

**PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ON THEIR ROLE IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME**

A CASE OF FOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE KING WILLIAM'S

TOWN EDUCATION DISTRICT

BY

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DECLARATION

I Sibusiso Big Boy Paulos, hereby declare that the thesis submitted for the MED degree entitled: Perceptions of School Principals on their Role in the Implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme is entirely a product of my own research and it has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is provided.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to look at the Perceptions of School Principals on their Role in the Implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme in the King Williams Town Education District. The areas that were deemed to be the most important in this regard were, (i) The role of principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme. (ii) Challenges faced by principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme. (iii) The views of principals on the training received for the implementation of the programme.(iv) Assistance provided to schools by the district offices.

The study was situated in the interpretive paradigm which seeks to construct detailed descriptions of reality. Qualitative methods were employed for data collection purposes because they allow the use of interviews and document analysis for data collection. This was the most suitable method for the study which seeks to understand the perceptions of principals on their role in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme

The study found out that, there were a lot of positives with regard to the implementation of the programme and principals were satisfied with its positive impact on teaching and learning. However, principals raised serious concerns regarding some aspects of the programme such as, lack of infrastructure, budget constraints, lack of capacity of the School Nutrition Committees and food

handlers. Also, the study revealed that, there is non-compliance by schools with the 10H00 feeding time, menu guidelines and five day feeding requirement of the programme. Furthermore, the study found out that, lack of training and support from the district offices were other challenges facing the programme. Community involvement was missing and this was having a negative impact on the implementation of the programme.

The study recommends that, the department must embark on a mobilization drive to educate communities about the benefits of participating in the programme. It is further recommended that, the department should develop partnerships with other departments such as Social Development and Health, form partnerships with Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations and corporate businesses. This must be done so as to ensure that issues of lack of capacity and budgetary constraints are addressed. Furthermore, the study recommends that, the number of food handlers be increased and the department should ensure that budget allocations to schools are transferred on time. Training and monitoring should be consolidated through employment and training of district officials.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC African National Congress

PSC Public Service Commission

RDP Reconstruction and Development Programme

CHU Child Health Unit

DOH Department of Health

NSNP National School Nutrition Programme

PSAM Public Service Accountability Monitor

SMMEs Small Medium and Macro Enterprises

DOE Department of Education

DBE Department of Basic Education

PSNP Primary School Nutrition Programme

SGB School Governing Body

LED Local Economic Development

VFH Voluntary Food Handler

SIU Special Investigation Unit

SNC School Nutrition Committees

PFMA Public Finance Management Act

SNFS School Nutrition and Food Security Programme

WFP World Food Programme

USAID United States Agency for International Development

CSO Civil Society Organisation

SMC School Meal Councils

CCFSN Collaborating Centres in Feeding and School

SFPI School Feeding Programme in India

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

GED Grahamstown Education District

L S Loading Schedule

PODs Proof of Delivery

GRVs Goods Received Vouchers

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

DORA Division of Revenue Act

DOF Department of Finance

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1 CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108/1996) states the right of every individual to a basic education and the responsibility of the State in ensuring accessibility of this right to everyone. This, therefore, means that by ensuring this right the state needs not only to provide classrooms, educators and other educational resources but also look at challenges that may hinder accessibility to education, such as socio-economic factors. It is against this constitutional directive that the African National Congress (ANC) government, after the 1994 election, introduced free and compulsory education for the first ten years of schooling.

Education was placed as one of the top priorities in the reconstruction and development of the post apartheid South Africa. However, given the inequalities which were created by decades of the apartheid system, there was a high poverty rate in black communities across the country. This meant that 'learners faced the risk of reduced capacity to learn as a result of nutritional deprivation' (The Public Service Commission (PSC), Report on the evaluation of the National School Nutrition Programme, 2008). Also, this correlation between nutrition and education is confirmed by many scholars .Del Rosso (1999) states that a community's educational and economic status is closely linked to its health status: improve its nutrition and health and its education and economy will be

strengthened. This means that positive educational outcomes are closely related to improved health and nutrition. This, in turn, results in a healthy socio-economic environment. Healthier and better nourished children stay in school longer, learn more and become more productive (Del Rosso, 1999). This means that school nutrition contributes to improved school attendance and better performance by learners. It is against this background that the democratically elected government, after 1994, introduced the Primary School Nutrition Programme which was later renamed the National School Nutrition Programme.

1.2 Background of the study

The Primary School Nutrition Programme was introduced as a lead project in President Mandela's State of the Nation Address on 24 May 1994 (Child Health Unit (CHU) 1997). Since it was a Presidential project, it was funded through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and was placed under the Department of Health (DoH). From 1996-2003, this project was administered by the DoH both nationally and in the provinces. This was done because "it was regarded as a poverty alleviation health promoting initiative designed, in part, to realize section 28(1) c of the South African Constitution which stated that every South African child "has the right to basic nutrition (Evaluation of the School Nutrition Programme, Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) 2010). Furthermore, according to the Child Health Unit (1997), the aims of the programme were to:

- (i) Foster better quality education and encourage regular attendance.

(ii) Ensure punctuality by providing an early morning snack for the child.

(iii) Alleviate short term hunger by providing 30% of dietary requirements of the child.

To ensure the success of the programme, policy and operational guidelines, systems and procedures were put in place. Monitoring and evaluation tools were introduced and personnel were recruited and trained to manage the implementation of the programme (PSC, 2008). Also, communities were brought on board through SGBs, for monitoring the implementation of the programme, and small, medium and macro enterprises (SMMEs) as food suppliers to schools. Unemployed women were recruited as food handlers to prepare food for learners and were paid a monthly stipend.

Over the years, the programme has been evaluated and refined so as to ensure improvements in the implementation and monitoring while consolidating strengths. These included, among others, the name change, increased budget allocations and an increase in the number of learners benefiting from the programme.

In September 2002, Cabinet decided that the programme be transferred from the DoH to the Department of Education (DoE) with effect from April 2004 (Department of Education, 2008). This transfer was based on the fact that schools are the functional responsibility of the Education Department (DoE, 2008). Furthermore, according to the Public Service Commission (PSC) Report of 2008, the programme focused on educational outcomes of school feeding rather than nutrition. Also, since the programme was taking place at schools,

then the Education Department should take responsibility for the programme. Lastly, the programme would provide the Department with an opportunity to link school feeding into the broader context of educational development. Furthermore, the PSC (2008) report states that these aims were in line with Chapter 2 (Bill of Rights) of the South African Constitution, Sections 27, 28 and 29. Section 27(1) b talks of the right to have access to sufficient food, section 28(1) c talks of the right of every child to basic nutrition, and section 29(1) a talks of the right of every child to basic education (Act108/1996). In essence the programme was conceptualized more as an educational intervention aiming at improving children's ability to learn rather than focusing solely on improving nutrition (PSC, 2008).

As the Department continued to evaluate the programme, focus shifted to schools as they are one of the main players in the implementation of the programme. According to the PSAM report (2010), there are now three main activities within the programme:

- The actual supply of food to schools.
- The promotion of sustainable food production initiatives (food gardens) at schools.
- The promotion of nutritional education and healthy eating lifestyles.

Also, the programme was renamed from being the Primary School Nutrition Programme to the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). This was done because of the impending roll out of the programme to secondary schools. When the programme was started, it had an initial budget of R469m for the

1997/98 financial year (CHU, 1997) and cater for quintile 1 (Q1) primary schools. By the 2007/08 financial year, it had a budget of R1,52 bn, catering for six million learners in 17 899 schools. (Department of Education,2007/08). Informed by the survey conducted in 2006 by the Fiscal and Finance Committee, National Treasury increased the NSNP budget allocations to cater for secondary schools as well (DBE, 2010). The programme was implemented in Quintile 1(Q1) secondary schools in April 2009 and was to be phased in to Q2 and Q3 secondary schools in April 2010 and 2011 respectively (DBE, 2010). Quintile 1 schools are schools that are situated in farms while Q2 and Q3 are those situated in rural areas and townships respectively. These are regarded as poor schools because of the challenging socio-economic conditions in the areas where they are situated. The Fiscal and Finance Committee confirmed the need for the roll out of the NSNP to secondary schools since the conditions under which it is provided in primary schools also exists even in secondary schools. Also, the figures mentioned above do not only indicate the growth of the programme but also the extent of poverty levels and the number of learners who go to school hungry everyday (CHU, 1997).

The NSNP was meant to embody the principles of the RDP. Key amongst the principles of the RDP is democratization, meaning that the school and its community should be at the centre of the programme (CHU, 1997). This principle was aimed at ensuring the involvement of communities in the formulation and implementation of the programme. This, in turn, was to galvanize communities into taking ownership of the programme so as to ensure its smooth running.

Amongst the chief aims of the programme is to link school nutrition activities to other school activities with the aim of improving education quality, community involvement and health initiatives (CHU, 1997). It is for this reason that policy and operational guidelines, systems and procedures were put in place, and schools through School Governing Bodies (SGBs) were brought on board through training to implement and monitor the programme (PSC, 2008). Also, aspects of Local Economic Development (LED) were mobilized through contracting of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) as food suppliers. Local unemployed women were recruited as volunteer food handlers (VFH) to prepare food for learners and were paid a monthly stipend (PSC, 2008).

The NSNP has had a degree of success especially in provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape but there have been poor results in provinces with high percentages of poverty and malnutrition such as the Eastern Cape and Limpopo (CHU, 1997). The two provinces, especially the Eastern Cape which is the focus of this study, have had challenges since the inception of the programme. Since the inception of the programme in the Eastern Cape, it has been littered with problems ranging from gross mismanagement of funds to allegations of corruption (PSAM, 2010). In 1996, the programme was suspended in the province and the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) was brought in to probe these allegations of fraud and corruption (Daily Dispatch, 13 December 1997). Again in 2007, the programme collapsed leading to the expulsion of MEC, Mkhangelisi Matomela, and the roping in of the Scorpions to investigate (Daily Dispatch, 27 August 2007). Chief amongst challenges which faced the programme was the

awarding of tenders. Furthermore, in its 2008 research the PSC, amongst other things, found out that:

- i. Role players in the programme have varying levels of awareness regarding their roles and responsibilities. By role players, the report talks about stakeholders such as principals, SGBs and educators.
- ii. There is an active involvement of communities in the programme. (The report is correct on both these findings but fails to explain why there are varying levels of awareness regarding roles and responsibilities amongst role players).
- iii. Also, on the question of community involvement the report does not state how members of the community participate in the programme.

This is against the general consensus that school communities, that is, SGBs, principals and educators, were trained and attended workshops on the implementation and monitoring of the programme. The Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual of the NSNP (2004) refer to some of the responsibilities of the principals as:

- i. Appointment of an educator as a School Nutrition Committee (SNC) member. This means that the principal ensures that an educator is democratically elected by other educators to serve on the SNC.
- ii. Establishment of the School Nutrition Committee. The principal together with the SGB should ensure that a committee which will represent all stakeholders in a school is established. This committee will work with

the principal in co-ordinating and administering the programme. Though the principal may delegate some of the responsibilities to members of the committee, he/she remains accountable for the programme.

- iii. Ensuring provision of food to learners before 10H00. As mentioned above, one of the key aims of the programme is to provide an early morning snack for the child. It becomes the responsibility of the principal to ensure that this key aim of the programme is not compromised.
- iv. Signing of Proof of Delivery forms after verifying that deliveries are correct. Principals are obliged not to sign for incorrect deliveries or food delivered near or after the date of expiry.
- v. Monitoring the daily running of the programme. The principal should ensure that food handlers arrive on time, sign attendance register, and see to the general hygiene of the cooking area and personnel and any other activity that ensures that the programme does not have an adverse impact on teaching and learning.
- vi. Submission of monthly reports to the district office. Principals must submit reports to the district office on the progress of the programme in their schools. These must include a detailed financial expenditure on the money allocated to the school. Non compliance may result in the withholding of funds.

However, there are allegations of poor or non compliance by principals with the rules and regulations governing the programme. Some educators allege that the

selection of educators for the SNC is not done transparently while some parents claim that they are sidelined in the activities of the SNC. These irregularities contribute to irregular appointments of food handlers and food suppliers.

Also, studies conducted on the programme indicate that there is generally poor compliance with the 10H00 feeding time. However, these studies fail to indicate why this is the case while this compromises one of the key aims of the programme.

Another area of concern is that of food deliveries. There are allegations of some principals working in cahoots with food suppliers. This results in incorrect deliveries and poor quality of food. This also impacts on the ability to comply with menu options and learners not being fed regularly.

There is also a growing perception amongst educators that lack of monitoring of daily activities of the programme works against its intended consequences. This is caused by, amongst other things, food not being ready at break time and learners then being taken out of classes when food is ready or there being extended break times since it takes time to feed all learners in a limited time in big schools. These disruptions have a negative effect on teaching and learning which the programme seeks to enhance.

Concerns have also been raised with regard to monitoring and reporting. Studies which have been undertaken with regard to the programme indicate lack of monitoring and reporting. Districts are expected to monitor the implementation by way of regular visits to schools (PSAM, 2010). However, this seems not to be the case as monitoring and reporting remain a challenge because of the lack of

human resources and capacity amongst those entrusted with the operations of the programme (DBE, 2010).

Studies conducted on the programme fail to explicitly come up with the causes of the challenges mentioned above, especially at school level. Since the programme was implemented in secondary schools, studies conducted have not explicitly explained the perceptions of principals on their role in the implementation of the programme.

It is against this background that the study seeks to assess the perceptions of principals on their role in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme.

1.3 Statement of the problem

School principals, SGBs and educators have the responsibility of taking charge of the NSNP at schools. However, the findings of various studies conducted show that school principals and other stakeholders lack understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to the programme (PSC, 2008). This is despite the fact that these people were trained and went through induction when the programme was introduced. This lack of understanding regarding roles has led to non-compliance with rules and regulations governing the programme, learners not being fed regularly and poor or non-submission of reports to the district offices. Furthermore, quality of food remains below the required standard, non-delivery of food continues and we continue hearing about irregular appointments of food handlers and food suppliers. However, much as these

challenges pointed out above are confirmed by various studies conducted on the programme, they fail to come up with explicit causes, especially at school level (PSC, 2008; DoE, 2008). Since the roll out of the programme to secondary schools, studies conducted have failed to explicitly explain perceptions of school principals on their role in the implementation of the NSNP. The study focused on why there is a general non-compliance by principals with regard to the rules and regulations of the programme. Also, the study looked at why there are continuing problems when guidelines are clear and people were trained.

It is for this reason that the study sought to assess perceptions of principals on their role in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme.

1.4 Research questions

1.4.1 Main research question

What are perceptions of principals on their role in the implementation of the NSNP?

1.4.2 Research sub questions

1. How are principals involved in the implementation of the NSNP?
2. What challenges do principals encounter in the implementation of NSNP?
3. How do principals view the training received to enable them to implement the NSNP?

4. What support do principals receive from Department of Education officials to ensure proper implementation of the programme?

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to find out perceptions of the principals on their role in the implementation of the NSNP.

1.6 Research objectives

1. To find out how principals are involved in the implementation of the NSNP.
2. To find out challenges encountered by principals in the implementation of the NSNP.
3. To find out how principals view the training they received to enable them to implement the NSNP.
4. To find out support provided to principals by officials from the Department of Education to ensure proper implementation of the programme.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The NSNP remains one of the key responsibilities of the government in its quest of ensuring equal access to education for all (CHU, 1997). The findings of this study will assist in the improvement of the implementation of the programme at schools since they will elevate the voice of the principals and bring forward their

challenges. The findings of this study will also bring to light the challenges facing schools in the implementation of the programme and try to come up with ways of dealing with such challenges. The findings will also assist in understanding the capacity levels of the people responsible for the implementation of the programme who are principals in the case of this study. The study will also assist district officials with regard to understanding challenges faced by schools so as to develop intervention programmes where necessary.

1.8 Assumptions of the study

The study assumes that:

Principals do not comply with rules and regulations governing the programme.

There is inadequate support by district offices provided to principals with regard to effective implementation of the programme.

1.9 Delimitation of the study

The study will be limited to four secondary schools which are part of NSNP in the King William's Town district. Participants will be the principals of the four secondary schools.

1.10 Definition of terms

- **Reconstruction and Development Programme** – African National Congress Policy after 1994 which was aimed at addressing inequalities of

the apartheid government by bringing basic services to the people (ANC, 1994).

- **Public Service Commission** – State organ which investigates, monitors and evaluates the public service so as to ensure effective and efficient public administration and high standards of professional ethics in the public service (Act108/1996).
- **Food suppliers** - any person /organization which supplies schools with food for the NSNP (DoE 2008).
- **Food Handler** – person employed to prepare food for learners in the school (DoE, 2008).
- **Perceptions** - perceptions involves two important processes, namely the gathering of signals carrying information and the subsequent decoding of this information in the brain, where any previous knowledge of such information is stored (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004).

