duty and power to prepare and adopt school finance policies. However, in the study by Dladla (2014:70), it shows that SGBs played a very minimal role in policy formulation. This task was mainly left to the SMT; hence, the reason for the need of the SMTs to be capacitated in financial skills. As a result, one of the key areas, which constitute the core purpose of the SMTs, is managing school finances (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2015:19). However, SMT members are appointed on the basis of teaching experience and academic and professional development, but a working knowledge of and academic qualifications in financial management are not considered a prerequisite for appointments

(Motsamai et al., 2011:106). Therefore, insufficient knowledge, insufficient skills and less expertise in managing school finances lead to the mismanagement of funds, which results in the scarcity of crucial resources in schools as the funds are not enough to buy such resources (Manamela, 2014: 69).

In light of the above, it is evident that the SMT should be developed in order to have the capacity and expertise relating to the administration of school finances (Mestry, 2004:126). However, the training needs of SMTs are diverse as some challenges are related to generic processes or to the operation of specific systems; therefore, it is necessary to develop a framework to ensure that they are addressed in a coherent and effective manner (Institute for Public Finance and Auditing (IPFA), 2001:6). The need for this study is to enhance the professional development framework in order to empower SMTs to execute their financial management duties effectively and efficiently.

## **2.10.2 Challenges relating to financial management in schools**

### ***2.10.2.1 Planning and budgeting school funds***

Planning and budgeting in some schools are poorly compiled or even non-existent (Swartz, 2009:2). This lack of understanding the budgeting process leads to a failure to prioritise expenditure as the school income is limited (Berk, Demarzo & Harford, 2008:69). In Kenya, financial planning and budgeting is an overall process of tracking the income and expenses of the school; however, studies have found that the figures included in the budget did not match up with the needs of the school (Kaguri et al., 2014:60). It was, therefore, rated as a high-level challenge to the SMTs due to incompetence in financial management. Inadequate financial planning made it difficult for the SMT to run the school effectively as some exceeded the allocated funds (Atieno & Simatwa, 2012:398). Some schools still do not understand the features and functions of a school budget clearly; how to implement and control remains a challenge (Clarke 2008:286; Thenga, 2012:87). In South Africa, it is found that preparing annual budgets is the biggest challenge as it was clear that expenditure in the most schools was not according to the actual budget (Xaba & Ngubane, 2010:148).



Schools are responsible for their own financial planning in ways to meet their needs; therefore, the school's prioritised educational objectives should be reflected in the budget. It forms part of the long-term planning for the allocation of funds that guides the SMT to study the problems relating to the timely implementation, as it generates a sense of caution and care among SMTs and SGBs (Needles, Powers & Crosson, 2013:958). Schools draft budgets based on the norms and standards allocated by the government and are supplemented by school fees and other fundraising endeavours. However, it seems as if understanding the reason behind drafting a budget is a challenge. It is done for compliance, rather than planning and accountability. SMTs do not seem to understand that school budgeting is an essential financial management tool and is used to set goals and measure development towards achieving those goals.

### ***2.10.2.2 Accounting principles***

In most schools, cash payments are generally made in the non-existence of a payment authorising system. The supporting documents and procurement systems were questionable (Swartz, 2009:2). These accounting principles are not correctly applied due to a lack of knowledge. Professional development programmes provide a foundation for financial literacy that enhances the ability to make financial decisions in schools (Rosacker, Ragothaman & Gillispie, 2009:391). One of the challenges in Nigeria is that some SMTs lack knowledge and a good understanding of accounting principles and would, therefore, find it difficult to appreciate the financial statements presented to them (Garuba & Donwa, 2011:317). Some of the weaknesses that were found in some schools are non-compliance with the provisions of the compilation of monthly financial and performance reports, as required by the Provincial Financial Management Prescripts 2009/2011, and the submission of incomplete financial statements (Rangongo, Mohlakwana & Beckmann 2016:3).

Other weaknesses with regard to accounting principles are insufficient financial record-keeping, inadequate cash management and recording, and expenditure without proper approval by the relevant parties (Rangongo, Mohlakwana & Beckmann, 2016:3). In a study by Mestry and Naidoo (2009:115), most of the school

managers lacked the relevant financial knowledge, skills and competencies required to apply successful accounting principles correctly, and consequently many schools experienced financial complexity and made wrong decisions.

International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), previously known as Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), are commonly used to set accounting principles, procedures and standards that guide and ensure uniformity in record-keeping (Shortridge & Myring, 2004:34). This is also evident in a study conducted in Gauteng where SMTs consistently identify accounting procedures and principles as the areas where they have the most development needs (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2009:7). As accounting principles are the language of financial transactions that have taken place at a school, it means that the accounting reports prepared in one school should be commonly used and understood by the users of another school. The materiality principle ensures that the financial officer in a school includes sufficient, relevant and explicit information in its reports, as required by the stakeholders to enable them to make knowledgeable judgements and decisions and take knowledgeable action (Cooper & Owen, 2007:650).

### ***2.10.2.3 Reporting and accountability***

There are serious concerns in the United States of America and Europe about the poor quality of financial reporting, inadequate audits and poor governance (Garuba & Donwa, 2011:317). Schools follow specific rules and formats of presenting their annual reports, which record the financial performance over a financial year. However, in some cases, the information does not faithfully represent underlying transactions and events (Kaguri et al., 2014:60). Accountability requires conformity to the rules and regulations, record-keeping, reporting, auditing and supervision as essential financial management practices. The South African government provided a range of financial policies, accepted norms and systems necessary to encourage and maintain a high standard of professional ethics in managing school funds (Rangongo et al., 2016:2).

According to a study conducted in South Africa, it was found that in some schools, there were no invitations to or minutes of the parents' meetings as evidence that

audited financial statements were presented to them (Manamela, 2014:79). The minister of Basic Education mentioned inadequate accountability methods in different spheres of the education system. The minister further alluded to poor planning, monitoring and evaluation systems, which complicate the achievement of the key mandate of the department (Serfontein & De Waal, 2015:3). Reporting on the school funds is publicising the information relating to the financial standing of the school to all the role players that would use it to improve their understanding and decision making in school affairs. SMTs, in their position of power, are held accountable to the state and to the communities they serve. Their responsibility is not limited to only compiling financial statements but they should also submit the statements to a registered accountant who will check whether the statements are in order. The audit outcomes have not been reflective of the system that is improving the predetermined objectives.

#### ***2.10.2.4 Roles and responsibilities of school management teams and school governing bodies in financial management***

The implementation of sound corporate governance and financial management principles is hindered by responsibilities that are not clearly defined as to who is responsible for the management of school funds (Swartz, 2009:6). The SGB has a crucial responsibility for the financial management of schools; however, they delegate daily operational financial management functions to the SMT, which, in turn, separates the ownership and control, thereby creating the possibility of management entrenchment. There is a lack of coherence among SMTs and SGBs on the dissemination of financial information (Berk et al., 2008:69).

The responsibilities of the SGB, the finance committee and the SMT, as far as taking financial decisions, are not clearly defined, and the limits of the delegated authority are not established. Therefore, there are ambiguities about activities that may actually be considered as governance and management, which often lead to difficulty in sketching the boundaries of SMT financial activities (Salahuddin, 2012:51). The role of the SMT and the SGB in managing the school's finances is complicated; sometimes their functions go beyond the usual, which usually gives rise to misunderstandings and tension between them. In some schools, the SMTs and

the SGBs do not work collaboratively (Mestry, 2004:127). The SGB, along with the SMT, has widespread financial responsibilities, which include the school budget, managing the allocated funds from the provincial and national treasurer and deciding on the amount of the school fees. The legislation is not clear on the daily functioning of the governing body which sometimes causes tension between the SMT and SGB. The sound management of school funds is hindered by a lack of defined knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of SGBs and SMTs.

#### ***2.10.2.5 Policies and legislation***

Some schools are lacking in managing their finances efficiently and effectively because they have not developed and implemented a school financial policy within the stipulations of legislation, policies and directives from the national and provincial Departments of Education. The school financial policy defines a shared understanding of how the school will develop its financial practices and administer its resources to provide the best value for money to the stakeholders and beneficiaries (McKinney, 2015:5). This assists with the financial control and monitoring that must be adopted by all the stakeholders (Mestry & Bisschoff, 2009:88). Some parents believe that school decisions are taken without consultations with them, which may be due to inadequate knowledge about the applicable rules and their compliance (Ambassa, Ngwe & Dossing, 2011:7).

One study revealed that among the weaknesses that contribute to financial mismanagement is the lack of information and understanding of rules and regulations guiding some key transactions in schools (Rangongo et al., 2016:3). Many of the problems related to the management of finances are linked to a general lack of knowledge by SMTs about the laws and policies that are supposed to govern the schools (Ambassa et al., 2011:8). In South Africa, most schools have a school policy on paper as a matter of compliance, but there is no evidence that the policy has been implemented; they are following procedures incorrectly simply because of the difficulty of interpreting what law and policy mean in relation to school governance (Xaba & Ngubane, 2010:149). Effective school financial policies are absent, and if present, they are not implemented (Mestry, 2006:33). Rule-bending practices that are reported are fraudulent cheques, making unacceptable decisions

because of vested interests and not communicating effectively with the stakeholders (Steyn, 2011:56). Inadequate knowledge and the poor interpretation of financial policies and legislation are common shortcomings in managing school finances.

### **2.10.3 Possible solutions to the implementation of professional development frameworks to empower school management teams in financial management**

The following are the possible solutions to the implementation of professional development frameworks according to the literature reviewed.

#### ***2.10.3.1 Induction of school management teams on planning and budgeting***

The induction process for SMTs is vital to the growth, development and ultimate success of the financial management of schools (Wright, Siegrist, Pate, Monetti & Raiford, 2009:1). Developing a systematic process for inducting SMTs into their new leadership role is, therefore, an activity that human resource departments should take as a priority. They should take advantage of professional organisations who offer periodic conferences and workshops for beginning SMTs, where they can be inducted into financial planning aspects (Wright et al., 2009:2). The aim of these induction workshops is to enable the transition of the SMTs to their new role, empowering them with the features of a budget and emphasising the importance of adhering to the budget (McCormick & Faller, 2012:3).

In Kenya, the Kenya Education Management Institute focuses on newly appointed SMTs and orientates them to administrative work, including drafting a budget and its features. Induction includes an introduction to the school ethos, financial policies and procedure, which is usually conducted by more experienced SMTs (Atieno & Simatwa, 2012:400). Induction programmes are fundamental in preparing and equipping the newly appointed SMT members with financial skills (Pont et al., 2008:108). Orientation programmes should lay a foundation for the broader induction of SMTs by providing all the information on school policies and procedures in a format appropriate to the needs and experiences of participating SMTs (Department of Basic Education, 2015:5). There is a need to induct newly appointed SMTs by

district officials in order to acquaint them with financial planning and drafting the budget and to become aware of the advantages and challenges they are likely to encounter and how to address them.

### ***2.10.3.2 Continuous professional development***

The participants in a study done in Texas emphasised the importance of actively engaging in ongoing efforts to educate themselves and improve their knowledge of applying accounting principles correctly (Abshier, Harris & Hopson, 2011:8). Continuous professional development (CPD) is part of the learning process that occurs in everyday practice in schools and continues over a period as it emphasises lifelong learning and development (Steyn, 2011:217). Regular seminars should be facilitated by the DoE as part of the CPD of SMTs to improve their knowledge of GAAP (Kariuki, Majau, Mungiria & Nkonge, 2012:52). In Botswana, efforts to improve the knowledge of accounting principles were done through the Primary Schools' Management Development Programme by providing effective management training and support to SMTs. Short-term courses in school leadership presented by experts are continuously offered through school- and cluster-based workshops. Training by the Institute of Development Management, as well as SMT conferences, were some of the ways in which school leaders were supported in order to enhance their skills required for maintaining financial records (Tsayang, 2011:383-384). Continuous self-reflection by SMTs on their financial capacity could be adopted as a common practice. The results from such self-reflection could be used as a basis for cluster- and school-based practical in-service intervention leadership programmes (Tsayang, 2011:388).

Professional development activities should be ongoing for SMTs, and they should specifically focus on the key qualities of relationships, such as trust, defined roles and responsibilities, knowledge of policies, cooperation and empowerment (Dladla, 2014:97). The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011-2025 advocates the creation of the National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development and District Teacher Development Centres that can provide accredited and adequate pre-service training in financial management (The Presidency, 2011:2). One other initiative by the

University of Johannesburg and the Matthew Goniwe School of Governance and Leadership is the Advanced Certificate in Education course in educational leadership and management for principals and for those aspiring to become principals. This is a cluster-based practical two-year part-time course, which covers five key areas of management, of which one is managing finances and physical resources (Mestry & Singh, 2007:482). The education and training development practices (ETDP) and Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) play a significant role in investigating and identifying skills required in the sector and getting SMTs to enrol in courses to upgrade their qualifications (Mahanyana, 2003:128).

### ***2.10.3.3 Professional and ethical practices to reporting and accountability.***

The study of ethics can be a welcome and important addition to financial management programmes to empower SMTs to be able to recognise and appreciate the importance of accountability. A programme aimed at preparing SMTs to serve as managers in a school is considered complete with an inclusion of a course that is addressing professional ethics and the impact of ethical codes on the day-to-day financial management decision making (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016:4). SMTs can embark on the eight-week field missions in other provinces, where they work with partner schools from other provinces. They receive pro bono access to the knowledge and capability of highly skilled professionals; as a result, they get to work and learn in a setting that is fundamentally different from their schools and face different challenges. This provides them with an opportunity for personal growth and improvement on accountability mechanisms (Pless, Maak & Stahl, 2011:243). Kohlberg (1969) developed the cognitive moral reasoning and development theory. It had to do with how one comes to sensible conclusions and the reasoning behind that discernment. It emphasises that moral reasoning is as a result of higher ethical standards (Weeks, Loe, Chonko, Martinez & Wakefield, 2006:206).

It is important that SMTs should be equipped with management practices that are ethical and moral by the very nature of their work when deciding what is right and what is worthwhile. An ethics code and social justice play important roles in what happens in schools and emphasise the moral correctness of behaviours and actions (Ah-Teck & Hung, 2014:357). SMTs are morally accountable to all the stakeholders

in education; therefore, whatever decisions are taken on school finances should be reported to the stakeholders. The SMTs' influences are largely anchored in their moral virtues, such as honesty, integrity, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, responsibility and inclusion (Maile, 2002:329). Ethical management has to do with the character, integrity, ethical awareness and a shared direction of managers, which promotes team interests over personal interests. It should consider the rights and needs of others, show civility and include the management of accountability.

#### ***2.10.3.4 Formulation of professional learning communities***

In Australia, professional learning communities (PLCs) are established to provide educators and SMTs with a sense of personal and collective efficiency and responsibility and serve as a platform where they critically express their views and develop professionally (Dickerson, 2011:39). Within the PLCs, SMTs can participate in peer coaching or observing a colleague's financial management style and sharing information, thus encouraging collaboration (Barnes & Verwey, 2008:23). In Botswana, PLCs are referred to as "work improvement teams"; their aim is also to support one another to adapt to work units by sharing information that would lead to improving their work environment, efficiency, effectiveness, knowledge and skills (Tshukudu, 2009:45).

School is a hierarchical organisation, which is the basis for allocating and integrating roles. School financial management is a collective activity where every stakeholder is interlinked to one another in networks through the flow of information and the patterns of cooperation; therefore, through PLCs, SMTs and SGBs can learn to work together and share information (Günbayi, 2011:554). Clustering SMTs and SGBs through the formulation of PLCs should be introduced in order to share knowledge and have a mutual understanding of the roles they each play (Dladla, 2014:97). This will encourage networking with other schools that are successful in working together as teams (Abshier et al., 2011:7). PLCs promote collaborative or participative leadership whereby all the parties feel empowered by being treated as collaborators. When all the stakeholders feel empowered, they are most likely to show trust and mutual respect, while a sense of empowerment instils good interpersonal relations, enriched decision making and sharing of responsibilities (Tsayang, 2011:383).



Provincial and district officials should initiate strategies to improve work relationships within schools and play a leading function in developing SMTs (Dossing, Mokeki & Weideman, 2011:09). The responsibilities of the SGB and the SMT should be clearly outlined and the confines of delegated power should be established (Manamela, 2014:28). The school finance policy should provide a clear understanding of the roles of the SGB, the SMT and the finance officers (Limpopo DoE, 2009:24).

#### **2.10.3.5     *Policy and financial management guidelines***

This can be achieved by bringing in outside consultants or mentors to address and educate SMTs on developing a school policy in line with the legislation provided by the government (Abshier et al., 2011:7). The emphasis should be on moral and ethical leadership because it is evident that the quality of the authority exercised by the schools is dependent on the person who exercises it (Serfontein & De Waal, 2015:6). Their capabilities can be enhanced through well-defined guidelines and better financial management development activities (Dossing et al., 2011:09). SMTs should be provided with information on the official policies, rules and standards governing the functioning of the schools and ensure that they are familiar with these (Ambassa et al., 2011:08). The aim of the Public Finance Management Act (No. 1 of 1999) is to secure accountability, transparency and sound financial management in government institutions (Republic of South Africa, 1999:S.2). This act calls for the internal control of finances that is effective, with the support of an audit team and applicable cost-effective and fair procurement systems (Republic of South Africa, 1999:S.38(a)(i) & (iii)). Professional development programmes on financial guidelines can be made available and enhanced by using current information technology and communication (ICT) equipment and applications, such as interactive multimedia-based tutorials, computer-aided tools and online communication tools.

#### **2.10.4     Conditions conducive for the implementation of professional development frameworks**

##### **2.10.4.1     *Professional development programmes require adequate time***

SMTs are to be provided with the time to promote collaborative learning and professional development. When professional development has a longer duration, it helps SMTs to learn more about their practice, especially if it includes follow-up and feedback (Steyn, 2011:225). Professional development activities require significant time that is well organised, cautiously prearranged, purposefully directed and focused on the needs of the SMTs (Guskey & Yoon, 2009:499). Professional development programmes are effective when they take place over time so that their activities can have an impact on providing opportunities for detailed discussions, developing financial concepts and identifying misconceptions (Mogari, Kriek, Atagana & Ochonogor, 2016:346). Numerous sessions of a particular programme allow the STMs enough time to implement what has been learned and give them the opportunity to reflect back on the next contact sessions. SMTs are able to create time to internalise the new knowledge and share successes and challenges (Dreyer, 2012:386). Financial management workshops that last one to three days are unlikely to improve the attendees' financial knowledge and build skills, unless they are part of a broader capacity-building process (Haddock, 2015:4). It is evident that a sustained approach to professional development has a more significant impact on practice than impromptu learning opportunities (Timperley, 2011:3). It is understood that learning is gradual and informal. It is an incremental process that takes time; therefore, enough time that is well organised and carefully structured, should be allocated for SMTs to deepen their understanding in order for learning to take place.

#### ***2.10.4.2 Continuous monitoring and evaluation of professional development frameworks***

Monitoring and evaluation assist SMTs in drafting their individual professional development needs based on self-evaluation and integrate their needs with school development needs (Steyn, 2011:226). There should be ongoing monitoring and evaluation, whereby frequent and specific feedback on performance is vital. Both formal and informal feedback from the immediate supervisor is an important induction strategy. Valuable feedback is a key performance indicator of improved performance in SMTs (McCormick & Faller, 2012:6).

In Kenya, professional development programmes are monitored by tutors and provincial officials in fortnightly meetings to ensure that there is a connection between the province and the district (Bunyi, Wangia, Magoma, Limboro & Akyeampong, 2011:10). Experience has shown that capacity-building programmes need to start by doing pre-assessment of prior knowledge to make competencies effective in job performance, which can be done through evaluation (Waisbord, 2008:230). The department needs to put monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure that the intervention of a development programme has succeeded (Moloi, 2010:166). Monitoring and evaluating the professional development framework form part of the range of interactive basics that form the basis of a series of inquiries. This is a system of probing into learning needs and identifying the gaps in the financial knowledge of the SMTs to best support their needs (Timperley, 2011:3). A well-planned and coordinated monitoring strategy with clear processes and structures is crucial to ensure the success of the framework (Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET), 2011:19).

#### ***2.10.4.3 Provision of collaborative learning opportunities***

Collaborative learning fosters a more logical professional development and a set of practices across schools and allows for SMTs to share strategies and insights to support one another's development (Darling-Hammond, 2013:60). Collaborative customs build social and professional wealth in a school community. SMTs are able to accumulate and circulate knowledge, ideas and support that help them to be more effective, confident, innovative and actively willing to bring about transformation (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012:114). In clusters, SMTs meet and share the challenges and experiences that have improved their skills in the management of school funds. In Kenya, developmental activities were held every second week, which serves as an enhancement factor in promoting SMT collaboration (Hardman, Abd-Kadir, Agg, Migwi, Ndambuku & Smith, 2009:68).

One of the fundamental grounds of the strategic approach was that thriving capacity building requires functional institutional networks. Workshops, for instance, should

not provide opportunities for only defining and learning but also for widening ideas for cooperation across district and provincial institutions. This would bring diversity to the management of finances in schools (Waisbord, 2008:232). Professional development in schools should form part of the daily activities of SMTs and should not try to deal with the gap between present performance and required performance (Tshukudu, 2009:125). They are able to use one another's strengths and complement their financial skills and knowledge.

#### ***2.10.4.4 Relevant training content***

Training should focus on the implementation of research-based instructional tradition, actively involve learning experiences for those involved and provide SMTs with opportunities to familiarise themselves with the practices of their individual financial management situations (Guskey & Yoon, 2009:496). Professional development in financial management needs to be relevant to the daily work life of SMTs and school situations. It should be considered as a long-term process whereby SMTs learn through the sequence of learning actions and experiences. In order to achieve this, group learning and networking can be used as they provide school-based developmental opportunities (Ali, 2017:63). This is vital because involving those who are expected to create or support a change in defining success will lead to a more realistic training plan (Haddock, 2015:4).

The qualifications of SMT members need to be reviewed prior to training, since not all qualifications require the same level of knowledge and skills and it cannot cover everything; therefore, learning objectives need to be prioritised. Skills audits should be done, which would ensure that the SMT members' training corresponds to the identified deficiencies (Haddock, 2015:5). The effective professional development framework considers and validates adult personal and professional experience (Chabaya, 2015:39). This requires strong regulatory structures that will determine the needs, ensure that the appropriate scope of the courses is available and monitor their impact and worth. The SETAs have a valuable task in developing the skills that are needed to meet the direct needs of the employers (National Planning Commission, 2013:266).

A professional development framework should build the SMTs' knowledge in managing school funds, and the programmes offered should be targeted at those areas where the SMTs' financial skills are the weakest. It should focus on the needs of SMTs (National Planning Commission, 2013:307). In order to attain that, SMTs must take the initiative to discover and point out the areas in which they require advanced development, and those areas should be included in the professional development plan for submission to the department for assistance to access the training opportunities (National Planning Commission, 2013:308).

## **2.10.5 Threats that may hinder the implementation of the professional development framework**

### ***2.10.5.1 Insufficient funding***

In Asia, professional development frameworks are underfunded and operate on lean discretionary budgets, which lead to SMTs resorting to self-funding (Jacob, Xiong & Ye, 2015:3). This has led to an insufficient number of learning centres and other educational facilities to meet the developmental needs of SMTs. These shortages of developmental facilities are also linked to inequalities, such as urban or rural inequality (Santiago, Shewbridge, Nusche & Herzog, 2012:2). In Tanzania, while the resource allocations to professional development have increased over time, the resources were still inadequate and most priority programmes have gone without being adequately funded, creating pressure to the implementation process (Woods, 2007:17). The lack of funding for development programmes for SMTs is a major concern as it leads to low-quality, uncoordinated programmes (Mapasela & Hay, 2005:729).

