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PRINCIPALS' ROLE IN MANAGING TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Despite South Africa's high spending in education compared to other sub-Saharan countries, its education system is often criticized as ineffective as evidenced by poor student outcomes in both national and international assessments. This educational inefficiency is often linked to poor teacher quality, particularly in mathematics and science where some teachers are considered to have content knowledge below the level at which they are teaching. The researchers interviewed five primary school principals in KwaZulu-Natal on the training needs analysis methods they used to identify the training needs of foundation phase teachers. They all reported that they only used the Integrated Quality Management System template provided by the Department of Basic Education. However, they did not use it optimally due to a lack of comprehensive knowledge of how it should be implemented. In order to address this, it is recommended that principals should receive thorough training on the implementation of the Integrated Quality Management System, and that training needs analysis should be conducted on a quarterly basis rather than once a year.
Keywords: *integrated quality management system, professional development, training needs analysis, interpretive paradigm.*

Introduction

The South African education system is often criticized as inefficient and wasteful as indicated by poor educational outcomes, weak management of schools, poor teacher quality, an ineffective system for identification of teachers' training needs, and limited professional development (PD) opportunities. This is worrying since South Africa spends around six percent of its budget on education, which is far more than most sub-Saharan Africa countries, yet its educational outcomes are far worse and its educational quality is poor and weak, particularly for the black African population (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019; Motala, 2001). Despite this generalization, the apartheid-era educational inequalities still exist in the sense that the formerly 'whites-only' schools are still high performing, whereas the previously 'blacks-only' schools tend to be low performing (Spaull, 2014). Spaull (2015) further noted that South Africa has fared badly in national and international assessments of educational achievement. In 2015, it ranked 75 out of 76 countries in a list of education systems drawn up by OECD, and second-last in a ranking of 34 countries by the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement in Grade 8 mathematics and last in science (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019). It also fares badly in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) designed to assess the learners' knowledge of mathematics and science in Grades 4 and 8 (Reddy et al, 2016; Spaull 2014). This bleak scenario confirms Motala's (2001) assertion that the achievement of education quality is an enormous challenge in South Africa.

As a strategy to diagnose and address the causes of poor educational outcomes, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) conducted the first Annual National Assessments (ANAs)

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in Grades 1–6 and Grade 9 in 2011 (DBE, 2014; Van der Berg, 2015). ANAs were primarily introduced to evaluate the quality of primary education and the learners' shortcomings, focusing particularly on literacy and numeracy in the foundation phase (Grades 1–3) and languages and mathematics in the intermediate phase (Grades 4–6) (DBE, 2019a; Van der Berg, 2015). An analysis of the 2011 ANA results shows that the performance of South African primary schools is generally poor, since even the best province, the Western Cape at 46 percent in Grade 3 literacy, was "well below what can be considered acceptable" (DBE, 2011, p. 6). Spaull (2013) confirmed this educational crisis stating thus, "…with the exception of a wealthy minority – most South African pupils cannot read, write and compute at grade-appropriate levels, with large proportions being functionally illiterate and innumerate" (p. 3). This situation is disturbingly bleak and shows that the government's efforts to improve learners' achievement have not made much impact.

Robinson (2019) linked the learners' alarming underachievement portrayed above to poor teacher quality stating that most mathematics teachers possess content knowledge below the level at which they are teaching. To address this, she proposed the introduction of high teacher professional standards, which requires having high expectations of teaching quality. She averred, "if you expect more from teachers, don't allow them into the classroom until they've met a basic set of criteria, and hold them to account if they fall short, then the quality of teachers will improve" (p. 1). This accentuates the centrality of well-qualified, competent teachers to learners' academic success and the need for teacher training institutions to improve their admissions selectivity and for school authorities to be selective when appointing teachers.

Research Problem

The success of a country's education system depends largely on the quality and efficiency of its teachers in performing their jobs. However, for teachers to do their work effectively, they should be provided with relevant and adequate support and training. To accomplish this, a training needs analysis (TNA) should be done for every teacher to determine their needs and how these needs can be addressed. This research was prompted by the researchers' realization that many learners in the foundation phase (Grades 1–3) in the Imfolozi Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal underperform despite the significant allocation of human and nonhuman resources to these schools by the government. This situation shows that the government's concerted efforts to improve the learners' achievement do not make much impact.