1.11 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.11.1 Theoretical framework

The study was informed by distributed leadership, participatory leadership and policy implementation models.

1.11.2 Distributed leadership

Spillane et al. (2004) as cited by Harris (2008) states that distributed leadership is constituted through the interaction of leaders, teachers and situations as they influence institutional practice. Furthermore, Spillane and Orlin (2005) describe distributed leadership as a product of interactions of school leaders, followers and aspects of their situations. This means that school principals should always take on board educators, parents and learners in every matter regarding the school. Also, the context of the school, that is, the community in which the school operates, should be taken into consideration in every aspect of the school. This means that with regard to the National School Nutrition Programme, relevant stakeholders and other members of the community should be kept abreast about the programme so that they can take ownership of it. Everyone should be capacitated so that it can be easy for them to take initiatives like establishing SMMEs and food gardens.

1.11.3 Participatory leadership

The participatory leadership model is known by many names. It is sometimes referred to as democratic leadership, shared leadership or participative decision making. This means that this leadership model give voices to those who may be perceived as holding insignificant positions in an organization and allow them to share ideas with those who are perceived as superiors. This leadership model focuses on respect and engagement and increases commitment to final decisions and enhances relations between management and subordinates. This

means that, with regard to the programme, everyone at school should be part of decisions taken. This includes learners and parents. Also, principals should include any other stakeholder with the necessary expertise in the process of policy formulation regarding the programme.

1.11.4 Policy implementation

According to Anderson (2006:06), policy is defined as 'a relative stable purposive course of action or inaction followed by an actor or actors in dealing with a problem or a matter of concern'. This therefore means that the purposive nature of policy indicates the intent or what needs to be done and if such a policy is not effectively implemented, it remains merely a statement of intent (Cloete & Wissink, 2000). This model consists of two approaches which are top-down and bottom-up approaches (Paudal, 2009). According to Sabatier (1983), policy implementation in the top down approach is the hierarchical execution of centrally defined policy intentions and is based on the assumption that a small, elite group (usually government) is responsible for policy decisions and that this group governs an ill-informed public, i.e. the masses (Dubnick & Bordes, 1983). Parsons (1995) defines the bottom up approach to policy implementation as emphasizing the examination of the role of street level bureaucrats when implementing a policy or programme. This study adopted a bottom up approach.

1.11.5 International perspective of the National School Nutrition Programme

Nutritional programmes have been implemented in many countries all over the world. This has been done in response to particular challenges which were faced by those countries (PSC, 2008). Literature relating to Brazil, India and Kenya are reviewed in this study. The reason why India, Brazil and Kenya were selected is that they experienced similar challenges to those of South Africa, such as managerial skills among stakeholders involved in the programme (principals, teachers and members of SGBs), lack of community involvement and inconsistency in the number of feeding days.

1.11.6 Involvement of principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme

School managers have the responsibility to implement, monitor and report on the National School Nutrition Programme (DOE, 2007). This means that, as schools are the cornerstone in the implementation of the programme, principals become important in the effective and efficient implementation of the programme. As much as the successful implementation of the NSNP remains the responsibility of all, from the National Department to schools, school principals as accounting officers in their schools have, amongst their responsibilities, that of implementing, monitoring and reporting on the programme (PSC, 2008). It is for this reason that literature will be reviewed on the involvement of principals in the implementation of the NSNP.

1.11.7 Challenges faced by principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme

The Guidelines for the Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual of the National School Nutrition Programme (2004) clearly outlines the responsibility of principals with regard to the implementation of the programme. However, schools continue to be embattled by challenges. These include, amongst others, non-delivery of food supplies, learners not being fed, food provided to learners after 12H00, and lack of monitoring and reporting. It is for this reason that literature will be reviewed on the challenges faced by principals in the implementation of the programme.

1.11.8 The views of principals regarding training received in the implementation of the programme

Despite the fact that principals were trained and issued with guidelines governing the programme, challenges continue to derail its effective implementation. Since principals are accounting officers in schools, their views and attitudes regarding training on the implementation of the programme become imperative. Hence literature is reviewed in the next chapter on the views of principals with regard to training received to enable them to implement the programme.

1.11.9 Assistance provided to schools by the districts

Section 38 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 1999 considers Heads of Departments as Accounting Officers. The Act states the responsibility of Accounting Officers as “effective, efficient, economical and transparent use of resources” transferred to their respective departments and they must maintain an “effective, efficient and transparent system of financial and risk management” and take “appropriate steps to prevent unauthorized irregular and wasteful expenditure” (Department of Treasury, 1999). Section 8 of the PFMA states that, an Accounting Officer will be committing an act of misconduct if he/she “wilfully and negligently” fails to comply with section 38 of the PFMA.

Since the NSNP is funded by a conditional grant, further regulations govern how the money is spent (PSAM, 2010). The Division of Revenue Act (DORA) which deals with conditional grant allocations states that the receiving department must use the money for the particular purpose it has been allocated. In the case of NSNP, monies should be used to effectively implement the programme. Failure to do so may result in the withholding of funds (PSAM, 2010).

It is against this background that district officials need to be vigilant in ensuring the smooth implementation of the programme. District officers are expected to monitor the implementation of the programme through school visits. According to the Guidelines for the Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual (2004) the district office should, amongst other things:

Conduct training for schools

Liaise with schools on a regular basis

Produce monthly reports relating to the NSNP to the ECDOE.

1.12 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chief aim of this section is to provide a framework on how the study will be conducted. This will be done by discussing the research approach and methodical steps to be used in the assessment. Also, the section will look at data collection methods, sampling, negotiating entry, credibility and trustworthiness, data analysis and ethical considerations.

1.13 Research paradigm

The study will be premised within the interpretivist paradigm. Henning (2004), states that this approach describes people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons. It is seen to emphasize that one has to get close to what he/she is studying and view it from the perspective of the insider. The interpretivist paradigm is said to be emphasizing 'experience and interpretation' (Henning, 2004). This means that this paradigm concerns itself with meaning and seeks to understand how societies define and understand their situations. This paradigm is relevant to this study since the research questions are interpretative in nature. The researcher wants to understand the roles of principals in the implementation of the NSNP. Furthermore, this paradigm concerns itself with the future and this is relevant to the aims of the study since the study seeks to give meaning and direction to the NSNP in the near future.

1.14 Research approach

In this study, a qualitative approach was used to interrogate the scope of the research problem. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) as cited by Gray (2004:319) qualitative studies have a quality of 'undeniability' because words have a more concrete and vivid flavour that is more convincing to the reader than pages and numbers. Also, qualitative research is conducted through contact with real life settings. This approach also emphasizes the process rather than outcomes. One can draw parallels between qualitative research methods and the interpretive paradigm of this study since both view the world through the eyes of the participants and view human behaviours as a result of how people view their world. This approach was used in the study since it is possible to study events as they happen as in the study the researcher was able to study principals when executing their duties in the NSNP.

1.15 Research design

Maree (2007) talks of research design as a strategy which moves from underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, data gathering techniques to be used and data analysis to be done. This research adopted a case study design. Yin (1994) as cited by Gray (2004:123) defines a case study as "... an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context...". Gray (2004) further states that, this approach is particularly useful when the researcher tries to uncover the relationship between a phenomenon and the context in which it is occurring. This

study sought to investigate the perceptions of school principals in their roles in the implementation of the nutrition programme. Henning (2004) states that the case study design focuses on a phenomenon that has 'identifiable boundaries'; this means that a study of a phenomenon focuses on specific instances. Also, it is within the confines of qualitative approach which means interaction with participants in their natural settings, which in this study are their work places. Assessment of perceptions of principals on the implementation of NSNP is the phenomenon and the case is each school.

1.16 Population and sampling

1.16.1 Population

Population is the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements and it is from which the sample is actually selected (Babbie & Mouton, 2005:173). The population of this study were the principals of the four hundred and fifty schools in the King William's Town district participating in the NSNP. It is from this population that the researcher chose his sample.

1.16.2 Sample and sampling

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion for the study. Merriam (1998) defines sampling as the selection of a research site, time, people and events in a field research. The sampling techniques which were used in the study were a combination of convenience and purposive samplings. Goldenberg

(1992:162) defines convenience sampling as "... just what the title implies, since the investigator simply gathers data from whomever is conveniently accessible". The schools which were used in the study were conveniently accessible to the researcher. The danger of this technique is that it disregards the representativeness of the target population, it may be biased and it may not lead the researcher to 'desirable participants'. The researcher guards against this by also using the purposive sampling technique.

Henning (2004) describes purposive sampling as a method which has elements of theoretical sampling and which looks for those who can assist in building the subtractive theory further, 'people who fit the criteria of desirable participants' (Henning, 2004:71). This means that participants are selected for a particular purpose, the information needed in the study. The sample for this research comprised four school principals. The four schools and the school principals were conveniently and purposively chosen. This means that the schools were chosen because of their proximity to the researcher and their principals because they are people who are accounting officers in schools regarding the programme.

1.17 Negotiating entry

Before the research was conducted, permission was sought from the Eastern Cape Department of Education. This allowed the researcher to gain access to schools. It also allowed the researcher to obtain documents which were of assistance to him in conducting the study. Also the researcher talked to the

various respondents about his intentions to include them and their schools in the study. A letter was also obtained from the University to confirm his intentions.

1.18 Data collection instruments

1.18.1 Semi-structured interviews

The researcher used interviews and document analysis as instruments of collecting data. Arskey and Knight (1999) as cited by the Gray (2004:214) define interviews as a “powerful way of helping people to make explicit things that have been implicit, to articulate their perceptions, feelings and understandings”. This means that the researcher, through an interview, was able to probe for more detailed answers as the interviewee was asked for more clarity on what he/she said. The four principals were interviewed on their role in the implementation of the NSNP.

1.18.2 Document analysis

Document analysis entails using documents as part of data gathering strategy. The main focus in document analysis as a data collection technique is that the written communication provides information on the subject of investigation. The researcher analysed documents to find out whether they had evidence which could strengthen the information obtained in the interviews. Written communication that was used in this study included minutes of meetings, policy documents, reports and attendance registers.

1.19 Trustworthiness and credibility

1.19.1 Trustworthiness

There is a general agreement among scholars that trustworthiness is a key principle in qualitative research. This is further confirmed by Babbie & Mouton (2005) when saying that the key principle of a good qualitative research is in the notion of trustworthiness, the neutrality of its findings or decisions. A qualitative study cannot be called transferable unless it is credible and cannot be trustworthy unless it is dependable. Therefore, that means trustworthiness brings credibility. Trustworthiness in a qualitative research can be measured using several strategies. To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher used two strategies which are triangulation and auditing of scripts. This means that since the researcher used different data collection methods, namely interviews and document analysis, the researcher was able to complement information obtained from different sources. Also, the researcher shared the transcribed information with the participants in order to confirm whether the written information was a true reflection of what was said.

1.19.2 Credibility

Credibility refers to that which can be believed. A research is credible because it clearly represents the views of participants who will be given an opportunity to read the draft scripts before research papers are finalized. To enhance the credibility of this study, the researcher used multi data resources such as

interviews and document analysis. Interview questions for the research were filed for future use and this ensured that the reliability of this study could be verified. If a later researcher followed the same procedure and conducted the same study, then he/she would be able to draw lessons from this study.

1.20 Data Analysis

Henning (2004:101) describes data analysis as a “process which requires analytical skills and the ability to capture understanding of the data in writing”. Since the product of a qualitative research is rich in descriptions, the researcher should be able to use words and pictures to convey what the researcher has learnt about the phenomenon. For this research, the researcher used aspects of qualitative data analysis. This included putting information into themes which were related to the study.

1.21 Ethical considerations

The consideration of ethics in a research is very important as the researcher deals with people. Cohen et al. (2006) state that social research necessitates obtaining the consent and co-operation of subjects who are to assist in the study. This means that since the researcher would be embarking on a journey with the interviewee trust must be established. Gray (2004) also states that participants should not in any way be harmed or damaged by the researcher when data is collected through interviews. This means that the researcher should ensure anonymity and confidentiality of all participants. The researcher should also

respect the autonomy of the participants and they must have the right not to answer questions and may terminate an interview before its completion (Gray, 2004). With regard to this issue, I also got approval from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee and the University of Fort Hare Ethics Committee.

1.22 Chapter outline

The outline of the thesis is as indicated below:

CHAPTER 1: Covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, research objectives, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, delimitation of the study and definition of terms.

CHAPTER 2: Cover the theoretical framework and the literature review.

CHAPTER 3: Covers the methodology of the study and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 4: Consist of data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER 5: Covers discussions of the findings.

CHAPTER 6: Covers summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature regarding the role of school principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the theoretical framework which will be used to explain the collected data. Literature is reviewed in order to reveal what other researchers have written on the role of principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The study will be informed by the distributed leadership, participative leadership and policy implementation models.

2.2.1 Distributed leadership

The effective implementation of the NSNP largely depends on the schools as they serve as the sites where the programme is implemented. This therefore means that the school community, meaning the teachers, parents and learners should embrace and take ownership of the programme for it to be effectively implemented. Harris (2008:173) states that "Distributed leadership theory would recognise that many people will have the potential to exercise leadership in any organisation but the key to success will be the way that leadership is facilitated,

orchestrated and supported". This means that, much as distributed leadership appreciates the fact that everyone can have the potential to lead, this must not in any way compromise the formal leadership structures of the school.

Distributed leadership does not promote anarchy in schools but enhances participation. Harris (2008:174) further reaffirms this when stating that, "Distributed leadership does not imply that formal leadership structures within an organisation are removed or redundant. Instead, it is assumed that there is a peaceful relationship between vertical and lateral leadership processes". This means that as much as participants, that is, teachers and other stakeholders, should always be brought on board regarding the implementation of the NSNP, principals remain key with regard to accounting for the programme. Spillane et al. (2004) as cited by Harris (2008) further affirms this argument by describing distributed leadership as an interaction of school leaders, teachers and situations as they influence institutional practice.

Spillane and Orlin (2005) when investigating the distributed leadership concepts raised two key elements of distributed leadership. These are the leader-plus aspect and the practice aspect. They refer to the leader-plus aspect as acknowledging the work of all individuals who have a hand in leadership practice irrespective of their positions within the organisation. This means that leadership is not the sole responsibility of the person who has formal power. Such an undertaking can be performed by whoever provided that he/she has the necessary expertise. But key to this is the leadership practice which has to 'foreground' interactions between leaders and followers. This means that the

actions of a leader should facilitate these interactions. Much as school principals remain accountable for the programme, they should not be the beginning and the end of the programme as this will prove a mammoth task. Principals should facilitate the establishment of committees, headed by the people with the necessary expertise to lead the programme.

Spillane and Harris (2008) provide us with some key elements of distributed leadership. These are the normative and representational powers of this model. With regard to the 'normative power' of this model, the political changes of 1994 have been filtered down to our education system. The fact that many of our schools are self-managing... "...require leadership to be actively and purposefully distributed within schools" Spillane and Harris (2008:31). Furthermore, "the model of the singular heroic leader is at last being replaced with leadership that is focused upon teams rather than individuals and places greater emphasis upon teachers, support staff and students as leaders" (Spillane and Harris, 2008:31). The fact that the success of this programme depends on all stakeholders working together further affirms the need for this model. The representational power of distributed leadership can also be associated with the political changes of 1994. Today in South Africa the majority of people are represented whether in the form of parliamentary representation, through chapter 9 institutions, civil society or through the trade union movement. This, therefore, means that representation is a key word in the vocabulary of South Africans and our schools cannot escape this growing trend. For teachers, parents and learners to embrace the

programme, they should be represented in the committees that are responsible for the running of the programme.

As much as a lot has been written about the positives of distributed leadership, MacBeath (2005) provides us with some interesting challenging dilemmas with regard to the implementation of this model. These are:

- Trust and accountability
- Holding on and letting go
- Consultation, consensus and command

Distributed leadership is based on trust. Since school principals have an obligation of accounting to district officers and parents on the progress of the NSNP, it then becomes very challenging for school principals to trust their educators with the responsibilities, especially those that involve school finances such as the NSNP. Though MacBeath (2005) points out some challenges, he also offers some solutions to the challenges. This is done by ensuring firm performance monitoring tools are in place so as to eliminate any mistrust. MacBeath (2005:349) states that “while working to generate trust, heads have to hold staff to account through performance monitoring, comparative benchmarking and scrutiny of attainment data which they acknowledge”.

Also, with regard to holding on and letting go, school principals should allow the establishment of working committees in their schools but should ensure that they are part of work progress of such committees through regular reports from people responsible for such committees. MacBeath (2005:355) states that, “consultation is the process by which heads are listening to others but hold on to

the right to decide while decision making by consensus distributes that right to others". These two definitions are inclusive in approach and allow participation of others in decision making but they do not take the right of principals to make decisions and command on agreed portions.