School-based development activities are considered to have far-reaching implications for positive results, but only if there are SMTs at school level who are competent. Otherwise, the training programmes are expected to be outsourced to experts, which the schools in South Africa normally cannot afford because of the socioeconomic conditions in many schools in the country (Govender, 2013:33). According to presentations – one at the University of Limpopo and the other at the University of Johannesburg – state funding has been declining in terms of student per capita, which has led to an escalation in tuition and study costs, where they are

increasing faster than income (Mabelebele, 2015:6; Ramdass & Kruger, 2011:28). Some of the prevailing challenges affecting the success of a professional development framework are related to insufficient funding and inadequate and insufficient financial resources, with no earmarked funding specifically allocated to training (Ramodibe, 2011:1).

#### ***2.10.5.2 Lack of alignment with the needs for skills development of school management teams***

Training is often perceived as a solution for a variety of performance problems, when it may not be an issue at all. If a professional development framework is not aligned with the development needs of SMTs with regard to financial management, no improvement can be linked to the programme (Phillips, 2017:1). This is owing to neglecting strategic planning, where SMTs have almost no formal input into the content of the professional development training. A lack of collaboration, whereby the strengths and weaknesses of SMTs are not considered in devising strategies for improvement, may hinder the impact of the professional development framework (Jacob et al., 2015:10). Setting standards that are fundamental to the professional development culture helps ensure a professional development framework that has an understandable purpose and a plan of action and sufficient support for SMTs (State of Victoria, 2014:10). It provides a clear set of expectations for SMTs and provides a point of reference for identifying current and future development needs. The standards give clear guidance to what SMTs are expected to know in financial management and to develop proficiency in their work (Cole, 2012:6). Professional development is to be planned, rather than be used as crisis management responding to immediate problems (Welton, 2001:176). In cases where development programmes are not linked to the needs of SMTs, there is usually no positive impact, which must come from behaviour change of the individual participants.

#### ***2.10.5.3 Fragmented training curriculum***

The effects of unplanned programmes are “highly reactive, nonflexible, piecemeal and poorly targeted” (Tynan & Lee, 2009:89). The common lack of bringing together the training curricula and work-based performance prevents capacity programmes from focusing on and delivering considerable institutional expectations (Waisbord,

2008:231). If the framework is not linked to organisational analysis, trained SMTs may not be able to implement what they were taught once they are back at their schools (Haddock, 2015:6). This may be due to a lack of baseline information, which makes it difficult to compare the knowledge of SMTs before and after the interventions (Birra, 2012:3).

One study revealed that most SMTs believe that professional development programmes have had no influence in building financial knowledge as they are merely available as a routine and, therefore, unresponsive to the needs of the SMTs (Ngcamu & Teferra, 2015:136). Poor planning of development programmes is a result of too much focus on activities without assessing the results of those activities, which usually leads to a lack of continuous improvement, coordination and expansion (Republic of South Africa, 2010:3).

## **2.10.6 Evidence of success for the implementation of professional development frameworks**

### ***2.10.6.1 Planning and budgeting***

School finances are used in line with the principles of sound financial management, spent in an effective, efficient and economical manner. The allocation of funds is in accordance with the norms and standards, and regulations and measures are taken to correct and prevent errors (European Commission, 2015:1). According to the traditional budget theory, budgeting is, to some degree, political, economic, accounting-based and partially administrative (Khan & Hildreth, 2002:161). The SMTs understand that a budget is a political document that assists with allocating the limited income of the public among conflicting and challenging interests. In relation to economics, it serves as a primary instrument for evaluating the distribution of income, stimulating its economic growth and maintaining stability (Wienhold, 2015:16). As an accounting document, it imposes a ceiling on government expenditure and makes it legally obligatory for the school to spend funds within the allocated income. Lastly, as an administrative document, it stipulates the ways and

means by which community services are provided and determines the standards by which the use of funds is monitored, measured and evaluated (Khan & Hidreth, 2002:161). Schools ensure that expenses may only be incurred in terms of the approved annual budget, which can be achieved by monitoring expenditure on a monthly basis where actual spending will be compared with planned spending (Stellenbosch Municipality, 2014:7).

#### ***2.10.6.2 Formulation of professional learning communities***

Forming PLCs has been recognised as an effective way to encourage interaction and support networks among SMTs and SGBs. The shared experiences build positive interpersonal relations, reactive capabilities and team-learning skills. Connections established in PLCs tend to be stronger and more sustainable. They help to reduce feelings of operating in isolation and problems with coping with a wide range of tasks simultaneously (Pounder, 2011:261). The different stakeholders involved in the management of school finances are connected to interpersonal relations in varied ways. The school finances are managed effectively where good working relationships are prioritised (Günbayi, 2011:541). The stakeholders feel empowered; therefore, showing trust, mutual respect and a sense of empowerment instils good interpersonal relations, enriched decision making and shared responsibilities among them (Tsayang, 2011:389). PLCs provide a conducive environment and essential support for SMTs and SGBs to participate collectively in determining activities for their own development (DoHET, 2011:12).

#### ***2.10.6.3 Improvement in policy implementation***

In a study done in Papua New Guinea, the benefits of effective professional development are stated as increased confidence and competencies, which provide opportunities for increased job satisfaction and improved performance, leadership and financial management skills. There is an improvement in reporting strategies and communication at school on district and provincial levels (Polum, 2011:10). An effective professional development framework has shown a significant positive effect on the stakeholders' involvement and organisational commitment, which assists SMTs in increasing the level of commitment to compiling and submitting financial reports on time (Truitt, 2011:2). SMTs are empowered with the necessary skills to



make school financial decisions and understand that they are answerable to all the stakeholders (Jency, 2016:706). It leads to collaboration between all concerned stakeholders in schools. The professional development framework produces SMTs of equivalent qualities and qualifications and is considerate to the needs of others (Woods, 2007:32).

A successful professional development framework increases the stakeholders' interest and enthusiasm and improves their self-confidence, sense of belonging to educational leadership and innovation. It also leads to changes in the attitudes of the SMTs to financial management knowledge and principles (Jacob et al., 2015:6). An investment in professional development does not only have an impact on individual SMT performance and skilfulness on financial management but also on employee association, engagement and, in general, the performance of the school.

## **2.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented social constructionism as a theoretical framework and the related literature was reviewed. In the first part, the chapter deliberated on the historical origins of social constructionism and how it emerged in social sciences as a radical perspective in relation to constructivism, phenomenology and postmodernism. The features and principles of social constructionism as the lenses guiding the study were discussed. The chapter additionally presented the epistemology, the ontology of social constructionism and the role of the researcher and the co-researchers in the study. The operational concepts of framework, school management team (SMT), financial management and professional development were defined. The last part of the chapter reviewed the related literature based on the objectives of the study, the challenges faced by SMTs in financial management, the possible solutions to the challenges, the conditions conducive to the implementation of the professional development framework to empower SMTs, the potential risks that can impede the implementation of the framework and the evidence of successful implementation of the professional development framework.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study seeks to design a professional development framework to empower SMTs for financial management. Participatory action research (PAR), as the methodological approach underpinning this study, is presented in this chapter. The historical background, objectives, formats, steps, epistemology and ontology of PAR are elucidated. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the credentials of the co-researchers and their activities in achieving the aim of the study and the SWOT analysis of the team. The priorities and the action plan are clarified and the ethical consideration is discussed. In addition, the chapter illustrates the process of generating and analysing the data. Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a strategy for analysing the data is discussed at three levels, namely the textual (language used), social (social injustices) and discursive (transcription of text) levels.

#### **3.2 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AS A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

PAR is used in this study as a way of collecting data since this is an action research, where it is envisaged that learning will take place by doing. PAR is a social practice, which brings transformation and does not ignore the theoretical perspective that assists the co-researchers to work from a critically informed perspective on social life (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2013:2). The theoretical standpoint of PAR includes four themes: the generation of knowledge, the co-researchers' empowerment and research, PAR as a cultural movement, and leadership and consciousness (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991:1). This methodology is relevant as it holds the same views as social constructionism, the theoretical framework underpinning this study. They both symbolise a way of thinking about the art of learning that SMTs come to learn most effectively by being involved in designing their own framework, reflecting on it and debugging and sharing it (Eden & Ackermann, 2013:8). The researcher involves the co-researchers throughout the development process, from the initial design of the study through the information gathering and data analysis to the findings and recommendations. The co-researchers participated in every action arising from the

research as PAR advocates that the affected individuals should be actively involved in the process (Baum, MacDougall & Smith, 2006:854). PAR, as a methodology, opens a communicative space in which the co-researchers can reflect together on the professional development framework to build SMTs skills and knowledge in financial management.

It works best when the co-researchers undertake each of the steps in the spiral of reflecting collaboratively, which includes to plan, act, reflect and re-plan. The cycle continues until all the parties agree that the objectives of the study are met (Kemmis et al., 2013:19). PAR researchers are emancipators, who are more interested in improving human welfare and use methods of reflection and action (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008:428). The main reasons for using PAR as a method of conducting this study is that it provides opportunities for the co-construction of knowledge with the co-researchers, rather than for them (McIntyre, 2007:21). Its philosophical perspective is that knowledge generation is a socially engaged and democratic practice, and therefore, the design and implementation of the framework to empower SMTs in financial management can only be understood if SMTs and the relevant co-researchers are involved in the inquiry process (Reason & Bradbury, 2008:4).

PAR strongly encourages the continuous professional development (CPD) of SMTs in financial management (Greenwood, Whyte & Harkavy, 1993:177). The co-researchers are actively involved and use their experience to design a professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management. This process is empowering and leads to change. PAR is relevant to this study as the aim of the study is to construct new knowledge, to verify the validity of the data they have generated and to develop a new theory, which in this case, is the framework to empower SMTs in financial management.

### **3.3 DEFINING PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH**

PAR is democratic process and concerned with developing practical information for valuable, individual purposes. It is a methodical and logical approach that searches for knowledge for social action (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008:427). It involves the researcher and co-researchers, who are working as a team to study a challenging

situation and change it for the better and to the benefit of the relevant communities (Kindon, Pain & Kesby, 2007:1). Therefore, it is referred to as a study by, with and for the people directly affected by a particular challenge. It is undertaken collaboratively by academic researchers and co-researchers seeking to produce democratic knowledge and promote opportunities for empowerment for those involved (Kindon et al., 2008:91).

(Reason & Bradbury, 2008:4) defines PAR as –

a participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

The researcher and the co-researchers go through a process of spiral action research cycles consisting of five major phases to achieve the goals of PAR: planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning. From the above definitions, the four basic goals of PAR can be summarised as follows: the empowerment of the co-researchers, collaborative participation, the attainment of knowledge and social transformation (Zuber-Skerritt, 2003:10).

### **3.4 HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH**

There is evidence of the use of PAR, which was then known as “action research”, by a number of social reformists prior to Lewin, such as Collier in 1945, Lippitt and Radke in 1946 and Corey in 1953 (McKernan, 2013:8). Lewin espoused that social problems should serve as the locus of social science research (Vaduva, 2012:137). He wanted marginalised groups to stand against mistreatment and inequality, which had been dominant during that era. PAR was aimed at raising the self-esteem of minority groups to help them become independent and be treated as equal participants. Lewin’s model viewed research as an action cycle that includes analysis, fact-finding, conceptualisation, planning, implementation, reflection and evaluation of impact (Adelman, 1993:8). He highly regarded participatory action research as a way of educating on certain matters by being actively involved, thus

bringing about change, while, in the process, making them more responsive to the employee's requirements (Wilkinson, 1996:216).

The origin of PAR is evident in countries that were colonised in the early 1960s and stirred by anti-colonial struggles (Castellonet & Jordan, 2004:187). Therefore, an approach from the viewpoint of the social sciences were developed as part of an ideological shift away from the customary way to work towards recognising and addressing complex human and social matters (Eruera, 2010:1). It involved a shift from the principle of "I ask; you answer" to "we explore" (Wadsworth, 2011:78).

PAR asserts that existing knowledge is a basis for understanding and that practical learning can result in a reliable form of information that has an impact on practice. The work of Freire strongly supported this viewpoint. He used PAR to support deprived and disadvantaged communities to look at and examine the reasons behind their domination (Freire, 2005:127). He believed that critical manifestation was vital for the transformation process in individuals and society. PAR grew from these perspectives as a methodology enabling the researchers to work in partnership with communities with the aim of ensuring transformation (Baum et al., 2006:855). Freire was a Brazilian educationalist who wished to change the way education was put together, away from specialist and scholarly driven educational systems towards the layperson and "building a community of grounded or indigenous experts" (Gonzales, 2007:79). As a method of inquiry, PAR has developed over the last century. A careful study of the literature indicates "clearly and convincingly that participatory action research is a root derivative of the scientific method reaching back to the Science in Education movement of the late nineteenth century" (McKernan, 2013:8).

The idea of participatory research became known during the 1970s from developing countries (Masters, 1995:22). The movement known as "Group Dynamics" used it in human relations and social psychology training during the nineteenth century to address the then existing social problems through a qualitative enquiry. It emerged again in the 1940s to deal with some of the challenges (such as the onslaught of World War II, intergroup relations, racial prejudice and social reconstruction) that were experienced during that time (Masters, 1995:22). PAR was related to the

following movements: the drastic and reformist approaches to international economic development aid, the view of empowering adults as an alternative to customary approaches to education and the ongoing debate within the social sciences over the dominant social science paradigm (MacDonald, 2012:37).

Somekh's book (2005), *Action Research: a Methodology for Change and Development*, displayed that honesty strengthens trust in research relationships, which leads to open-mindedness that underpins good research. Innovation and transformation are the premises (Dick, 2006:441). According to Dick (2006:442), the following authors made a significant contribution to the study of professional development: Mertler wrote a practical textbook to help teachers investigate their own practices; Kosha relates participatory action research to professional development and the progress of classroom tradition; Hendricks mentions the benefits of reflection, which attains the balance between theory and practice; and Taggart and Wilson offer 50 guidelines and some workbook styles for assisting reflection. PAR is, therefore, a relevant approach to use in this study as it also aims to achieve a balance between theory and practice while empowering SMTs in financial management knowledge and skills.

### **3.5 OBJECTIVES OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH**

This section describes how the co-researchers engaged in collaborative processes aimed at designing a professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management. The focus is on the objectives of PAR; the section describes how these objectives are integrated into the study: the active participation of the researcher and the co-researchers in the creation of knowledge, the empowerment of the co-researchers, collaboration through participation, social change and the connection of theory and practice (McIntyre, 2007:9).

#### **3.5.1 Active participation of researcher and co-researchers**

PAR is about recognising the ability of the SMT and all the relevant stakeholders working and managing in a particular school to participate in all the phases of the research progression (Kemmis et al., 2013:4). It is both an art and a method to

engage the co-researchers in democratic problem solving, where the role of the researcher and the co-researchers converge in order to form new pedagogical possibilities (Cammarota & Fine, 2010:14). The study involves a researcher and co-researchers, including SMT members, SGB members, teacher development officials and a member of the District Training Committee partnering to better understand the challenges and solutions they are facing in the management of school finances through shared, participatory research. PAR enabled the participation of all the co-researchers, helping them to establish new working relationships, not only internally but also in other surrounding schools (Brydon-Miller, Kral, Maguire, Noffke & Sabhlok, 2011:389). The co-researchers identified questions, answered them and made decisions on the action plan. They fully contributed to gathering data about their own challenges by working in a collaborative and democratic manner, which shares power among all the other co-researchers. The co-researchers were encouraged to be accountable for their own critical analysis, evaluation and management (Crane & O'Regan, 2010:3).

### **3.5.2 Empowerment of co-researchers**

The PAR process was an effective way to raise critical self-reflection among the researchers and co-researchers, positively influencing leadership behaviours (Fletcher, MacPhee & Dickson, 2015:8). Using PAR as a methodology provided a practical and inclusive evidence base from which current work practices were critically examined and areas for development and growth discovered (Crane & O'Regan, 2010:2). Most importantly, the consultation method contributed to the success of the professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management as it provided the chance to exchange their ideas and construct their own framework while they were actively involved throughout the study process. Discussion meetings and the action cycles provided a framework to guide the co-researchers in the study, to prompt their views and actions and to enable easy documentation of the study (Boyle, 2013:18).

### **3.5.3 Collaboration through participation**

PAR offered a chance to formulate professional learning communities (PLCs) in which the co-researchers could meet one another as a team on a mission to strengthen their financial management knowledge. PLCs are a shared process of collaborative learning appreciated by groups of SMT members who meet to discuss their financial management challenges and solutions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:277). PAR involves mutual knowledge production by the researchers and co-researchers. It values the knowledge gained through experience that is used to address real-life challenges faced by SMTs in schools and to achieve positive social change (Reason & Bradbury, 2008:6). The need for better collaboration is common throughout most of the reports of SMTs. The focus is to put more efforts together to develop collaborative work between various stakeholders through known and common communication methods, such as networking, seminars, conferences and cluster meetings, as well as inviting experts to address internal meetings. Improving feedback mechanisms was noted to be a focal point in order to gain more information and improve interaction and forging closer working relationships with schools (Boyle, 2013:10). Social collaboration is the heart of PAR and social constructionism, as they both emphasise that the best way to construct valuable knowledge is working together as a team.

### **3.5.4 Bridging theory and practice**

Most supporters of participatory action research argue that theory alone has limited influence in bringing about transformation and it is vital that there is a more complex interaction between theory and practice. PAR encourages theorising and obtaining knowledge enriched through direct involvement and intervention in the process of social action (Reason & Bradbury, 2008:17). "Learning to do by doing it" leads the researcher and the co-researchers to richer understandings of the framework to empower SMTs (Kemmis et al., 2013:2). This stresses the connection between research and implementation in a practical environment, ending in the construction of knowledge between the researchers and co-researchers. It has a dual focus on research and action. Methodologically, it seeks to provide a cautious balance between scholarly rigour and faithfulness to experiential knowledge. It aims to involve participants fully as co-workers throughout the study, generating both



knowledge through discussion and action (Fletcher et al., 2015:8). It incorporates knowledge and action for the common advantage of all the partners. All the co-researchers are expected to commit to applying the research results in their schools to bring about transformation in financial management. Social constructionism is PAR itself; it cannot exist without practice, and it happens within and throughout practice. Therefore, the study cannot be seen as a separate element of theory and implementation (Marrengula, 2010:90).

### **3.6 FORMAT OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH**

#### **3.6.1 Systematic**

Participatory research is a systematic process in the sense that those who are directly affected by the study become co-researchers; therefore, they take action and learn through the inquiry process (Green, George, Daniel, Frankish, Herbet & Bowie, 2003:419). The study, therefore, adopted this approach to enquiry to allow SMTs to find effective solutions to the problems they are facing in the management of school funds (Stringer, 2007:1). PAR is said to be “systematic and orientated around analysis of data whose answers require the gathering and analysis of data and the generation of interpretations directly tested in the field of action” (MacDonald, 2012:36). The initial stage was to build a basis for collaborative participation by developing relationships and negotiating roles and responsibilities. The researcher ensured that the investigation process is democratic, unbiased, beneficial and enhancing. Therefore, the study broke away from traditional research and formed alliances with individuals with the least social, cultural and economic power (Khan & Chovanec, 2010:35).

#### **3.6.2 Emancipatory**

The aim of the study was to accomplish “liberation through knowledge gathering” (Mills, 2003:6). PAR is emancipatory because it acknowledged the SMT members as active co-researchers since they were the ones who were affected the most by the matters under enquiry. Societal programmes should benefit vulnerable persons, groups and communities who are targeted for intervention. All the co-researchers gained new knowledge and learned in the process (MacGarvey, 2007:3). PAR

conceptualises the active involvement of the beneficiaries of the study, and other target groups of intervention are important for an idealistic rationale. PAR ensured that the most responsive strategy was developed to address the challenges in the best possible way (Crane & O'Regan, 2012:3). The study was a relevant form of professional development for SMTs and other co-researchers because it considered both the content and context of the matters that were investigated and focused on the phenomenon within the community and the school context in which they occur (James, Milenkiewicz & Bucknam, 2008:12).

### **3.6.3 Social change**

The PAR method is an ongoing process by its very nature of continuously examining and reflecting on development. It provides learning experiences and opportunities to apply the acquired knowledge to practical situations. It combines getting a better understanding of the matters and using this knowledge to transform one's way of doing something (Action Research Induction Kit, 2008:1).

PAR is situated in a context where change occurs (Smith, Bratini, Chambers, Jensen & Romero, 2010:411). It was used to change and improve a social situation by involving those most affected in the process. This study clearly identified, supported and reinforced social structures, processes and knowledge already existing in the schools that help them work together to improve their financial management skills. PAR is regarded a division of action research, which is the "systematic collection and analysis of data for the purpose of taking action and making change" by creating practical knowledge (MacDonald, 2012:35). It is suggesting that dialogue is the key to social change and "conscientisation", whereby marginalised people engage in critical analysis and organise action to improve their situation. Furthermore, the researcher and the co-researchers committed themselves to a form of research that challenges the management of school funds, the mismanagement of funds, unjust and undemocratic decision-making styles and political systems. The research process was intended to be a liberating and transformative experience (Khan & Chovanec, 2010:36).

#### **3.6.4 Democratic**

PAR is democratic in the sense that it encourages “bottom-up”, “inside-out” interaction among co-researchers; it seeks to strengthen equal participation and open proper engagement for all the co-researchers to voice their different points of view to empower themselves. It defines all the co-researchers as experts with proficient knowledge and views (MacGarvey, 2007:2). The process is democratising as it engages the co-researchers to seek solutions for their challenges (James et al., 2008:6). The study is rooted in values of democracy, respect, equality and learning for personal development. It seeks to bring the problems voiced by the co-researchers into mainstream management. The study ensured that social justice and equity are enhanced through observing democratic principles as a guide (Koch & Kralik, 2009:2). Grassroots democracy, social movements, active contribution of all the knowledgeable people and the wisdom of reasoned dialogue are key to the empowerment of SMTs in financial management (Chevalier & Buckles, 2013:3). The principles of PAR enable a potentially democratic process that is equitable and liberating to the co-researchers as they construct meaning during focused discussion meetings (Koch & Kralik, 2009:5). Therefore, the co-researchers in this study are the co-contributors to knowledge and understanding, and not simply the objects of the study. Reciprocity, cooperation, mutuality and dialogue are key concepts in this study (Holstein & Minkler, 2007:23).

#### **3.6.5 Reflective practice**

PAR involves people reflecting on and theorising about their practices. As a starting point, this requires people to be inquisitive about understanding the relationships and forces between circumstances, actions and consequences in their lives (Koch & Kralik, 2009:41). The study puts the co-researchers at the core in the development process of the study. This involves SMTs, SGBs and district officials thinking deeply about their financial management in schools, their responsibility and how their values and assumptions influence their perspectives on the study. They understood the intervention opportunities, their professional development and the strategies they can use to cope with the challenges that might arise during the study (Crane & Regan, 2010:5). The aim of the professional development framework is to motivate

SMTs to create the needed change by involving them in the study and improve their financial management skills (James et al., 2008:11).

### **3.7 EPISTEMOLOGY OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH**

PAR is very much associated with social constructionism as it deals with how people know things; by definition, it takes account of the relationship between the researcher and knowledge, as well as how this relationship is connected to knowledge creation. (Ren & Langhout, 2010:135). They both argue that knowledge is co-constructed and produced through collaboration and information sharing between the researchers and co-researchers. These relationships are mediated through values. Within this framework, PAR highlights the relationship between the researcher and the co-researchers through a reflexive examination of the researcher and brings into question how knowledge is constructed (Langhout & Thomas, 2010:63).