This research was undertaken to explore whether teachers are well equipped to perform their duties effectively as expected. In particular, it probed whether principals are effective in providing expected leadership in different aspects of their schools to ensure teacher productivity and enhance quality education. The research probed how principals conducted TNA for foundation phase teachers in their schools in order to assist them in their PD efforts. Specifically, this research sought to answer the following main research question: How do principals identify professional development needs of foundation phase teachers in order to enhance their competencies?

Needs Assessment Context in South African Schools

Although the problems highlighted above can be addressed at different levels of the country's education system, this research focused on the school level, particularly on the role played by principals in conducting TNA for teachers. Principals play a central role in the professional growth of teachers, and this, in turn, influence student outcomes positively (Brown & Militello, 2016; Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). They have an enormous influence on the effective functioning of schools and creating a success-oriented school culture that supports

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teachers' PD. Although the research focuses on TNA, it is helpful to explain the concept of professional development, which is closely related. The OECD (2009) explained PD as the "activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher" (p. 49). For Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017), PD is structured professional learning that seeks to improve teacher practices and student learning. It is also defined as a comprehensive, sustained and intensive process of enhancing the effectiveness of teachers and principals in order to raise student achievement (Brown & Militello, 2016). Some of the descriptors used for PD include in-service training, continuing education, staff development and self-improvement (Bredeson, 2002) intended to deepen teachers' mastery of content, critical thinking and problem-solving in order to develop 21st century student competencies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

PD is instrumental to student learning and educational achievement which are key indicators of educational quality (National Planning Commission, 2012). In South Africa, the goal of continuing professional development is to improve teachers' instructional practices, the standard of teaching and student learning, and the quality of education (Jita & Mokhele, 2014; Tsotetsi & Mahlomaholo, 2013). For PD programmes to be successful, the principal should conduct an effective TNA for teachers. This helps to determine the current levels of performance and knowledge related to a specific activity and indicates the highest levels expected (Cekada, 2010). As Coetzee (2007) noted, an individual TNA identifies individuals who should receive PD within an organization and the kind of PD they need to improve their performance. Steyn (2011) submitted that it is understandable why some teachers consider official PD programmes to be wasting their time and are not keen to attend them because they do not address their individual development needs or those of their schools.

Steyn (2011) noted that one of the weaknesses of the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (NPFTED) is that, although it underscores the need for sustained leadership and support, it does not clearly encourage or clarify school-based programmes for teacher development or the role of principals in such programmes. It is a fruitless exercise if teachers receive training in areas that do not address their professional or pedagogical needs because this may lead to a loss of morale. As Quint (2011) argued, the primary role of the principal is to ensure that the school is committed to ongoing learning and improvement, to organize regular meetings that foster change for teachers, to monitor the content of teachers' meetings and to explore strategies that can improve learners' achievement. To achieve this, it is also important that school leaders should mobilize resources to support teachers and forge productive relations and collaboration among them as they engage in the process of reflective practice (Wells, 2013).

In South Africa, teachers' PD needs are addressed through different mechanisms such as the IQMS and Continuing Professional Teacher Development programmes (DBE, 2011). The IQMS was introduced to develop teachers' competencies, to monitor and evaluate their performance, and to provide support and opportunities for development (More, 2016; Tsotetsi & Mahlomaholo, 2013). It can indirectly be used to monitor an institution's overall effectiveness, assess its strengths and weaknesses and promote accountability. However, the IQMS provincial coordinators who visit schools from time to time often report that many of the problems and inconsistencies in the system are caused by lack of proper understanding and insufficient teacher development and support (DBE, 2011). In general, teachers consider the IQMS processes to be time-consuming and believe that they should be streamlined by reducing paperwork and time involved.

The IQMS plays a pivotal role in needs assessment in South African schools, and its implementation is mandatory. Therefore, it is important that PD should be one of the top priorities on the school's agenda (Mestry, Hendricks, & Bisschoff, 2009). Its implementation entails the recording of teachers' needs in their Personal Growth Plans (PGPs) where they

indicate the areas in which they want to be developed (DBE, 2011). However, the DBE (2011) noted that teachers' performance appraisals executed through the IQMS do not evaluate competences sufficiently, and therefore, it does not help teachers to identify their development needs adequately.