2.2.2 Participatory leadership

O'Connor & White (2010) refer to participation as the mental and emotional involvement of a person that encourages the individual to contribute to group goals and share responsibility for them. This therefore means that participation is an engagement of an individual with others, sharing ideas so as to enhance shared responsibility for action. This concept is also concerned with ensuring that everyone who is involved in a particular project is him/herself involved in the planning and implementation of that particular project. It is also aimed at ensuring that there is increased participation by all those who are involved since this will motivate them and ensure that they understand decisions and they take ownership of them.

The participatory leadership model is known by many names. It is sometimes referred to as democratic leadership, shared leadership or participative decision making (Torbert & Rook, 2008). This means that this leadership model gives voices to those who may be perceived as holding insignificant positions in an organisation and allows them to share ideas with those who are perceived as superiors. This leadership model focuses on respect and engagement and

increases commitment to final decisions and enhances relations between management and subordinates.

Bottery (2004) highlights the need for members of any organisation to fully participate in decision making which affects them as stakeholders in an organisation. Full participation makes stakeholders own decisions and abide by them. By doing so, people adopt an 'all swim or sink' approach, meaning they reap the fruits of success together and take full responsibility of failure together. Also, participation happens in many ways, that is, direct (personal) or indirect (through representation) and in different intensities, that is, ranging from minimal to comprehensive, by which individuals, groups or collectives secure their interests or contribute to the choice process through self-determined choices (Harris, 1998).

As indicated above, participatory leadership is democratic and favours decision making by a group. In this model, the leader facilitates the conversation, encourages people to share ideas, delegates authority and makes use of human engagement to release potential (wise Geek, 2013). In this way, a sustainable and empowering climate is created and allows people to perform even in the absence of the leader.

In implementing this leadership model, one needs to guard against aspects which may be superficial. These aspects may be reflected if leadership in implementing this model is not genuine. Another manifestation is pressure on individuals to conform to group domination where one person takes control of a group and urges everyone to follow his/her standpoint. Also, time can be another

challenge for this model since ideas come from many people and to save time discussions may be stopped. This may lead to a situation where good ideas are unheard. Also, this model can lead to inefficiency and indecisiveness since it takes a long time to reach an agreement.

This model becomes important for this study since participation by all stakeholders is key to the effective and efficient implementation of the programme. Since NSNP is implemented in schools, stakeholders must be involved in all its facets so that they can take ownership and lead the programme.

2.2.3 Policy implementation

According to Anderson (2006:06), policy is defined as “a relative stable purposive course of action or inaction followed by an actor or sets of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern”. This means that the purposive nature of policy indicates the intent or what needs to be done because if such policies are not effectively implemented, they remain merely a statement of intent (Cloete & Wissink, 2000). This also means that the policy must result in action by those who are responsible for the implementation of such a policy.

This model consists of two approaches. This is confirmed by Schofield (2004) who says that in policy implementation processes there are two perspectives. These are defined by Paudal (2009) as the top down and the bottom up approaches. This study has adopted a bottom up approach to policy implementation.

2.2.3.1 Top down approach

In defining this approach, Sabatier (1983) states that policy implementation in the top down approach is the hierarchical execution of centrally defined policy intentions and is based on the assumption that a small, elite group (usually government) is responsible for policy decisions and that this group governs an ill-informed public, i.e. the masses (Dubnick & Bordes, 1983). This therefore means that policy formulation becomes the privilege of the elite and the masses are left behind. Also, this means that the general populations' views are not taken into account even on issues which they are expected to play an important role.

One of the strengths of this approach is based on the assumption that policy implementation begins with a decision made by central government (Pulzl & Treib, 2007). This assumption means that people in high positions are regarded as having authority in policy implementation. The other strength of this approach is that it ensures compliance since people are told what to do and when and regards policy makers as key actors in policy development at the macro level (Gumede, 2008). However, this approach ignores the fact that local service deliverers have knowledge of the challenges that exists on the ground and are better placed to propose purposeful policy (Paudal, 2009). It is for this reason that the study has adopted a bottom up approach.

2.2.3.2 Bottom up approach

According to Parsons (1995), a bottom up approach to policy implementation emphasises the examination of the role of street level bureaucrats when

implementing a policy or programme. This means that this approach appreciates the value of input by people in the lower tier of bureaucracy and is contrary to the top down approach which maintains that successful policy implementation is the result of getting people to do what they are told to do and controlling all the stages of implementation (Parsons, 1995). Also, Pulzl and Treib (2007) state that the aim of the bottom up approach is to give an accurate empirical description and explanations of interaction and problem solving strategies of actors involved in the delivery and policy implementation. This means that this approach argues that implementation cannot be divorced from policy formulation. With regard to the NSNP, policy makers need to work with other stakeholders such as school principals, teachers and parents from policy formulation to implementation of the programme.

2.3 International perspective of the National School Nutrition Programme

School Nutrition Programmes have been implemented in many countries all over the world. The programmes were introduced in response to the particular needs the respective countries sought to address at the time (PSC, 2008). Brazil, India and Kenya are examples of such countries which introduced this programme. The reason these countries are used as examples is that, in spite of experiencing similar challenges to those of South Africa, such as managerial skills amongst stakeholders involved in the programme (principals, teachers and members of the SGB), lack of community involvement and inconsistency in the number of

feeding days (PSC, 2008), these countries have recorded sustainable and fairly successful feeding programmes. Kenya, an African country, has a low level of school attendances and a high poverty rate but it can provide us with some key lessons to be learnt.

Brazil introduced its School Nutrition and Food Security Programme (SNFS) at school after the Second World War in 1945 (PSC, 2008). The programme has expanded immensely over the years. It has grown from a programme which was providing food to 85 000 students from 340 schools in 137 municipalities in 1945 to a programme benefiting about 40 630 000 million students from 165 000 schools in 5 564 municipalities in 2008 (Brazilian School Feeding Programme (PNAE), 2012-Ministry of Education-Brazil). This programme is supported by both the United Nation World Food Programme (WFP) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Because of the vast nature of Brazil, the country adopted a decentralised approach where the programme is managed by Local School Meals Councils. The councils are constituted by representatives from government (municipal), teachers, parents and civil society organisation (CSOs). The councils decided on how the funds should be spent, the actual delivery of meals and other related products (PSC, 2008). This means that it is the School Meal Councils who have the responsibility to account for the programme. School principals are not entirely responsible for the implementation of the programme and their responsibility is management of their schools.

Another significant aspect of the programme in Brazil is around the issue of staff training and capacity building. The Federal Government has developed

partnerships with universities to train staff and optimize food supply (World Food Organisation (WFO), 2012). Collaborating Centres in Feeding and School Nutrition (CCFSN) have been established to train teachers, food service staff, dieticians and school feeding committees. These centres also train farmers to optimize production and marketing of their products and to sensitize communities on issues such as locally composed menus (WFP, 2011). Also, the Education Department has a partnership with the Department of Social Development which focuses on food security and the Department of Health which looks at the health issues of learners (WFP, 2011).

Another strong aspect of the programme in Brazil is the promotion of local procurement. The Ministry of Agriculture organizes and trains small producers to become suppliers to the school feeding programme and many municipalities have started to buy from local producers (Brazil Ministry of Education, 2012).

India is another country with a School Nutrition Programme and has adopted a decentralised approach which is similar to that of Brazil (PSC, 2008). The programme was launched around the mid 1980s operating in three states, and by 1995 it was implemented nationally (School Feeding Programme in India (SFP), 2011). The Programme has managed to mitigate some of the challenges facing the country such as millions of out of school children and undernourishment among millions of children. Much as there is a lack of funds and capacity amongst the stakeholders, there are lessons to be learnt from the programme in India.

One of these is the involvement of Non Government Organisations (NGOs) and big businesses in the programme. Given the vastness of the country and the density of population, the government lacks the capacity to provide enough funding for the programme (Rukmani, 2011). This involvement by NGOs has lessened the burden on schools regarding the implementation of the programme since implementation and monitoring are the responsibility of these NGOs. Also training is conducted by these NGOS. This involvement has contributed to the programme being expanded nationally and caters for out of school children. It has also gone a long way in mitigating hunger and undernourishment among millions of rural Indian children.

Another country which offers interesting lessons on the implementation of the nutrition programme is Kenya. Its nutrition programme was introduced by the Kenyan Ministry of Education in partnership with the World Food Programme in the 1980s (WFP, 2011). Education is a challenge in Kenya because of extreme poverty and the nomadic livelihood patterns. This has led to a low learner population and a high drop-out rate. It was for these reasons that the nutrition programme was introduced in Kenya.

Amongst the lesson to be learnt (WFP, 2011) are 'being in the room' when policy decisions are made, discussions on school feeding with other stakeholders and learning from what other countries are doing. This means that school managers are involved when policies about the programme are formulated. Though this at times may take a long time, results over the long term make the effort worthwhile. Also discussions with stakeholders on the programme are very important. These

help to identify some bottlenecks and finding ways of dealing with them. Lastly, it becomes very important for a country to learn what other countries are doing by adopting good practices and applying them in their countries

Lastly, and more importantly, is the introduction of a computer-based monitoring system to manage information (WFP, 2011). This system assists the ministry in planning and arriving at decisions at review meetings.

Given the challenges which face the implementation of the programme in South Africa, it becomes important to interrogate what other countries who have implemented the programme before us have done to overcome their challenges.

2.4 Role of principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme

School managers have the responsibility to implement, monitor and report on the NSNP (DOE, 2007). This means that, as schools are the cornerstones in the implementation of the programme, principals become important in the effective and efficient implementation of the programme. As much as the successful implementation of the NSNP remains the responsibility of all, from the National Department to schools, school principals as accounting officers in their schools have amongst their responsibilities that of implementing, monitoring and reporting on the programme (PSC, 2008). It is for this reason that literature on the involvement of principals in the implementation of NSNP is reviewed.

The Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual of the NSNP (2004) refers to some of the responsibilities of the principals, including the appointment of an educator(s) as School Nutrition Committee (SNC) member(s). This means that the principal ensures that an educator(s) is democratically elected by other educators to serve on the SNC. According to the Implementation Guidelines for Schools (2011/12), due consideration should be given to educators with nutrition and financial expertise since these educators will be expected to take leading roles in the functioning of the SNC.

However, the 2010 Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) study came up with some challenging observations around the selection of SNC educators. Firstly, while the study found that a number of educators were pleased to be SNC educators, some educators felt that they were compelled to take on the role. The study (PSAM, 2010) found that educators were reluctant to take roles in the SNC because they felt that the programme placed more responsibility on them as educators and this becomes annoying to educators and thus counter-productive. This attitude of educators works against the interests of the programme. Also, there are unconfirmed allegations of principals appointing their favourite educators to the SNC with the aim of embezzling the money meant for the programme (PSAM, 2010). Though this is not the purpose of this study, this is one area on which the researcher tried to get some clarity.

Secondly, the Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual (2004) states that it is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that a School Nutrition Committee is established. The principal together with the School Governing Body

(SGB) should ensure that a committee which will represent all school stakeholders is established. This committee will work with the principal in co-ordinating and administering the activities of the programme. Though the principal may delegate some of the responsibilities to the members of the committee, he/she remains accountable for the programme. The Implementation Guidelines for Schools (2011/12) states detailed responsibilities of the SNC which includes, amongst others:

To ensure that the procurement processes at school level is in compliance with the relevant departmental requirements and procedures. This means that the SNC must obtain quotations, evaluate and select suppliers, and undertake ordering of supplies, receiving goods, paying suppliers, storing goods and managing stock control.

Pay the monthly stipend to food handlers and keep a daily attendance register.

Comply with the monthly reporting requirements of the Department.

Deliver a daily meal to all learners as per the prescribed menu by 10h00.

The guidelines also outline the composition of the SNC, which may vary in size depending on the size of the school and criteria for selecting the members of the committee. Regarding the composition of the committee, the guidelines recommend that the committee should comprise the following members:

1x Food handler

2x SGB members (preferably the Chairperson and Treasurer)

3x Educators (one educator for the following – sustainable food

Production, school feeding and nutrition education)

1x SMT member responsible for school nutrition

1x learner from the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) -

Secondary schools only

Also, with regard to the criteria for selecting people, the guidelines recommend that the following facts should be taken into consideration when selecting members:

Basic bookkeeping skills of the SGB chairperson and treasurer should be taken into consideration so that they can fulfil their responsibilities on the SNC.

No member of the committee or any member's family may supply food to the school.

No member of the SNC may be incentivised for any service rendered in terms of the programme with an exception of food handlers.

However, studies conducted on the programme clearly indicate that this is one area which is very challenging for the programme (PSC, 2008). A study conducted by the Public Service Commission in 2008 showed that only 40% of teacher co-ordinators and 22% of principals were aware that they were responsible for the overall implementation and monitoring of the programme in the Eastern Cape. This therefore means that SNCs and school principals were not well capacitated in performing their duties regarding the programme. This finding is further confirmed by a study conducted by the Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) in 2010 in the Grahamstown Education District

(GED). The study found that in the thirty schools which were surveyed for the study the majority of educators and principals surveyed indicated that they understand how documents such as Loading Schedules (LS), Proof of Delivery Receipts (PODs) and Goods Received Vouchers (GRVs) are used, but only less than 50% of the respondents could practically demonstrate how they are used. One respondent actually came out and said that her school simply took whatever food they were given (PSAM, 2010).

Another area of concern with regard to the SNCs is that of extra workload the NSNP places on educators. Educators are lamenting because the NSNP interrupts their normal teaching obligations (PSAM, 2010). Other educators complain of too much paperwork involved in the NSNP. A study conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2008, working together with the DoE, further confirms this extra workload on teachers responsible for implementing the programme. The study (UNICEF, 2008) found that educators and principals responsible for the NSNP appear not to have time to ensure proper implementation with regard to the record keeping, controlling food items received and supervising the preparation of food. This lack of administrative capacity compromises effective implementation of the programme.

Thirdly, the Guidelines state that, the principal should ensure that learners are provided with food before 10h00. As mentioned above, one of the key aims of the programme is to provide an early morning snack for the child. It then becomes the responsibility of the principal to ensure that this key aim of the programme is not compromised. The NSNP is funded via a conditional grant from National

Treasury which is allocated to provinces according to the Division of Revenue Act (DORA) as well as other directives from the Department of Basic Education and National Treasury (KZN-DoE, 2011). This means that the NSNP allocations are ring-fenced and may only be used for the programme. The National Grant Framework dictates that learners be fed on all school days with at least a minimum of 193 days per year and learners in all schools shall be fed by 10h00 (KZN-DoE, 2011).

However, studies conducted on the programme indicate that there is a general non-compliance by schools to these crucial policies (PSC, 2008). In most instances, learners are fed less than five days a week and food is not served to learners before 10h00 as it is stipulated in the policy documents. According to the Public Service Commissioner 2008 report, 70% of respondent schools from ten districts surveyed in the Eastern Cape indicated that learners were served with food during the first break which is between 10h00 and 12h00. The study also found out that in 20% of the schools feeding of learners does not take place five days a week. Challenges in the delivery of food by suppliers were cited as the main reason, especially unreliable or non-delivery of food (PSC, 2008). These findings were further confirmed by a study conducted by UNICEF in 2008 which, amongst its findings, states that schools are not complying with the prescribed feeding time. The study concludes that the background and importance of feeding before 10h00 may not be clearly understood by principals. It is for this reason that the views of the principals regarding compliance with the policy directives were sought.

In another study undertaken in the Grahamstown District (PSAM, 2010), the findings clearly indicate a total disregard of the feeding times by about 60% of principals who participated in the study. The reasons which are again cited are late food deliveries and meal servers unable to complete their cooking commitments before 10h00.

Another key requirement of the Guidelines is that of principals being required to sign PODs after verifying that deliveries are correct. According to Operational Guidelines for Schools (2011/12), all orders for school products are made in writing. Delivery times and dates should be agreed to between the SNC and the supplier. Deliveries in schools should be done in time to ensure that all learners are fed before 10h00 every school day.

All schools should adhere to the following when receiving goods:

All deliveries should be accompanied by a delivery note which should include:

- The name and address of the supplier
- The name of the school
- The date of delivery
- The description and quantity of each item supplied.

Quantities received should be checked against the original order and the delivery note which should be signed by two members of the SNC.

All products delivered should be checked carefully to ensure that the quality of food is acceptable (substandard products should be rejected and noted on the delivery note)

Sell by/expiry dates are acceptable

All items have the appropriate original manufacturer's label (no repackaging is allowed).