The key element of motivation is to be as objective and neutral as possible in the generation, analysis and presentation of the data. The researchers took precautions in the data collection to ensure that they did not dominate or have too much influence on the views of the co-researchers during discussions (Ritchie & Janelewis, 2013:20). PAR, like social constructionism, is linked to participation; they both view the world as not a separate, but rather an interactive process, which is co-authored. A natural view regards human beings as part of the natural universe. PAR considers the wholeness of the study and, through reflexive reviews, learning and action, co-construct a meaningful practical framework (Burgess, 2006:428).

In order to understand the framework to empower SMTs in financial management, an appreciation of qualitative research is essential, as it requires meticulous attention to elements such as the research questions, objectives, study design, selection of co-researchers, methodology, outcomes and conclusions to be valid, reliable and relevant (Harris, Gleason, Sheean, Boushey, Beto & Bruemmer, 2009:80). PAR involves forms of inquiry where the researcher and the co-researchers form mutual

relations in order to identify and address a professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management through cycles of action and research. Participatory processes enable the co-researchers to be involved in the research programme as PAR is inclusive and emancipatory. The co-researchers share their knowledge to create new understandings and they work together to form action plans in an ongoing reflection and evaluation cycle (Parkes & Panelli, 2001:87).

### **3.8 ONTOLOGY OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH**

The ontological feature of human beings is that people produce past narration and backgrounds in the same way as history and culture produce them. Therefore, both the theory and the application of education as a practice of freedom take the people's past as their starting point (Marrengula, 2010:94). Ontological obligations that strengthen participatory action research include actions that are value-driven and morally committed. Thus, participatory action researchers and co-researchers view themselves in relation to other individuals in their social environment (MacDonlad, 2012:36).

PAR entails that the relevant individuals in the organisation under investigation actively participate in the study process, from the initial stage to the adoption of the action strategies. Therefore, the researcher's role has moved from that of expert to enabler (Cassell & Johnson, 2006:796). It is believed that human beings continuously recreate knowledge through language and that the world cannot be interpreted directly, but only subjectively through a process of sense-making. The social world can take almost any shape, depending on how one chooses to look at it (Andriessen, 2006:4). PAR as action research calls for individuals and groups whose views are silenced in organisations to be given a voice. Therefore, the identification, mobilisation and involvement of all the potential co-researchers are vital (Cassell & Johnson, 2006:798). It involves foregrounding the concern of those whose contributions to knowledge production have been marginalised and distorted or those who were not afforded an opportunity to participate (Cahill, 2010:154).

### **3.9 RELEVANCE OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH IN THIS STUDY**

Participatory action research has played a crucial role in educational transformation, especially in the development of educators in relation to teaching and learning. Activities such as educational research, curriculum development, teaching and evaluation form part of the essential aspects of a participatory action research process. Elliot (1991) cites participatory action research as “a form of creative resistance because it transforms rather than simply preserves the old professional craft culture of teachers” (Elliot, 1991:49). Consequently, the primary aim of this study is to empower the SMTs in financial management, rather than the production of knowledge (MacDonald, 2012:43). PAR, in this study, is the approach used by the co-researchers in order to improve the professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management (Mitchell, Reilly & Logue, 2009:349). The use of PAR in the study ensures that the co-researchers are free, comfortable and able to make a contribution. Providing a sense of challenge and stimulation remains important. It is necessary to ensure sufficient safety for differences to be expressed strongly without group members feeling frightened that they may be victimised (Wicks & Reason, 2009:249). PAR researchers seek emancipatory knowledge (Evans, Hole, Berg, Hutchinson & Sookraj, 2009:6). The emphasis is on the contribution of new knowledge to social change and on the co-researchers’ access to understanding their daily routines. PAR provides an opportunity for the construction of new knowledge and the development of a new hypothesis. It is a commitment to teamwork in its most profound sense, as a principle of not only engagement but unity as well. The aim is to build the capacity of SMTs as financial managers using the participatory approach to investigate matters based on their concerns (Cahill, 2010:153).

### **3.9.1 The benefits of participatory action research in the study**

#### ***3.9.1.1 Participatory action research as a capacity-building and systems-changing approach***

As a team, the co-researchers develop a research project that is valued and of benefit to them by acknowledging and respecting one another and making valuable inputs while they learn and develop their capacity (Genat, 2009:103). Professional development emphasises the connections with others, highlighting the social dimension that when engaged in professional development, SMTs learn best from

other SMTs. Professional development is more effective when problem solving and creativity are enhanced by different groupings as it creates collective wisdom that surpasses individual expertise. The need for others is particularly important when co-researchers are engaged in reflection on their practices (Mitchell et al., 2009:344). The reflection and evaluation at different levels do not only reflect the rigour with which PAR was developed but also ensures that the PAR process can adapt to the realities and personalities of those who took part in this project (Flicker, Maley, Ridgley, Biscope, Lombardo & Skinner, 2008:297). The researcher and the co-researchers were equally involved in the research process; co-learning occurred; the co-researchers were empowered through the process; their capacity to participate in decisions that influence their lives increased; and there was a balance between the research being conducted and the action taken to address the problem (Jurkowski, 2008:2). As a result, the involvement of purposefully selected co-researchers introduced the knowledge that led to better-informed decisions, enabled social learning and thus helped to achieve a win-win potential and foster more sustainable decisions (Newig & Fritsch, 2008:6). Capacity building was enhanced in this process by the fact that using PAR provided a balance between theory and practice (Blair & Minkler, 2009:652).

### ***3.9.1.2 Participatory action research as a collaboration enrichment***

The use of the PAR approach in the study instilled the principles of free will, equity, and social justice. These principles aimed to encourage the perception between the researcher and the co-researchers that people are able to determine their own needs and take action to address them and by valuing the co-researchers as equal contributors to the research project (Maiter, Simich, Jacobson & Wise, 2008:306). It is their subject knowledge that is honoured in terms of resources by committing to articulate their positions and constructing the text. Other interpretations, from both the researcher and the related literature, are examined against the foreground of developing key subject matter of the local knowledge (theory) of the co-researchers. The researcher gave attention to facilitating the open interaction of the co-researchers, building shared understandings, unity and solidarity (Genat, 2009:107).

Similarly, social constructionism, the theoretical framework used in this study, is of the view that knowledge is created by the interactions of individuals within the society and that our identity originates from the social realm and not from within ourselves. The basic strength of the project, and its potential for success, was evident in the relationships that were built, agreed upon and expanded with each new stage of the project (Maiter et al., 2008:310).

### **3.10 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The co-researchers in this study are two SMT members from each of the two selected schools, two SGB members per school, including the chairperson, one circuit manager, two district officials from teacher development and governance sections and one member of the District Training Committee. Pseudonyms were used instead of the real names of the co-researchers to protect their identity for ethical reasons.

#### **3.10.1 Credentials of co-researchers**

This section highlights the skills and experience that the co-researchers added to the study.

##### ***3.10.1.1 School management team – School 1***

Mrs Mbokazi has been the principal at a no-fee, Section 21 school for ten years. She has 16 years' experience as a teacher and three years as a deputy principal. She has a bachelor's degree in education and a BEd (Honours) degree in educational management. She has attended a number of professional development workshops. She is a democratic leader who believes that leadership is not one individual but an organisational structure that creates the framework for standards and relations. She is a member of the school finance committee and, therefore, understands that keeping financial records is key to effective school administration. As a good principal, she justifies her actions with tangible evidence; her endeavours are recognised and appreciated. She is an efficient manager who understands disciplinary procedures, proper communication channels, grievance procedures and financial management.



Mr Myeni is the deputy principal with 18 years' experience in the DoE. He has obtained a primary school teachers' diploma and advanced certificate courses in education. He is teaching economic and management sciences and has been exposed to many teacher development workshops. He has realised that in order to be effective, teachers need to be developed. One of the responsibilities of the deputy principal is managing ongoing organisational change, which is a key feature of effective school management. The deputy principal is the second in charge in the absence of the principal. He takes full responsibility for managing the school and is fully accountable for that period. Mr Myeni has good communication skills and a good knowledge of the applicable educator legislation and policies.

### ***3.10.1.2 School management team – School 2***

Mr Mnguni has 15 years' experience as a principal and a total of 27 years in the DoE. He holds a higher diploma in education, a bachelor's degree, and passed the following modules of the Programme in Financial Management from the Centre for Business Management: Introduction to Financial Management, Financing and Investment Decisions and The Management of Working Capital and Risk Management. He has furthered his qualifications through a distance education programme in public procurement and supply chain management. He is a competent, well-informed and firm principal. He has a strong school ethos based on positive collaboration to provide a sound foundation for effective school management. He is well aware of and respects the fact that all the stakeholders have a right to know how the school funds are spent.

Ms Radebe is a departmental head for ten years in the science department. She holds a BEd degree, an honours degree in education and a certificate in information, communication and technology. Her duties are to develop programmes of instructional supervision with department members and to provide opportunities for department members to improve their instructional processes. The head of department will support professional development by being directly involved in the school improvement plan, supporting and participating in the staff development programmes and participating in in-service programmes, workshops and conferences. She is involved in the identification of in-service opportunities for

department members, encouraging professional development through the exchange of ideas with members of the subject area. She participates in drafting the school budget, monitoring the requisition of supplies and equipment, maintaining inventory control and arranging for the repair and maintenance of resources.

### ***3.10.1.3 Teacher development official***

Mr Mbatha holds a four-year qualification in education and has 22 years relevant experience in the department. He has knowledge of the education legislation and policies and the policy regulating the administration and implementation of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). He is well aware of educational management, project management and human resource development strategies. When the study was conducted, he showed good organisational and planning skills. His duties, among others, include managing and coordinating the appraisal of all the professional development needs. He manages and monitors the compilation of an annual integrated report on training needs, and manages and evaluates the co-ordination of the integration of the training activities. He monitors and evaluates the impact of different training programmes

### ***3.10.1.4 Governance and management directorate official***

Ms Ndlovu is working in the governance section responsible for providing support services and the training of SGBs. She develops and coordinates school safety programmes and promotes the development of schools as centres of community involvement. She supports schools that implement acceptable governance systems and accounting procedures to ensure maximum support to teaching and learning. She is well aware of the strategic goals and objectives of the KZN DoE. She has a senior secondary teacher's diploma, an advanced certificate in education and an honours degree in educational management. She further studied for a certificate in monitoring and evaluation.

### ***3.10.1.5 Circuit manager***

Ms Mazibuko is a circuit manager with a four-year degree in education, an honours degree in education management and is currently registered for a master's degree.

She is computer literate and has knowledge of the Public Fund Management Act (PFMA) (No. 1 of 1999), the South African Schools Act (SASA) (No. 84 of 1996), the Public Service Act and other legislation governing the operation of schools. She has 23 years' experience in the education field. Her duties entail liaising with the cluster school principals on policies and practices governing their schools, and evaluating and appraising principals for growth and development. She has excellent communication, negotiation, interpersonal and problem-solving skills. She is good in report writing and an innovative, analytical and creative thinker.

### ***3.10.1.6 Member of the District Training Committee***

Mrs Mbongwe holds a bachelor's degree in education, a certificate in project management and a diploma in adult basic education and training. The duties of this multi-stakeholder body, the District Training Committee, are to expand the skills of the department workforce at all levels. It liaises with SETAs and gives advice on aspects relating to skills development, including policies, strategies and guidelines for the implementation and allocation of money from the National Skills Fund. The committee meets on a quarterly basis to compile a district report on the training and development programmes that have taken place in the district. It analyses skills development priorities in the identification of skills development needs. The representatives from different subsections promote information about training opportunities and act as mediators on skills development for all staff members. Mrs Mbongwe is aware of the district development needs and the business plan as she sits in on this committee.

### ***3.10.1.7 Members of the school governing bodies***

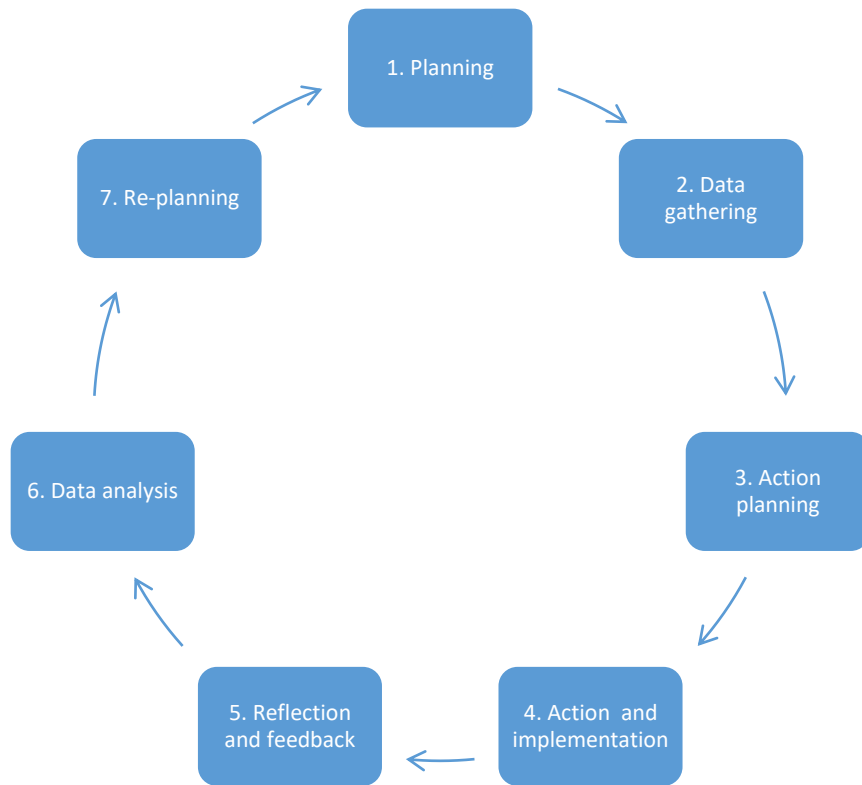
Mr Mthembu is the chairperson of the SGB in School 1 and Mr Ngwenya is the secretary, who has been serving on the SGB for the past two years. Mr Mkhwanazi is also an experienced SGB chairperson and Mr Dludlu is the secretary of the SGB in School 2. They are responsible for managing the school funds, such as determining the school fees, as well as preparing the budget yearly and keeping the financial records. In consultation with the principals of the schools, they take financial decisions on behalf of the parents. They adopt a mission statement with the beliefs and values of the school to promote the best interests of the school. This is done in

consultation with the learners, parents and teachers. Their tasks also include, among others, administering, maintaining and controlling the property, buildings and grounds of the school.

### **3.11 STEPS OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH**

The cyclical nature of the PAR process upholds the manifestation and reconstruction of experiences that can lead to the empowerment of SMTs (Koch & Kralik, 2009:5). In order to involve the co-researchers in the research, they need to participate in the discussions and implementation with the researcher and, thus, develop the process of conscientisation. This dialogical action is based on a combination of the reflection and action of two dimensions, because action without reflection is activism (Marrengula, 2010:93). Lewin's definition of the cyclical steps and iterative process of planning, reflection and action is to generate knowledge, analyse data, take action, reflect on their experiences and collectively construct new knowledge (Jacobs, 2010:374).

Figure 3.1 illustrates the cycle of PAR, which comprises steps followed in the study, as follows: planning action, gathering data, analysing data and implementing, reflecting and giving feedback, re-planning and repeating the process until the aim of the study has been achieved.



**Figure 3.1: Steps of participatory action research**

PAR is an approach to resolve problems; it is an application of a scientific method of finding facts and the experimentation of real-life problems requiring action resolutions by collaboratively involving co-operating co-researchers (Coughlan & Coughlan, 2002:223). The study process follows an action-reflection cycle that develops experiential learning among the co-researchers in exploring a professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management within the emancipatory ethos (Genat, 2009:103). The aim is to engage the co-researchers in all the steps in order to help formulate the research problem, discuss it, find an intervention method, implement it and assess the outcomes (Langhout & Thomas, 2010:61). Next, guided by the tentative hypotheses, the researcher and the co-researchers design the field study and collect and analyse the data. They actively collaborate throughout this cyclical process. The final step of feedback and evaluation feeds into a new cycle where the researcher and the co-researchers observe and collect the data again to assess the effects of the framework they

implemented, thus leading to the re-planning; analysis; action and reflection process (Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008:431).

### **3.11.1 Step 1 – Planning**

Planning involves an initial stage beginning with a joint problem identification and diagnosis (Langhout & Thomas, 2010:61). This first step turns out to be fundamental as it is the creation of a communicative space that is embodied in the network of the co-researchers aiming to reach a common understanding and agreement about what to do (Kemmis, 2001:100). During this meeting, all the co-researchers were present; the purpose of the study was discussed, as well as the opportunities for collaboration and mutual benefits. Relationships were built and information was exchanged with the co-researchers at this early stage to make sure that the research aim met the concerns of the co-researchers. The principles of working together were collaboratively developed to encourage equal contributions and responsibility sharing. The development of these principles was a way of forming trusting relationships as the participants could evaluate whether their concerns were noted. During this discussion session, the members appeared to become quite comfortable in voicing their points of view. It was emphasised in the meeting that the principles developed are open to revision and expansion as the study develops (Maiter et al., 2008:311). The purpose and the method of conducting the study were clarified. The researcher outlined the five objectives of the study to the co-researchers. Roles and responsibilities were allocated to all the members. An action plan, which guided the development of the framework, was drafted. The researcher chaired this meeting, as it was the first one; however, the members then nominated the principal of School 1 to be the chairperson of the research team. The co-researchers collectively agreed that three-hour meetings would be held on Saturdays, once a month, alternatively using both schools as venues.

### **3.11.2 Ethical consideration**

The study obtained ethical clearance from the University of the Free State as well as permission to conduct the research at schools from the KZN DoE. Permission was also obtained from the schools involved as well as from the district office. All the relevant and important information about the study, such as the aim of the study and

the methodology, was communicated to the co-researchers. The co-researchers were made aware that the study is for academic purposes and, therefore, not funded. The co-researchers were requested to sign a consent form to take part in the study voluntarily and the researcher explained that they may withdraw at any time during the study process should they wish to do so. They were assured that they would be informed of any changes that might occur during the course of the research. Furthermore, the researcher assured them that any form of harm to the co-researchers, such as physical damage, victimisation and through the release of information that is taken out of context or misinterpreted, would be avoided. The researcher undertook a courteous and largely non-invasive task of recording the co-researchers' words. This allowed the co-researchers to take initiative in the discussions, including continuing the discussions through the less helpful questions (Wadsworth, 2011:431). The co-researchers' identity would not be revealed in publications, and pseudonyms were used to ensure their privacy and safety (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011:6). The records and copies of the gathered data would be kept safely on a computer protected with a password, and hard copies of the data would be locked away.

### **3.11.3 Step 2 – Data gathering**

The study process provides the co-researchers with opportunities for discussions to expand their knowledge and contribute to the knowledge production processes. They developed their decisive thinking skills and experienced heightened consciousness and inspired or pursued action. In more ways than one, these participatory processes were evident during the different stages of the research continuum (Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty & Aoun, 2010:67). The data were collected by taking the minutes during all the meetings and the other documents produced by the members, such as discussion guidelines and logbooks (Jacobs, 2010:373).

### **3.11.4 Step 3 – Action planning through discussions**

Ms Mazibuko led the discussion on the first objective, which is to demonstrate and justify the need to develop a framework for the professional development of the SMT in financial management. This discussion took an hour. All the members discussed the need to develop a framework. The secretary and the researcher took and

recorded the notes. Mrs Mbongwe led the discussion on the solutions to address the identified challenges, which also lasted an hour. Ms Ndlovu discussed the conditions conducive to developing the framework, which lasted 30 minutes. Lastly, Mr Mbatha outlined the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that might hinder the implementation of the framework. The data were generated using research tools such as posing the research questions, facilitating reflection and discussion among the co-researchers and encouraging them to use their new knowledge to empower others. The co-researchers gained new insights and knowledge about the professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management (Malcom-Piqueux, 2015:88).

#### **3.11.5 Step 4 - Implementation**

In this stage, the researcher and the co-researchers implemented the framework on which they had agreed. PAR emerges and takes shape based on the inquiry work of the co-researchers; therefore, the inputs into the enacted framework are discussed and decided upon collaboratively (Malcom-Piqueux, 2015:87). The co-researchers implemented the possible solutions that were discussed to address their challenges regarding financial management.

#### **3.11.6 Step 5 – Reflection and feedback**

The reflection and feedback stages promoted knowledge development because these research processes presented an opportunity for the co-researchers to learn about matters pertaining to financial management in schools and to share these concerns with their colleagues in professional learning communities (PLCs). Meanwhile, critical consciousness emerged during the problem identification and data analysis stages, when the co-researchers were given a chance to reflect critically on their experiences on financial knowledge and skills (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010:67). There were also progressive updates about the study. Information was shared continuously through discussions in the meetings. The exchange of ideas was a reproduction ground for professional development because it created a space for reflection on one's theories in use as well as for co-learning. The reflection that followed from this dialogue was to self-evaluate more than to check whether the study was still on track (Ray, 2007:69). Ms Radebe encouraged the members to



discuss their evidence of success that the framework for the professional development of SMTs in financial management has been a success.

### **3.11.7 Step 6 – Analysis of data**

The researcher and the co-researchers worked more individually, each focusing on his or her own task, for example, analysing the material and developing the framework for professional development to empower SMTs in financial management (Jacobs, 2010:376). The co-researchers used this newfound knowledge to think strategically about how their practices could be improved and to identify the cause of action.

### **3.11.8 Step 7 – Re-planning**

In this stage, the discussion was around the implementation of the framework after the reflection and evaluation of all the activities and feedback. The way forward was discussed and the means of communication and ongoing support was approved. The researcher and the chairperson gave a comprehensive report of the whole study. The co-researchers had an opportunity to comment on the report before it was adopted as a true reflection of what has taken place during the study.

## **3.12 SWOT ANALYSIS**

A SWOT analysis guided the activities of the research team with regard to **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**. The aim of the analysis was to evaluate the alternatives with respect to each SWOT factor. It gave the essential outline for the analysis of the operational environment to support calculated decision making. The SWOT results were considered in the decision-making process. SWOT analysis also assisted with determining the action line options that were based on the detection of the imperative operational environmental aspects and their possible interdependencies (Kajanus, Leskinen, Kurttila & Kangas, 2012:1). It sought to address the strategy formation from a dual point of view, namely from an external appraisal of threats and opportunities in the conduction of the study and from an internal appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the team.

### **3.12.1 Strengths**

#### ***3.12.1.1 Relevance of co-researchers***

The co-researchers involved in the study are members of the SMTs with much experience in managing school finances. They have attended financial workshops and training during their service, which put them in a better position to contribute based on their experience. The chairpersons of the SGB have been serving for a number of years; therefore, they are familiar with the matters pertaining to professional development in financial management, which greatly enriched the study. The district officials from teacher development, the Governance Directorate and the District Training Committee were directly involved in the professional development of SGBs and SMTs in financial management.

#### ***3.12.1.2 Participatory action research ensured proper ethics***

One of the strengths of PAR is the concept of reciprocity, which is a continuous process of exchange with the aim of setting up and upholding equality between the researcher and the co-researchers and providing a lead to the ethical practice in the study. It refers to the considerate nature of good research interaction and exchanges that are crucial in participation (Maiter et al., 2008:305). The participants engaged in the study transformed themselves on a very personal level, and the process typically politicised them with respect to the relationship between the co-researchers and the desired outcomes (Lykes & Coquillon, 2007:333). In this research, a safe communication environment was carefully considered to ensure mutual support and empathy through which the co-researchers, who might otherwise feel threatened to share their views and experiences with others, felt free to voice their experiences. The co-researchers always felt that they were required for the confrontation of views from the perspective of their social backgrounds and to negotiate and develop a professional development framework (Wicks & Reason, 2009:251).