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

The research has adopted two main TNA models, namely the *organization-task-person* model often referred to as the OTP model developed by McGehee and Thayer in 1961, and the *performance analysis* model developed by Mager and Pipe in 1970 (cited in Taylor, O'Driscoll, & Binning, 2006) to frame the discussion. The OTP model has three components: organization analysis, task analysis and person analysis. Organization analysis involves assessing the goals and objectives, resource needs and efficiency indicators of an organization to determine the areas where training is required (Taylor et al., 2006). In the context of this research, training needs could be determined by reviewing school policies on aspects such as student admission, subject choice, student absenteeism, ICT, instructional practices and staff competencies. Task analysis (sometimes referred to as 'operations' analysis) seeks to establish performance standards, the tasks that need to be performed to achieve those standards, the way tasks are performed, and the knowledge and skills required to perform such tasks in order to determine the content and scope of training required (Cekada, 2010; Taylor et al., 2006). This could be established by assessing teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and instructional competencies in their subjects. Finally, person analysis seeks to establish who needs training and the type of training they need (Cekada, 2010; Taylor et al., 2006). This could be achieved by determining the level at which each employee is operating to meet performance standards, usually through performance appraisals. In schools, teacher competence can be ascertained through performance appraisals, teacher observations and learner achievements in comparison with others in similar circumstances or national standards.

Taylor et al. (2006) argued that *performance analysis* is an alternative model that seeks to determine the causes of discrepancies between the desired and the actual performance. It seeks to identify the performance gap, its root causes and possible solutions. It advocates that training should be provided only when a performance discrepancy is linked to lack of knowledge or skill, and not to other factors that influence work behaviour such as rewards and punishments. The model also assumes that performance problems can be addressed by changing the work environment rather than increasing the knowledge and skills of employees, implying that training in organizations has little effect on worker productivity. If executed properly in a school, performance analysis may point to deficiencies in teachers' actual performance in areas such as content knowledge and instructional practices against expected performance levels. However, providing training only when there is a performance discrepancy may be problematic because teaching is a dynamic profession that requires educational leaders to continuously look out for training opportunities to develop and support teachers professionally in order to stay abreast of developments in the profession.

The Principal's Role in Teachers' Professional Development

PD is seen as an antidote to all the challenges that ail education since the remedy for all the complaints lodged against schools involves some form of PD. Brown and Militello (2016) noted that most policymakers and leaders focus on interventions for teachers since they have the most direct impact on student learning as they deliver subject content daily in class. In spite of this, they observed, "the content, context, and delivery of PD in schools are fluid and idiosyncratic" (p. 703). In South Africa where there is still a widespread problem of poor

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educational outcomes, the most direct way of improving the quality of teaching and learning is through a comprehensive reform, review and reorientation of in-service education for teachers (DBE, 2019b; Jita & Mokhele, 2014; Steyn, 2008). This could foster high-quality teacher learning, and improve teachers' knowledge and instructional practices. Arikewuyo (2009) contended that this could be done if principals provide leadership through developing their own professional knowledge, organizational and administrative competencies; developing sound school policies; knowing how to delegate authority; and establishing good working relationships with staff and parents. This requires principals to ensure that all school systems, processes and human resources are transformed and improved gradually for optimal performance.

One of the key responsibilities of teachers is to support teachers and ensure that they receive professional development continuously in order to stay efficient in their jobs (Ngema, 2016). Effective leaders engage teachers in reflective professional discourse, draw on research and external ideas to shape their thinking and actions and challenge them to think critically about what they want to achieve with learners and how they want to do it (Jita & Mokhele, 2014; Steyn, 2008). For this reason, Grogin and Andrews (2002) averred, "the school principal is a key lynchpin between teacher development and school improvement" (p. 249). This underscores the fact that principals play a pivotal role in creating and nurturing a success-oriented school culture that supports teachers' PD to enhance student outcomes. This research explored how principals ensure that individual professional needs of foundation phase teachers in the Imfolozi Circuit, KwaZulu-Natal are properly analysed.

Components of Teacher Knowledge

Since its transition to democracy in 1994, South Africa has undergone significant curricular reforms that include Curriculum 2005, which was first introduced in 1998, and was intended to be implemented in phases until its complete rollout in 2005. However, before this could be realized, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was introduced in 2002. Due to some teething problems in its implementation, RNCS was revised and renamed the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2008. The NCS also had some technical problems in its design and content and was replaced by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement in 2012 (DBE, 2012). These rapid curricular changes have occurred over a short period, and require teachers to continuously upskill and update their content and pedagogical knowledge. During the phases of curriculum change, teachers normally attend workshops to prepare for its implementation; however, many of these are ineffective as teachers encounter difficulties in understanding and implementing the curriculum. In terms of the National Education Policy Act (27/1996): Norms and Standards for Educators (2000), teachers are required to fulfil seven roles of being a mediator of learning, assessor, designer of learning programmes, leader, manager and administrator, researcher, scholar and lifelong learner and to take on a pastoral role.