However, studies conducted with regard to this area of compliance showed that this is one area which remains an Achilles heel for the programme (PSAM, 2010). While it is clear that there have been improvements, problems do persist. These problems contribute to a feeding programme that is administratively weak, in the sense that monitoring and oversight regimes which are supposed to prevent wasteful expenditure and opportunities for leakages are not being implemented effectively (PSAM, 2010). These problems include late/non delivery of food supplies, delivery of food not ordered by the school and delivery of substandard or expired food supplies. Some of the delivery irregularities include the arrival of food after school hours or even on weekends (PSAM, 2010). This means that no SNC educators or school principals are available to monitor the actual delivery. Also, when food is delivered over weekends, it is sometimes stored outside the school premises which may lead to the loss of this food.

The Guidelines also require the submission of monthly reports to the district office by the principal of the school. Principals must submit reports to the district office on the progress of the programme in their schools. These reports must include a detailed financial expenditure on the money allocated to the school (PSAM, 2010). The Operational Guidelines for Schools (2011/12) give a detailed account of the process to be followed in the submission of monthly reports. The

guidelines state that a set of six documents should be submitted to the district office by the last day of the feeding every month. These documents are:

- Monthly NSNP Expenditure Control form
- Cumulative Expenditure vs. Budget
- Daily Food Handler Attendance Register
- Food Handler Acknowledgement of Payment Form
- Daily School Feeding Register
- Tax invoices/vouchers

The Guidelines also state that, when completing the Expenditure Control Form for each month, the following should be taken into consideration:

Cheques are written down in numerical order.

Invoices are attached according to the sequence on the Expenditure Control Form.

Suppliers' statements should not be submitted; only tax invoices are required.

All spaces must be used when making copies of invoices.

Also the guidelines state that schools must fill in their monthly NSNP budget at the bottom of the Expenditure Control Form so as to compare this to the actual expenditure for the month. The Expenditure Control Form must also be signed by the relevant people at the school and have the school stamp on it. The Cumulative Expenditure versus Budget should be updated and a copy sent to the district as part of the monthly report back and the originals of all documents must be filed.

Again, there has been tremendous improvement in this area of the programme though problems do persist (UNICEF, 2008). Educators responsible for the NSNP do monitor key performance indicators but monthly reports from schools to districts are not submitted timorously (UNICEF, 2008). Also, the study by UNICEF (2008) found out that invoices are signed by principals despite the non receipt of the recorded proof of food items and records kept at schools are not filed in an orderly manner. This is a clear indication that there is a lack of effective monitoring of the programme at the schools. It is for this reason that the views of principals on their involvement in the implementation of the programme were sought.

2.5 Challenges faced by principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme

The implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual of the National School Nutrition Programme (2004) clearly outlines the responsibilities of school principals with regard to the implementation of the programme. The assumption, which is backed by various Department of Education reports, is that school principals and educators responsible for this programme are being trained and work-shopped with regard to the implementation of the NSNP. Despite this assumption, schools where the programme is being implemented continue to be embattled by challenges regarding the effective and efficient implementation of the programme. Much as some of the challenges facing the programme have been discussed in the section which deals with the role of principals in the

implementation of the programme, the level of consistency in which they occur throughout the country points to similar underlying causes. Studies conducted on the programme have, amongst other challenges facing principals, indicated lack of training, infrastructure and establishment of active food gardens as some of the underlying causes of the challenges facing the programme (DoE, 2007).

Lack of training seems to be an overarching challenge for the programme. The lack of understanding of how to interpret and use LS and PODs by educators should be seen within this context of lack of training of educators with regard to the NSNP (PSAM, 2010). The PSAM study found that, of the thirty school principals surveyed in the Grahamstown district, an overwhelming 86% stated that they had received no training in the programme. This study is indeed an indictment on the state of the programme. The fact that studies have shown that there is generally non-compliance with the guidelines of the NSNP gives evidence to this finding. Also, the PSC (2008) study found that only 22% of the hundred and sixty principals interviewed for the study were aware that they are responsible for the overall supervision of the programme, quality control and monitoring of food provision to learners. One SNC educator indicated that she had not received any formal training with regard to NSNP since 1996 when she first took on the role (PSAM, 2010). Lack of training leads to lack of capacity. The fact that people are not aware of their roles is a direct result of this lack of training. The fact that PODs are signed without food deliveries being checked and learners are not fed before 10h00 as the policy dictates can be to a large extent attributed to this lack of training. Since educators are central to the

successful implementation of the programme, their lack of understanding of their roles affect the implementation of the programme and its intended goals might thus be compromised (PSC, 2008).

Another major challenge which is facing the NSNP is that of infrastructure, especially in the Eastern Cape which is mostly rural. Effective implementation of the NSNP requires the provision of the necessary infrastructure and equipment at the respective schools (PSC, 2008). Schools in the rural Eastern Cape face more major challenges than those in the urban areas. Resources such as availability of clean water, electricity and cooking facilities remain a challenge for rural schools. Many rural schools end up cooking with firewood and the provision of food to learners is adversely affected by inclement weather conditions (PSC, 2008). Also, schools in urban areas do have some challenges of their own. They incur high electricity cost because of the NSNP and these are not budgeted for in the programme. These costs end up affecting school budgets meant for other programmes. Some schools resort to using gas stoves but others end up using firewood because of not having easy access to gas (PSC, 2008). This lack of cooking facilities is indeed having a negative impact on the implementation of the programme.

Another infrastructure challenge which is facing the programme is lack of storage facilities. Many schools resort to using classrooms meant for teaching and learning as storage facilities while other schools keep their food in general all-purpose storerooms (PSAM, 2008). Some schools store their food outside their school premises. Six schools (20%) of the thirty schools which participated in the

survey by the PSAM stored their food outside school premises because of repeated burglaries. This food was stored in the same room as the neighbouring school's food. This has the potential of getting food mixed up. Food for the remaining five schools is stored either at a SGB member's home or the school principal's home. All the schools that stored food outside of school premises cited burglaries as the reason for storing food outside the premises of the school (PSAM, 2010).

The storage of food in general storerooms is not ideal for health reasons. Also, storage of food in private homes creates opportunities for leakage as food could be used by those living in the homes, either by mistake or deliberately. Again, this does not bode well for the proper implementation of the programme. This lack of storage facilities, it seems, is going to remain a challenge for the programme in the Eastern Cape which has massive infrastructure backlogs (PSAM, 2010).

The establishment of active food gardens at schools and immediate communities is seen as an important performance indicator of the programme because it ensures sustainability of the programme in the long term and also improves food security of school communities (UNICEF, 2008). Amongst the aims of the programme is to promote sustainable food production initiatives (food gardens) at schools and the promotion of nutritional education and healthy eating life styles (PSAM, 2010). Coupled with these aims, the programme, through the establishment of food gardens, seeks to create job opportunities for local communities. This should be done through the engagement of the Departments

of Education, Agriculture and Economic Development in identifying existing community based projects and agricultural co-operatives within local communities that shall be trained and equipped to work as production centres of food items consumed in schools.

However, much as there are success stories around the establishment of food gardens in provinces such as Kwa-Zulu Natal, Free State and Gauteng, the majority of provinces have not made any significant strides in the establishment of food gardens (UNICEF, 2008). This is not surprising given the fact that, schools participating in the programme have prioritised objectives that are directly linked to feeding above those that are indirectly linked to school feeding. In the Eastern Cape, unavailability of water, inadequate security which leads to theft and vandalism were cited as some hinderers to the establishment of food gardens (UNICEF, 2008).

Another challenge with regard to the school garden is that of lack of community participation. This challenge interlinks with that of lack of understanding of roles by stakeholders in the implementation of the programme. If proper advocacy was done, meaning canvassing communities to be part of the programme, the results would have been different. The fact that there is little progress in the establishment of food gardens can be attributed to the fact that communities do not know that they should be part of the programme (UNICEF, 2008). The fact that there are continuing burglaries and nothing is done to prevent them by communities may be an indication of this isolation of communities from the

programme. The researcher sought, therefore, to find out from the principals their views with regard to challenges facing the programme.

2.6 The views of principals regarding training received on the implementation of the programme

Despite the fact that principals were trained and issued with guidelines governing the programme, challenges continue to derail its effective implementation (PSC, 2008). Since principals are accounting officers in their schools, their views and attitudes regarding their training on the implementation of the programme became very imperative. One of the aims of the programme is to make a valuable contribution to the lives of poor learners every day of the week throughout the year. This is a very challenging task and needs a good measure of understanding of policy directives.

Studies conducted on the NSNP show a general consensus amongst principals on the positive impact the programme has had on the learners (UNICEF, 2008). Principals agree that the programme has led to increased enrolment, improved attendance and improved participation by the learners in the classroom (PSC, 2008). This means, therefore, that the programme is succeeding in achieving its aims.

However, research conducted shows high levels of non-compliance by principals with regard to the implementation of the programme (PSC, 2008). This non-

compliance by school principals must not be viewed as an act of defiance by school principals since no principal in the studies conducted has voiced his opposition to the programme but it must be viewed, instead, as lack of capacity which is a result of lack of training. Various studies conducted do confirm this assertion and principals have indicated their support for the programme since it has yielded positive results (DoE, 2011).

Lack of understanding of how to interpret and use LS and PODS by principals and school staff should be looked at within the context of lack of training received regarding the programme (PSAM, 2010). The fact that only 22% of principals in the study conducted by the PSC in 2008 indicated that they are aware of their responsibilities regarding the programme further confirms this lack of training, hence this study examined the role of principals in the implementation of the NSNP.

There is also some degree of complacency among principals concerning the programme (PSC, 2008). Some school principals do not appreciate the value of training concerning the programme. They regard it as a waste of time and would rather be at schools with their educators teaching. In the PSAM study, one educator remarked that she was informed by her principal that the training starts at 12h00 and, on arrival at the venue, she found out that the workshop started at 10h00. Another educator said that she was informed by her principal about the NSNP training on the morning it was taking place. This is a clear indication that these two principals were reluctant to release these educators for the training. Two principals in the same study from rural schools stated that they could not

attend the NSNP training because one had no transport and the other because his school had no budget for transport (PSAM, 2010).

Another indicator of lack of training is the view by principals that the NSNP places excessive demands on them (PSAM, 2010). This has led to some principals abdicating their responsibilities with regard to the programme and outsourcing them to other staff members (PSAM, 2010). Though the Implementation Guidelines for Schools (2011/12) and other documents related to the NSNP state that it is the responsibility of the SNC to implement the programme, principals should be at the centre of these committees since they are accounting officers in their schools. The establishment of SNCs should not be viewed in any way as outsourcing of responsibilities by principals (DoE, 2011). Harris (2008) describes distributed leadership as the working together of vertical (formal) and lateral (elected) leadership structures.

Research has also indicated that the total disregard of feeding time by some school principals is another indication of lack of proper training (PSC, 2008). Regulations governing the programme are clear on that fact that feeding should be completed before 10h00. According to the Implementation Guidelines, the benefits of this regulation is to assist learners to concentrate and remain alert throughout the school day, especially learners who come to school without breakfast and those who have to walk long distances to get to school (PSAM, 2010). Some principals go to the extent of misrepresenting these documents. An example is that some principals interpret the documents as saying meal servers must prepare the food for the learners by 10h00 while others interpret the

document as saying feeding must take place by 10h00 (PSAM, 2010). The fact that some school principals refuse to adjust their school time-tables to accommodate break times before 10h00 may be because this requirement has not been communicated effectively or is simply impractical (UNICEF, 2008).

Food gardens are one of poverty alleviation strategies implemented in schools. They should be regarded as the means to import knowledge, experience and practical skills on food production so as to enhance the potential of disadvantaged communities to live healthy lives (KZN, DoE, 2011).

The lack of establishment of food gardens is another area where lack of training manifests itself. School principals have indicated in numerous studies that they do not have the capacity to maintain these gardens let alone turning them into productive food gardens (DoE, 2011). The DOE's annual report (2011) showed a decrease in the number of food gardens in schools when compared with its 2010 annual report, despite an increase in the number of schools participating in the programme. Although schools are encouraged to have food gardens, this finding confirms this lack of capacity on the part of principals in implementing these food production units. Even schools that have food gardens use their gardens as part of the school curriculum where learners are taught Agriculture as a subject and this is done in isolation to the NSNP (PSC, 2008). It is for this reason that the views of principals regarding the training they received on the implementation of the programme were sought.

2.7 Assistance provided to schools by the districts

Section 38 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 1999 considers the Heads of Departments as accounting officers in their departments (Department of Finance (DoF) 1999). The Act states the responsibility of accounting officers as “effective, efficient, economical and transparent use of resources” transferred to their respective departments and they must maintain an “effective, efficient and transparent system of financial and risk management” and take “appropriate steps to prevent unauthorised, irregular and wasteful expenditure” (DoF, 1999). Section 81 also states that an accounting officer will be committing an act of misconduct if they “wilfully and negligently fail to comply with the Section 38 of the PFMA.

Since the NSNP is funded by conditional grant, further regulations govern how the money is spent (PSAM, 2010). The Division of Revenue Act (DORA) which deals with conditional grant allocations states that the receiving department must use the money for the particular purpose it had been allocated for (DoF, 1999). In the case of this programme, monies should be used to effectively implement the programme. This requires strict monitoring of schools by the districts since failure to use money for the purpose it was allocated may result in the withholding of funds (PSAM, 2010).

It is against this background that districts need to be very vigilant in ensuring the smooth implementation, monitoring and reporting on the programme. District officers are expected to monitor the implementation of the programme through

regular visits to schools. According to the Implementation Guidelines (DoE, 2004), districts offices should, amongst other things:

- Conduct training for schools
- Liaise with schools on a regular basis
- Produce monthly reports relating to the NSNP to the ECDOE.

Furthermore, districts must visit five schools per day and phone every other school in the district every day to monitor the state of feeding. Districts must also 'collect' monthly monitoring reports from schools which indicate the number of learners fed in each school on a daily basis. Reports sent to the ECDoE by districts should contain programme performance information such as number of schools targeted, actual number of feeding days, number of learners fed, and details of food production initiatives and capacity building workshops (PSAM, 2010).

Though studies conducted on the programme show a lot of improvement in this regard, much more still needs to be done. If one takes into account the situation in the Eastern Cape, the province has improved its staff complement. It has improved from a province which was characterised by 'high vacancy rate' (DoE, 2008) to a relatively staffed province of 21 support staff, 5 registry clerks (Head Office) and 58 officials in 23 districts (DoE, 2011). Given the fact that the province feeds and monitor 4680 schools (DoE, 2011) and considering the distance that has to be covered by district co-ordinators when visiting schools, the province remains understaffed. In the PSAM study, the average time that was spent by district officials at each school was about 14 minutes. Given the brief

nature of these visits, it is unlikely that they cover every aspect of the programme accurately. Also, the study found that communication between schools and districts was only taking place when schools encountered problems with regard to the implementation of the programme. Visits by districts to schools were at times undertaken when there was going to be a visit by the National Department (PSAM, 2010). Also these findings mean that effective and efficient implementation cannot be guaranteed and this compromises key financial policies governing the programme. This further means that the researcher had to find out from the principals their views on the assistance provided by the districts to schools.

2.8 Summary

This chapter presented literature that was reviewed during the study and the theories that were incorporated in the investigation of perceptions of school principals in their role in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme. Theoretical frameworks guiding the study, which are distributed, policy implementation and participatory leadership models and their relevance to the study, were also outlined. The final section of the chapter examined what people have written regarding the programme. The methodology which was followed in this study will be discussed in the next chapter.

3 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In Henning (2004:36) the term 'methodology' is defined as "more than a collection of methods ... about reasoning what their value in a study is and why they have been chosen". The chief aim of this chapter is to describe the framework used to conduct this study. This will be by describing the research approach and methodical steps used in the study. Also, the chapter will look at data collection methods, sampling, negotiating entry, credibility and trustworthiness, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research paradigm

Mertens (2005) defines a paradigm as a way of looking at the world and it is composed of philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action. Furthermore, Maree (2007) describes a paradigm as a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which give rise to a particular worldview. Also, Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) state that a paradigm is made up of loosely related assumptions and concepts which are tied together by prepositions scholars make and these are used to orientate a researcher's outlook. This therefore means that researchers must have a guiding philosophy which makes it possible to put in place principles that systematically lead to valid steps as phenomena are studied. It becomes the choice of a paradigm that sets down the intent, motivation and expectations for the research. By choosing a

paradigm, the researcher is setting the basis for subsequent choices regarding methods, literature and research design.

There are a number of paradigms discussed in literature such as the positivist, constructivist, interpretivist, transformative, emancipator, critical and deconstructivist (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). In cautioning the researcher, Mertens (2005) talks of the lines between these paradigms which may not be clear in practice. However, much as he cautions the researcher, Mertens (2005) advises the researchers to be able to identify the worldview that most closely approximates his/her own. This is done by being able to understand the basic beliefs of each paradigm which are ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (nature of knowledge, relationship between the knower and would be known) and methodology (approach to systemic inquiry).