### **3.12.2 Weaknesses**

The mobilisation of all the stakeholders is important in order to identify and involve all potential co-researchers (Jacobs, 2010:384). While this may be highly challenging, the consequent power relations between the co-researchers created a struggle. The danger is that theoretically, democratic communication becomes a cover-up in which the more powerful people develop a rhetoric of democracy or participation to impose their own preferences on and marginalise the vulnerable. It was not easy for the SGB members to talk about their challenges freely in the presence of the SMT members, who, at times, showed that they were more familiar with financial concepts. Democracy necessitates participation that requires the preceding development of a critical consciousness by the co-researchers (Cassell & Johnson, 2006:799).

### **3.12.3 Opportunities**

The involvement of the team in the study offered the team members the opportunity to develop a critical social analysing ability, instil self-efficacy and develop a sense of hope and empowerment. They had an opportunity to develop group cohesion, social norms and collective efficiency regarding the ability to work effectively as a team in the same district (Berg, Coman & Schensul, 2009:347). They were exposed to practical ways of investigating knowledge that could help them solve the challenges they might encounter moving forward. The educative process through which the researchers refined their investigative and theory-building skills was significant (Rodríguez & Brown, 2009:23). Bringing power to their voices had extensive implications on their own well-being and development and on creating truly democratic schools. Action, as a way of applying the knowledge, is the best way of learning, reflecting and discussing, and the availability of support in this study was liberating.

### **3.12.4 Threats**

The study showed that limited time can be a threat and, as a result, have an impact on interpersonal dynamics. It sets in motion defensive routines, such as dividing tasks and withdrawing from familiar roles. PAR is time consuming and necessitates

the commitment of the co-researchers. Orientation was required for all to participate, and adequate time had to be allocated to enable full team participation for all the cyclical development to progress as planned. Lastly, an emancipatory intent does not guarantee an emancipatory outcome. It is highly possible that some co-researchers would not apply to their everyday practices what they have learned through the study process (Stahl, Tremblay & LeRouge, 2011:380). The study is for academic purposes; therefore, there was no funding to cover the costs of travelling to meetings, refreshments or using cell phones and other means of communication. The attendance of meetings was not always satisfactory as they had other commitments during the weekends.

### **3.13 DATA ANALYSIS**

The researcher used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse the generated data in this study. According to Van Dijk, “[c]ritical discourse analysis studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are performed, repeated, justified, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political perspective” (Tannen, Hamilton & Schiffrin, 2015:352). Therefore, it is a way of analysing dialogue from a critical angle, where its focal point is on theoretical concepts, such as power, ideology and domination. It considers the examination of the social, political, historical and intertextual perspective, which looks into the deeper analysis of the language in speech (Baker, Gabrielatos, Khosravini, Krzyżanowski, McEnery & Wodak, 2008:273).

#### **3.13.1 Evolution of critical discourse analysis as an approach**

Some tenets of CDA were already significant in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School before the Second World War. The focus was on language and discourse, initiated with the “critical linguistics” that surfaced mostly in the United Kingdom and Australia during the last part of the 1970s (Tannen et al., 2015:352). CDA also emerged in the 1990s, following a small convention in Amsterdam in January 1991. The beginning of the CDA network is also marked through the launch of Van Dijk’s journal, *Discourse and Society* (1990), as well as other books. Since then, many journals have been published with multiple overviews that have led to CDA being an established paradigm in linguistics.

CDA has become a well-known scholastic discipline with the same formal procedure and organisational practices as all the other disciplines. CDA has its roots in the critical-dialectical and phenomenological hermeneutics of the four theory types. Apart from this, it is complicated to compile a dependable account of the hypothetical establishment of CDA. There is no such thing as a standardised, universal theory structure defining CDA (Fairclough, 2013:186). Epistemological theories, general social theories, middle-range theories, micro sociological theories, socio psychological theories, discourse theories and linguistic theories can be found in critical discourse analysis (Weiss & Wodak, 2007:6).

### **3.13.2 Critical discourse analysis as an approach to analyse data**

CDA provides an outline for problem-oriented research in the form of group discussions and debates, to mention a few. It is conceived as a study of meaning-making and meaningful communication, rooted in an immediate, internal text, shared text, and an intertextual and socio-political perspective (Baker et al., 2008:279). Van Dijk emphasises that “the ‘core’ of CDA remains the logical and unambiguous analysis of the different constitutions and strategies of different levels of wording and talk” (2008:821). The tenets of CDA are summarised as follows: discourse is a historical form of social action that does ideological work; discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory; power relations are discursive; and discourse addresses social problems (Tannen et al., 2015:352). The CDA texts and contexts can be examined separately. Once a feature of context has been observed, hypothesised or, rather, identified, it may be used to explore whether and how such feature affects or is affected by the structures of text and talk. Again, with its diverse methodological criteria, CDA was used to discuss more loosely and freely the many ways power domination and inequity are expressed, passed and reproduced in communication, both in its structure and its contents (Van Dijk, 1999:460).

In CDA, language gains power by the way people makes use of it and by those who have access to language means and discussions. It emphasises the need for interdisciplinary work in order to gain a proper understanding of how language works in constituting and passing information, in social interactions or in exercising power in diverse spheres of influence in our societies (Wodak, 2004:192). In analysing

data, the researcher was guided by CDA agenda which teaches individuals more broadly in the misuse of power by linguists and to expose how language is used for dishonesty, deformation and the promotion of injustice (Widdowson, 2008:viii). Ideologically, CDA is seen as an imperative way of creating and upholding unequal supremacy relations. It receives particular attention in the ways in which language arbitrates philosophy in a variety of social organisations (Weiss & Wodak, 2007:14).

### **3.13.3 Application of critical discourse analysis in the study**

The researcher analysed the data according to the objectives of this study, which are the challenges, solutions, conditions, threats and evidence of success in the implementation of a professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management. There are opening statements under each subheading relevant to the study. The objectives were analysed based on the reviewed literature guided by relevant legislation and policies. CDA looks to analyse the data beyond the texts and considers the institutional and sociocultural contexts. The data are simultaneously analysed at three levels, namely textual analysis, discursive analysis and sociological analysis, and aim to expose, reveal or disclose what is unspoken, hidden and not clear (Van Dijk, 1999:459).

#### ***3.13.3.1 Textual analysis***

Textual perspective involves a close examination of the linguistic structures in a text. CDA requires a close and detailed analysis of texts, which means that any interpretation of a discussion should be based on the words and grammar of the text, which are placed and considered in the realistic context of the text. Speeches are not seen as neutral in terms of their ideological content, but at times it is the hidden parts of the texts that best divulge the underlying postulation (Vaara, Sorsa & Pälli, 2010:691). The four main headings under which text can be analysed are vocabulary, which refers to individual words; grammar, which is the set of words combined into phrases and sentences; cohesion, which deals with how clauses and sentences are linked together; and the structure of the text, which refers to the large-scale manner in which texts are organised (Widdowson, 2008:91). The texts are studied as a representation as well as an interaction (Van Van Leeuwen, 2008:4). When we interpret any language, a word or phrase has a certain meaning potential.

This means that there is a range of likely meanings that a word or phrase can have in different contexts of use (Gee, 2004:21). Therefore, CDA studies the structure of language more than the sentence or the clause and, thus, studies larger linguistic units, such as discussion exchanges or printed texts (Young & Harrison, 2004:1).

### **3.13.3.2     *Discursive analysis***

The discursive analysis of texts is the analysis of specific articulations of different discourses, genres and styles that characterise a particular text. It contributes to social analysis on a mediating level between various forms of social analysis and detailed linguistic analysis of a text (Wodak & Chilton, 2005:61). Deviating ways may have foremost philosophical effects that could lead to and repeat unequal power relations between social classes, gender, ethnical groups, majorities and minorities through the ways in which things are represented (Weiss & Wodak, 2007:13). Discourse analysis assumes that a social situation presents itself unambiguously to the speaking subjects; hence, the face of the situation depends on the speakers' identity in terms of their social positioning (Young & Harrison, 2004:39). The concept of principles, beliefs, supremacy, chain of command, gender and sociological variables were all seen as relevant for the analysis of the text. CDA has a meticulous interest in power and language relations (Weiss & Wodak, 2007:12). The researcher's focus and analysis are on the co-researchers' understanding of and contribution to the discussion of the professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management.

### **3.13.3.3     *Social analysis***

Social customs are commonly acceptable ways of doing things. Different social practices are synchronised at different stages and in different ways through prescripts, traditions or the authority of experts (Van Leeuwen, 2008:7). Every text reflects social routines, meaning there are interconnections between the texts and the context in which they occur. Fairclough and Wodak addressed the relationship between language and context by elaborating on topics that CDA seeks to address, such as social challenges, power relations that are digressive, speech that constitutes society and the way of life, the link between text and society which is

arbitrated and communication as a form of social action (Young & Harrison, 2004:85).

CDA disputes that words are at all times somewhat constitutive of specific social traditions and always imply naturally political things, such social position, harmony and the distribution of social power. In this sense of politics, customs and traditions are habitual activities through which people carry out mutual goals based on a shared understanding of the various responsibilities that people can fill within these activities. Therefore, unyielding linguistic and grammatical foundations exist that dispute that all language in interaction is intrinsically political (Gee, 2004:34). The researcher then aims to be alert to power relations that are exercised through discourse and to overcome the inequality of social practices by resisting discourses based on social class.

### **3.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter outlined the method of research used to conduct the study. PAR, as the methodology used in the study, was defined and its history discussed. The chapter further outlined the objectives, formats and steps of PAR. It was anticipated that rich data would be generated during this study as the chosen co-researchers were directly involved in the management of school funds and the provision of training. The SWOT analysis and priorities, according to the objectives of the study and action plan, were discussed, and the ethical matters of the study were presented. This chapter gave a link and relevance to the use of PAR and social constructionism in conducting this study. CDA, as the method of analysing the data, is discussed in the next chapter.



## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA, AND PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to design a professional development framework to empower school management teams (SMTs) in financial management. This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis, interpretation and discussion of the collected data and the findings. The methodology used to collect the data is participatory action research (PAR); therefore, its principles were observed in conjunction with those of social constructionism, the theoretical framework which serves as the foundation of this study. The data presented in the chapter are categorised into the five objectives of the study in an attempt to design a professional development framework to empower SMTs:

- Demonstrating challenges and justifying the need to develop a framework for the professional development of SMTs in financial management.
- Finding possible solutions to the challenges faced by SMTs in financial management.
- Discussing the conditions conducive to the implementation of the framework.
- Delineating the possible threats that may hinder the implementation of a framework.
- Demonstrating the possible successes associated with the implementation of the professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management.

The constructs discussed and generated in the previous chapter resulted in the empirical data that were analysed and interpreted in this chapter using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (CDA). The analysis of the empirical data to get a deeper meaning of the emerging findings was done at three levels, namely the textual (the language used for communication), social (considering the social backgrounds) and discursive (unacceptable practices that were reflected during discussions) levels.

## **4.2 CHALLENGES JUSTIFYING THE NEED TO DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

This section highlights the challenges faced by SMTs in schools with regard to financial management, as identified and discussed by the co-researchers during discussion group meetings that took place in the data generation process. The following challenges were discussed: planning and budgeting school funds, accounting principles, reporting and accountability, roles and responsibilities of SMTs and school governing bodies (SGBs) in financial management, and policies and legislation. The co-researchers also discussed possible solutions to these challenges. The identified challenges are used as constructs for the discussions below.

### **4.2.1 Planning and budgeting school funds**

According to Chapter 4 of the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996), the Finance Committee must prepare an annual budget, as per the guidelines agreed on by the Member of the Executive Council. It must show the approximate expenditure and income derived from the school fees for the schools that collect fees, the norms and standards allocation and the donated funds of the school for the next financial year. The specified time for the preparation of the annual budget is from August to September of the foregoing year. The chairperson of the Finance Committee should present the annual budget report to the SGB. Once endorsed by the SGB, it is then presented to the parents at the annual general meeting (South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, 38(1):24).

Budgeting is a way of financial planning for schools to be able to meet their needs; therefore, the prioritised educational objectives of the school are revealed in this document. It is a long-term planning for the allocation of funds, which guides the SMT and SGB to use the available funds within the allocation based on the school policy. It is drafted in consideration of the norms and standards allocation of the government and the school fees for the schools that are collecting it and other donations (see 2.10.2.1).

During the discussion with the co-researchers, the challenge of planning and budgeting emerged as one of the challenges of SMTs in financial management. The literature also agrees that preparing a budget as part of planning is the biggest challenge in schools as the figures put in the budget do not correspond to the needs of the schools (see 2.10.2.1). In a data generation meeting that took place at Khayaletu Primary, **Mr Myeni**, the deputy principal said as follows:

*Siyayenza ibudget minyaka yonke njengoba isuke ifuneka, kodwa akuvamile ukuthi siyilandele senze esisuke sikubhale kuyo.*

*[We prepare the budget annually as required; however, funds are not usually used as planned.]*

In the same discussion about the budget, **Mr Dludlu** said,

*Kwesethu isikole yenziwa uthisha omkhulu nabasizi bakhe kuphela ngoba yibona abazi izidingo zesikole. Thina asibe sisathintwa nje ukuthi sibeke imibono yethu.*

*[In our school it is prepared by the school management team only because they are the ones who know the needs of the school. We are never given a chance to make our contribution.]*

However, **Ms Radebe** responded as follows:

*Kuyafana kodwa ngoba asizitholi zonke nezidingo nqangi zethu zokusiza ukufundisa singothisha.*

*[That does not help because we as teachers do not get learning and teaching support material.]*

### *Textual analysis*

It is evident from the above statement, especially the words by **Mr Myeni** “as required” that the budget is only prepared because it is required by the department. The phrase “not usually used as planned” shows that they do not use the budget as a guide to spend the allocated funds as planned. It further reflects that expenditure is not according to the actual budget.

### *Discursive analysis*

Mr Dlodlu's statement "*We are never given a chance to make our contribution*" shows that the preparation of the budget is not a collective exercise of all the stakeholders; only the SMT members are involved. There is no collective decision making where the budget is presented to all the stakeholders and discussed before adoption. Ms Rabebe's statement "*do not get teaching and learning material*" shows that planning is not done properly, income is not allocated equally across the expenses of the school, needs are not prioritised and the budget allocation does not cater for their needs. The teachers' needs are not catered for in the budget.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

The extracts above, "*We are never given a chance to make our contribution*" and "*do not get teaching and learning material*", show that the people who prepare the budget take for granted that they know all the needs of the other stakeholders. Social constructionism cautions researchers against assumptions of supposedly knowing what others think and need (see 2.4.1). Hence, it advocates that social relations by this principle do not regard knowledge as something one individual has or does not have, but as something society collectively agree on through communication and do together (see 2.4.3). This is not democratic as it does not involve others sharing their opinions about the matters that concern them. Social constructionism encourages democracy, team collaboration and joint decision making, which are not evident in the above extracts.

The process of creating a budget is not a short-term, day-to-day management of the business, but rather forces the SMT to consider longer-term planning for funds allocated to the school. It gives guidance to the management relating to planning and outlining the policies; therefore, it provides a means of controlling the income and expenses of a school (see 2.10.2.1). A deeper knowledge of planning and budgeting by the SMTs leads to the maximum allocation and utilisation of scarce resources in a manner that is beneficial to teaching and learning.

#### 4.2.2 Accounting principles

The accounting theory is the numerical art used to collect record and compile monetary information into the system that can be understood by its end users in a resourceful and valuable manner (Wolk, 2009:5). It presents both the theoretical basis and the rules used to guide SMTs in compiling functional financial statements. The International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) are a commonly used set of accounting principles, standards and procedures that the accounting officers in schools should follow when compiling their financial statements (see 2.10.2.2; Carmona & Trombetta, 2008:459). The IFRS consist of authoritative standards and commonly accepted ways of recording and reporting accounting information, which improve the communication of financial information and ensure the minimum level of consistency in the financial statements of a school (see 2.10.2.2; Epstein, Nach & Bragg, 2009:2).

The challenge relating to accounting principles was discussed and **Ms Ndlovu** articulated as follows:

*Uma uvakashela izikole uyozinika I support iningi lazo uthola amabhuku ezimali engekho up to date. Bayeke bathi abayiqondi kahle hle indlela yokugcinwa kwamabhuku ezimali.*

*[When you visit schools to provide support, I find that in most schools, the financial records are not up to date. They say they do not fully understand how to keep financial records.]*

**Mrs Mbokazi** justified why they are not keeping records up to date by pointing out the following:

*Asinaye umuntu oqashelwe ukubhekelele amabhuku ezimali ezikoleni. Thina asikufundelanga ukugcina amabhuku.*

*[No one is hired to make financial books in schools. We do not have qualifications on financial management.]*

And **Mr Mnguni** supported her by saying,

*Ama workshop esibizwa kuwona aphinda into eyodwa esiyaziyo minyaka yonke, loku kokugcina amabhuku okuyikona esingakwazi*

*akugxilwa kuko. Nanokuthi nje isikhathi sincane ama workshop eqala ngo 12 iphume ngo2.*

*[Workshops that we are invited to, repeat one and the same thing every year and they are not addressing record-keeping, which is our main concern. Another thing is that time is too short. Workshops start at 12 and finish at 2 pm.]*

### *Textual analysis*

The citation “*they do not fully understand*” means that they do not have knowledge of keeping financial records and the application of accounting principles. Mrs Mbokazi’s phrase “*We do not have qualifications on financial management*” agrees with Mrs Ndlovu’s that they have not received formal training in financial management. The discussions around this challenge revealed that understanding the importance of adhering to rules and following guidelines requires a deep understanding of financial management. The IFRS are not well known and it is not understood that they are authoritative standards. The statement “*they are not addressing record-keeping, which is our main concern*” is understood to mean that their knowledge needs are not addressed by the workshops that they attend.

### *Discursive analysis*

The statement “*I find that in most schools, the financial records are not up to date*” in the extract indicates that financial records are not recorded and kept in the relevant books. The guidelines are not followed, and policies are not implemented effectively.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

The extracts “*We do not have qualifications on financial management*” and “*and they are not addressing record-keeping, which is our main concern*” indicate that there is a lack of knowledge. Social constructionism is of the view that knowledge is not naturally given, but is created through sustainable social relations (see 2.4.2). A common understanding of financial concepts and principles can be created through networking and self-development (see 2.4.4). The citation “*Workshops that we are invited to, repeat one and the same thing*” might be an indication that the prior skills and knowledge of SMTs are not considered when workshops are planned. The

principle of social constructionism, which advocates historical and cultural inclusivity, is not followed. This principle recognises prior knowledge as the starting point for learning new things. It poses that it is easy to generate knowledge when SMTs receive training, think and make sense of their personal experiences through the development process (see 2.5.3).

The IFRS is a principle-based system that provides a roadmap to establish standards that serve as a guide to ensure that the information that is recorded and kept in the accounting books is relevant, reliable and comparable across the reporting period (see 2.10.2.2). The IFRS system enables the stakeholders to understand the financial standing of the school and its past performance better, and to evaluate the nature and financial effects of the activities which the school engage in. The application of accounting principles also assists the stakeholders in identifying the resources allocated to support teaching and learning and enhances transparency in reporting (see 2.10.2.2). Adequate knowledge and the correct application of these accounting principles ensure the proper management of school finances. The delivery of professional development programmes provides a base for financial literacy that enhances the capability to make sound financial judgments (see 2.10.2.2).

#### **4.2.3 Reporting and accountability**

According to the accounting theory, the prime goal of giving feedback is to present a platform for the stakeholders to have a say in the management of funds. Reports are of little value if they are not able to inform the stakeholders about the information that influences the choices and behaviour of both the reporting official and the stakeholders (Cooper & Owen, 2007:650). In Rorty's terms, the reporting party should open up an honest and unbiased discussion and debate among all the stakeholders, which are accepted by all the stakeholders of a democratically determined consensus view of the school responsibilities (Unerman & Bennett, 2004:691). An acceptable reporting process should be governed by the attitude of accountability. Accountability is, in return, underpinned by the rule of inclusivity of all the relevant stakeholders. The stakeholders' vision is obtained through engaging

them in the process that allows them to express their thoughts without fear or restriction.

The discussion of adhering to accounting principles led to the challenge of accountability and reporting. **Ms Mazibuko** commented as follows:

*Amabhuku ezimali awagcinwa ngendlela efanele. Yingakho izikole zingahambisi umbiko wama financial statements osuhluziwe ngesikhathi.*

*[Financial records are not kept up to date. This is the reason why schools do not submit audited financial statements on time.]*

**Mrs Mbongwe** supported her and added as follows:

*Abakuqondi ukubaluleka kombiko wezimali. Baze bawulethe ngoba bephoqwa ukuthi ngeke bayithole isabelo zimali sabo sonyaka olandelayo uma bengalethile I report yombiko zimali osuhloliwe.*

*[They do not understand the importance of financial reports. They eventually submit their financial statements because they will not get norms and standards for the next financial year if they do not provide audit statements.]*

Another aspect that transpired was raised by **Mr Mkhwanazi** during the discussion when he said,

*Iningi labazali alizi emhlanganweni wokwethulwa kwezimali bathi kusizani ngoba bafundelwa izibalo ezinkulukazi abangaziqondi.*

*[Most parents do not attend financial management meetings because they say they do not understand the figures being presented to them.]*

### *Textual analysis*

The phrase in the first extract “*records are not kept up to date*” indicates that financial information is not recorded in the accounting books. The citation “*This is the reason why schools do not submit... on time*” shows the consequence of not keeping the records up to date.



### *Discursive analysis*

Mrs Mbongwe commented, “*They do not understand the importance of financial reports.*” This shows a lack of understanding of the rationale behind reporting. It indicates a lack of commitment to transparency. The phrase “*submit their financial statements because they will not get norms and standards*” further shows that SMTs only submit financial statements because they want to receive a monetary allocation for the next financial year.

### *Social analysis*

The statement “*Most parents do not attend financial management meetings because they say they do not understand the figures being presented to them*” by Mr Mkhwanazi indicates that the language and terms used by those presenting the financial reports are not simple and does not accommodate all the stakeholders. It means the reports are not explained and interpreted in a simple form to encourage discussions and input. The social and cultural backgrounds of all the stakeholders are not taken into consideration. It shows that parents do not feel valued and their right to information is disregarded.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

Social constructionism holds the view that language does not mirror the reality, but creates a common understanding among a group of people and an acceptable way of doing things. Language gives meaning to reality (see 2.3). The extract “*Most parents do not attend financial management meetings because they say they do not understand the figures being presented to them*” indicates that language was not considered to create a common understanding between the individual’s meanings and the meaning of others (see 2.5.5). Social constructionism supports freedom of expression; sharing ideas results in shaping our thinking and helps us communicate with others (see 2.3). Social constructionism holds the view that knowledge and meaning are not stable, but are co-constructed through the interaction with others. The main characteristic of constructionism is that cultural constructs are socially stabilised by institutional structures, and therefore, managing school finances is not the business of a single individual, but of the whole team (see 2.5.6). Financial

reports should, therefore, not be understood by a presenter only, but by all the stakeholders (see 2.5.6).

Financial management in schools is not to be separated from a broader frame of management, which includes all the stakeholders, as enforced by the DoE. Within this structure, authority at school level is not centralised around one individual, which may be a principal or an SGB chairperson, but is shared with the SMT members, SGB members, parents, learners and district officials as far as possible. It should be inclusive of all the relevant stakeholders (Bhenguni & Ncwane, 2014:464). Accountability obliges compliance with the laws and regulations, record-keeping, reporting and auditing and is an essential financial management practice (see 2.10.2.3). SMTs should be transparent in all the activities pertaining to the management of school finances.