Effective implementation of a new curriculum requires teachers to apply up-to-date teaching strategies and techniques. To achieve this, they need to have sound knowledge of the content and pedagogical content knowledge. Content knowledge involves knowing about a topic from deep learning of the subject, whereas pedagogical content knowledge involves knowing about the teaching and learning of a topic using effective instructional strategies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Kind, 2009). Teachers with sound content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge for particular content have been shown to provide high-quality instruction (Kleickmann et al., 2012). Finally, the changes in curriculum require teachers to access continuous, high-quality professional learning opportunities to develop and acquire new relevant knowledge and skills. This indicates how crucial it is to ensure that a professional development needs analysis of each teacher is done to determine whether he or she is able to fulfil all the roles of the teacher outlined above.

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Some Approaches to Training Needs Analysis

Chiu, Thompson, Mak, and Lo (1999) identified two broad categories of training needs, namely supply-led approach and demand-led approach. The *supply-led approach*, which is described as 'pedagogical', is trainer-driven and authority-oriented in the sense that it is directed by the vested interests of trainers. In this traditional approach, trainers are responsible for identifying the needs and determining the scope of training. However, the weakness of this approach is that trainers often lack line management experience and may not understand the operational issues on the ground. This approach seems to be predominant in South African PD programmes since it is mostly the DBE officials who identify the teachers' training needs and provide training without much input from the trainees.

The *demand-led approach* can be either business-oriented, process-oriented or trainer-centred. The business-oriented approach emphasizes 'bottomline', profitability and growth (Chiu et al., 1999). It uses an organization's business plan as one of the sources of information about training needs. It is considered to be anticipatory because it seeks to develop the skills that an organization needs to achieve its objectives or growth. However, one criticism of this approach is that it is top-down and emphasizes the business outcomes more than the trainee's development needs. Similarly, the process-oriented approach focuses on a division or department rather than the whole organization (Chiu et al., 1999). Training is dictated by new processes like technology or a new curriculum in schools. In such a scenario, training needs are identified to ensure that the new work processes are implemented in an effective manner.

The trainer-centred approach uses "lectures or different kinds of presentations… to transmit theoretical knowledge and basic skills to trainees who [are] treated as passive recipients of 'readymade' knowledge rather than active agents engaged in decision-making processes" (Tzotzou, 2016, p. 14). This approach is often contrasted with the trainee-centred or an 'andragogical' approach (Delahaye, 1992). It is bottom-up, self-development driven and emphasizes the employee's training needs more than the business outcome or work efficiency (Charungkaittikul & Henschke, 2018). It relies more on self-assessment as a source of information that depicts a true reflection of the trainee's development needs. In South African schools, the DBE uses this approach by means of a standard IQMS template administered by the principal to identify the teachers' training needs. From the teachers' expressed needs, the principal draws up a school training plan, which is submitted to the circuit and district offices to develop the circuit and district training plans respectively. However, in practice, it does not appear that these are used as a frame of reference when developing training programmes as the content and structure of training are largely influenced by the objectives of the DBE or trainers.

Research Methodology

General Background

The performance of South African learners in the national and international assessments such as ANA and TIMSS is poor compared to other developing countries including some poorer African countries. To address this, principals are required to improve the quality of teaching in their schools mainly through PD for teachers. This can be achieved if principals conduct TNA for teachers properly. Accordingly, five principals were interviewed in the Imfolozi Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal province to probe their perceptions of TNA and how they conducted it for teachers. The research followed an interpretivist paradigm, which underscores that the best way to learn about people is to go to their natural settings to obtain rich information about their lived experiences (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014), which enables the researcher to gain new insights about a phenomenon of interest (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). In qualitative research,

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participants are afforded an opportunity to provide their interpretations, perceptions, meanings and understandings of a phenomenon, which are then regarded as the primary sources of data. A case study design was used to generate data as it allowed for a systematic in-depth study of one particular case, which could be an individual, a group of people, a school or a community (Rule & John, 2011).