In further explaining these basic beliefs, Blanche, Durrheim & Painter (2006) state that paradigms are all-encompassing systems of interrelated practice and thinking that define for investigators the nature of their inquiry along three dimensions of ontology, which is a fundamental assumption such as the belief about the nature of reality, epistemology, which raises the question of what knowledge is, how it is created and how it gets to be known and understood, and methodology, which concerns itself with the theory of how things are done.

This is further affirmed by O'Brien (2006) when suggesting that there are multiple realities or phenomena and these can differ across time and place and so the researcher must choose a personal interactive mode of data collection. Since the study looked at the perceptions of school principals on their role in the

implementation of the NSNP, the researcher used their views and ideas so as to describe findings and make recommendations which may, in turn, be used to develop intervention strategies to assist the programme.

The choice of a paradigm is guided by the objectives of the researcher and what he/she wants or intends to accomplish. This is done by choosing a suitable paradigm which will enable the researcher to seek answers to the research question. This particular study was premised in the interpretive paradigm which will be described in the next section.

3.3 Interpretive paradigm

This study adopted the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm ensures that the methodological approach brings out the views and experiences of school principals with regard to their role in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme. This paradigm allows the researcher to solicit the responses of the respondents within the context of their environment. This means that school principals were interviewed in their schools. The researcher also took cognisance of the fact that those who were involved, school principals, were best positioned to describe their own situations. The researcher's stance in choosing this paradigm followed the assertion that interpretivists believe that human life can only be understood from within and cannot be observed externally (Liversey, 2006).

According to Henning (2004), by the mid 20th century there was a shift away from 'positivism' to studies that were aimed at capturing the lives of participants

in order to understand and interpret their meaning. This means that research assumptions which were based on the positivist paradigm were being questioned. This diminishing interest in the positivist paradigm led to the rise of the interpretivist paradigm. This was because the interpretive paradigm describes people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons (Henning, 2004). This means that this paradigm emphasises that one has to get closer to what he/she is studying and view it from the perspective of the insider. This paradigm seeks to understand people and not to explain them as is assumed by positivism. The paradigm acknowledges that people are conscious, self directing, symbolic human beings and cannot be treated like objects. Also, this paradigm acknowledges that human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their world. They continually interpret, create and give meaning to their actions.

Again, Henning (2004) describes this paradigm as emphasizing 'experience and interpretation'. This means that it concerns itself with meaning and seeks to understand how societies define and interpret their situations. This definition is further affirmed by Maree (2007) when saying that this paradigm attempts to describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences. The interpretive researcher begins with the individual and sets out to understand his/her interpretation of the world around him. This therefore compels the researcher to base his theory on the 'grounded' data generated by the research act. Theory must arise from a particular situation and should not precede research but follow it (Cohen & Manion, 2005). The researcher should work directly with experience and understanding to build his own theory of them.

Cohen & Manion (2005) further states that the interpretivist paradigm seeks to understand the 'subjective world of human experience'. Durrheim (1999) further argues that an interpretative paradigm provides relevant information to the researcher in terms of 'subjective reasons and meanings' that lie behind social activities. This is done to retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated and compels the researcher to get inside the person and understand from within. This helps in resisting any external viewpoint of the researcher and focuses on the person directly involved.

Also, the interpretive paradigm focuses on action. Cohen & Manion (1985:38) refer to this as "behaviour with meaning since it is intentional behaviour, meaning it is future orientated". This means that actions become meaningful if one is able to understand the interactions of the actor and share his experience (Cohen & Manion, 1985). This paradigm was thus relevant to this study and the researcher's questions were, accordingly, interpretative in nature. The researcher sought to understand the perceptions of school principals regarding their role in the implementation of the NSNP. Since this paradigm concerns itself with the future, it is therefore relevant to this study since the findings of the study will assist the Department of Education in understanding the views and concerns of school principals where the programme was actually implemented. The study will thus help in giving meaning and direction to the NSNP in the near future.

3.4 Research approach

In this study, the qualitative approach was used to interrogate the scope of the research problem. According to Miles and Heberman (1994) as cited by Gray (2004:319), “qualitative studies have a quality of undeniability because words have a more concrete and vivid flavour that is more convincing to the reader than pages and numbers”. Merriam (2002) further qualifies this statement when saying that qualitative inquiry is ‘richly descriptive’ since words and pictures rather than numbers communicate explicitly what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon.

Key among the features of the qualitative research is that it is conducted in a natural setting of the participant. Patton (1985) as cited by Merriam (2002:05) refers to qualitative research “as an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and their interactions there”. This means that the researcher seeks to understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and experience. Furthermore, Draper (2004) states that qualitative research concerns itself with the quality or nature of human experience and what these phenomena mean to individuals. This therefore means that this approach tends to start with ‘what’, ‘how’, ‘why’ types of questions instead of ‘how much’ and ‘how many’.

Merriam (2002:05) further refers to this approach “as not attempting to predict what may happen in future but to understand the nature of the setting, what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what is going

on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting ... the analysis strives for depth of understanding”.

Another feature of the qualitative approach is that, ‘the researcher is the primary instrument’ for the collection and analysis of data (Merriam, 2002). A qualitative researcher observes actions and events as they happen without interfering by just becoming a participant observer. He does not control the setting as in quantitative research. He has to put himself/herself in the place of the participants he/she is observing and studying in an attempt to understand their practices, actions and decisions. The approach also allows the researcher to expand his or her understanding through non verbal communication so as to seek and verify the accuracy of interpretation from the respondent.

Furthermore, the qualitative approach is inductive in nature. Unlike in quantitative research, the researcher does not begin with a hypothesis derived from theory but, rather, begins with describing events as they happen in their natural setting and gradually coming up with a hypothesis and theory that will explain the observation. Draper (2004) refers to this process as ‘grounded theory’ where inferences are made from specific observations to more general rules in order to construct a hypothesis or theory. According to Merriam (2002), qualitative research is conducted when there is lack of theory or existing theory fails to explicitly explain the phenomenon. This therefore means that this approach resonates well with this study since studies which have been conducted on the programme have not explicitly explained the perceptions of principals on their role in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme. Since this

approach emphasizes the process rather than the outcome, one can draw parallels between the qualitative research approach and the interpretive paradigm of the study since they both view the world through the eyes of the participants and view human behaviour as a result of how people view their world. This approach was used in the study since it is possible to study events as they happen in their natural setting.

Another advantage of the qualitative approach is that it produces more in-depth and comprehensive information. Since the study used the case study method to look at perceptions of school principals on their role in the implementation of the NSNP, the researcher was in a better position to probe respondents with questions that would clarify views and opinions during interviews and allow the researcher to view the behaviour of respondents in a natural setting, without the artificiality that sometimes surrounds experimental research (Schulze, 2003). Furthermore, it can be argued that there is flexibility in the qualitative research approach which allows the researcher to pursue new means of interest by exercising good judgement but that requires considerable preparation and planning (Leedy & Ormord, 2005). This means that the researcher must plan carefully when using research instruments such as interviews and document analysis.

Much as this approach can be perceived as good, it has some disadvantages such as being subjective in its enquiry, leading to difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of the approaches and information. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2006) concede that qualitative researchers are criticised for being

impressionists, biased on reaction or details. In addition, Cohen et al. (2006) contend that the subjective involvement of the researcher would make him/her manipulate/share the experiences of the participants. Furthermore, Walker (1985) states that qualitative methods are subjective, unreliable and unsystematic. In dealing with these challenges, the researcher used interviews and document analysis in dealing with the issue of subjectivity. Also, in ensuring validity, the researcher remained non judgemental throughout the study process and reported what was found in a balanced way.

The qualitative research approach has also been criticised for usually having sample sizes that are too small, allowing the researcher to generalise the data beyond the sample selected and report only examples that fit the researcher's preconceived ideas (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000). Also, Denzin & Lincoln (2011) mention the fact that researchers come so close to the respondents that they are likely to lose objectivity when collecting data. This, therefore, compels the researcher to be very careful and demands a great amount of methodological knowledge and intellectual competence.

Despite these weaknesses, this approach was used in the study because of the instruments it uses to gather live data from the respondents on their role in the programme. Furthermore, this approach is suitable for the study because it allowed the researcher to understand the values, actions and concerns of the people in charge of the programme at the schools.

3.5 Research design

Maree (2007) refers to research design as a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of respondents, data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. The researcher will adopt a case study design. Yin (1994) as cited by Gray (2004:123) defines a case study as "... an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context". Furthermore, Cohen & Merriam (1989:124-125) refer to a case study as "an observation of characteristics of an individual unit with the purpose of probing deeply and intensively to analyse the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view of establishing generalisations about the wider population to which the unit belongs". Gray (2004), further states that, the approach is particularly useful when the researcher is trying to uncover a relationship between a phenomenon and the context in which it is occurring. Since the study sought to identify the reasons for the recurring problems facing the NSNP, the perceptions of principals regarding their role in the implementation of the programme constituted the phenomenon and the case consisted of the schools which were used in the study.

One of the reasons for the adoption of a case study as a research design is that researchers were becoming more concerned about the limitations of quantitative methods in providing holistic and in-depth explanations of the social and behavioural problems in question. Through a case study a researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand the behavioural

conditions through the actor's perspective (Maree, 2007). Case studies therefore, in their true essence, explore and investigate contemporary real life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationship (Tellis, 1997). They also strive to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and thick description of participants lived experiences of thought about and feelings for a situation, thereby enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles (Mouton, 2004).

Coupled with what has been said above, the researcher adopted a case study design because it afforded an opportunity to gather large amounts of information. It also allowed the researcher to go into greater depth and get more insight into the real dynamics of situations and people. Case studies offer a multi perspective analysis in which the researcher takes into consideration the voices and perspectives of all groups and the interaction between them. In addition to that, case studies use a number of instruments of data collection such as document analysis and interviews which allow the researcher to study the respondents in their natural setting since one result may depend on several sources of evidence with data gained through triangulation. Triangulation is about merging several multiple viewpoints, approaches and foundations of information (e.g. interviews, observations, field notes, tests, transcripts and document analysis). Cohen & Manion (1989:269) describes triangulation as a technique in social sciences which attempts "to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint". Triangulation

also adds quality, complexity and multiple understanding of an analysis and can enhance the legitimacy or trustworthiness of the results.

Stakes (2008) cites two examples of case studies which are intrinsic and instrumental case studies. The purpose of an intrinsic case study is to have an in-depth knowledge about a particular case, while an instrumental case study seeks to show a general phenomenon. The researcher will use an intrinsic case study as this will help in understanding the perceptions of school principals regarding their role in the implementation of the programme.

Another rationale behind the choice of this design is that this design is “characterised by the focus on a phenomenon that has identifiable boundaries” (Henning, 2004:41). This means that a study of a phenomenon with “identifiable boundaries” focuses on specific instances and, as it is within the confines of a qualitative approach, interactions with participants are in their natural settings, which in the case of this study were the principals’ work places.

However, Yin (1994) as cited by Gray (2008:125) points out that “... the case study approach has not been universally accepted by researchers as reliable, objective and legitimate. One problem is that it is difficult (indeed dangerous) to generalise from a specific case”. But, in defence of his criticism, Yin (1994) points out that most scientific inquiries have to be replicated by multiple examples of cases of the same phenomenon. In this study, the researcher used the four schools as the cases and the phenomenon was the principals’ perceptions of their role in the implementation of the NSNP. This meant that the same phenomenon, which is the perceptions of school principals on their role in the

implementation of the NSNP, would be replicated by multiple examples, which are schools.

3.6 Population and sampling

3.6.1 Population

Babbie & Mouton (2005) refer to population as the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements from which a sample is selected. Furthermore, Mitchell (2008) refers to population as a full set of cases from which a sample is taken. The population of the study is the principals of the four hundred and fifty schools in the King William's Town district participating in the NSNP. It is from this population that the researcher chose his sample.

3.6.2 Sample and sampling

Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2007) describes a sample as a small group or subset of the population from whom the researcher seeks to collect information in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study. This statement is further affirmed by Babbie & Mouton (2001) by defining a sample as a special subset of a population observed in order to make inferences about the nature of the total population itself. The process of arriving at a particular sample is referred to as sampling.

Merriam (1998) defines sampling as the selection of a research site, time, people and events in a research field. To put it simply, Nieuwenhuis (2007) refers to

sampling as a process to select a portion of the population for a study. The sampling techniques which were used in the study were the combination of convenience and purposive sampling. Goldenberg (1992:162) defines convenience as “just what the title implies, since the investigator simply gathers data from whoever is conveniently accessible”. It is sometimes called accidental or opportunity sampling because it involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents. The schools which were used in the study were conveniently accessible to the researcher. The dangers of this technique are that it disregards the representativeness of the target population, it may be biased and it may not lead the researcher to desirable participants. The researcher guards against this by also using the purposive sampling technique.

Henning (2004) describes purposive sampling as having elements of theoretical sampling. It looks for those who can assist in building the subtractive theory further, “people who fit the criteria of desirable participants”, (Henning, 2004:71). Nieuwenshuis (2007:79) describes purposive sampling as “selection of participants because of certain defining characteristics that made them the most appropriate holders of data needed for the study”. This means that participants are selected for a particular purpose, the information needed in the study. The sample of this study was comprised of four school principals. The four schools and the four principals were conveniently and purposively chosen because of their proximity to the researcher and because principals were the only participants in this study. Another reason for choosing principals was that, as

accounting officers in their schools, they are responsible for the implementation of the programme.

3.7 Negotiating entry

Slavin (1984) claims that the most important determinant of your ability to get access to schools is the study itself. Education authorities tend to be anxious about allowing people from outside into the school. This is for this reason that Slavin (1984) cautions the researcher to be sensitive to the authorities' natural anxiety about allowing the researcher to do the study. Thus permission to conduct the study should be sought from the relevant authorities long before the study is conducted. Bell & Stevenson (2006) suggest, amongst others, the following principles for negotiating access to institutions:

- Clear official channels by formally requesting permission to carry out your investigation.
- Speak to people who will participate in the study.
- Maintain strict ethical standards at all times.
- Submit project outlines to the authorities.
- Inform participants what is to be done with the information they will provide.
- Be honest about the purpose of the study and about the conditions of the research.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher spoke with the various respondents about his intentions of including them and their schools in the study. The

researcher also sought permission from the King William's Town District Director to conduct the study in the four schools that are under his jurisdiction. The researcher also asked for a letter from the University that informed his intentions. This letter helped the researcher to gain entry into research sites so as to seek permission from gatekeepers and respondents.

3.8 Data collection instruments

3.8.1 Interviews

Kvale (1996) as cited in Cohen et al. (2005:267) states that 'the use of interviews in research marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulatable and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations. This means that this remark sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production and emphasizes the social 'situatedness' of research data (Cohen et al., 2005). Also, Cohen et al. (2005) state that the purpose of interviews is to provide access to what is 'inside a person's head' since it makes it possible to measure what a person knows, what a person likes or dislikes and what a person thinks.

Cohen et al. (2005:269) define research interviews as a "two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation". This

means that interviews involve gathering information through direct verbal interaction between individuals. Furthermore, Cohen (2007) sees interviews as a principle means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research questions. Also, according to Babbie & Mouton (2005), qualitative interviewing design is characterised by being “flexible, interactive and cautious” rather than being prepared in advance and ‘locked in stones’. This means that the researcher engages in conversation with the interviewee with the researcher establishing a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent. Kvale (1996) as cited by Babbie & Mouton (2001) offers an interesting metaphor for an interviewer, that of a ‘miner’. This means that the participant possesses specific information and it becomes the responsibility of the interviewer to dig it out.

According to William (2005), the strength of the interview approach is in its richness and depth of information and how high it is on validity, where the outcome is not predetermined by the researcher and where the interviewee can provide a narrative on the process of interaction. This therefore means that the researcher gathered relevant information which is rich in detail, there is high response rate, and respondents are able to understand what is being asked and are more relaxed since the interviews are taking place in their own setting. Follow up questions can be asked and some may be questions that were not anticipated at the beginning of the interview. Gray (2004) refers to this as ‘probing’ which is a way for the interviewer to explore new paths which were not initially considered.

This also means that the researcher is able to explore the participants' feelings, views and opinions on the topic.

With regard to limitations, interviews are costly since they require the researcher to travel and are also time consuming (Karjornboon, 2005). Also, face to face interviews can be deceiving as the respondents are likely to modify their posture so that they give responses they believe the interviewer wants to hear and may tend to display socially desirable behaviour. However, these limitations were addressed in this study by assuring the respondents that the interviews were purely for the research purpose, no victimisation would follow and he pleaded with the respondents to be as forthright as possible. With regard to the issue of costs, the researcher sampled sites that did not require much travelling.