#### **4.2.4 Roles and responsibilities of school management teams and school governing bodies in financial management**

The KwaZulu-Natal School Education Act (Act No. 3 of 1996) states that the school principal should consult with the school governing body in appointing an individual from the administrative personnel to keep records of school funds. If the school does not have administrative personnel employed at the school, the principal, in discussion with the governing body, may ask for a member of the teaching personnel to keep financial records for the school (KZN DoE, 1996:79).

Belbin's (2012:24) team role theory states that team members assume different team roles, which contribute to and interrelate with others in a certain way. The team members communicate their purpose strongly, both inside and outside the group, and are willing to value people for their knowledge, competence and contribution rather than their status. Each person plays an important role to ensure the success of the team (Belbin, 2012:26).

The challenge of roles and responsibilities transpired when, during the discussion, **Mr Mthembu** pointed out as follows:

*Kwezinye zezinto eziyeke zidale ukudideka ukuthi ubani kahle hle othatha izinqumo zokugcina ngokusebenza kwemali yesikole.*

*[Another thing that confuses us is who has a final say in making decisions on how to spend school funds.]*

**Mr Ngwenya** asked while we were discussing:

*Angiwazi ukuthi uyini umsebenzi kaTreasurer uma kuzophinde kube nomuntu oseceleni obhala amasheke.*

*[I do not understand the role of the Treasurer if we still have to appoint Finance Officer?]*

While **Mr Ngwenya** was talking, **Mr Mkhwanazi** interrupted –

*Izinqumo eziningi uzizwa sezithathiwe ngu Thishanhloko ngaphandle kokubonisana no Shlalo womkhandlu owengamele isikole.*

*[Decisions are taken by the principal without consulting the chairperson of the SGB.]*

#### *Textual analysis*

The word “confuses” reveals that there are no clear guidelines with regard to the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in the management of school funds. Similarly, the excerpt “*I do not understand the role*” shows that there are no engagements where the roles and responsibilities are discussed and clarified. It shows a lack of working together as a team; there is no communication between the stakeholders.

#### *Discursive analysis*

The statement “*decisions are taken by the principal without consulting the chairperson of the SGB*” reveals that there is no consultation with the other stakeholders and transparency in decision making. There is no interaction and collaboration between the principal and the chairperson of the SGB. There is confusion with regard to the fact that the policy states that principals are responsible and accountable for keeping the financial records, while it stipulates that the school’s

financial management is a primary function of the SGB. This prevents cohesion that promotes solidarity in the team.

#### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

The words “*without consulting*” display a lack of team spirit and working cohesions. Social constructionism advocates that the team members should be directly active in circumstances, rather than looking at them from a distance. The connection is a powerful means of attaining understanding. The belief that there is no “I” without “you” is applicable here; people are always in relation to others (see 2.3). Social constructionism promotes social cohesion; it says knowledge is gained through the process of socialisation (see 2.4.4). It is of the view that the behaviour of an individual is influenced by social structures (see 2.5.6). This shows that there is a need to promote collaboration and team spirit among all the stakeholders.

The final accountability for the accurateness of the financial records lies with the principal and SMTs, even if they are not in charge of keeping the books on a regular basis. They are required by the system to make several and frequent verifications. The management of the school’s finances is a primary function of the SGB, usually through its Finance Committee. However, the principal is ultimately responsible for the accuracy of the books. Both the chairperson of the SGB and the treasurer should, therefore, be completely familiar with the state of the school’s finances (see 2.10.3.4).

#### **4.2.5 Policies and legislation**

The school financial policy defines limits on the actions that the Finance Committee may take in order to realise the strategic goals of organisations and provide standards to measure the performance of their jurisdiction. Steps to consider when making effective financial policies include deciding on the scope, developing the policy, designing it, presenting it to stakeholders and reviewing it should the need arise. It should be implemented accordingly as it protects SMTs, SGBs and teachers in case something goes wrong, as long as they have adhered to the policy (see 2.10.2.5). Schools should draft a school financial policy which clearly indicates the

procedures and rules for conducting funds at schools. It should stipulate an unambiguous understanding of the responsibilities of the treasurer, finance officer, principal and other nominated members who are delegated with financial management tasks (Western Cape DoE, 2013:8).

A high-quality policy recognises and expresses the basic values and principles that should be applied to the specific needs of a school. It sets and gives direction. Therefore, it is important that all the stakeholders are directly involved in the drafting and implementing of the financial policy of the school. The guiding rules and regulations for handling the funds or assets of the school in the financial policy should be formulated (Mestry, 2006:35).

Another challenge articulated by **Mr Ngwenya** in the meeting was policies and legislation. He said,

*Asinalo ulwazi olunzulu lwemithetho yokulawula izimali.*

*[We do not have enough knowledge of financial management rules and regulations.]*

**Ms Radebe** agreed with him and commented,

*Uthi noma usuzitshela ukuthi usuyayazi uzwe sekuthiwa sekukhona okusha.*

*[Even when you think you understand the policies, you find out that it has been amended.]*

When the discussion continued, **Mr Dladlu** pointed out as follows:

*Uma kuthengwa izinto zesikole, abawenzi ama quotation awu 3 njengokusho komthetho.*

*[When the school procure goods for the school, they do not make the three quotations as stipulated by legislation.]*

### *Textual analysis*

The statements “do not have enough knowledge” and “it has been amended” show that the SMTs do not have the knowledge of financial policies and amendments. They do not keep abreast of the changes in the system; hence, the framework to empower the SMTs in financial management. Mr Dlodlu’s (the secretary of the SGB) use of the word “They” displays that he is not part of the procurement process. This shows that there is no consultation and involvement of all the stakeholders. It further reveals that there are disparities between policy and what is actually done by the finance committees.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

Social constructionism argues that knowledge is not stable; it is co-constructed, modified and shifted in interactions with others (see 2.2.2.1). The word “amended” confirms that people do not live in the world that is defined by only one system of knowledge, but under a variety of available kinds of knowledge guided by a variety of policies and legislation. It illustrates that knowledge changes from time to time (see 2.2.2.4). Therefore, a professional development framework to empower SMTs is important to ensure that they are kept abreast of the new developments in policies and legislation.

National policy mandates, such as the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) (Act No. 1 of 1999), and norms and standards of funding and circulars issued by the education departments are frameworks that provide a rubric within which schools, based on their own theories of action, continually design their school policies.

## **4.3 POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS THAT SERVE AS A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TO EMPOWER SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

In the above section, challenges faced by SMTs in schools with regard to financial management were identified and discussed. This section focuses on discussing the possible solutions for each challenge identified by the co-researchers during meetings. They are as follows: induction of SMTs on planning and budgeting,

continuous professional development (CPD), professional and ethical practices for reporting and accountability, formulation of professional learning communities (PLCs) and adhering to financial management guidelines. These solutions serve as a framework that can empower SMTs to manage school funds effectively.

#### **4.3.1 Induction of school management teams on planning and budgeting**

According to the reviewed literature and practice, planning and budgeting are rated high as a challenge that makes it difficult for SMTs to manage school finances effectively. It was also clear that the expenditure in schools was not according to the actual figures stipulated in the budget (see 2.10.2.1). It transpired in the discussions in 4.2.1 that SMTs face taking many financial decisions when they are appointed to management positions, and they typically have to learn through trial and error. Therefore, there is a need for the induction of SMTs on planning and budgeting so that it is used as a tool that guides financial decisions made during that period.

According to the *School Management Team Handbook*, all newly appointed SMTs should be exposed to learning and induction into related departmental prescripts, policies, procedures, systems, structures and processes within the first month of their assuming their duty. During induction, the new appointees must be given a file on all the practical and essential documents, including duties and responsibilities, as provided in the Personnel Administrative Measures and the Education Labour Relations Council file (KZN DoE, 2010:24). The best practice would be to induct SMTs into planning and budgeting in a participant-oriented workshop to ensure that there is a smooth transition to the organisations and their new roles (see 2.10.3.1). The induction model proposes that the induction programme is divided into three stages, namely the anticipatory stage, encounter stage and setting stage (Prajapati, Chack & Trivedi, 2017:65). In the anticipatory stage, SMTs may have a variety of expectations of the position, based on what they have heard. The encounter stage is when SMTs have assumed their duties and face the reality of the new role. Lastly, the setting stage is when the SMT has established working relations and begins to get familiar with the processes (Mabaso, 2012:34-35).

Ms Ndlovu and Mr Mbatha, as officials from governance and teacher development, organised an induction workshop on financial planning and budgeting. The workshop was participant-orientated as it dealt directly with their development needs on planning and budgeting. During this workshop, important aspects of budgeting were discussed. The information was shared on the processes to be followed when the Finance Committee is doing financial planning. The co-researchers' discussions showed that they all agreed that induction into budgeting is vital as a solution to the challenge faced by SMTs on the matter. **Mr Mkhwanazi** said,

*Kuningi esikufundile kulomhlangano esizokusebenzisa masilungiselela ukusetshenziswa kwezimali zesikole.*

*[We have gained a lot of knowledge that we are going to use when we do financial planning and budgeting.]*

**Mrs Mbokazi** supported him and said,

*Sizoxhumana kakhulu nabo bonke abathintekayo uma senza I budget ukuze wonke umuntu aneliseke ngezinqumo ezithathiwe.*

*[We will consult all the stakeholders to get their views so that everyone forms part of our decision making.]*

**Ms Radebe** further suggested as follows:

*Kungakuhle ukuthi loluhlobo lwe workshop lube khona njalo uma kukhona abasanda kuqashwa ukuze basheshe bakhanyiseleke ngendlela yoku budget nemithetho yakhona ukuze kunciphe izinkinga nezinqinamba umuntu abhekana nazo ngenxa yokungazi.*

*[It would be great to have such induction workshops on budgeting for newly appointed employees to eliminate challenges due to lack of knowledge.]*

### *Social analysis*

The above statements show that the induction of SMTs in financial planning and budgeting was a success. The use of the word “we” by the co-researchers in this context indicates that the induction did not only provide them with knowledge on budgeting but also promoted the consultation of the stakeholders and the spirit of



working together as a team. They understand the importance of spending within the allocated amount as guided by the budget as a legal document. Ms Radebe's phrases "*induction workshops*" and "*eliminate challenges*" show that the early induction of newly appointed SMTs on budgeting empowers SMTs to prepare the budget correctly and adhere to it.

#### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

The consultation of the other stakeholders and working as a team, which is shown by the use of word "*we*" in the above statements, are supported by social constructionism as it advocates communication and social cohesion among the stakeholders. The citation "*We have gained a lot of knowledge*" in Mr Mkhwanazi's comment shows that the induction workshop provided the opportunity to construct knowledge socially. Democracy and joint decision making are evident (see 2.4.3).

The induction policy in Australia states that the induction coordinator must schedule all newly appointed employees to attend induction programmes on the first day of employment. The appropriate time should be allocated to ensure that all the necessary information is communicated, and these programmes should be tailored in such a way that they suit the needs of the new employee (Institute of Community Directors, 2015:3). Induction programmes help newly appointed SMTs to integrate into the work processes with minimum difficulty by acquainting them with the knowledge and skills required to manage school finances efficiently (see 2.10.3.1).

#### **4.3.2 Continuous professional development**

Generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) provide guidelines to financial officers on the nature of information to be shown in the financial statements in order for them to be accepted as reliable. South African statements of GAAP comply with the IFRS, as represented by the International Accounting Standards issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (see 2.10.2.2). It was evident that some schools do not know these principles, which makes it difficult for them to keep records and draft financial statements at the end of the financial year (see 4.2.2).

SMTs need to enhance their financial skills and knowledge to implement the GAAP effectively in record-keeping. CPD strengthens their financial knowledge base and development of specialist skills in financial management. It renews their enthusiasm and commitment to the best practices of public finance management (DoE, 2006:17). As part of CPD, the government has introduced a system called continuous professional teacher development under the South African Council of Educators to provide SMTs with comprehensible guidance concerning the professional development activities that will add to their professional growth (DoE, 2006:27). The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, which aims to address continued teacher development, places educators at the centre of their own development. Furthermore, according to the plan, the DBE is the lead agency responsible for the progress of processes to help educators to identify their development requirements and provide expanded prospects for access to excellent CPD activities and programmes to meet these needs (DoHET, 2011:2).

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa advocates the creation of the National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development and District Teacher Development Centres, which can provide accredited and adequate pre-service training in financial management conducted by experts (see 2.10.3.2). The Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg and the Matthew Goniwe School of Governance and Leadership initiated a professional development programme, the Advanced Certificate in Education in Educational Management. This initiative was to address the leadership and management challenges faced by SMTs in schools. It aims to develop SMTs professionally to be able to manage school finances, among other things (see 2.10.3.2).

During the discussion where the co-researchers brainstormed possible solutions to the challenge in 4.2.2, they came to an agreement that CPD in financial management is a possible solution for the poor implementation of GAAP. This was evident when **Mr Mbatha** said,

*Kubalulekile uzithuthukisa ngolwazi ngoba kulesikhathi esiphila kuso izinto zishintsha usuku nosuku.*

*[It is important to continuously develop ourselves; we are living in dynamic times; things change all the time.]*

**Ms Mazibuko** supported **Mr Mbatha** by saying,

*Ziningi izinhlelo zokuzithuthukisa ngolwazi lwezokuphathwa kwezimali ezingasisiza ukuze siqonde yonke imigomo yakhona. Uma unguthisha ufanele ukuba ngumfundi impilo yakho yonke.*

*[There are many professional development activities on financial management that can help us have deeper accounting principles knowledge. A teacher is a lifelong learner.]*

**Mrs Mbongwe** emphasised the following point:

*Sifanele ukukubeka ezandleni zethu ukuzithuthukisa ulwazi singalindi umqashi ngaso sonke isikhathi ukuthi kube nguye osihlelelayo amathuba okufunda. Uma kunezinto ezingaziqondi kahle asisukume sifune ulwazi kwabanye.*

*[We are responsible for our own development; we do not need to rely on the employer for development opportunities all the time. If we feel that we need knowledge on a certain aspect, we have to take initiative and network with others.]*

### *Textual analysis*

The excerpts “*continuously develop ourselves*” and “*lifelong learner*” show that professional development have to be continuous. In order for the SMTs to have more knowledge of accounting principles and be able to implement them, they need to participate in professional development programmes in financial management continuously. It is vital for the SMTs to expose themselves to capacity-building opportunities on financial management, even if they are not organised by the DoE. This would also help them keep up with the changes that are taking place in the financial field. The phrases “*responsible for our own development*” and “*take initiative*” indicate that every individual SMT or SGB member must take responsibility for his or her own development. SMTs and SGBs should take the initiative to find out how other schools that do not have a person employed as a finance officer deal with record-keeping.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

Social constructionism acknowledges the process of externalisation, which means that knowledge is produced by human beings on an ongoing basis (externalisation), as shown in the above comment by the phrases “*continuously develop ourselves*” and “*lifelong learner*”. Its objective stance states that if something has a continuous effect on people’s lives, they have to learn about it (objectivation). The implementation of GAAP in financial record-keeping is part of an everyday activity which should be done by the Finance Committee; therefore, the Finance Committee needs to be continuously developed on these principles (see 2.2.1).

In Botswana, school leadership development short programmes are offered continuously through the Primary Schools Management Development Programme, cluster-based workshops and SMT conferences. The Institute of Development Management is one other way in which school leaders were supported in order to enhance their knowledge of accounting principles (see 2.10.3.2). A study conducted in Texas also revealed that CPD is part of the learning process which engages SMTs in ongoing efforts to educate themselves and improve their knowledge in applying accounting principles correctly (see 2.10.3.2).

#### **4.3.3 Professional and ethical practices for reporting and accountability**

Reporting and accountability of school funds by SMTs emerged to be one other challenge during the discussions and in the literature reviewed. In the study conducted, it was found that in some schools, there were no invitations or minutes of the meetings to invite parents to the presentation of financial statements. The co-researchers echoed the same sentiments, namely that financial statements are not submitted on time because the financial records are not adequately kept (see 2.10.2.3; 4.2.3). The co-researchers were of the opinion that the study of professional and ethical practices by SMTs can provide solutions to this challenge.

One other aspect that has an influence on the moral conduct of workers is the ethical environment of the organisation (Humphrey, 2005:342). Inspiring ethics in financial education to improve the moral behaviour of its members is regarded as one way of

restoring the trustworthiness of the profession (see 2.10.3.3). The constructive effect of ethics education on the moral improvement of the SMT is beyond that which is expected to occur. Therefore, high levels of moral development are useful to ensure that SMTs always stick to high ethical principles in their management of school finances (see 2.10.3.3). Professional accounting bodies need not only offer professional accreditation financial management courses for SMTs but also provide continuous development activities in ethical learning. Research has found that SMTs with high attitudes of moral development rely more on judgement and less on technical standards for resolving challenges (Jackling, Cooper, Leung & Dellaportas, 2007:932).

During the discussions, ethics and moral education was viewed by the co-researchers as one probable solution to deal with the challenge of reporting and accountability, as discussed above and in Chapter 2 (see 2.10.2.3; 4.2.3). **Ms Ndlovu** commented as follows:

*Ibalulekile kakhulu I workshop noma izifundo ezifundisa ngobuqotho nokuba neqiniso ekuphatheni izimali.*

*[It is very important to attend workshops on ethical and moral education in financial management.]*

**Mr Ngwenya** added the following:

*Kuhle imibiko zimali uma wethulwa ngolimi nangendlela eqondwa yiwo wonke umuntu. Kungenza abazali bakukhuthalele ukuza emhlanganweni wombiko zimali.*

*[It would be helpful if financial reports are presented in a language that is understood by all people. It can encourage parents to attend financial report meetings.]*

**Mr Mthembu** further emphasised the following:

*Kuchazwe kahle yonke into, kuvuleleke ukubuza uma kukhona abazali abangakuqondi.*

*[Every detail must be outlined and parents must feel free to seek clarity where they don't understand.]*

### *Textual analysis*

The citation “*very important*” from Ms Ndlovu’s statement acknowledges that moral and ethics education for SMTs in financial management have a significant impact on the way in which things are done. It has a role to play in instilling a sense of responsibility and accountability to the society that one is serving.

### *Social analysis*

The word “*helpful*” and the citation “*language that is understood by all*” indicate that the inclusion of all the stakeholders, through the use of language that is simple and clear to everyone, can encourage the parents’ attendance in financial report meetings. The phrase “*feel free*” is understood to mean that parents will feel at ease to contribute, share their views and ask clarity-seeking questions on what is presented during the financial report meetings. This promotes ownership and collective agreement in the financial decisions. By doing this, accountability and responsibility are shared by all the stakeholders.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

Professional and ethical practices are in line with social constructionism as constructionists derive knowledge from looking at the world from ethical and moral perspectives (see 2.6). Social constructionism advocates to be directly active and is connected to circumstances rather than looking at them from the distance, which is an influential means of attaining understanding and represents the questioning and searching of truth and reality through reasoning and rationality (see 2.3). The quote “*parents must feel free*” acknowledges equal engagement of all involved in the management of school finances, which is in line with the principles of social constructionism (see 2.8).

The financial professional bodies are dedicated to an important responsibility of ethical development and acknowledge that ethics should be part of the accounting programme, just like other technical accounting skills (Jackling et al., 2007:939). SMTs should be centrally concerned with leadership practices that are ethical and moral to decide what is acceptable or not in the management of school funds. They

are morally accountable to all the stakeholders in education; therefore, whatever decisions are taken on school finances should be reported to the stakeholders. The influences of the SMTs are largely anchored in their moral qualities, such as respect, fairness, honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, responsibility and transparency (see 2.10.3.3).

#### **4.3.4 Formulation of professional learning communities**

Defining the roles and responsibilities of SMTs and SGBs in the management of school finances is a challenge. There are no clear limits of a delegated authority, which leads to a difficulty in establishing the boundaries of each. This usually gives rise to conflict and tension among them (see 2.10.2.4).

PLCs, as a form of networking, are a very effective mode of leadership learning that can address this challenge. The main benefit is that it is social learning and provides a strong possibility for transferring ideas (Bush, 2009:379). Visiting other schools, particularly those that have encountered the same challenges, tends to increase learning. Interschool networking is a prevailing means for professional development. Hence, the Advanced Certificate in Education emphasises that school managers work and learn together in clusters (see 2.10.3.4).

During the discussions, the co-researchers agreed that the formulation of PLCs can be a solution to the challenge discussed in 4.2.4 as it encourages networking with other schools and sharing strategies to improve work relationships. PLCs provide platforms where SGBs and SMTs from different schools work together as a team and share information on defining the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the management of school funds (see 2.10.3.4). This was evident when the co-researchers reflected after Mr Mbatha, from teacher development, had suggested that the schools involved should formulate PLCs, which would include the schools within the circuit. The formulated PLCs were PLCs for SGBs, for SMTs and for finance committees from different schools. **Mrs Mbokazi** gave feedback and said,

*Sifunde lukhulu ngokuhlanganyela nezinye izikole sabelana ngolwazi, ikakhulukazi ngoba besixoxa ngezinto ezenzekayo ngempela ezikoleni.*

*[We learned a lot a lot from other schools during our information-sharing sessions, especially because we were discussing practical issues that are taking place at schools.]*

**Mr Dlodlu** supported this as follows:

*Besinokukhululeka kokusho konke esifisa ukukusho nokukubuza. Size savumelana ngokuqhubeka sixhumane nangezincingo uma kukhona ulwazi esifisa ukulidlulisela kwabanye.*

*[We were free to express our views and ask questions. We agreed to continue communicating with one another through the use of cell phones in case there is information to be shared.]*

**Mr Mnguni** further elaborated –

*Kusisizile ukuzwa uvo lwabanye abantu nokuthi imisebenzi yokuphathwa kwezimali bayihlukanisa kanjani. Sonke sibalulekile kulomsebenzi kufanele siwenze ngokubambisana.*

*[It helped to learn how others share roles and responsibilities of managing finances. We all have an important role to play in executing this task as a team.]*

### *Social analysis*

The phrase “*learned a lot from other schools*” acknowledges that learning communities provide opportunities to learn more from peer discussions and the views of others. Mrs Mbokazi’s statement shows that this activity enhanced their development on specific relevant matters that directly affect them. The extract “*agreed to continue communicating*” indicates that meeting as a group that share a common interest was beneficial to all and it further concurs with the concept of CPD discussed above (see 4.3.2) in that development is a continuous process. The citation “*We agreed to continue communicating with one another through the use of cell phones*” illustrates that there are many effective ways of communication that can be used by PLCs to ensure that information is shared continuously. The phrase “*free to express*” proves that PLCs provide a chance for individuals to communicate freely with others. The statement “*it helped to learn how others share roles and responsibilities*” depicts that during PLC meetings, the roles and responsibilities were



discussed and clarified. After that, all the stakeholders were aware of the role they were expected to play in financial management.

#### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

Social constructionism is of the view that projecting one's feelings and ideas are a key to learning, which is evident from Mr Dlodlu's comment "*free to express*" from. PLCs provide the opportunity to express ideas, make them tangible and shareable, which results in shaping the thinking of SGBs and SMTs and helps them to understand one another's roles in managing school funds (see 2.3). The statement "*We learned a lot a lot from other schools*" emphasises that our understanding of humankind continues to change as we communicate with others and that there is no "I" without "you" – people are always in relation to others, whether they are present or not. Therefore, financial management requires that SMTs work together as a team (see 2.3). Social constructionism supports that knowledge is the end result of social interactions and information-sharing processes (see 2.4.3).

Through PLCs, SMTs support one another to adapt to the work unit by sharing information that will lead to improving their work environment. They participate in peer coaching or observe a colleague's financial management style and sharing of information, thus encouraging collaboration (see 2.10.3.4).