Sample Selection

The research sample comprised five principals purposively selected from a population of 45 primary school principals in the Imfolozi Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal province. This was considered a manageable number that would allow intensive interviews in this qualitative research. The participants were selected because of their vast work experience and knowledge of the TNA processes in primary schools accumulated over many years, first as teachers and later as principals. The research focused on how principals conducted TNA for foundation phase teachers (Grades 1–3). The participants were selected from five geographic areas of the circuit, namely deep rural, rural, township, informal settlements and urban areas in order to get a balanced view of the principals' conceptions and implementation of TNA in their schools. The participants were requested to share their views, experiences and strategies for conducting TNA for teachers. All the participants had more than three years' experience as principals, and therefore, it was assumed that they would provide rich first-hand information pertinent to the research. To uphold the principles of anonymity and confidentiality, the five principals were labelled P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5 respectively.

Instrument and Procedures

Semi-structured interviews were deemed appropriate for this qualitative research because they allowed principals to provide rich descriptive data on the tools and methods they used to conduct TNA for foundation phase teachers. In South Africa, TNA is embedded in the IQMS template provided by the DBE. The semi-structured interviews included open-ended questions and further probing questions to clarify some answers given (De Vos et al., 2011). All five principals interviewed were also observed in their respective roles during post-evaluation meetings. Field notes were written during the interviews to ensure the recording of unanticipated events (Rubin & Babbie, 2014), and a voice recorder was used to capture the discussions. The participants mainly responded in English, but occasionally codeswitched to *isiZulu* (their home language); however, their responses were carefully translated during the transcription process.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed in three stages: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. In the first stage, data were broken down into distinct parts, and then combined into new ways during the second and final stages. Thereafter, they were selected and arranged into core categories, which were then organized into themes and subthemes that sharpened understanding and enabled interpretation. A narrative analysis was used wherein the participants' responses and experiences were transcribed. The principals' narratives presented during the individual interviews were reformulated in a manner that retained their voices (Earthy & Cronin, 2018). In other words, their stories were synthesized to provide a holistic view of their responses to specific questions. In keeping with the narrative analysis, the researchers put themselves in participants' shoes and tried to see the world from their perspectives.

Since the research followed an interpretivist or naturalist approach, the objective was not to generalize the findings, but to generate a rich and contextualized understanding of how

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principals conducted TNA for foundation phase teachers. Therefore, to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, some dependability and credibility mechanisms were infused into the data generation process. Dependability was ensured by conducting research in five different contexts: deep rural, rural, township, informal settlements and urban areas to increase confidence in the findings, designing comprehensive questions focused on how principals conducted TNA, and rechecking the interview questions several times because in qualitative research, "the researcher is the instrument" (Patton, 2002, p. 14). This also influenced the credibility of the findings as this typically depends on the researcher's ability and effort (Golafshani, 2003). Anney (2014) explained that credibility refers to the degree to which the findings reflect the actual meanings of the participants. To ascertain this, member checks were conducted wherein transcribed data was taken back to the participants to confirm or disconfirm its authenticity.

Research Results

The main purpose of this research was to explore how principals carried out TNA with teachers at their schools. The main findings that emerged from the data were synthesized and presented thematically using narrative analysis. In some cases, the participants' verbatim responses are cited for the purpose of clarity, using codes P1 to P5 to represent each of the five principals. The following main themes that emerged from data analysis are discussed under different sections:

- Principals' understanding of their roles;
- A single method of conducting an individual needs analysis;
- Lack of clarity about who should address teachers' needs;
- Personal and other contextual factors that hinder effective teacher development;
- Consequences of lack of proper needs identification and professional development of teachers; and
- Failure to address individual needs of teachers.

Principals' Understanding of Their Roles

The first interview question probed the principals' views on their role in identifying the teachers' professional development needs. In responding to this question, all five principals disclosed that one of their duties was to ensure that the IQMS processes were effectively implemented in their schools, and that teachers attended the staff development activities and workshops organized by the DBE. They reported that they were required to sensitize teachers on the implementation of IQMS at the beginning of the year mainly through training. After training, teachers normally chose their Development Support Group (DSG) made up of three people, that is, the principal or other School Management Team (SMT) member, a peer and the appraisee. The principals also stated that the first pre-evaluation meeting for the DSG was a platform for members to meet with the appraisee to discuss their PGPs using a form where teachers recorded their professional development needs. P1 clarified her role as follows:

> My responsibility as the principal of the school is to see to it that teachers attend workshops, come back and report to the staff. I have to ensure that IQMS processes are implemented properly. At the beginning of the year, I have to train teachers on IQMS processes although I feel that, we, as principals, need to be trained from time to time. The information that we have needs to be updated. I last attended the workshop in 2003, and since, then I have never been invited to any workshop. I have heard the updates from the IQMS monitor from national level who was visiting schools that were randomly selected, and he was questioning about some forms that we did not have and we never heard about.