According to Cohen et al. (2007), there are three specific types of interviews which are structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. In further defining these three types, Cohen et al. (2005) talk of interviews as ranging from formal interviews where set questions are asked and responses are recorded on a standardised schedule, through less formal interviews where the interviewer is free to modify the sequence of questions, change the wording, explain the questions or add to them, to completely informal interviews where the interviewer raises a number of key issues in a conversational way. Qualitative studies normally employ unstructured or semi-structured interviews. The researcher used semi-structured interviews for this study.

3.8.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are defined as those organised around a particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth. Gillham (2000) considers that semi-structured interviewing is the most appropriate form of interviewing in a case study research. Although semi-structured interviews have specific questions, there is freedom to probe beyond the answers offered by the participants and allows for greater depth in data collection.

According to de Vos (1998), the interview should be conducted after the researcher has created an atmosphere of friendliness and openness. Participants should be made to feel comfortable and the researcher should facilitate and not dictate the process. It is also for this reason that interviews should take place in the respondent's own backyard, i.e. where he/she feels comfortable.

One of the strengths of semi-structured interviews as mentioned by Corbetta (2003) is that the researcher can explain or paraphrase the questions if the respondents are not clear about the questions. Patton (2003:343) states that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to "explore, probe and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject, to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined". This means that the researcher can promptly probe deeper into the given situation and adhere not only to the interview questions.

With regard to limitations, semi-structured interviews can be time consuming if the sample is very large (Patton, 2002). Also, a substantial amount of planning is needed since the quality and usefulness of the information depends mostly on the quality of questions asked. Karjornboon (2005) also states that there may be limited scope for respondents to answer questions in detail or in-depth if interview questions are not well structured. In addition, Corbetta (2003) states that one of the weaknesses of semi-structured interviews is that inexperienced interviewers may not be able to ask prompt questions which may result in some relevant data not being captured. That means inexperienced interviewers may not adequately probe into a situation especially if they do not have in-depth knowledge of the subject under discussion.

Since the researcher used semi-structured interviews, an interview schedule was compiled before the researcher conducted the study. This provided the researcher with a set of predetermined questions that could be used as an appropriate instrument to encourage the participants and designate the narrative terrain (Levering, 2002). For the purpose of this study, the researcher developed an interview schedule for school principals on their role in the implementation of the NSNP.

3.8.3 Document analysis

According to Maree (2007), document analysis means focusing on all types of written material that could shed light on the studied phenomenon. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont (2011) believe that the study of documents involves

analysis of any written material that contains information about the phenomenon being researched. This may help the researcher in filling in gaps left open by interviews and may also help the researcher in answering questions that were not addressed during interviews. Furthermore, de Vos et al. (2011), in affirming what had been said by Maree (2007), state that the study of documents involves the analysis of any written material that contains information about the phenomenon being researched. Furthermore, document analysis is seen as substantive and non-reactive and can yield a lot of data about the values and beliefs of participants in their natural surroundings (Marshall & Rossman, 1997). Another reason for the use of documents is that it can strengthen the information obtained in the interviews. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used documents such as minutes of meetings, policy documents, reports and attendance registers.

Primary documents analysed by the researcher included minutes of meetings. These included minutes of parents' meetings, educators' meetings and SNC's meetings. The reason for analysing these documents was to see whether proper processes are followed in the selection of food handlers, how SNCs are selected and how the SNCs account for the programme. Also, policy documents were analysed. This was done so as to assess whether these policy documents are used in the implementation of the programme. Attendance registers for food handlers were also analysed so as to look at how they are being monitored. Other documents which were analysed were school time tables and school log books. These were analysed in order to look at whether schools adhere to the 10

o'clock feeding time as well as how frequent are visits by district officials to schools.

3.9 Credibility and trustworthiness

There is a general agreement among scholars that trustworthiness is a key principle in qualitative research. This is further confirmed by Babbie & Mouton (2005) when saying that the key principle of a good qualitative research is found in the notion of trustworthiness, i.e. the neutrality of its findings or decisions. Just as a quantitative study cannot be considered valid unless it is reliable, a qualitative study cannot be called transferable unless it is credible and it cannot be deemed credible unless it is dependable. Also, Babbie & Mouton (2005) state that the basic issue of trustworthiness is how the researcher can persuade his/her audience, including him or herself that the findings of the study are worth paying that attention to. Bossey (1999) further affirms this notion by stating that trustworthiness entails credibility and transferability, which is the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other contexts.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to that which can be seen and believed. Babbie & Mouton (2005:277) refer to credibility as the "compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the respondents and those that are attributed to them". To enhance the credibility of the research findings, the researcher used multiple data collection instruments such as semi-structured interviews and

document analysis. Also, the researcher ensured that participants confirmed the credibility of the findings by giving them access to them.

Credibility is achieved through the following procedures: prolonged engagement with the data sources, persistent observation, adequate checking of raw data with their sources and triangulation of data. Triangulation, according to Babbie & Mouton (2005), is the best way to elicit the various and divergent constructions of reality that exist within the context of a study and to collect information about different events and relationships from different views. To put it simply, triangulation is about merging several multiple viewpoints, approaches and foundations of information. Babbie & Mouton (2005) also refer to triangulation as asking different questions, seeking different sources using different methods. The researcher ensured credibility by triangulating data from interviews and documents. Corresponding data from these sources confirmed the credibility of the study.

3.9.2 Transferability

Guba & Lincoln (1989) as cited by Mertens (2005) equates transferability to external validity. External validity means the degree to which you can generalize the results to other situations. Babbie & Mouton (2005) affirm this when saying that transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. In qualitative studies, the burden of transferability is on the reader to determine the degree of similarity between the study site and the receiving context. This means that the researcher needs to

provide all necessary detail that will enable the reader to make such a judgement (Mertens, 2005). Guba & Lincoln (1984) as cited by Babbie & Mouton (2005) refer to this statement by Mertens above as 'thick description'. Transferability can also be achieved through purposive sampling. This is done by maximizing the range of specific information that can be obtained from and about the context by purposively selecting locations and respondents that differ from one another (Babbie & Mouton, 2005).

3.10 Data analysis

Henning (2004:101) describes data analysis as "a process which requires analytical skills and the ability to capture understanding of the data in writing". In enriching the statement above, Sherman & Webb (1990:183) refer to data analysis as "a process which entails an effort to formally identify themes and to construct hypotheses as they are suggested by data and an attempt to demonstrate support for those themes and hypotheses". Furthermore, Mertens (2005) describes qualitative data analysis as a somewhat difficult to understand process in which the findings gradually 'emerge' from the data through some type of mystical relationship between the researcher and the source of data. In defining further this process of data analysis, Tesch (1990) as cited by Mertens (2005) identifies nine principles and practices that hold true for most types of qualitative research analysis and interpretation. These principles are:

- Analysis occurs throughout the data collection process.
- The analysis process is systematic and comprehensive but not rigid.

- Data analysis includes reflective activities that result in a set of notes that record the analytic process, thus providing accountability.
- The analysis process begins with reading all the data at once and then dividing the data into smaller, more meaningful units.
- The data segments are organised into a system that is predominantly from data, that is, the data analysis process is inductive.
- The main analytic process is comparison, that is, the researcher uses comparison to build and refine categories, define conceptual similarities, find negative evidence and discover patterns.
- The categories are flexible and are modified as further data analysis occurs.

Qualitative data analysis is not mechanistic. The basis for judging the quality of analysis rests on corroboration to be sure that the research findings reflect people's perception (Stainback & Stainback, 1988).

The result of an analysis is some type of higher order synthesis in the form of descriptive pictures, patterns or themes or emerging or substantive theory.

The principles mentioned above do confirm that the product of a qualitative research is rich in description and this compels the researcher not only to use words but also pictures to convey what the researcher has learnt about the phenomenon. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used aspects of qualitative data analysis which included putting information into themes. Data reduction in research is the most important stage in data analysis. Wellington (2000) refers to this as data selection and condensation.

3.11 Ethical considerations

The consideration of ethics in research is very important especially when the study deals with people. Ellen (1984) as cited by Gray (2004) talks of the 'moral community of their hosts'. Also Gray (2004) talks of 'proximity' of the researcher to the subjects of the research. In dealing with the issue of ethics, Cohen et al. (2005) talks of a dilemma which requires researchers to strike a balance between the demands placed on them in pursuit of truth and their subject's rights and values potentially threatened by the research. This therefore means that, since the researcher will be embarking on a journey with the interviewee, trust must be established.

Cohen (2007) defines ethics as a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others. On the same wave length, de Vos (2011) defines ethics as a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for and behavioural expectations of the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students. In ensuring these ethical considerations, Kvale (1996) as cited by Babbie & Mouton (2001) suggests three main focus points which are informed consent, confidentiality and the consequence of an interview.

Cohen et al. (2005) states that social research necessitates obtaining the consent and co-operation of subjects who are to assist in investigations and of significant others in the institutions or organisations providing the research facilities. This means that the researcher needs to talk to the people whom he/she wishes to interview for a study. This entails explaining the ethical

obligations to the participants which will, as the journey continues, serve as guiding principles for the interview process. Cohen (2007) mentions the principle of 'autonomy' of all people participating in the study. It is, therefore, important that all participants must be well informed of what the researcher expects of them so that they can make an informed choice, that of voluntarily participating in the study. Cohen et al. (2005) talk of informed consent, where the participant will be allowed to choose to participate or not to participate in a study after they have been informed about the relevant information and the risks that could arise if they participate in the study.

Gray (2004), states that the central issue surrounding data collection through interviews is that participants should not be harmed or damaged in any way by the research. This means that the researcher should ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. The researcher should guarantee the anonymity of participants and information shared with the researcher will not be shared with anyone who is not directly involved in the study. Also in ensuring anonymity of the participants, the researcher should remove all identifying information from documents gathered from the field. The researcher ensured that all the undertakings mentioned above were adhered to and respected. The researcher also sought approval from the University Ethics Committee.

3.12 Profile of the schools

3.12.1 Overview of the Eastern Cape Province

According to the study in 2011 conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRS), the Eastern Cape Province continues to be one of South Africa's provinces with the highest level of poverty, under developed infrastructure and unemployment. The province has about 6.8 million people representing about 15% of the South African population. About 4.2 million of the 6.8 million people in the province live in rural and semi-urban areas. The province has six district municipalities which are Amathole, Alfred Nzo, Chris Hani, Joe Gqabi, O.R Tambo and Cacadu, and two Metropolitan Municipalities which are Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality and Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality. Buffalo City, which was the focus of the study, has high levels of poverty and unemployment and can be regarded as the poorest Metropolitan Municipality not only in the province but also in the whole of the Republic (HSRC, 2011). It is for this reason that proper implementation of the programme becomes imperative.

After the 1994 political breakthrough, various racially divided education departments were amalgamated. The Eastern Cape Province had the most challenging process since it had two former homelands, Ciskei and Transkei, and other racially divided education departments (white, coloureds, Indians). This resulted in the creation of a single provincial education department with 23

districts. King William's Town, which is the focus of the study, is the largest district in the province.

Since 1994, there has been under performance by the Eastern Cape Education Department. The Department has had no less than ten Members of Executive Council [MECs] and Superintendent Generals [SGs] and this has created a lot of instability in the Department (South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), 2010). Coupled with this administrative instability, the province has huge infrastructure backlogs in terms of electricity, sanitation and libraries in schools. On top of this, schools continue to under-perform and the province continues to register the lowest pass rate when compared with other provinces. These challenges have led to intervention by the National department in the administering of the Education Department through Section 100 of the Constitution of the Republic (The Times, 17 May 2013).

King William's Town district which is the focus of the study, though not the worst performing district has continuously been performing below National performance standards (Statement by MEC Makupula, 4 January 2013). The district is mostly rural and socio economic conditions are poor. Poverty and unemployment are rife in the district and this has had a huge impact on the learners. The majority of schools in the district fall into the category of quintiles 1 to 3. These are no fee schools and are situated in the most rural and poorest semi-urban communities. Since unemployment is high, the majority of people are dependent on social grants such as the child support grant, the foster care grant and old age pension grants (HSRC, 2011). According to a study by the Human Science Research

Council, the province ranks among the highest with regard to child-headed households (HSRC, 2011). It is for these reasons that the schools in the district are characterized by a high drop-out rate, absenteeism and under performance. The objectives of NSNP are to improve the health and nutritional status of school children, improve levels of school attendance and improve the learning capacity of learners. Given the socio economic conditions mentioned above and the state of education in the province, the introduction of the programme seeks to alleviate these problems. Also, for achievement of the objective of the programme, it becomes imperative that the programme be implemented effectively so that its potential for success is maximized (PSC, 2008)

3.13 Summary

This chapter examined and justified the methodology selected for the study by showing its appropriateness. The chapter discussed the research paradigm, research approach and design, population and sampling procedures. The study adopted a case study design in the qualitative research approach hence data collection instruments such as interviews and document analysis were also discussed. Data analysis procedures and ethical considerations were also presented. The next chapter will present and analyse data that was collected.

4 CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis of the data collected. The data collected which is presented in this chapter was gathered through interviews and document analysis. The respondents were four secondary school principals in the King William's Town district participating in the National School Nutrition Programme. The respondents are identified as P1; P2; P3; and P4. Also the documents that were analyzed are identified as D1; D2; D3 and D4. The use of document analysis was done in order to triangulate data obtained through interviews. The researcher took field notes which were corroborated and written properly after interviews. Information gaps which were identified were filled by going back to the participants to collect additional information and check clarity on issues that were not clear. Data collection was organized into themes and sub themes to uncover the perceptions of principals on their role in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme. This was done to bring order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (Maree, 2007). The first section of this chapter focuses on the biographical information of the respondents and an overview of the Eastern Cape Province while the second section focuses on the presentation of data collected.

4.2 Biographical information

This section of the chapter presents biographic data of the respondents. This information is necessary because it gives information regarding the respondents' gender, age, academic qualifications and work experience. This information helps the researcher to gain insight into the respondents' perceptions of their role in the implementation of the programme since age, gender and education qualifications of respondents are important indicators of knowledge and experience.

4.2.1 Gender

As indicated above four secondary school principals were interviewed for the study. Of the four, three were male principals while one was a female. Though the sample was conveniently and purposively selected, it reflects the current demographics with regard to the number of males holding senior positions as compared with women. Also, gender is an imperative with regard to the purpose of this study since the study deals with the views of principals on their role in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme and societal stereotypes dictate that secondary school principals should be male while regarding the feeding of children as the responsibility of women. Much as this was not the mandate of the study, the researcher was able to make references to the participants' responses which are normally attached to gender.

4.2.2 Age

The age range of the principals interviewed for the study was between 45 and 55 years. The age of a person is important since it is associated with the person's level of maturity. Also, it is believed that mature people have the capacity to understand and analyze situations. They are able to make informed decisions, voice their opinions, take responsibility for their actions and are independent. It is for this reason that age becomes important since the respondents are dealing with some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Much care is needed if one takes into account the socio-economic conditions of the learners whose school principals participated in the study.

4.2.3 Academic qualifications

The researcher also sourced information from the respondents on their education qualifications. This was done because education qualifications have an influence on the way one understands and interprets policies governing schools. The fact that the School Nutrition Programme has constitutional prescripts, it becomes imperative for the person responsible for the implementation of the programme to be an adherent reader.

All the respondents in the study were qualified educators with professional diplomas [Senior Teacher Diploma [STD]. One respondent has an Honours degree in Education [B. Ed. Honours] whilst two other respondents have Advanced Certificates in Education [ACE] in school management. The ACE programme was an initiative of the Eastern Cape Department of Education

[ECDoE] in partnership with Rhodes University to capacitate school principals on school management. The other respondent had obtained short course certificates in Leadership and Management and HIV/AIDS counselling. Both these certificates were obtained through distance programmes offered by the University of South Africa [UNISA].

The data collected on education qualifications of the respondents shows that the respondents are skilled people with high levels of analytical skills. It is expected that the level of education one possesses enables one to be knowledgeable and have the capacity to understand the dynamics of the education system in the country.

4.2.4 Teaching experience

Experience plays an important role in one's ability to deal with the complex issues of a situation. It is for this reason that the researcher sourced information from the respondents about their education qualifications and experience. Limited experience may result in people making irrational decisions. Given the dynamic of education in the South African context, experience becomes vital. Though the National School Nutrition Programme is a new programme and none of us can claim to have experience on its implementation, experience in dealing with the education and financial matters become of vital importance.

All the respondents interviewed for the study had more than 20 years of experience in the teaching profession and varying levels of experience with regard to being principals. Two of the respondents had more than 10 years

experience as principals while the other two had between 6 and 8 years of experience as principals. In relation to the research question, this information proved to be vital since the experience of the respondents comes in handy in dealing with issues regarding the NSNP.