#### **4.3.5 Policy and financial management guidelines**

The reviewed literature and empirical data reveal that there are still disparities between what the policies stipulate and what is actually done by the managers in financial management (see 2.10.2.5; 4.2.5). In other countries, this challenge was addressed by effecting workshops on policy education, thus ensuring awareness and adhering to policies and legislation.

It is vital that the SMTs are aware of the requirements of the PFMA, which should not be seen as being applicable only to finance committees but are also relevant to the other stakeholders operating at different levels (Madue, 2007:308). The treasury regulations were disseminated and came into effect in June 2000 to go together with

and compliment the PFMA as a financial management regulation. Treasury regulations include an interior ruling instrument, planning, budgeting, asset management, cash management, accounting and reporting. They are consistent with the regulations of the PFMA (Madue, 2007:309). Therefore, schools should also align their school financial policy to the treasury regulations.

Ms Ndlovu, from the governance subdirectorate, initiated a policy workshop where an official from employee relations within the DoE was invited to facilitate it. Different policies and legislation relevant to financial management were discussed. During the feedback session, it was evident that policy education workshops can play a significant role in enhancing knowledge and thus creating awareness of adhering and implementing financial policies in their management of school funds. **Mr Ngwenya** reflected as follows:

*Yahamba kahle kakhulu i workshop, sazuza ulwazi olubalulekile ngenqubomgomo. Singakujabulela ukuthi siphinde sifundiswe futhi ngeminye noma uma kunoshintsho.*

*[Workshop went well; we gained a lot of important knowledge about financial policies. We would be happy if we can have another one, especially if there are amendments.]*

**Mr Mkhwanazi** added and said,

*Mina engakujabulela engangingakwazi ukuthi okubalulekile ukufunda imithetho lena eqondene nqo nokuphathwa kwezimali hayi ukuthi sekufanele ufunde usomqulu wonke uwucule.*

*[What I found interesting was that one does not have to know the whole policy or Act by heart. You only need to focus and highlight those that are relevant to management of school funds.]*

**Ms Radebe** highlighted the following:

*Sesizobuyela sibukeze inqubomgomo yesikole yokuphathwa kwezimali siwubhale ngendlela ezokwenza kube lula ukuthi ulandeleke. Kahlehle iyisifinyezo se PFMA nezi nqubomgomo ezahlukene.*

*[We will now go back and revise our school finance policies and make them to be in line with PFMA and all other relevant legislation. This will ensure that we adhere to it. In fact, it is a summary of all financial prescripts.]*

### *Textual analysis*

The words “*went well*” reveal that the workshop on financial policy provided the SMTs with the relevant knowledge that they would use in managing school funds. The words “*another one*” again brings up the importance of CPD to ensure that they keep up with the amendments of acts (see 4.3.2). The use of the word “*relevant*” in Mr Mkhwanazi’s statement shows that the workshop on policy was able to address their specific needs and it empowered them with the relevant skills that would assist them to adhere to the financial rules and regulations.

### *Social analysis*

The word “*we*” indicates that the co-researchers acknowledge the importance of consulting and including all the stakeholders, as stipulated by the acts. The phrase “*ensure that we adhere*”, in Ms Radebe’s statement, is an indication that they now understand that there were disparities between what is in the school financial policy and what was actually done and they are willing to address that. The policy education provided them with clarity on how to draft a school finance policy that is in line with the relevant acts, such as the PFMA, as pointed out in the comment “*We will now go back and revise our school finance policies*”.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

The perspective of social constructionism is about revealing reality and pave the way for new interpretations of knowledge in a way that is simple and understood by all concerned, which is manifested in the extract “*we gained a lot of important knowledge*”. Policy education provided an opportunity for SMTs to find meaning and understanding of the policies and legislation to such an extent that they could apply them to their practical situations (see 2.2.2.2). They were able to produce knowledge that is useful in bringing transformative change in the way they manage school funds. This is evident in the statement “*We will now go back and revise our school*

*finance policies and make them to be in line with PFMA and all other relevant legislation” (see 2.3).*

Providing support empowers SMTs with new skills to address the challenges connected to changing policies and legislation. Active learning opportunities to decipher policies help teachers comprehend and apply a concept and remain open to adopting it. SMTs would benefit from professional development that focuses on integrating policies and legislation to practical school financial management (Curtis, 2016:43). Policy and legislation knowledge can be enhanced by introducing consultants or mentors to address and educate SMTs on developing a school policy in line with the relevant legislation. Professional development programmes on financial guidelines can be made available and enhanced by using modern instructional technology for easy access (see 2.10.3.5).

#### **4.4 CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TO EMPOWER SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

In the above section, the possible solutions to challenges faced by SMTs in financial management were presented. In order to ensure the successful implementation of the professional development framework, the following conditions were discussed and agreed on by the co-researchers during the meeting. Professional development programmes require adequate time, continuous monitoring and evaluating the professional development framework, providing collaborative learning opportunities and relevant training content.

##### **4.4.1 Professional development programmes require adequate time**

Professional development should take place over an extensive period of time and SMTs need to have time without responsibilities for the most favourable learning to take place. They should determine their own appropriate time for professional development in financial management (see 2.10.4.1). Everybody learns at their own pace, which should be taken into account when designing training programmes. Time should be given for SMTs to review training information and process what they

have learned. Articulating and codifying prior experience take time and thinking after completing can powerfully enhance the learning process (Di Stefano, Gino, Pisano & Staats, 2016:27).

Professional development programmes need to be longer and to have more content focus, active learning and consistency. Quick-fix workshops may not at all times yield the expected results (see 2.10.4.1). Therefore, the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa supports the use of the immediate pre- and post-term periods to minimise the loss of teaching and learning time and integrate professional development time into the school timetables by adjusting the schooling week (DoHET, 2011:20).

The reviewed literature revealed that one essential condition for the successful implementation of the professional development framework is adequate time (see 2.10.4.1). Similarly, during the discussions in the meetings, time was indicated as an important factor when **Ms Mazibuko** voiced her opinion –

*I SMT kufanele ithole isikhathi esanele sokuziqeqesha ukuze bakuqonde kahle konke okufundiwe.*

*[SMTs need enough time when attending development programmes so that they are able to comprehend and make sense of what they were taught.]*

**Mr Mthembu** suggested the following:

*Kuncono uma izinhlelo zokuzithuthukisa ziba ngamaholidi ukuze i SMT ithole isikhathi esanele sokufunda ingaphazamiseki.*

*[It is better when these development activities are held during the holidays so that the SMT can have enough uninterrupted learning time.]*

**Ms Radebe** stated,

*Kungafanele kuhlelwe kahle ukuze abantwana bangaphazamiseki kakhulu nothisha basithole isikhathi sokuphumula.*

*[Arrangements can be made so that there is minimum loss of teaching and learning time as well as teachers to have resting time during their holidays.]*

### *Textual analysis*

The phrase “*need enough time*” shows that time is important in ensuring that SMTs were able to learn and develop their knowledge during the development activity. The word “*comprehend*” indicates that processing and finding a deeper understanding of the content requires time, otherwise SMTs can attend and listen to what is presented, but the understanding aspect needs time. The statement also shows that learning is a continuing process that takes time before one sees the changes that are needed. **Mr Mthembu’s** suggestion “*SMT can have enough uninterrupted learning time*” shows that he agreed that SMTs need uninterrupted time when they can focus on the development activity. The excerpt “*Arrangements can be made*” shows that with proper planning, enough time can be allocated for professional development with minimum loss of teaching time.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

Social constructionism states that learning happens continually in human beings. They develop skills and knowledge habits and a certain way of acting by repeating them and that requires time. This is also evident in the citation “*SMTs need enough time*” (see 2.4.1).

The literature shows that time available for professional development can be creatively structured into the following categories: release time (which refers to freeing SMTs from their regular instructional time with students), common time (which is organising time to ensure that SMTs with the same needs have common free time) and purchased time (where, with the help of grants from the department, SMTs are compensated for attending professional development activities outside their working hours) (Loucks-Horsley, Stiles, Mundry & Hewson, 2009:126). One other important aspect of time is to use the allocated time in resourceful and exceptional ways to ensure maximum fruitful learning opportunities for SMTs (see 2.10.4.1).

#### 4.4.2 Continuous monitoring and evaluation of a professional development framework

Monitoring and evaluation is the logical method of collecting information about activities and outcomes of programmes to make judgements about the development programme to develop its value in the future (see 2.10.4.2). Staff development is most efficient when there is an ongoing monitoring and evaluation procedure that includes individual follow-ups through observation, feedback and staff discussions. It measures the merit or impact of the professional development programmes against the set of standards, as defined by the programme's goals (Hill, 2009:474). The standards are scaled to reflect the level of expectation in the development programme outcome; it thus provides evaluator criteria against which to measure the deputy principal's success (Killion, 2008:8).

In the discussion, monitoring and evaluating the impact of the professional development framework came up as an essential condition for its success. **Mrs Mbongwe** suggested as follows:

*Kuhle ukuthi emva kohlelo lokuzithukisa kwezokuphathwa kwezimali zesikole kugcwaliswe imibuzo ebuza ngokuthi kuhambe kanjani. Kuba ithuba lokubeka umubono wokuthi sikuzuzile yini ebesikulindele.*

*[It is better to fill in assessment forms after professional development in the financial management programme. It provides an opportunity to comment if our expectations were met.]*

**Mr Ngwenya** further added,

*Kuyasiza impela ukuthi sithole ithuba lokubeka imibono ngezinhlelo zokuzithukisa ukuthi yiziphi esizidingayo nezisisizile.*

*[It helps to get a chance to give feedback on professional development activities so that we can share our satisfaction and future needs.]*

**Mr Myeni** elaborated as follows:

*Kungaphumelela ukuthuthukiswa kwabaphathi besikole uma zonke izinhlaka ezifanele ukubamba iqhaza eku monitheni zikwenza loko ngokuzimisela.*

*[Professional development framework to empower SMTs can be a success if all the stakeholders are committed to playing their required role of monitoring the professional development activities.]*

### *Textual analysis*

The suggestion “*It is better to fill in assessment forms after*” shows that feedback should be provided after each professional development activity. The statement “*provides an opportunity to comment if our expectations were met*” further emphasises the importance of monitoring and evaluating the whole aspects and processes of professional development. The words “*It helps*” and “*for future needs*” indicate that the continuation of the professional development process is dependent on the information provided by SMTs. The words “*share our satisfaction*” tell us that giving feedback is one way of monitoring thus measuring the impact of professional development and determining whether the objectives were met.

### *Social analysis*

The extract “*can be a success if all stakeholders play their required role of monitoring*” shows that monitoring is important because the only way to determine if everyone is playing their roles is through the analysis of reports, which serve as the means of giving feedback.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

Social constructionism promotes dialogue, evaluation and giving feedback, which is illustrated in the text by the phrase “*It helps to get a chance to give feedback*”. It is part of a social process where new knowledge is created. This framework advocates that the views of others are accepted and respected (see 2.3).

Providing support to teachers when they are back at their schools to implement change has been recognised as an important aspect of more successful development programmes. SMTs are required to point out the level to which their



involvement in the professional development programme led to increased knowledge in financial management (Ingvarson, Meiers & Beavis, 2005:10). The effectiveness of the framework relies much on the monitoring and evaluation of the development programmes. If both those who design and undertake the evaluation process, as well as those who use their results, do not possess the proper skills and competencies to do the evaluations, the feedback may not be reliable or give the best results (see 2.10.4.2).

#### **4.4.3 Provision of collaborative learning opportunities**

Communal involvement can add to a shared professional custom where SMTs develop the same values and goals. The professional development framework is more effective when staff share the knowledge and expertise to help one another improve their financial management knowledge (see 2.10.4.3). Teamwork and support of SMTs are necessary for the professional development framework to be successful as it provides opportunities for educators to discuss their achievements and problems in managing school finances. Collaboration contributes towards the development of a helpful school culture that is devoted to change and the formation of better educational opportunities for all (Carrington & Robinson, 2009:132). The thriving execution of the professional development framework is reliant on continued teamwork and support on the part of all the stakeholders that added to its development (DoHET, 2011:19).

During the discussion, **Ms Ndlovu**'s opinion was as follows:

*Kubalulekile ukuxhumana, kube nokubambisana uma kuhlelwa izinhlelo zokuzithuthukisa kusukela emazingeni aphansi ezikoleni kuze kufike kuzwelonke kubalulekile.*

*[It is important to work together as a team when planning professional development activities from school to national level.]*

**Mr Mbatha** added,

*Ngalemihlangano nje ebesiba nayo sibonile ukuthi ngokubambisana singenza lukhulu.*

*[The meetings that we have held together has shown us that together we can do more.]*

**Mr Mnguni** attested as follows:

*Yebo! Sifunde lukhulu komunye nomunye.*

*[Yes! We learnt a lot from each other.]*

### *Social analysis*

The phrase *“important to work together as a team when planning”* shows that collaboration plays an important role from the initial planning stage of professional development. The extracts *“together as a team”* and *“school to national level”* indicate the importance of cohesion when dealing with professional development and that collaboration should not be limited to the local level only, but learning opportunities should be broadened in order to gain more knowledge. Mr Mbatha’s citation that *“meetings held together has shown”* shows that there is evidence of success already been identified as a result of collaboration. Mr Mnguni’s affirmation *“Yes!”* is an indication that he agrees with the other speakers.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

Social constructionism recognises an intersubjective connection, as it acknowledges that the co-researchers are influenced by the people around them. The main characteristics of social constructionism are that constructs are socially stabilised by institutional structures and, therefore, not by a single individual, as it is illustrated by the statement *“It is important to work together as a team when planning professional development activities from school to national level”*. The implementation of the professional development framework is successful when responsibilities are shared by all the stakeholders (see 2.4.3; 2.4.4).

When the professional development activity is a combined effort, the amount of information shared in a social unit is more than the sum total of the knowledge acquired by an individual member (Boreham, 2000:505).

#### 4.4.4 Relevant training content

The Skills Development and Skills Development Levies Acts, passed in 1998 and 1999 and succeeding the National Skills Development Strategy, have been initiated to develop the people and to offer education chances for all. In order to execute the National Skills Development Strategy, SETAs were established in various sectors. The Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) is in charge of supporting and assisting the delivery of education, training and development (Steyn, 2004:217). The tasks of the skills development planning unit are to conduct research and analyse the labour market in order to establish skills development needs to help in the formulation of the national skills development strategy and relevant skills development plans (see 2.10.4.4).

During the discussion in a meeting, **Mrs Mbokazi** pointed out the following:

*Uphiko olubhekelele izindaba zokuthuthukiswa kwabasebenzi kufanele luhlaziye okubhalwe abasebenzi ohlelweni lwe Professional Development Plan ukuze bazi izidingo zoqoqosho lwabasebenzi.*

*[Human resources development should analyse the PDP (professional development plan) to determine the professional development needs of the SMTs.]*

**Ms Radebe** added,

*Uma benze njalo izinhlelo zokuzithuthukisa ekuphatheni izmali zesikole zohambisana nezidingo zethu.*

*[When they do that, the professional development in financial management activities will be in line with our development needs.]*

**Mr Mnguni** emphasised the following:

*Siyoya ngobuningi bethu ezinhlelweni zokuzithuthukisa ngoba sobe sazi ukuthi sothola ulwazi noqeqesho oluzosisiza ezikoleni.*

*[We will attend professional development activities in numbers because we will be sure that we will gain knowledge and skills that will help us in our schools.]*

### *Textual analysis*

Part of the statement that says “*should analyse the PDP to determine*” indicates that it is important to align professional development activities with the needs of the SMTs. The extract “*we will gain knowledge and skills that will help us in our schools*” points out that by determining the needs, the professional development framework provided will be relevant to the real, practical situations SMTs face at school level. The excerpt “*will attend in numbers*” shows that SMTs are only interested in professional development activities that are relevant to their school situations. It is evident from the statements that the success of the professional development framework relies on its ability to provide, through its content, the knowledge and skills that would lead to change in managing school finances.

### *Theoretical framing (social constructionism) and interpretation of data*

The extract “*we will gain knowledge and skills that will help us in our schools*” shows that knowledge remains grounded in contexts and thus should not be detached from the situations in which it is constructed and actualised (see 2.5.7).

The deficit model refers to professional development which must particularly address an alleged shortfall in the performance of SMTs. The training content in this context is planned in such a way that it addresses the skills gaps identified through the analysis of the professional development plan (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003:124).

## **4.5 THREATS**

Threats in this context are factors that could hinder the implementation and success of the professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management.

### **4.5.1 Insufficient funding**

A lack of funding and the inadequate use of available resources create pressure in the implementation of the professional development framework as it leads to SMTs having to pay the costs themselves (see 2.10.5.1). The successful execution of professional development framework is dependent on the efficient use of funds

already obtainable in the system, as well as on obtaining additional funding from the DBE medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) grants. The human resource development and skills development budget of the provincial Departments of Education is a source of funds for teachers and SMTs to register for short learning programmes or qualification programmes built into the skills plan of the provincial Departments of Education (DoHET, 2011:21).

In the meeting, **Ms Ndlovu** pointed out the following:

*Siyakuthanda ukuzithuthukisa, kodwa imali asinayo yokuthi sizikhokhele thina.*

*[We would like to continuously develop ourselves, but we do not have money to pay for ourselves.]*

**Mr Myeni** supported the above statement –

*Kunzima ukuzikhokhela imali yokuzithuthukisa ezifundweni zokuphatha izimali zesikole. Yingakho sigcina silinda lama workshop amahala ahlelwe uMnyango weZemfundo adonsa amahora amabili engasisizi kangako.*

*[It is difficult to pay fees for our professional development in management of school funds. That is why we wait for the free workshops organised by the Department of Education that lasts for about 2 hours, which is not benefiting us that much.]*

#### *Textual analysis*

The assertion “*but we do not have money*” in Ms Ndlovu’s statement indicates that due to a lack of funding, SMTs are expected to pay for their professional development which, in turn, causes a barrier to CPD. The extract “*We would like to continuously develop ourselves*” shows that SMTs have a will to capacitate themselves, but due to a lack of funding, they are not able to do so. The phrase “*That is why we wait for the free workshops*” illustrates that the lack of funding causes them to rely only on the free workshops that are provided by the DoE, which, in many instances, do not yield the expected results.

The Skills Development Act (Act No. 97 of 1998), stipulates that each department in the national and provincial spheres of government must put aside at least one percent of its payroll for the training and education of their employees with effect from 1 April 2000 (South Africa, 1998: Chapter 7 (30) (a.b)).

#### **4.5.2 Alignment of professional development framework to skills development needs of school management teams**

A professional development framework that is not aligned with the development needs of SMTs with regard to financial management cannot yield the desired improvement in financial management (see 2.10.5.2). Setting standards and aligning the professional development framework with the developmental needs of the SMTs are central to the professional development culture because they help to ensure that a professional development framework has a comprehensible purpose and a plan of action and provide relevant support to SMTs (see 2.10.5.2). SMTs have different specific learning needs. When they attend development programmes that accommodate their preferences, they will obtain more skills, become more encouraged and implement what they learn in their schools. It should be considered that SMT members, like any other learner, are at different stages of mastering certain skills (Somers & Sikorova, 2002:108).

The discussion revealed that a lack of aligning the professional development framework with the needs of the SMTs may hinder the implementation. This was evident when **Mr Mkhwanazi** pointed out the following:

*Sihlala sibizwa kuhlobo olulodwa lokuzithuthukisa angikhathali ngisho usune sikhathi eside usebenza.*

*[We are always invited to attend the same mode of professional development activity, regardless of your experience in the field.]*

**Mr Mnguni** supported this by saying,

*Mina sengivele ngithumele ngingayi ngoba kusuke kuyoshiwo engikwaziyo.*

*[I no longer attend; I delegate because they are presenting one and the same thing.]*

**Ms Mazibuko** commented as follows:

*Imali nesikhathi kubalulekile kanti akwanele, yingakho kufanele sikusebenzise ngendlela efanele uma kuhlelwa nanoma iluphi uhlobo lwe workshop kwenziwe isiqiniseko sokuthi luzoba usizo lulethe ushintsho ekuphathweni kwezimali zesikole.*

*[Money and time are limited; that is why we must use them wisely. It must be ensured that all professional development activities are planned and presented in such a way that they bring change in the management of school funds.]*

### *Textual analysis*

The excerpt “*same mode*” shows that SMTs are mostly invited to one type of professional development activity, whereas they prefer a variety of professional development activities to address different needs. Mr Mkhwazani’s statement “*regardless of your experience in the field*” further indicates that SMTs have different levels of knowledge and experience that are not considered when planning professional development activities to empower SMTs in financial management. The comment “*I no longer attend*” is an indication that offering a professional development activity without aligning it with the needs of the SMT will not motivate them to attend. Ms Mazibuko touched on the matter of time and money in her quote “*we must use it wisely*” as discussed in 2.10.4.1, that the time allocated for professional development should be used wisely, purposefully directed and focused on the needs of the SMTs, thus bringing change in practice.

Some forms of professional development activities are more appropriate to some outcomes than others. A successful professional development programme will include a variety of models, each meeting the different needs of SMTs and achieving different outcomes (Kyriakides, Creemers & Antoniou, 2009:13).

### 4.5.3 Fragmented training curriculum

The lack of bringing together the training content and workplace performance prevents capacity programmes from paying serious consideration to institutional expectations. If the framework is not linked to the SMTs practical situations and development needs, the trained SMTs might not be able to implement the knowledge gained once they are back at their schools (see 2.10.5.3). A professional development framework that is fragmentary pieced together results in a one-time learning opportunity with an inadequate potential to truly have an impact on empowering the SMTs in financial management. Successful programmes bring together those experiences through a set of goals, approaches and support over time (Loucks-Horsley et al., 2009:130).

The co-researchers were also of the view that a fragmented training curriculum can pose a threat to the success of the professional development framework. **Mr Mbatha** shared his experience as follows:

*Kwezinye izikhathi kulama workshop okuphathwa kwezimali, kuke kufundiswe izinto othi mawuphuma zingakusizi ngalutho nje. Ikakhulukazi uma kuhlelwe izinhlaka ezingekho kumnyango wezeMfundo. Uthi mawusubhekene namabhuku esikole, sekungokunye.*

*[At times, the financial management workshops offered are irrelevant, especially those that are organised and offered by other sectors other than Department of Education. When you are back at school, you find that it is a different case.]*

**Mr Myeni** elaborated, supporting Mr Mbatha –

*Kufana nawo angithi ama Acts, engathi kungagxilwa kulezizigatshana esisebenza ngazo futhi nazo zichazwe ubudlelwano bazo nnemisebenzi yethu.*

*[Even with the acts, it is better if emphasis is on the sections that are applicable to us at schools and explain how it is relevant to our situations at schools.]*

**Mr Ngwenya** also pointed out the following:



*Kufana naloku kokuthi ngelinye ilanga nibizwe omunye asho lokhu, kuyaba ngenyanga elandelayo kufika omunye ovele kolunye uhlaka asho okunye. Lonke ke lolulwazi luvele lunidide kakhulu.*

*[The different fragmented training offered by different structures from time to time are sometimes confusing.]*

### *Textual analysis*

The word “*irrelevant*” gives an indication that what is learned or presented is not applicable or relate to the SMTs’ real practical situations at school. The whole statement shows that if there is no consultation, it is highly likely that what is presented can be irrelevant. The structures are not working together as a team. The word “*applicable*” again emphasises the importance of coordination between theory and practice. It is understood to mean that SMTs must be able to implement the knowledge acquired from professional development activities. The use of words such as “*different fragmented* and “*confusing*” by Mr Ngwenya indicates that if there is no link between the professional development activities as a result of a lack of collaboration of the organisers, the results will be negative, rather than positive, regardless of the number of opportunities offered.