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The lack of regular workshops highlighted above was also echoed by principals P2, P4 and P5. They stated that they needed to be trained regularly on effective implementation of IQMS processes and decried the fact that they last attended the IQMS workshops in 2003 when it was introduced, yet they were expected to train teacher on IQMS at the beginning of each year. The disclosure by P1 in the above excerpt that she learned about some new information during the monitoring visit by the DBE official highlights some shortcomings and gaps encountered in the implementation of the instrument. Irregular workshops that are few and far between may lead to inconsistencies in the implementation of IQMS. To highlight lack of support for principals in implementing IQMS, P4 stated:

> *I ensure that I train teachers in IQMS at the beginning of every year. However, I am not confident with some areas since I have not attended any IQMS workshop since I was appointed to this principalship position five years ago. I was only trained by the principal of my previous school.*

In this instance, it would be difficult for P4 to be efficient in the implementation of IQMS as he operated solely with basic knowledge gained informally on the job from the previous principal and not from well-organized workshops. Ideally, the DBE at the district and provincial levels should run training workshops for newly appointed principals in all areas of school management and teacher development; however, this is not the case.

A Single Method of Doing an Individual Needs Analysis

On the question of how they conducted an individual needs analysis for teachers' professional development, the principals stated that, in compliance with the IQMS, they only completed the PGP forms, and then consolidated this information to develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP) as expressed in the extracts below.

> *Teachers fill in the Personal Growth Plan forms where they record prioritized areas in need of development. After the teacher has been observed in class by the DSG, they assist the teacher to record what they regard as her areas of development. The teacher's areas of development are written in assessment criteria as they appear in the IQMS performance standards* (P1).
> *We implement IQMS, which helps us to identify and analyse individual needs at school. At the first DSG meeting, a teacher and his or her team fill in the PGP forms. My role as the leader is to motivate and monitor that teachers implement IQMS because it is for their professional development* (P2).

On further probing, the two principals revealed that they did not always complete the PGP form as this depended on how teachers cooperated each year. It could be deduced that this haphazard approach arose because they did not see its value and significance since the DBE seldom provided the training that the teachers had indicated that they needed. They stated that the DBE tended to focus on training teachers on the implementation of the new curriculum, and ignored the specific training needs of individual teachers, a situation that thwarted the DBE's efforts to improve teacher efficiency.

Lack of Proper Guidelines on Who Should Address the Teachers' Needs

The main purpose of conducting a TNA is to provide support to teachers on identified needs. Accordingly, the following question was posed to principals: After collecting information about the teacher's needs, what do you do, and why do you think it is crucial to do a needs analysis? Their responses indicate that there was confusion as to which of the identified teachers' professional development needs should be addressed at the school, circuit or provincial level. In

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this respect, two principals stated that after teachers had submitted their PGPs, they identified the needs that they could address at school and those that could be addressed at the circuit level in the SIP as expressed in the excerpts below.

> After collecting the teachers' training needs, the SMT meets, looks at all the teachers' needs for the school, and chooses the ones that we might be able to address at school. We then compile the School Improvement Plan and write all those that we feel may be addressed by the Department of Education. We still have some challenges as the Department has been busy with curriculum changes workshops over the past years, and the individual needs of each teacher have not been attended to (P5).
>
> Once all the teachers have been evaluated, I develop the school improvement plan where all the information about the teachers' needs as identified in their Professional Growth Plan is included. The School Improvement Plan is submitted to the circuit office where they develop the Circuit Improvement Plan. The only problem is that we keep on going through the same process of writing SIP yearly, but the Department of Education has never attended to the individual needs of teachers (P4).

P1 added to the debate as follows:

> Teachers have become discouraged in writing these PGPs because they don't see them being used to improve their performance. I, as the principal of [the] school, have been writing in my PGP that I would like to be developed in project management and advanced computer skills, but until now I have never received any training on these.

Some level of frustration could be deduced from the above narratives premised on the belief that although the principals conducted a TNA for teachers annually in accordance with government policy, the follow-through was ineffective or non-existent. This highlights that in schools, the teachers' TNA was merely conducted as a routine exercise for policy compliance without attaching much importance to it.

Personal and Contextual Factors That Hinder Effective Development of Teachers

In response to the question asking them to identify the factors that hindered effective professional development, the participants identified teacher apathy to new knowledge, negative attitudes towards work, lack of knowledge, poor implementation of IQMS processes, unhealthy human relations at school, lack of resources and an unsafe work environment. Their views are expressed in the following excerpts.