4.3 The role of principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition programme

4.3.1 Advocacy and the views of principals on the advocacy programme

One of the key ingredients of success of any programme is how it is communicated as well as accepted by the people who are going to implement and participate in it. Since the NSNP is a programme which is implemented at school and schools are owned by communities, it becomes very much important that school communities embrace the programme so as to ensure its success.

What came out of the interviews is that principals were not involved from the designing of the programme up to its advocacy. School principals were just informed that the programme was going to be implemented in their schools. This was confirmed by P1 when saying that:

I was not involved in any way in the advocacy of the programme if there was any. I was just informed by the district office that the programme was going to be implemented in my school.

What also came out of the study is that, since its inception in 1994, the programme has undergone many changes and all these were just communicated to schools for implementation. This is confirmed by P2 who stated that:

Everything regarding the programme is just communicated to us as schools for implementation. Any change which is effected in the programme, we are not part of it but we just implement. Even when the programme was to be implemented at my school, I was asked by the district officials to convene a parents meeting where officials came and informed the parents about the impending implementation of the programme.

This approach by the Department is further confirmed through document analysis. Analysis of D3 from the district to one of the schools informs the principal that the National School Nutrition Programme will also be extended to the school since the school is a no fee school.

With regard to views of principals on the advocacy of the programme, the researcher found that school principals were not overly concerned about not being part of the advocacy of the programme; instead, they had embraced the programme. P4 had this to say about the advocacy of the programme:

I as a school principal had no role in the advocacy of the programme but from the outset I supported the programme since majority of my learners come from poor background. They only depend on social grants and the programme affords their parents an opportunity to use some of the social grants money to buy other basic necessities, knowing their children will get something to eat at school.

Furthermore P1 had this to say about the advocacy:

I think that since this was national programme, it becomes the responsibility of the National Department of Education to ensure that the programme is filtered down to communities but how they did that I do not know.

The sentiments of the two principals were echoed by the two who were happy that the programme was also implemented in their schools

From what the respondents said above, the researcher found that principals are not involved in the advocacy of the programme but only convene meetings where parents of learners are informed about the impending implementation of the programme.

4.3.2 The work of the School Nutrition Committees and the principals' views on the work of these committees

School Nutrition Committees are the cornerstones in the implementation of the NSNP and the successful implementation of the programme largely depends on the functionality of these Committees. All the principals interviewed for this study indicated that their schools have School Nutrition Committees, though in varying degrees. The majority of the SNCs do not have learners and food handlers. Also the selection of these committees is more or less the same in all the schools under study. P1 had this to say about SNC:

Yes my school has a School Nutrition Committee. We have four people who are serving in the committees, two educators and two parents who are SGB members. Educators are elected in a staff meeting by other educators and parents elected in an SGB meeting.

This was confirmed by the minutes of both the staff and parent meetings. The minutes indicated that meetings were convened and people were selected though this was not done according to proper procedures. P2 also stated that:

Our school is having a committee and the term of office is two years. The committee consists of three parents, two educators and the principal. Parents are elected by other parents in a meeting while educators are elected by other educators. I as principal, I am part of the committee as an accounting officer of the school.

P3 indicated that:

We have four people in our committee elected according to the formation of the SGB. Since our school is not a large school we have two parents, one educator and a learner because we believe in transparency.

Another key aspect which came out of the respondent was the emphasis on having a parent with a learner at the school in the meeting. P4 indicated that:

Parents who have learners at the school are called to a meeting. As a school we need to ensure that only parents with learners are called to a meeting.

The researcher found that these meetings when open to everyone they are hijacked by people who have their own interests and not those of the school and learners. P2 had this to add:

In issuing such notices we emphasize the fact that invitations are only extended to parents with learners in our school. We do not want to have people who would see this programme as a way of making money.

D4 and D2 reflected what was being said by both principals. Attendance registers of both school meetings had the names of parents in attendance next to the names of their children.

From what the respondents said above, the researcher found that schools do have School Nutrition Committees though their composition is not the same. Also efforts are made to ensure that people who serve on the committees are parents of learners who attend that particular school.

Also with regard to the SNC there seems to be a general understanding with regard to the work of the committee. What came out of the study is that the most important tasks of the committee were to ensure the smooth day to day running of the programme, and budgeting and reporting on the progress of the programme to the Department. P1 and P2 were in agreement in saying that the work of the committee involves everything regarding the programme from ensuring that food is bought, learners are fed every day for five days and reporting on the programme both to the SGB and the Department. Also, P3 and P4 further confirmed that the committee is also responsible for monitoring of food

handlers, maintenance of utensils and general cleanliness, as well as communicating with the Department whenever the need arises.

Regarding the view of the principals on the work of the committees, the researcher found that principals have different views regarding School Nutrition Committees. Though there is a general satisfaction amongst principals on the work of the committees, some have raised some concerns. P1 had this to say regarding the SNC:

I think that the members of the committee are doing their best in ensuring that the programme is implemented efficiently. I think the only major challenge is that the work of the programme is taking too much of the teachers' time and they end up lagging behind their teaching. Other than that, I do not have any problem.

P2 indicated that to mitigate the challenge regarding syllabus coverage:

We normally have our SNC meetings after school but even there we have a challenge since teachers, because of transport arrangements, have to leave early.

Another challenge regarding the SNC was raised by P4 when saying that:

Parents who serve on the committee expect the school to pay for their transport and catering when they do their committee work. Though this expectation is fair it is not budgeted for on the money for the programme.

P3 also indicated that:

We are satisfied with the work of the committee though their work could be enhanced if we can get help from people with experience in this field of work because this parents lack the necessary skills and educators are trained to teach learners. If that can be done the programme can be largely successful.

From what the respondents said, the researcher found that though the committees are functioning, there are concerns such as disruption of teaching and learning, expenditure which is not budgeted for and shortage of skills.

4.3.3 Selection of food suppliers, food handlers and the views of principals on their work

4.3.3.1 Selection of food suppliers

This is one area where the researcher found that there has been large improvement. The selection of food suppliers used to be the responsibility of the Department of Education but now schools are allowed to choose their own food suppliers. The selection of food suppliers by the Department led to all types of problems such as food shortages, delivery of expired food items and non delivery of food. Three of the participant principals in the study indicated that they do not have food suppliers but they buy their own food. P1 in his response to the question about food suppliers had this to say:

This used to be done by the Department and we encountered many problems since food was delivered to us by people whom we do not know.

Now we are allowed to source food the way we choose and that has eliminated many problems such as non-delivery of food and food shortages.

Both P2 and P4 also indicated that they buy their own food following Public Finance Management Act procurement procedures. This means that they have to get three quotations and choose the cheapest quote.

P3 indicated that:

We have stopped buying our own food because this process is time consuming and we lack the necessary capacity to do that. We are now using a local food supplier and I can say so far so good.

When asked to explain further how this is done, P3 indicated that:

We decided not to invite tenders but to choose a person who has business near our school.

This therefore means that schools use different methods of sourcing food and they seem to be satisfied with their arrangements though it seems that they do not use stipulated procedures.

4.3.3.2 Selection of food handlers

With regard to the selection of food handlers and the criteria used, there seems to be a lot which needs to be done. Though the researcher found that conditions of service of food handlers have vastly improved mainly because the process is

now handled by the schools, from selection to payment much more needs to be done.

Schools which participated in the study indicated that they have one food handler for every 200 learners. Food handlers prepare food for learners every day and this must be done before 10H00. They are also responsible for the upkeep of the kitchen. Principals also stated that they follow the criteria set by the Department in the selection of food handlers though they make some alterations so as to suit their situation. The criteria states that unemployed parents should get preference and they should be employed for 12 months. P1 stated that:

A meeting is convened in the same way that a meeting for election of SNC is convened. As a school we have four food handlers employed for a year, three females and male. The male person is assisting with carrying heavy stuff and other general work which need to be done in the kitchen. On the issue of the criteria it becomes difficult because the socio-economic condition of these people is the same and it becomes difficult to select.

P2 had this to say:

Our school is having 1050 learners and that translates to six food handlers. We employ them for six months so as to benefit as many as possible since their conditions are same. We started with those who do not have any source of income in the family except child support grant.

P3 indicated that:

My school has two food handlers because of our low enrolment which is 254. We employ them for a year and we follow a criteria set by the Department which means we consider the poorest of the poor.

However, P4 indicated a different approach when saying:

We call a parents' meeting where names of parents are selected. The SGB then sets criteria and conduct interviews. The criteria set by SGB include, age (30-50 years), socio-economic condition, hygiene and most important the parent must have a child at the school.

This therefore means that though schools are allocated food handlers according to the number of learners, they use different approaches in selecting food handlers.

The researcher also found that the respondents have serious concerns about the number of food handlers and the criteria. All respondents indicated that the number of food handlers is not enough and should be increased. P1 indicated that:

The number of food handlers is not enough when one considers the number of learners to be fed and the limited time of the school break. These people have to be here at 8 o'clock in the morning and they go home at around 5 o'clock.

P2 echoed the same sentiments as P1 when indicating that:

I believed that the number of food handlers is not enough and needs to be increased. These people arrive here at eight in the morning and knock off at five. Given the number of our learners, the work becomes too big for

them. Another area which needs to be revisited is their remuneration. They work for eleven hours, more or less twenty days a month for a mere R864.

P3 indicated that:

This is another area of challenges for the school. We have two food handlers and we end up asking learners to assist them. At times, we ask the SGB members to assist and they require payment for their assistance, money which is not budgeted for.

These responses of the participant principals clearly show that the number of food handlers is not enough and should be increased. Another finding by the researcher was with regard to the criteria used. When asked about the number of food handlers and criteria used, the principals indicated some of the complexities involved in the selection of food handlers. P4 had this to say:

We have four food handlers since enrolment is seven hundred and four. Though I may not have solution at hand right now but I have reservation about the criteria of selection of food handlers. This criteria compels us to discriminate people with similar condition. Many of these parents are poor and unemployed and it becomes difficult to weigh each plight.

Also in further highlighting the complexities surrounding the selection of food handlers, P1 and P2 stated disturbing claims around the selection criteria. P1 indicated that:

I must mention the fact that there are some challenges in this regard (selection of food handlers). Issues of health are raised by some parents. One parent was not selected because of claim that she was HIV positive and parents felt strongly that they won't allow such a person to prepare food their children. When you try to intervene by stating government policy, you are perceived as interfering. This created a tense atmosphere at the meeting and it leads to animosity amongst parents.

Another disturbing claim was raised by P2 who had this to say:

I believe that this is one area that the Department needs to look at. There are issues which are sensitive and we as a school find it difficult to deal with them. I remember in one meeting where a parent was disallowed to be a food handler because she was a foreigner. When we tried to intervene, parents objected and we ended up accepting their position.

These startling claims by the principals were further confirmed by minutes of the respective meetings. D1 and D2 clearly indicate the resolution of such meetings which discriminates against other parents. When asked how this unfortunate situation can be rectified, the principals offered no solutions except to say that the Department needs to intervene and set the record straight.

Data presented above clearly indicates, firstly, that principals are not satisfied with the number of food handlers their schools have and strongly feel that the number should be increased. Secondly, principals are raising concerns about the criteria used to select food handlers, including elements of discrimination on the

basis of health status and xenophobic tendencies which are raising their ugly heads.

4.3.4 Feeding time, menu guidelines and the five day feeding requirement of the programme

This is one of the key areas regarding the programme. The Implementation Guidelines for School (2011/12) states clearly that feeding at schools should take place before 10H00, every day of the week for five days and stipulated menu guidelines should be followed every time (DoE, 2011). When respondents were asked about their compliance with regard to the above, the researcher found that these policy directives are not followed to the letter.

4.3.4.1 Feeding time

The researcher found that school principals do not comply with the Implementation Guidelines. The researcher also found that principals are aware of the policy directives and they were provided with documents stating the policy imperatives but, as they claim, reasons beyond their control necessitate this policy deviation. P1 had this to say when asked about feeding time:

We have our break between 11H20 and 12H20. We are aware of the 10 o'clock feeding time but it is quite impossible for the food handlers to finish cooking before 10H00. These parents arrive here at school at 8 o'clock and it becomes impossible for them to finish cooking food before 10H00.

In the past we tried to make them arrive at least by 7 o'clock but because of crime, especially in winter when the day breaks very late, we stopped.

P2 indicated, when asked the same question, that:

Feeding takes place between 09H00 and 11H00. The reasons are the shortage of utensils and the fact that food takes a while to prepare because of our numbers.

These sentiments were also echoed by P3 and P4. They both conceded that they do not comply with the 10H00 feeding time. P2 stated the fact that they have two food handlers as a reason for not complying while P4 stated cooking utensils as a challenge since one of their gas stoves was stolen when there was a burglary at their school.

This non-compliance was confirmed by documents analyzed from the schools. All the schools' time tables indicate break times which are beyond 10H00. One time table indicates break time which is at 11H00 while three indicate break times of between 11H20 and 12H20. This information influenced the researcher to believe that there is no attempt by the schools to try and comply with the 10H00 feeding time.

4.3.4.2 Menu guidelines

Another observation made by the researcher was around the question of menu guidelines. Implementation Guidelines for Schools (2011/12) state that there are essentially five menu options (one for each day of the week). Each daily option

should offer a variety of starch and vegetables/fruit combinations with each daily protein option. All respondents indicated that they do not comply with the menu guidelines provided for the programme due to late money transfers by the Department. The respondents indicated that effort is made to comply with menu guidelines but indicated that since this directive is linked to availability of funds then late transfers affect compliance. P1 and P2 indicated that they try by all means to follow menu guidelines. P1 had this to say when asked about compliance with menu guidelines:

Yes, we try by all means to follow menu guidelines but when we are short of food suppliers, we replace some items, for an example, we normally replace pilchard and sour milk, with soup since these are expensive.

P2 indicated that:

Sometimes we do, sometimes we do not because of shortage of food. Since we buy our own food, we do not have the luxury of having food supplies upfront. We have to pay before we get food.

The sentiments of the two principals were shared as well by P4 who also stated late transfer of money as a reason for not complying. P3 had a different but a budget related reason for not complying. P3 had this to say when asked about menu guidelines:

The fact that our enrolment is low means that our nutrition budget is affected and in most instances we do not comply with menu guidelines.

We buy what is cheap because the lower your numbers the less you get and in order to have mileage on your budget, you have to save.

The researcher found that schools do not comply with the menu guidelines. Principals indicated issues such as late transfer of budget allocations and insufficient budget allocations.

4.3.4.3 Five day feeding requirement

With regard to the five day feeding requirement the researcher found that there is also non-compliance by schools to this directive. All the respondents indicated that they do not comply with the requirement not because they do so purposely but, as indicated in the above finding, because of the late transfer of funds by the Department. The researcher also found that this normally happens immediately after schools have opened and towards the end of the school term. However, two principals indicated that at times they do take from the school fund and replace the money when the nutrition money has been deposited. P1 had this to say regarding the five day feeding requirement:

Yes, we do comply with the feeding requirements of the programme but that depends on the availability of money .At times we go for days without feeding the children because the Department has not deposited the money. This normally happens at the beginning of the term or towards the end of the term when we are short of funds.

P3 echoed the statement by P1. However, P2 and P4, though indicating that they experience the same challenge as P1 and P2, sometimes find a way of mitigating

the impact of this challenge. P2 when asked about compliance with the five day feeding requirement had this to say:

Yes, we do comply unless we do not have food due to lack of funds. But even in that case we do take money from school funds and buy food and when the money for the programme is deposited we replace the school fund money.

Furthermore, P4 had this to say:

We do have instances where learners are not fed for days especially at the beginning and end of school terms and this is painful since these learners are used to getting food at school. Though this is not allowed we do take money from the school fund and use it for the nutrition programme.

From what the respondents said above, the researcher found that schools are trying to comply with the key requirements of the programme. Though the respondents have stated reasons which they claim are beyond their control, such as late transfer of funds by the Department, the researchers believes that much more effort should be made to ensure compliance since these policy directives are at the heart of the programme.

4.3.5 The view of principals on the impact of the programme on the improvement of teaching and learning

According to the Child Health Unit (1997) the aims of the programme are (i) foster better quality education and encourage regular attendance, (ii) ensure punctuality by providing an early morning snack for the child, (iii) alleviate short term hungry by providing 30% of the dietary requirements of the child. This therefore means that the above aims should be achieved for the programme to be deemed as successful. Also, achievement of these aims should manifest itself in the improvement of teaching and learning. The researcher found that the majority of principals who participated in the study indicated that the programme has had a positive impact on the improvement of teaching and learning. The researcher also found that school attendance and punctuality have also improved drastically. P2 had this to say when asked about the impact of the programme on the improvement of teaching and learning:

The programme has improved learner attendance and performance significantly.