Procedure and organisation put forward in the implementation of professional development framework activities make up a particular, coordinated system in which various role players make their contribution. The professional development framework should provide a coordinated set of learning experiences through a comprehensive plan (DoHET, 2011:19).

## **4.6 INDICATORS OF SUCCESS ON IMPLEMENTING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

The previous sections (4.2; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5) illustrated the process of developing a professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management. The evidence of success in the implementation of the professional development framework is discussed in this section.

#### **4.6.1 Planning and budgeting**

The co-researchers were inducted into budgeting, and they gained more knowledge on planning and budgeting that will help them in their schools. As a result of the workshop, they revisited the budgets of their schools, errors were corrected and the budgets were aligned with the guiding policies. The expenditure of school funds is in accordance with the norms and standards regulation and is monitored (see 2.10.6.1). This was evident from the comments below (see 4.3.1):

*We have gained a lot of knowledge that we are going to use when we do financial planning and budgeting.*

*We will consult all the stakeholders to get their views so that everyone form part of our decision making.*

The first comment shows that they benefited from the induction, and they are going to implement what they have learned when drafting a budget. The co-researchers agreed to have monthly meetings as a way of consulting other stakeholders and to monitor cash flow. It was also highlighted that the draft budget would be presented to the stakeholders before it is adopted and they would ensure that the educational objectives are prioritised (see 2.10.2.1; 4.2.1).

#### **4.6.2 Formulation of professional learning communities**

The aim of the PLCs is to improve skills and knowledge through collaborative study, expertise exchange and dialogue. It was agreed that in their meetings, the discussions would remain respectful, constructive, objective and goal-oriented (see 2.10.3.3). Group leaders were appointed to ensure that the conversations are productive and that they remain objective and factual, rather than subjective and speculative.

The co-researchers formulated groups of different stakeholders involved in school financial management that would meet monthly to share expertise and to work collaboratively to improve their financial skills and knowledge. This was evident in the extract from Mr Dlodlu's comment (see 4.3.4),

*We agreed to continue communicating with one another through the use of cell phones in case there is information to be shared.*

They further agreed to explore other means of communication to share information and develop one another. The determination to work as a team was strengthened. They acknowledged that the best results are achieved through sharing responsibilities and working collaboratively.

#### **4.6.3 Improvement in policy implementation**

Sharing information during workshops through the discussions of financial policies, facilitated by employee relations, has led to an insightful understanding of the acts and legislation governing financial management in schools. The team agreed on creating acceptable communication channels and being committed to transparency on financial management matters (see 2.10.3.4). The importance of adhering to regulations was discussed. This is demonstrated by Ms Radebe's comment (see 4.3.5):

*We will now go back and revise our school finance policies and make them to be in line with PFMA and all other relevant. This will ensure that we adhere to it. In fact, it is a summary of all legislation financial prescripts.*

This has led to the habit that the co-researchers review their school policies and align them with the relevant laws. The benefits of an effective professional development framework are the improvement in policy implementation. They were of the same opinion that they would use the school financial policies as a guide to decision making and adhere to them.

#### **4.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter focused on presenting, analysing and interpreting the data generated from the reviewed literature and the empirical data conducted through social constructionism. This was done to design a professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management. The formation was in line with the objectives of the study, as presented in Chapter 1. The generated and analysed data included the challenges that SMTs face in managing school finances and the

solutions to address those challenges were discussed. The discussions considered the conditions necessary to make the implementation of the professional development framework effective. Furthermore, threats were anticipated that might hinder the success of the professional development framework. Lastly, the success indicators were discussed.

## CHAPTER 5

### SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on summarising the findings from the analysed data, recommendations, discussions and conclusions as a process of designing a professional development framework to empower school management teams (SMTs) in financial management. It starts with the background of the study, which summarises the statement of the problem, research question, aims and objectives of the study to remind the reader about the intention of the study. After that, the chapter presents the findings and recommendations aligned with the objectives of this study. The objectives are as follows: challenges faced by SMTs in financial management, possible solutions to the challenges, conditions conducive to the implementation of the professional development framework, possible threats that may hinder the implementation of the professional development framework and evidence of success for the professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management. It further presents the development of the professional development framework and its success. The chapter concludes by acknowledging the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research based on the findings.

#### 5.2.1 Research question restated

The overarching research question for this study is as follows:

How does the professional development framework enhance school management teams in financial management?

#### 5.2.2 Aim and objectives of the study restated

##### 5.2.2.1 *Research aim*

The aim of the study was to design a professional development framework to empower school management teams in financial management.

### **5.2.2.2      *Research objectives***

- To demonstrate challenges and justify the need to develop a professional development framework to empower school management teams in financial management.
- To determine possible solutions to the challenges faced by school management teams in financial management.
- To discuss the conditions conducive to the implementation of the framework.
- To delineate the possible threats that may hinder the implementation of a framework.
- To demonstrate possible successes associated with the implementation of the professional development framework to empower school management teams in financial management.

All the objectives of the study were achieved. The related literature findings indicated the need to design a professional development framework and the empirical data also confirmed the literature findings.

## **5.3      FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings that emerged from the study are as follows: planning and budgeting school funds, accounting principles, reporting and accountability, roles and responsibilities and policies and legislation. Each finding is discussed and followed by recommendations. The conditions conducive to the implementation of the professional development framework to empower SMTs and the possible threats thereto are further discussed in this section.

### **5.3.1      Findings: Planning and budgeting school funds**

The co-researchers mentioned that the preparation of the budget was not a collective exercise as it was compiled and adopted by SMTs only, without being presented to the other stakeholders for input (see 4.2.1). The study found that the preparation of the budget was a challenge as expenditure in the schools was not according to the actual budget. There was a lack of knowledge that it is legally binding instrument used as a guide to control, measure and monitor the income and

expenditure of the schools. It was evident that planning was not done properly, income was not allocated equally across the expenses of the school and educational objectives were not prioritised (see 2.10.6.1).

#### **5.3.1.1      *Recommendation: Induction of school management teams into planning and budgeting***

An induction workshop on planning and budgeting school funds, facilitated by the governance and teacher development, enhanced the knowledge and skills required by SMTs to draft a budget that is in line with the principles of sound financial management. It also transpired that the early induction of newly appointed SMTs into budgeting empowers SMTs to prepare the budget correctly and adhere to it and also promote consultation with the stakeholders (see 4.3.1). The reviewed literature recommended that the human resource department makes it a priority to develop a systematic process for inducting SMTs into their new financial management roles (see 2.10.3.1).

#### **5.3.2      **Finding: Accounting principles****

It was found that the SMT members have never received formal training in financial management. Therefore, they do not have the required knowledge of accounting principles guiding their financial record-keeping. It was found that the financial records are, therefore, not up to date (see 4.2.2). Both the reviewed literature and the empirical data showed that the SMTs are consistently identifying accounting procedures and principles as the areas where they have the most development needs. However, the workshops in financial management organised by the DoE do not empower them with that knowledge (see 4.2.2; 2.10.2.2).

#### **5.3.2.1      *Recommendation: Accounting principles***

The study found that SMTs have to develop themselves continuously in order for them to gain more knowledge on accounting principles and implement them. They need to expose themselves to different development opportunities on financial management to enhance their knowledge of accounting principles (see 4.3.2). Continuous professional development (CPD) is supported by social constructionism

as a process of externalisation, which implies that knowledge is produced by human beings on an ongoing basis (see 2.2.1). The related literature emphasised the importance of SMTs actively engaging in ongoing efforts to educate themselves and improve their knowledge in applying accounting principles correctly (see 2.10.3.2).

### **5.3.2.2      *Recommended condition: Professional development programmes require adequate time***

The study established that adequate time is one condition conducive to the successful implementation of the framework. The various SMT members learn at their own speed; therefore, they should be allocated adequate time to process and find a deeper understanding of financial management (see 4.4.1). The related literature reveals that professional development programmes require extensive periods that are well organised, carefully structured, purposefully directed and determined on the needs of the SMTs in order to achieve the envisaged transformational change. Professional development is a continuous process that requires time. Optimal learning takes place when SMTs have adequate time to internalise the new knowledge and apply it to their practical situations (see 2.10.4.1).

### **5.3.2.3      *Threat: Insufficient funding***

The study found that insufficient funding and the inadequate use of available resources may hinder the implementation of the professional development framework. The decrease in the funding allocated to professional development programmes have led to SMTs having to pay from their own incomes. The study revealed that they cannot afford to fund themselves; therefore, they rely only on free workshops that are provided by the DoE, which in many instances do not yield the expected results (see 4.5.1). If the professional development framework is underfunded and operates on lean, discretionary budgets, there will be an insufficient number of learning centres and other facilities to meet the professional development needs of SMTs. While resource allocations to professional development have increased over time, the resources were still inadequate and the most priority programmes have gone without adequate funds, putting pressure on the implementation process and leading to low-quality, uncoordinated programmes (see 2.10.5.1).



### **5.3.3 Finding: Reporting and accountability**

The study revealed that financial reports were not presented to the stakeholders in a language that is understood by all, which led to their exclusion in dialogue. The social and cultural backgrounds of all the stakeholders were not taken into consideration when reporting. Furthermore, the financial statements were not submitted on time because the financial records were not adequately kept. This showed a lack of commitment to transparency and accountability by the SMTs (see 4.2.3). The reviewed literature showed that the information generated in the financial statements did not faithfully represent underlying transactions and events (see 2.10.2.3).

#### ***5.3.3.1 Recommendation: Professional and ethical practices to reporting and accountability***

Both the reviewed literature and the empirical data recommend that the moral and ethical education of SMTs in financial management has a significant impact on the way in which they do things. It instils a sense of responsibility and accountability to SMTs towards the society they are serving (see 4.3.3). Addressing professional ethics is an important addition to financial management programmes, which can empower SMTs to be able to recognise and appreciate the importance of accountability (see 2.10.3.3).

#### ***5.3.3.2 Recommended condition: Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the professional development framework***

The co-researchers emphasised that reflecting and giving feedback are vital because the continuation of the professional development process is dependent on the information provided by the SMTs. Reflection provides information that can be used to monitor and thus measure the impact of professional development and determine the future needs of the SMTs. Hence, it also affords an opportunity for SMTs to communicate their views on the development programmes offered to them. Continuous monitoring gives direction for the future planning of follow-up financial management development programmes (see 4.4.2). A well-planned and coordinated monitoring strategy with clear processes and structures is crucial to probing into

educational needs and identifying the gaps in the financial knowledge of the SMTs to best support their needs (see 2.10.4.2).

### **5.3.3.3      *Threat: Fragmented training curriculum***

A lack of the synchronisation of training content and on-the-job performance prevents the professional development framework from paying serious consideration to institutional changes. If the framework is not linked to the practical situations and development needs of the SMTs, the trained SMTs may not be able to implement the knowledge into their school situations. A professional development framework that does not provide a coordinated set of learning experiences through a comprehensive plan, but rather presents a patchwork of disjointed, one-time learning opportunities, results in a limited potential to have a significant impact on empowering the SMTs in financial management (see 4.5.3). The reviewed literature further revealed that the professional development framework that is not linked to any organisational analysis, due to a lack of baseline information, makes it difficult to compare the previous knowledge of the SMTs with the interventions afterwards. Consequently, the professional development programmes have no influence on building financial knowledge as they are merely available as a routine and, therefore, are unresponsive to the needs of the SMTs (see 2.10.5.3).

### **5.3.4      Findings: Roles and responsibilities of school management teams and school governing bodies in financial management**

The study found that there are no clear guidelines related to the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved in the management of school funds. This is because the policy states that the principals are responsible and accountable for financial record-keeping, while it stipulates that the management of school funds is a primary function of the SGB. The limits of the delegated authority are not clearly established by the relevant legislation. Therefore, overlapping responsibilities leads to conflict between the SGBs and SMTs which, in turn, prevents cohesion that promotes solidarity in the team (see 4.2.4; 2.10.2.4).

#### **5.3.4.1      *Recommendation: Formulation of professional learning communities***

The recommendation of this study with regard to the roles and responsibilities is the formulation of PLCs with the aim to support one another by sharing information that will lead to improving their working relations and financial skills and knowledge. Through PLCs, the SMTs and SGBs can learn to work together and share information that can lead to a mutual understanding of the roles they each play in school financial management. Involving the stakeholders in the study promoted collaborative leadership, whereby all the parties felt empowered by being treated as collaborators. The stakeholders showed that trust, mutual respect and a sense of empowerment instilled good interpersonal relations, enriched decision making and sharing responsibilities (see 2.10.3.4; 4.3.4).

#### **5.3.4.2      *Recommended condition: Provision of collaborative learning opportunities***

The study showed that collaboration of the SMTs, as a condition conducive to the formulation and sustainment of PLCs, is required for the professional development framework to be effective as it provide prospects for teachers to talk about their achievements and problems in managing school finances. Collaboration contributes towards the development of a constructive school custom that is dedicated to the transformation and creation of better learning opportunities for all (see 4.4.3). The successful implementation of this professional development framework relies much on the continuous partnership and support of all the stakeholders that have contributed to its development. Collaboration should not be limited to the local level only, but networking should be broadened in order to gain more knowledge and bring diversity to the management of finances in schools (see 2.10.4.3)

#### **5.3.5      *Findings: Policies and legislation***

The study revealed that SMTs do not have adequate knowledge of policies and legislation, and the misinterpretation of financial policies governing the management of school funds leads to shortcomings in managing school finances (see 4.2.5). It further revealed that schools are lacking in managing their finances efficiently and

effectively because they have not developed and implemented a school financial policy within the limitations of the legislation, policies and directives by the DoE (see 4.2.5; 2.10.2.5).

#### **5.3.5.1      *Recommendation: Policy and financial management guidelines***

It is recommended that the guidelines on developing a school policy in line with the legislation are provided by the government. This can be made available and enhanced by using information, communication and technology applications, such as interactive multimedia-based tutorials, computerised equipment and online communication tools (see 2.10.3.5). The workshop on financial policy, facilitated by employee relations, provided the SMTs with the relevant knowledge that they would use in drafting their financial school policies. It was relevant to address their specific development needs and, therefore, it brought about transformational change. It emphasised the importance of adhering to the policies and legislation governing the school finances (see 4.3.5).

#### **5.3.5.2      *Recommended condition: Relevant training content***

It is recommended that the skills development planning unit conducts a study to investigate the labour market in order to establish the skills development needs to assist with the formulation of the national skills development plan and the relevant skills development plans. A skills audit allows for the training of SMTs in financial management to be responsive to the identified deficiencies. An effective professional development framework considers and validates adult personal and professional experience. SMTs should take the initiative to classify the areas in which they need further development and include that in the PDP (see 4.4.4; 2.10.4.4).

#### **5.3.5.3      *Threat: Lack of alignment with the skills development needs of school management teams***

A professional development framework that is not aligned with the development needs of SMTs with regard to financial management cannot yield the desired change in the management of school funds. The co-researchers indicated that SMTs have different levels of knowledge and experience; if that is not taken into consideration

when planning professional development activities to empower them, they are not motivated to attend them (see 4.5.2). Similarly, the related literature revealed that if a professional development framework is not aligned with the development needs of SMTs with regard to financial management, no improvement can be linked to the framework. A lack of collaboration, whereby the strengths and weaknesses of SMTs are not considered in devising the strategies for improvement and they have almost no formal input into the content of their professional development, may hinder the impact of the professional development framework (see 2.10.5.2).

## **5.4 A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AS CONSTRUCTED FROM THIS STUDY TO EMPOWER SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

### **5.4.1 Background of the framework**

The schools are responsible for controlling the funds allocated as they are disbursed directly to them. Therefore, the financial management function is a responsibility of all the members of the SGBs and SMTs. The related literature revealed that while SGBs have an ultimate responsibility for the management of school finances, they play a very minimal role and delegate the daily operational financial management activities to the SMTs. As a result, one of the core responsibilities of the SMTs is managing school funds. However, SMTs are appointed on the basis of teaching experience and academic and professional development; they do not have a working knowledge and academic qualifications in financial management (see 2.10.1). Therefore, the study established the challenges of planning and budgeting, accounting principles, reporting and accountability, roles and responsibilities and policies and legislation (see 4.2).

Favourable conditions for the implementation of the professional development framework were reviewed as adequate time, continuous monitoring and evaluation, collaborative learning opportunities and relevant training content (see 2.10.4). Furthermore, insufficient funding, a lack of aligning the professional development framework with the development needs of the SMTs and a fragmented training curriculum emerged as threats that may hamper the success of the professional development framework (see 2.10.5).

#### **5.4.2 Development of the professional development framework**

The study revealed the need to empower SMTs in financial management. Therefore, the relevant stakeholders were involved in designing a professional development framework to enhance the financial skills and knowledge of SMTs.

The co-researchers established a discussion environment that encouraged the team members to be free, comfortable and able to add in discussions, while providing a sense of challenge and stimulation. They collaboratively developed a framework that is valued and of benefit to them by acknowledging, respecting and valuing one another. During the study, the co-researchers learned that creativity is improved by various combinations, which build joint insight that exceeds individual proficiency and by valuing other team members as equal contributors. The strength of the framework, and its potential for success, was evident in the relationships that were created among the stakeholders during each stage of the study (see 3.9.2.1).

The co-researchers had meetings to discuss the financial management in schools. They collectively developed an action plan to guide the study. Roles and responsibilities were allocated to the co-researchers. They agreed to meet on a monthly basis to monitor the progress and reflect on what has taken place during the study (see 3.11.1).

An induction workshop on planning and budgeting enhanced the skills and knowledge required by SMTs to allocate school finances effectively and efficiently. Induction prepares the SMTs for the variety of expectations of the position when assuming duties and establishes working relations with the relevant stakeholders. Policy and legislation education was able to address the specific development needs of the SMTs. It created an awareness of adhering to and implementing financial policies in their management of school funds. It brought knowledge that was useful in transforming the preparation of the school finance policy. The reviewed literature revealed that providing CPD in moral education has a positive effect on the moral development of the SMTs. High levels of moral development are of practical value in ensuring that SMTs always adhere to high moral standards in their management of school finances. The team networked and shared knowledge with teacher

development, employees relations, Governance Directorates and District Training Committee officials to strengthen their knowledge in school financial management (see 4.3.1).

The team formulated PLCs as forums where they would continue to communicate and present information, ideas, problems and solutions on financial matters relevant to all the stakeholders. The PLCs further promoted social empowerment, emancipation, stability, collaboration in promoting equity and equal treatment of all and instilled commitment among the team members. The PLCs improved communication skills among the team members. Professional development interventions provided to SMTs are linked to the school improvement plan in order to give attention to CPD and promotion of standards. CPD is aimed at developing the relevant skills and knowledge to enable SMTs to transfer their skills and knowledge to their school situations (see 4.3). CPD requires adequate time to ensure that optimal learning takes place and there is a significant change in school financial management (see 2.10.4.1).

Furthermore, the related literature suggested that the successful implementation of the professional development framework is evident when there is a developed institutional monitoring and evaluation system which includes plans, indicators and assessment tools. The monitoring and evaluation of the professional development programmes provide sound operational and strategic management to assess their impact, improve services and promote coordination within the programmes (Mthethwa & Jili, 2016:109).

### **5.4.3 Indicators of the success of the professional development framework**

#### ***5.4.3.1 Planning and budgeting***

The reflection of the co-researchers showed that the induction into planning and budgeting was able to enhance their knowledge. They revisited the budgets of their schools, errors were corrected and they were aligned with the guiding policies. The co-researchers also agreed to meet on a monthly basis to monitor the cash flow by comparing the actual spending with the planned spending, thus ensuring adhering to

the budget. This encourages the stakeholders' involvement and transparency in the management of school funds (see 4.3.1; 2.10.6.1).

#### **5.4.3.2      *Formulation of professional learning communities***

The co-researchers formulated groups of different stakeholders involved in school financial management that would meet monthly to share their expertise and work collaboratively to improve their financial skills and knowledge. They nominated the PLC leaders to provide guidance and ensure continuity of the teams. They agreed to network with other schools and share information on financial management (see 4.3.4; 2.10.6.2).

#### **5.4.3.3      *Improvement in policy implementation***

The stakeholders' interest, enthusiasm and sense of belonging to the educational leadership and innovation were significant. The attitudes of the SMT members changed towards financial management knowledge and principles. The workshop on financial policies, facilitated by employee relations, led to an insightful understanding of the acts and legislation governing financial management in schools. The team reviewed the finance policies of their schools to align with the relevant laws and agreed on creating acceptable communication channels, committed to transparency on financial management matters (see 4.3.5; 2.10.3).

### **5.5      LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study were achieved and the professional development framework to empower the SMTs in financial management was successfully designed; however, the study encountered limitations. The study was a qualitative study, employing most of the principles of participatory action research (PAR). The subsequent power relations between the co-researchers posed challenges. It was not easy for the SGB members to talk about their challenges freely in the presence of the SMT members, who at times showed that they were more familiar with financial concepts. The presence of the district officials intimidated the SMTs, who were reluctant to express their views at times. The permission letter advised that teaching, learning and examinations should not be disturbed; therefore, the meetings



were held on weekends. The members were not always present due to weekend commitments. The study focused on two schools; therefore, the findings cannot be generalised because of the number of schools in the study compared to the number of schools in the district. The impact of the study could have been much more significant if there were more schools involved.

## **5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The theoretical framework guiding the study, social constructionism, has strong convictions that knowledge should be constantly constructed and reconstructed by the scientific community. It rejects that there is an ultimate truth, but instead, it acknowledges that the study findings are the result of many underlying factors and unseen constitutions. It is thus recommended that future research is conducted to determine whether there is a need to make financial qualifications and experience a prerequisite when appointing SMTs.

The study adopted a relativist position in that it aims to search and discover facts while accepting that there are other ways that exist that may be used to empower the SMTs in financial management. Therefore, the findings of this study are not definite, but are believed to be one of many discourses that exist in research. It is further recommended that future research is conducted to focus the investigation on the roles and responsibilities of SGBs and SMTs in school financial management.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

The first chapter presented the overview of the study. It highlighted the background of the study and the related literature review, research problem and questions, the theoretical framework, research aim and objectives, the methodology and design, and the ethical consideration.

In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework, social constructionism, was insightfully discussed in relation to the study. Operational concepts that inform the study were defined from four perspectives, namely literature, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and personal definitions. These concepts are as follows: framework, school management

team, financial management and professional development. Lastly, the related literature was reviewed following the objectives of the study.

The research methodology and design were discussed in Chapter 3. The chapter profoundly highlighted PAR. It further discussed the cyclical steps of PAR as it was used to generate the data. Lastly, critical discourse analysis (CDA) was discussed as a method used to analyse the data on three levels, namely textual, social and discursive analysis.

In Chapter 4, the generated data were analysed using the levels of CDA as well as theoretical framing. Extracts from the co-researchers' discussions were quoted.

The final chapter recapitulated the findings revealed by the study on its five objectives. The preparation of a budget was a challenge as expenditure in the schools was not according to the actual budget. It again showed that SMTs did not have the required knowledge of accounting principles and misinterpret financial policies governing the management of school funds, which leads to shortcomings in the keeping of financial records and managing school finances. It further indicates that financial reports were not presented to the stakeholders in a language that they all understand, and the information generated in the financial statements does not faithfully represent underlying transactions. Lastly, the study found that there are no clear guidelines with regard to the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved in the management of school funds.

The study recommended that newly appointed SMTs should be inducted into planning and budgeting school funds to empower them to prepare the budget correctly, adhere to it and involve all the stakeholders in the process. It further recommended that SMTs should continuously develop themselves in order to gain more knowledge on accounting principles and adhere to the policies and legislation governing the school finances. Another recommendation was to address professional ethics as an important addition to the financial management programmes. Finally, PLCs were recommended as a way to help SMTs and SGBs to

learn to work together and share information that can lead to a mutual understanding of their roles in school financial management.