> I believe a teacher should always be keen to learn. He or she should know his or her weaknesses and seek support. A teacher must acquire new information on developments in the area of his or her specialization like new teaching methods and assessment strategies. As the principal, it is sometimes difficult to support a teacher who does not see the need for self-development (P2).
>
> A teacher who does not upgrade herself or take responsibility for her development may not be able to perform well, as there are lots of new developments in education (P5).
>
> What takes place all around us these days requires one to desire to learn out of every situation and circumstance in order to know what to do at a particular time and improve on what has previously gone wrong. Some teachers do not do that; instead, they run away from any challenging situation and the SMT members or other colleagues [then need] to address them (P2).

The above extracts underscore the need for teachers to take control of their self-development. They can accomplish this by working together with principals, other teachers and the DBE. Finally, the narratives also express the principals' frustrations with teachers who do not see the need for professional development.

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Consequences of Lack of Proper Needs Identification and Professional Development

Effective professional development can ideally take place after proper identification of individual needs. In this sense, principals were asked to state what would happen if teachers could not receive proper professional development. They all agreed that in such a scenario, teachers would not perform their duties effectively, leading to some frustration and lack of self-confidence. In particular, two principals felt that teachers might develop negative attitudes towards change if their needs were not identified and they were not provided with relevant professional development. These sentiments are expressed in the excerpts below.

> *If teachers do not attend professional development [activities] and learn about new changes in the curriculum, they can have negative attitudes. Some teachers may stick to old methods of teaching and become reluctant to use the methods that are recommended in the current curriculum* (P2).
> *The result of not providing teachers with development is that, they may underperform and have negative attitudes towards their work. I find it so challenging to deal with a person who has a negative attitude because he or she usually opposes any new idea or activity and even influences others to be on his or her side* (P5).

Elaborating on the issue of teachers who had negative attitudes towards work, P3 and P4 indicated that it was difficult to work with them because they tended to oppose whatever activity was introduced at school and influenced others not to participate. Notwithstanding this, it remains the duty of the principal to lead teachers with negative attitudes and persuade them to see things differently failing which they may strain collegial relations and disturb order at school. P1 and P2 viewed teacher demotivation to be deleterious and counterproductive in the following way:

> *Demotivated teachers need close supervision in order to perform well and some do not even want to participate in extra-curricular activities. Some complained that there is too much work* [and] *that is why they sometimes fail to do other activities* (P1).
> *From my observation in many years as a principal, a demotivated teacher lacks zeal and knowledge about some issues, but does not necessarily display disrespect like most people who have a negative attitude* (P2).

Essentially, they felt that principals should have a way of dealing with demotivated teachers, which may include creating a nurturing environment that would enable the SMT members to provide them with strong support and encouragement. Motivating staff is one of the key functions of school leaders, and therefore, principals should create a conducive work environment that elicits and sustains teachers' interest and commitment to their own professional development.

Failure to Address Individual Needs of Teachers

To determine whether principals addressed the individual needs of teachers, the following question was asked: Do you ensure that the individual needs of each teacher are addressed? The participants' responses were as follows:

> *I would say I try, but it is not easy because the Department has always been busy with training teachers on the implementation of the new curriculum, [and] in that way, other shortcomings that [an] individual teacher has, have been ignored. When we submit the SIPs, the Department is supposed to provide workshops to teachers as per their needs, although we are not clear which ones should be addressed in schools and which ones by the circuit office* (P3).
> *We have managed to address the needs that we see that most teachers are short of. Since there*

have been different curriculum changes, the focus has been on preparing teachers for the implementation of the curriculum. We have programmes like Jika iMfundo [turning education around] *and teachers have been attending workshops on this. It is not easy… to follow up on every teacher's individual needs* (P5).

Discussion

A central theme that has emerged from this research is that South Africa's quality of education is low compared to other developing countries, despite allocating a higher proportion of its national budget to education than other sub-Saharan Africa countries (Spaull, 2014; Spaull, 2015; van der Berg, 2015). From a rigorous analysis of regional and international assessments, Spaull (2014) concluded that South Africa has the lowest score of all the developing countries that participated in TIMSS, and that in the regional Southern and East Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) assessments, its performance was worse than poorer countries such as Swaziland, Tanzania and Kenya. However, Reddy et al. (2016) noted that over the years, South Africa's performance in TIMSS has improved steadily from 'very low' to 'low', arguably because it started from a low base which made it possible for the government's school improvement efforts to make a difference.