This chapter further summarised the conditions conducive to the implementation of the professional development framework as follows: SMTs require adequate time to internalise the new knowledge and apply it to their practical situations; and a well-planned and coordinated monitoring strategy with clear processes and structures is vital to ensure that learning is taking place and there is a change in managing school finances. The continued collaboration and support of all the stakeholders and their collaboration and networking should be broadened to the national level. Last but not least, the development needs of SMTs should be identified to ensure that the content of training is relevant. The possible threats, which may deter the implementation of the professional development framework, were summarised as a lack of funding for the implementation of the professional development framework, if the framework is not aligned with the development needs of the SMTs and not linked to the practical situations of the SMTs. Finally, the evidence that the framework was successful was reiterated.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

# CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

Dr. L. Hoffman

Kroonstad

BA, BA(Hons), MA, DLitt et Phil

Member of South African Translators' Institute – No. 1003545

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## DECLARATION

To whom it may concern

I hereby certify that the English language of the following dissertation meets the requirements of academic publishing. This dissertation was linguistically edited and proofread by me, Dr. L. Hoffman.

### Title of dissertation

A professional development framework to empower school  
management team in financial management

### Candidate

Nozipho Prudence Khumalo



Lariza Hoffman

Kroonstad

15 March 2018

# **APPENDIX B: A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TO EMPOWER THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

Principal Investigator: Nozipho Prudence Khumalo  
Phone number: 082 755 7757

## **INFORMED CONSENT:**

Dear Co-researcher

I would like to invite you to participate in a study that I will be conducting. The title of the research is: **A professional development framework to empower the School Management Team in Financial Management.**

The aim of this study is to: design a professional development framework to empower the School Management Team in Financial Management.

### **Research objectives**

- To demonstrate the challenges and justify the need to develop a framework for the professional development of SMTs in financial management.
- To explore the possible solutions to the challenges faced by SMTs in financial management.
- To discuss the conditions conducive to the implementation of the framework.
- To delineate the possible threats that may hinder the implementation of the framework.
- To demonstrate the possible successes associated with the implementation of the professional development framework to empower SMTs in financial management.

You are regarded as the key informant based on your first-hand experience of the central phenomenon. You will therefore be able to purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem of the study. All steps will be taken to uphold confidentiality during this study.

Discussions will be approximately 1 hour in duration, utilizing prepared open ended questions. The discussions will be conducted at a mutually agreed venue where you as potential participant will feel safe and secure.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate in this study. You will not suffer any consequences or loss for choosing not to participate.

Participants will not be rewarded for participating. It is also your right to withdraw at any time with no repercussions.

Privacy will be protected in any publication of the information and privacy will be maintained at all costs. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Yours Sincerely

Nozipho Prudence Khumalo

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Please fill in and return this page. Keep the letter above for future reference

.....  
.....

Co-researcher:

- I hereby give free and informed consent to participate in the above mentioned research study.
- I understand what the study is about, why I am participating and that I can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I give the researcher permission to make use of the data gathered from my participation.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the discussions.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D: LETTER OF PERMISSION



University of the Free State

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE  
VRYSTAAT  
YUNIVESITHI YA  
FREISTATA



**Request for permission to conduct research at** \_\_\_\_\_

A professional development framework to empower the School Management Team in Financial Management.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Building no: \_\_\_\_\_

Department of education: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number : \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I, Nozipho Prudence Khumalo am doing research with Nkoane MM, a Professor in the Department of education towards a M Ed at the University of the Free State. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **A professional development framework to empower the School Management Team in Financial Management.**

The aim of the study is to formulate a framework to enhance the School Management Team in financial management. Your organisation has been selected because you are the manager/principal/deputy principal/HOD/circuit manager/SGB/mayor.

The study will entail discussions and audio recording of data. The benefits of this study are that school funds will be better managed. There will be no potential risks in this study. Feedback procedure will entail discussions.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
NP Khumalo  
Researcher



## APPENDIX E: FIRST MEETING



University of the Free State  
205 Nelson Mandela Drive/Ryland,  
Park West/Parkweg, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa/SuidAfrika  
P.O. Box/Posbus 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa/SuidAfrika

**Venue: School A**

**Time: 11:00**

### PROPOSED AGENDA

1. Opening and welcome
2. Attendance and apologies
3. Getting to know each other
4. The purpose of the study
5. The nature of the study / research methodology
6. Why the co-researchers were chosen
7. The benefits of participating in the study
8. Research ethics
9. Communication
10. Nomination of Chairperson and Secretary
11. Discussion meetings
12. Signing of consent forms
13. Way forward

## APPENDIX F: TRANSCRIPTS

### Discussion and Planning session

#### Ms Mazibuko led the discussion on challenges

Ms Mazibuko: Greetings everyone, let us all discuss the challenges that are faced by SMTs with regard to financial management.

Ms Radebe: The fact that we do not have administration officers to do the books is a challenge. There are so many things to be done by us. As a result of that, sometimes there are errors in our books, especially the budget and it is not prepared on time. At times the numbers do not balance. I guess managing funds requires that the department employ somebody who has a qualification in financial management

Mr Myeni: We prepare the budget annually as required; however, funds are not usually used as planned.

Mrs Mbokazi: The funds are paid into school accounts very late; which makes it difficult to follow the budget as planned.

Mr Mnguni: And this electricity bill, aybo!! In other months it is fair and acceptable but in other months 'yeeyyy ishuda phezulu' it is very high.

Mrs Mbokazi: On that one of electricity, you must try and check with Eskom if your school is rated as Phase 3, the department must assist you with that.

Mr Mthembu: Yes! You find that the photocopying machine is broken many times during the year and there has to be funds used to pay for repairs. One is asked to sign cheques now and again. In as much as we do budget for that but the charges are sometimes higher than the allocation.

Mr Dludlu: In our school it is prepared by the school management team only because they are the ones who know the needs of the school. We are never given a chance to make our contribution.

Ms Radebe: That does not help because we as teachers do not get learning and teaching support material.

Ms Ndlovu: When I do school visits to provide support, I find that in most schools, the financial records are not up to date. They say they do not fully understand how to keep financial records.

Mrs Mbokazi: No one is hired to make financial books in schools. We do not have qualifications on financial management.

Ms Radebe and Mr Mnguni: Yes, that is true!

Mr Mnguni: Workshops that we are invited to, repeat one and the same thing every year and they are not addressing record-keeping, which is our main concern. One other thing: time is too short. They start at 12 and finish at 2 pm.

Mr Mkhwanazi: What can we learn during such a short time? The terms that are used in the workshop are at times difficult for us to understand.

Ms Mazibuko: Financial records are not kept up to date. This is the reason why schools do not submit audited financial statements on time.

Mrs Mbongwe: They do not understand the importance of financial reports. They eventually submit their financial statements because they will not get norms and standards for the next financial year if they do not provide audit statements.

Mrs Mbongwe: Then one wonders if those figures are correct and true reflection of what happened if books are not recorded immediately after each transaction.

Mr Mkhwanazi: Most parents do not attend financial management meetings because they say they do not understand the figures being presented to them.

Mr Ngwenya: That's an excuse. They have a right to ask for clarity. It is not like speakers comes and present the financial record without allowing time for questions and suggestions. That can be done by somebody who has something to hide.

Ms Radebe: They only come to school when their children have failed, because even if they are invited for classroom meetings to view learner's work they do not come. In such meetings they have a one on one talk with the class teacher in the language they understand.

Mr Mthembu: Another thing that confuses us is who has a final say in making decisions on how to spend school funds.

Mr Mkhwanazi: Decisions are taken by the principal without consulting the chairperson of the SGB.

Ms Ndlovu: Some principals do not like to be questioned. This leads to parents being passive in meetings. If you ask something, innocently just for clarity, 'woooo usuzithelile'. We must all know that as government employees we are accountable to all stakeholders for our actions even if it is not about school funds

Ms Ndlovu: Both SMT and SGB have to work together as a team and discuss such decisions. In as much as the finance officer is appointed among the staff members if the school does not have an administration officer. His or her role is to keep the books not to make decisions alone with the principal.

Mr Ngwenya: I do not understand the role of the Treasurer if we still have to appoint Finance Officer?

Mr Dlodlu: In some cases, the roles of SMTs and SGBs in managing school finances are not clear. Some even feel that others are interfering or dominating the other. The legislation is also not giving a clear guidance on that. I personally do not understand the roles, how far one can do or say.

Mr Ngwenya: We do not have enough knowledge of financial management rules and regulations.

Ms Radebe: Even when you think you understand the policies, you find out that it has been amended.

Mr Myeni: And we are not called to be appraised each time there are changes.

Mr Dlodlu: When the school procure goods for the school, they do not make the three quotations as stipulated by legislation.

Mr Mbatha: We really need to adhere to these rules otherwise we can be in trouble. I once heard someone saying that they only ask for the other two quotations just for the sake of filling and auditing. 'Yaa kona izinto ziyenzeka'. One even wonders if it is because of lack of knowledge or it is done deliberately.

Ms Ndlovu: School financial policy is prepared just for compliance. Most of the things that are in the policy are not followed or implemented. Some even do copy and paste from other and even forgets to edit the name of that school.

Ms Mazibuko: The format might be the same but the school must prepare a policy that is in line with their environment and you must be able to relate to everything that is written there as a school.

Mrs Mbongwe led the discussion on solutions to challenges

Mrs Mbongwe: Thank very much for your inputs. May we now look at what can be the solutions to these challenges? The first identified challenge as captured by our secretary was the issue of planning and budgeting.

Ms Ndlovu: I suggest that I and Mr Mbatha organize an induction workshop on planning and budgeting which will cater not for SMTs only but for all of us that are involved in this study.

Ms Mazibuko: The presentation should be specific to address mostly the aspects that are our concerns.

Mrs Mbongwe: Do we all agree to that?

All members: Yes we agree.

Mrs Mbongwe: Second challenge was accounting principles.

Mr Mbatha: It is important to continuously develop ourselves; we are living in dynamic times; things change all the time.

Ms Mazibuko: There are many professional development activities on financial management that can help us have deeper accounting principles knowledge. A teacher is a lifelong learner.

Mrs Mbongwe: We are responsible for our own development; we do not need to rely on the employer for development opportunities all the time. If we feel that we need knowledge on a certain aspect, we have to take initiative and network with others.

Mr Ngwenya: It would help to consistently be exposed to workshops on financial management to refresh our knowledge. They empower us and serve as a reminder to stick to the rules and regulations. We can be able to get platforms to address the challenges we are facing in schools.

Ms Mazibuko: One is responsible for his or her development. We must take that initiative and not wait to be developed every time. You can even get CPTD points.

Mr Myeni: I attended a workshop on CPTD, but when I tried to register after that it could not allow me to register so I don't even have a profile as yet.

Mr Mbatha: I will make time and organize so that we meet at the centre to create profiles for your schools and individual profiles.

Mr Myeni: That will help.

Mr Mnguni: The thing is we don't have money to fund our own studies. I would have been better if we are assisted financially or even get compensation when we enroll on such programmes. This thing of getting CPTD points is not motivating at all.

Mrs Mbongwe: The next challenge was reporting and accountability

Ms Ndlovu: It is very important to attend workshops on ethical and moral education in financial management.

Mr Ngwenya: It would be helpful if financial reports are presented in a language that is understood by all people. It can encourage parents to attend financial report meetings.

Mr Mthembu: Every detail must be outlined and parents must feel free to seek clarity where they don't understand.

Mr Ngwenya: They will say you question their integrity.

Mr Mbokazi: But that is not true, it depends on how you present your question, I would not be offended really if someone seeks clarity not unless I am hiding something. I believe we must still keep to monthly meetings even when there are no funds we must meet to record a nil bank reconciliation.

Ms Maibuko: Moral education is important to encourage accountability and responsibility thus contributing to the well being of the school

Mrs Mbongwe: How can we assist each other with understanding our roles and responsibilities in financial management?

Mr Mbatha: We must establish professional development committees.

Mr Ngwenya: May you explain a bit about that?

Mr Mbatha: Ok no problem. PLC is a group of people who shares common interests. For an example teachers who teach Mathematics in a cluster of schools may group

each other; communicate, share ideas; share strategies and teaching and learning support material that works best for them. Communication can be done in many different ways, the common are physical meetings, WhatsApp groups and emails. It is one way of networking; learning from one another thus ensuring continuous professional development. We could all of us, also is a PLC. Our goal is to share ideas on managing school finances. PLCs build relationships; promote collaboration and communication among all involved. It can be used to share even when one of us have attended a workshop on our subject of interest.

Mr Mnguni: That would be good, so who will create WhatsApp group and remember not all of have that application so we need to accommodate those by sending them SMSs.

Mr Mbatha: I will create the group.

Mr Mnguni: Thank you

Mrs Mbongwe: The last challenge is inadequate knowledge of financial policies, rules and regulations.

Mrs Mbongwe: On this one, may we request teacher development, circuit management and governance to plan a workshop on important legislations that are relevant to financial management. We may not learn everything at once but the little that they may share can help us.

Mr Myeni: I agree.

Mr Mbatha: Do we do that on the same day as induction or we separate the two?

Mr Mthembu: I suggest that we separate them so that we will have more time to focus on one aspect.

Ms Mazibuko: I understand but are we going to have time to meet? We are monitoring extra classes on certain weekends.

Mrs Mbongwe: Please communicate that as district officials and come up with the date.

Mrs Mbongwe: Oh one other thing, we need to encourage SMTs to indicate their professional development needs when they submit their performance assessment

forms. That also informs the Skills development section of the workshops that are needed by SMTs.

Ms Ndlovu: That is very true. SMTs don't take that part of assessment form seriously.

#### Conditions led by Ms Ndlovu

Ms Mazibuko: SMTs need enough time when attending development programmes so that they are able to comprehend and make sense of what they were taught.

Mr Mthembu: It is better when they attend these development activities during the holidays so that the SMT can have enough uninterrupted learning time.

Mr Myeni: That one is tricky because they will say they need to rest during holidays

Ms Radebe: Arrangements can be made so that there is minimum loss of teaching and learning time as well as teachers to have resting time during their holidays.

Mrs Mbongwe: It is better to fill in assessment forms after professional development in the financial management programme. It provides an opportunity to comment if our expectations were met.

Mr Ngwenya: It helps to get a chance to give feedback on professional development activities so that we can share our satisfaction and future needs.

Mr Myeni: Professional development framework to empower SMTs can be a success if all the stakeholders are committed to playing their required role of monitoring the professional development activities.

Ms Ndlovu: It is important to work together as a team when planning professional development activities from school to national level.

Mrs Mbokazi: Human resources development should analyse the PDP (professional development plan) to determine the professional development needs of the SMTs.

Ms Radebe: When they do that, the professional development in financial management activities will be in line with our development needs.

Mr Mnguni: We will attend professional development activities in numbers because we will be sure that we will gain knowledge and skills that will help us in our schools.



Mr Myeni: I would also like to be taught about basic computer skills it helps to keep records.

Mr Mbatha: We do facilitate basic computer training for educators free of charge during the holidays. We always give out circulars to inform schools about that. Why don't you attend those, they are very informative and practical.

Mr Myeni: Yes, I know eish with that one the issue is during school holidays it is our time to rest.

Mr Mbatha: Well make sacrifice Mr Myeni, we cannot take you away from class all the time.

#### Discussion on threats facilitated by Mr Mbatha

Mr Mbatha: Let us discuss the threats that may hinder the implementation of the framework.

Ms Ndlovu: We would like to continuously develop ourselves, but we do not have money to pay for ourselves.

Ms Radebe: Ohhh yes, with so many expenses we don't have funds to pay for our education while we are paying for our children.

Mr Myeni: It is difficult to pay fees for our professional development in management of school funds. That is why we wait for the free workshops organised by the Department of Education that lasts for about 2 hours, which is not benefiting us that much.

Mr Mkwazazi: We are always invited to attend the same mode of professional development activity, regardless of your experience in the field.

Mr Mnguni: I no longer attend; I delegate because they are presenting one and the same thing.

Mr Mbatha: At times, the financial management workshops offered are irrelevant, especially those that are organised and offered by other sectors other than Department of Education. When you are back at school, you find that it is a different case.

Mr Myeni: Even with the acts, it is better if emphasis is on the sections that are applicable to us at schools and explain how it is relevant to our situations at schools.

Mr Ngwenya: The different fragmented training offered by different structures from time to time is sometimes confusing.

Researcher: Thank you so much for your contributions in these deliberations.

### **Reflection Session**

Mrs Mbokazi: We learned a lot a lot from other schools during our information-sharing sessions, especially because we were discussing practical issues that are taking place at schools.

Mr Dlodlu: We were free to express our views and ask questions. We agreed to continue communicating with one another through the use of cell phones in case there is information to be shared.

Mr Mnguni: It helped to learn how others share roles and responsibilities of managing finances. We all have an important role to play in executing this task as a team.

Mr Ngwenya: Workshop went well; we gained a lot of important knowledge about financial policies. We would be happy if we can have another one, especially if there are amendments.

Mr Mkhwanazi: What I found interesting was that you, one does not have to know the whole policy or Act by heart. You only need to focus and highlight those that are relevant to management of school funds.

Ms Radebe: We will now go back and revise our school finance policies and make them to be in line with PFMA and all other relevant legislation. This will ensure that we adhere to it. In fact, it is a summary of all financial prescripts.

Mr Mkhwanazi: We have gained a lot of knowledge that we are going to use when we do financial planning and budgeting.

Mrs Mbokazi: We will consult all the stakeholders to get their views so that everyone forms part of our decision making.

Ms Radebe: It would be great to have such induction workshops on budgeting for newly appointed employees to eliminate challenges due to lack of knowledge.

Mr Mbatha: The meetings that we have held together have shown us that together we can do more.

Mr Mnguni: Yes! We learnt a lot from each other.

Mr Myeni: It was good to be reminded of Batho Pele we have to pass it to educators so that we implement it in our schools.

Ms Mazibuko: Improvement in policy knowledge thus ensuring effective implementation, communication channels are formed and there is commitment to transparency

# APPENDIX G: PRESENTATION

## PLANNING AND BUDGETING

By Mr Nhleko (Finance – Service Centre)

### What is the budget?

- Budget is a:
  - Legal document
  - Plan of financial activities
  - Estimation of school's income and expenditure
  - Reflection of School financial policy
  - Administration document
  - Economic document
  - Political document

### Reasons for drawing budget

- Section 38 (1)(2) of South African Schools Act
- Plan financial activities
- Provision of resources
- Allocation of funds
- Setting priorities
- When do we draw budget?
- Annual administration document
  - Drawn in the Third term

### Adoption of budget

- Presented during the Fourth term
- Annual General Parents meeting

### Who contribute in the drawing of budget?

- Finance Committee
- School Management Teams
- Staff members
- Parents

### What is included in the budget?

- Sources of expected income
  - Norms and Standards
  - Fundraisings
  - Donations/Sponsors
- Expenditures
- Discussions on:
  - Items to include as expenditure
  - Prioritising needs

### Monitoring budget

- It is the role of School Governing Body to monitor compliance to budget
- Tools used to monitor budget:
  - Budget Control Statement
  - Cash Flow Statement
- Budget is reviewed and discussed during meetings

### Practical exercise:

- Assessing the budget
- Discussion on Variances
- Budget projections

## APPENDIX H: PRESENTATION

### South African Schools Act no 84 of 1996

Presented by Ms Mazibuko and Ms Ndlovu

1. Purpose of the Act
  - To provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools
  - To amend and repeal certain laws relating to schools
  - to provide for matters connected therewith.
2. Section 34-36 & 39
  - It is the responsibility of the State to fund the public schools
  - Allocation of Norms and Standards
  - School account
  - Allocation of Norms and Standards
3. The Provincial Department of Education allocates funds to schools annually, based on the 10th day learner enrolment statistics.
  - Funds are used for LTSM and other needs.
  - SGBs appoint a Norms and Standards Committee, to oversee the Norms and Standards funds allocated to the school.
  - Committee works closely with the Finance Committee and must ensure that the necessary procurement processes are followed.
  - Committee must include at least two parent members of the SGB.
4. School account
  - Each school must operate a current/cheque account.
  - Three signatories must be appointed by the SGB to conduct transactions.
  - A minimum of two signatories is required to execute any given transaction.
  - No school is permitted to have an overdraft facility
5. Section 37 - **Finance Committee**
  - Appointed by the School Governing Body.
  - Consist of the SGB Treasurer, the SGB chairperson, the Principal and the Finance Officer, who may be a school clerk.
  - Headed by the Treasurer, who serves as the chairperson.
  - Meet at least once a month to examine its financial records and to approve necessary transactions.
  - Report to the SGB.
6. Section 42-44
  - Financial records and statements of public schools
  - Provide example of financial books
  - Auditing of financial records and statements
  - Financial year of public school
7. **Procurement of LTSM and non-LTSM**
  - Responsibility of the SGB and Norms and Standards Committee.
  - LTSM must be prioritised.
  - Non-LTSM includes any other need the school may have such as furniture and equipment.

THANK YOU

# APPENDIX I: PRESENTATION

## **The Batho Pele Principles: The principles guiding financial management**

Presenter: Mr Mbatha

The Department of Education is committed to the principles of Batho Pele

### **1. Consultation**

- To find out the needs of customers
- To establish views of stakeholders
- Through meetings, questionnaires and surveys

### **2. Service Standards**

- Performance measurement is necessary to maintain standards
- Inform stakeholders about the standards of service they can expect from the school

### **3. Access**

- Ensuring that all learners who come to school are provided with opportunities for quality education

### **4. Courtesy**

- Being polite, respectful, helpful and willing to assist all stakeholders

### **5. Information**

- Ensure that information is available in the most commonly spoken language(s) of the area.

### **6. Openness and transparency**

- Information about how much money the school receives and how it is spent should be made available to all stakeholders
- Annual reports and accounts should be published
- Present how the school has performed against set standards and targets

### **7. Dealing with complaints**

- Stakeholders have a right to complain if the service received is not up to standard

### **8. Value for money**

- Parents as taxpayers have a right to know how school funds are spent.
- Precautions against wastage, fraud and corruption.

### **9. Service Delivery Impact**

- Implementation of the Batho Pele principles should improve service de-livery
- Promote working together as a team
- Provide better service to help improve the lives of learners

### **10. Encouraging Innovation and Rewarding Excellence**

- Encourage new and innovative
- Raise the standards of service excellence in schools.
- Recognise staff and stakeholders for new ideas and good practices.

### **11. Leadership and Strategic Direction**

- Principal should set direction and lead by example.
- Encourages creativity and innovation.
- Empower people to
  - work together
  - plan together
  - reach the targets and goals

## APPENDIX J: ETHICAL CLEARANCE STATEMENT



Faculty of Education

14-Nov-2017

Dear Ms Nozipho Khumalo

**Ethics Clearance: A professional development framework to empower the School Management Team in Financial Management**

Principal Investigator: Ms Nozipho Khumalo

Department: School of Education Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)

### APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2016/1045**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

Prof. MM Mokhele

Chairperson: Ethics Committee

Education Ethics Committee

Office of the Dean: Education

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# APPENDIX K: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH (KZN DoE)



education

Department:  
Education  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref.:2/4/8/868

Mrs NP Khumalo  
PO Box 1271  
Newcastle  
2940

Dear Mrs Khumalo

## PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TO EMPOWER THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM IN FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 25 July 2016 to 01 December 2017.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Zululand District

**Adv. MB Masuku**  
**Acting Head of Department: Education**  
**Date: 01 August 2016**

### KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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