The low achievement level of South African primary school learners is linked to teachers' insufficient content knowledge, which has been reported to be below the level at which they are teaching in some cases, particularly in mathematics and science. Spaull (2013) corroborated that most Grade 6 teachers could not answer mathematics test questions correctly during the SACMEQ III assessment, where some multiple-choice questions were the same as those for the Grade 6 learners. Inevitably, this insufficient content knowledge is transferred to learners because "teachers cannot teach what they do not know..." (Spaull, 2013, p. 27). This could be a reflection of weak selection mechanisms for teachers entering the teaching profession, and the comparatively low admission requirements for students enrolling for teacher training programmes at universities.

The poor quality of South African primary education described above requires school principals to provide purposeful leadership and professional support to teachers aimed at improving their content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in order to enhance the learners' understanding. As Day and Sammons (2016) asserted, principals play a central role in school improvement and creating learning and development opportunities for teachers. To identify teachers' professional development needs, it is imperative that principals should conduct a TNA properly and thoroughly. It is also vital that managers should gather as much information as possible about performance problems that can be addressed through training (Chiu et al., 1999). However, the research findings indicate that in South African schools, TNA is conducted in an ad hoc and uncoordinated fashion, usually through IQMS, a performance appraisal system for teachers. Making training decisions on an ad hoc basis is unproductive, and this can be changed by applying systematic approaches to TNA (Taylor et al., 2006). In this research, principals seemed to have a narrow understanding of TNA as they only linked it to completing IQMS processes. This could be attributed to lack of training on its application and could explain why they are frustrated in implementing it, as there is no clarity regarding which teachers' needs should be addressed by the school and which by the district.

The findings further revealed that principals largely used a single method of conducting a TNA, namely consolidating PGPs from individual teachers to develop SIPs (Ngema, 2016). In turn, these are submitted to the circuit and district offices to develop the circuit improvement plans (CIPs) and district improvement plans respectively. However, the main weakness of this approach is that trainers do not incorporate teachers' training needs stated in the PGPs and SIPs in their training content. Training is often supply-led or trainer-driven and not informed by

teachers' expressed training needs (Chiu et al, 1999). In this authority-oriented approach, the content and scope of training are determined by the DBE officials mostly around policy issues, and not necessarily on matters related to content knowledge or pedagogical practices. This approach renders the IQMS a routine exercise carried out purely to comply with government policy and negates its primary role of promoting teacher productivity and accountability needed to improve institutional efficiency advocated by this research.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The research findings indicate that there are weaknesses and lapses in the manner in which an individual TNA and PD are conducted for foundation phase teachers in Imfolozi Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal province. They highlight that teachers only identify their needs during their IQMS post-evaluation meetings with principals and when they complete their PGPs individually. Since these are both conducted once at the beginning of the year, there is no provision for urgent training needs that may crop up during the course of the year. This shows that, in its current form, the TNA in South African schools is authority-oriented and not trainee-driven, leading to ineffective in-service training and professional development programmes. Moreover, in many schools, the IQMS reviews are conducted hastily in one day without giving due attention to all the critical aspects required for PD of every teacher. Accordingly, the exercise is rendered ineffective as principals try to squeeze all the IQMS processes required for every teacher into a single session.

Furthermore, proper conduct of a TNA is hampered by lack of clarity concerning the PD needs that should be addressed by the DBE, and those that should be addressed by schools. Another challenge is that the workplace skills plans are compiled by the provincial Department of Education without proper follow-up on whether all teachers have received PD in the areas they identified for themselves. In terms of the Skills Development Act (1998), all government institutions including schools should develop annual workplace skills plans, which capture the training needs of all employees. Consequently, principals should submit their SIPs to the circuit office, which then consolidates the training needs of all the schools into a CIP and submits this to the district office.

Instead of conducting a TNA for teachers once a year to fulfil the DBE's IQMS requirements, it is recommended that this should be conducted at least quarterly. This could help to identify and address the teachers' emerging training needs more effectively and in time, especially because teaching is a challenging and dynamic profession that requires continuous learning to ensure quality teaching. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (2007) stipulates that teachers should take control of their professional development and identify the areas in which they need to develop, guided by the South African Council of Educators, the professional body for teachers. Therefore, it is also recommended that teachers should independently conduct their own needs analysis once a week, and that supervisors should conduct a TNA for each teacher once a term. Teachers should also keep records of their identified needs indicating the kind of support received and dates when this took place. This could assist them to track their own performance and monitor their progress and professional growth.

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