This was further echoed by P3 who had this to say:

Yes, the programme has improved the performance of our learners. In the past we used to have high levels of truancy but since the introduction of the programme school attendance has improved and so is the performance.

P4, though he was generally happy about the improvement he was witnessing because of the introduction of the programme, did mention the fact that there are reports of learners who disappear after break time. This means that some of the learners leave school after they have had their food. The view of P1 was slightly different from those of his colleagues and had this to say about the impact of the programme:

The programme has had a positive impact on the school. I have seen improvement in learner attendance, the levels of violence and bullism have gone down but with regard to the aspect of learner performance we are still facing a challenge as a school.

This means that the impact the programme has not been felt in the area of teaching and learning.

From what the respondents have said the researcher found that, though there is general satisfaction by school principals on the impact of the programme on teaching and learning, there is still more which needs to be done.

4.3.6 The view of principals on their role in the programme when juxtaposed with their responsibility for running the school

The success of a school largely depends on school leadership. Since the programme is designed and aims at assisting the school in the improvement of teaching and learning, its implementation and success then becomes the responsibility of the leadership of the school. Principals as school leaders then become the focal point in the implementation of the programme. It is for this

reason that the views of principals were sought on their role in the programme when it is balanced with their responsibility for running their schools. The researcher found that principals have conflicting views regarding the workload added by the programme. The majority of principals in the study felt that the programme was an added responsibility to their huge task of managing their schools and felt that they should be relieved of their responsibility of accounting for the programme. P1 had this to say:

The programme, though it is assisting, is an added responsibility to my work. Though we have the SNC but whenever there are challenges I must stop everything and focus on that particular thing. The administration work of the programme consumes a lot of time which as a principal of the school I do not have. Remember we are also expected to teach as principals.

This was echoed by P3 and P4. P3 had this to say:

This is an added responsibility. You cannot leave everything in the hands of the SNC because when things go wrong you have to account. I think that the programme should be placed under Department of Social Development and people be employed at schools to focus specifically on the programme and allow us to manage schools.

These sentiments by P3 were echoed by P4 when saying:

Nutritional programme should be the responsibility of nutritionists because there are many aspects involved such as food quality, measurements and

other health hygiene issues. As principals we do not have the expertise while every time something goes wrong with the programme we are blamed. We have been trained to manage schools but not as nutritionists.

However, P2 had a different view from the other principals. P2 had this to say when asked:

When you have a well-functioning SNC, the workload on the principal is not much. Teamwork is important and my SNC is working competently.

This therefore means that principals have contrasting views though, as indicated in P4's response, a well-functioning School Nutrition Committee can lessen the burden on the principal.

4.4 Challenges encountered by principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme

Much as a lot has been done to improve the implementation of the NSNP, it seems as if challenges continue to plague the programme. Though it can be said that the Department has done a lot to improve the programme but schools, which are the epicentres of the programme, continue to encounter problems. It for this reason that the research sought views from the principal on the challenges which are encountered in the implementation of the programme.

4.4.1 Provision of basic resources and the challenges encountered

When the programme was launched million of rand were spent on the provision of basic resources (cooking and eating utensils) for the programme. The Department continues to spend money so as to ensure the provision of these basic resources. It is for this reason that the respondents were asked about these recourses. The researcher found that all the respondents indicated that, although the resources were provided to them, they were not enough and, as a result, they hinder the effective implementation of the programme. Also respondents indicated that on their budget allocations no money is allocated for the purchase of basic resources and they are not allowed to deviate from the budget. This means that they are only provided money to buy food and gas. What also emerged from the study is that some schools were provided with utensils while other schools were given money to buy utensils. When asked, P1 had this to say:

We were given money by the Department to buy utensils but the money was not enough. We cannot even buy these utensils using nutrition funds. We were told that is not done.

These sentiments were echoed by P2 when stating that:

We were provided with utensils both cooking and eating but they were not enough. It is difficult for us to buy more because the nutrition budget has to be spent on nutrition only and nothing else.

P3 and P4 affirmed what was said by P1 and P2 when saying that though they were provided with money, as was the case with P3, and utensils as well, as was the case with P4, they were not enough. They also stated that they are forbidden to buy utensils from the nutrition budget and this has an effect on the delivery of the programme. P4 also cited theft of these utensils as another challenge.

4.4.2 The views of principals on the schools' nutrition budgets

The success of the programme largely depends on funding. Funding has, in most instances, been cited as the major challenge which hampers the programme. From National Department to schools, funding has been cited as a challenge which at the very worst could lead to the collapse of the programme. It is for this reason that principals were asked about their views with regard to funding. All the principals indicated that the school nutrition budget was not enough and money is not always deposited at the appropriate time. Also, the researcher found that principals believed that the fact that the Department uses learner numbers from the previous year's to budget for the next year contributes to this budget shortfall. P1 had this to say about funding:

The money is not enough given the fact that these learners really need this food because they come from poor families.

These words were echoed by P2 when saying:

The money is not enough and should be increased.

P3 and P4 further indicated another aspect which may be the cause of their budget shortfall. P4 indicated that:

The fact that the Department is using, for example, 2013 learner numbers to plan for 2014 may be the cause of this shortfall. Our numbers are increasing each year.

Furthermore, P3 had this to say:

The fact that the Department is using the previous year's learner numbers contributes to this shortfall. If they can use the ten day returns which we submit after the tenth day of schooling to plan for the remaining terms then that will be better.

Furthermore, P3 had another interesting theory around this question of budget shortfall. P3 stated that:

Another reason may be that their budget is influenced by their measurements for each learner. We do not use these measurements because they are inaccurate.

Documents analyzed on school budget confirmed this budget shortfall. D4 showed that the money allocated to the school for the first two terms caters for the number of learners they had last year (2012). This means that since their numbers have increased in 2013, they are going to fall short on their budget.

4.4.3 Availability of infrastructure for the programme and the views of principals regarding this infrastructure

This is one of the key areas of the programme and failure to provide infrastructure may lead to the collapse of the programme. Every school which participates in the programme must have a kitchen and a storage facility (PSAM, 2010). These should be conducive for the smooth running of the programme and failure to provide these could have disastrous results for the programme. It is for this reason that the respondents were asked about the availability of this basic infrastructure for the programme. All respondents indicated that they had to convert one classroom into a kitchen. In some instances this has led to the fusion of two classes and this leads to overcrowding which in turn affects teaching and learning. This came out when P2 stated that:

Yes we do have a kitchen. We had to convert one of our classrooms to a kitchen and this meant that we had to combine two classes into one.

P1, P3 and P4 also indicated that they had to convert a classroom so as to have a kitchen. They indicated that these kitchens are small and they are not conducive for cooking and dishing out food. P4 further added that:

Our kitchen does not comply with safety standards. We have four huge gas cylinders (19kg) in one room and in an event of fire I always fear the worst.

This means that these kitchens fall short of health and safety standards as required by the law. Also all the respondents indicated their displeasure about this state of affairs. In raising his displeasure, P1 stated that:

It is for reasons like these that you find these white schools taking the Department to court. We are given a programme to implement yet we are not provided with the necessary resources to implement it.

Also with the regard to mode of cooking, all respondents indicated that they are using gas stoves to prepare food and the money for gas is included in their budget allocation. All the respondents indicated their satisfaction in this regard. Their sentiments were best captured by P1 when saying that:

We use gas for cooking and we have not had problem in this regard. The only time we had problem was when there was a nationwide shortage of gas and we were forced to serve uncooked meals such as bread and drink.

Another area of displeasure among the respondents was the availability of a storage facility. All the respondents indicated that they had once or more than once had their storage facility broken into by criminals and at times incidents of theft by people who are at school have been encountered. P1 and P2 had this to say on the condition of their storage facility. P1 indicated that:

We are using a consumer studies classroom as a storage facility since it is having shelves. Our main challenge with regard to this facility is that since

it is a classroom, there is a lot of movement by learners and other people and because of this, we have recorded a number of theft cases.

P2 had this to say regarding the storage facility:

We are using our general storage facility as a store since we do not have a storage facility. The problem is that this facility is accessible to many people and it becomes difficult to monitor because it means I or someone else must stand guard at the facility. Because of this, food is stolen and at times it becomes difficult to point fingers at someone.

Again much as respondents indicated that they had experienced breaking in by criminals, it is P3 and P4 who have experienced constant breaking into their schools. P3 had this to say on this aspect:

Our school was burgled three times last year and we were forced to install an alarm system and that has served as a deterrent though we had an attempt in May this year but they did not take anything.

P4 had this to say:

We are using an unused office in the staffroom as our storage facility. We have experienced a lot of burglaries to an extent that we had to install an alarm system. This adds to our expenses and burdens our already overstretched budget. We rent this alarm using our school fund since it is not budgeted for in the nutrition budget.

From what has been said above, the researcher found that the respondents are very unhappy about the lack of infrastructure to service the programme.

4.4.4 Active food gardens and community involvement

The sustainability of the programme can be enhanced by creating of food production units. As part of enhancing Local Economic Development (LED), the programme seeks to encourage communities to establish food production units (Kwa Zulu Natal Department of Education (KZN, DoE), 2011). This means that these will serve as sources of food and schools will no longer use supermarkets in towns to buy food. Also, schools are encouraged to establish their own food gardens, since this will promote nutritional education and healthy eating life styles. It is for this reason that the researcher sought the views of the principals regarding these aspects. All the respondents indicated that they do not have food gardens and the researcher found that little has been done by schools to make sure that learners establish food gardens. Also lack of capacity was cited by the respondents as the reason they do not have food gardens. P1 had this to say:

We do not have a food garden. We once had one which was sponsored by Nedbank but we could not sustain it. I think the reason is that we do not have capacity to maintain the garden. Our teachers are already overloaded with curriculum demands and we do not have people to maintain the garden.

P4 also indicated that:

We do not have a food garden. Our learners do not understand the necessity of having one and I must admit even we as educators we are not motivating them.

P2 and P3 cited space as the major challenge. P2 had this to say:

No, we do not have a food garden because our site is too small to have such a facility.

This was also mentioned by P3 when stating that:

Our problem is lack of space and the people to work on the garden because during school hours, we need learners in the classroom and after school there won't be anyone to supervise them.

From the responses above the researcher found that there is little commitment from the respondents to establish these food gardens.

Also another finding by the researcher was that there is minimal community involvement in the programme. As a result of this non involvement, some respondents blame the community for some of the unfortunate incidents (burglaries) that befell the programme. Besides those parents who work as food handlers and those in the SNC, the researcher found that there is no other form of community involvement. P1 had this to say on community involvement:

The only parents we are having are meal servers and those who serve in the committee. Even the group of community members who were present at the launch of the project by Nedbank had since disappeared.

P2 also stated that there is no involvement by members of community in the programme. P3 and P4 further blamed community members for burglaries in their schools stating that if community was involved, burglaries would have been averted since criminals are members of the community.

4.4.5 The other challenges faced by principals regarding the implementation of the programme

Though no major challenges were cited by the respondents regarding the implementation of the programme other than the ones mentioned above, it was evident that the respondents do have some concerns. This came up when P1 and P4 were asked about the other challenges facing the programme. They indicated that the programme at times does affect teaching and learning. P1 had this to say regarding other challenges facing the programme:

At times when food is not ready we are forced to reschedule or extend our break time. Also adverse weather conditions force our learners to use classrooms for eating and we end up having dirty classrooms.

In affirming what was said by P1, P4 had this to say:

I can say that the other challenge is that the programme does have a negative effect on teaching and learning. There are days especially on Mondays where we have to wait for the delivery of milk and sour milk since we cannot buy these on Friday and keep them at school. The other days which are normally affected is when samp and beans are prepared .We end up extending our break by maybe 30 minutes and this affects the whole day programme.

The other challenge which was mentioned by P3 was theft of eating utensils by learners. P2 also cited non-involvement by community members as criminals are known by members of the community and if they were involved, these criminals would have been exposed.

4.5 The views of principals regarding training received on the implementation of the programme

Training of people responsible for the implementation of the programme is very important for it to succeed. Since the programme is new at schools and teachers and parents do not have the necessary skills to implement the programme, training goes a long way in mitigating this anomaly. It is for this reason that respondents were asked about their views on training they have received. All respondents indicated that they received a one day training on the implementation though they had contrasting views on its effectiveness. This came when P1 and P3 had this to say about the training they received. P1 said that:

I attended a one day training and it assisted me with the implementation of the programme.

However, P3 had a contrasting view to that of P1. This came out when saying that:

I attended one day training and I felt that was not enough. In most instances we do things our way and not according to policy because most

issues were not clarified. A one day workshop cannot cover the whole of programme.

Respondents also indicated that members of the SNC and food handlers were also trained. They indicated that they were trained on reporting, choosing of food handlers, menu measurements and parent involvement. All schools indicated that they were provided with documents to assist them with the implementation of the programme and they provided their policy documents to the researcher. However, P2 and P4 indicated that these were not very helpful, especially the menu documents. P2 had this to say:

We do not use these menu measurements on these documents since they are not practical.

Also P4 indicated that:

We do not use them, we normally use trial and error until we get things right.

When asked about follow up training sessions, all the respondents indicated that there were none. P4 indicated that:

After the one day training we were promised follow up training session but nothing came out of promise.

From what has been said above, the researcher found that the respondents were not entirely happy with the training they received on the implementation of the programme. Though many areas which are key to the implementation were covered by the training, the researcher found that the respondents feel that this

was not enough and as a result they do things on their own initiatives and not according to what policies direct.

4.6 Assistance provided by the district to the schools

District offices serve as a link between schools and the provincial Department of Education (ECDoE). For the programme to be implemented effectively, districts should be involved. This should be done by providing the necessary support to schools and monitoring areas of challenge with the aim of making necessary interventions. It was for this reason that principals were asked on their views regarding assistance provided by the district offices. All the respondents agreed that assistance is provided by the district but it is very minimal. Also all respondents agreed that much as they believe that the assistance is minimal, every time they encounter challenges, the Department does provide assistance. This was indicated by P1 when saying that:

What I have observed is that assistance from the Department, though forth coming is minimal. They only respond when we encounter a problem. At the most times we fend for ourselves.

This statement was confirmed by P2 when saying that:

We do receive assistance from the district only when we phone to report a problem.

What also came out of the data collected is that the only time the Department will phone the schools is towards the end of the month when they are enquiring about the monthly reports. P3 had this to say:

The only time they phone is when they want us to submit monthly reports.

This means that the main concern of district officials is the reports from schools. When asked about the school visits, all the respondents indicated that, they have had one visit from the Department since the start of the programme. P2 had this to say regarding visits:

Since we started the programme in 2010, we have had one visit from the district.

P3 further indicated that:

The only time we had a visit by the district was when we were to be visited by the National Department.

This also indicates that the district visits schools when there is going to be a national team visit as this was also mentioned by P4.

The visits were confirmed by the log books of the respondents' schools. D1 and D2 indicate visits by the nutrition team in May and September 2011. D3 and D4 indicate visits by the team in 2012 and 2013 respectively. The researcher concluded that this is disturbing since it is the responsibility of the district office to monitor implementation.

The researcher further asked the respondents about the duration of the visits and the areas of focus. All the respondents indicated that the visits lasted for about

an hour and the areas of focus were the kitchen, the storage facility and the reports. The researcher had serious concerns about this finding. Given the non-frequency of their visits, a more thorough and detailed visit should be conducted. The researcher also believes that the fact that the team focused on the kitchen, the storage facility and the reports, which are the face of the programme, that constitutes scraping the surface since there seems to be other challenges facing the programme.

4.7 Summary

This chapter dealt with what the principals said about the programme and what the researcher found out from the interviews conducted. Although the findings have revealed many positives with regard to the programme, there are areas which still need improvements. With regard to the role of the principals in the implementation of the programme, the findings revealed that principals regard the programme as an added workload on them. The findings also revealed challenges such as lack of infrastructure, budget constraints, non-compliance with the feeding time, menu guidelines and the five day feeding requirement of the programme. Also the findings revealed lack of training, lack of assistance by the district office and lack of community involvement. The next chapter will deal with the discussion of these findings.

5 CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the main findings of the study with regard to the main research questions. The objective is to discuss these findings by relating them to the literature which was reviewed in chapter two of the study with specific reference to the perceptions of school principals on their role in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme.

5.2 The role of principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme

5.2.1 Advocacy and the views of principals on the advocacy of the programme

One of the key ingredients of success of any programme is how it is communicated as well as accepted by the people who are going to implement it and participate in it. Advocacy as a process means inviting all interested parties to a dialogue on what has to be done. This means that stakeholders' views and opinions are sought and this leads to ownership of the programme by all. Since the NSNP is a programme which is implemented at schools and schools being owned by communities, it becomes imperative that schools and their communities embrace the programme so as to ensure its success.

What came out of the study is that principals were not involved in the advocacy of the programme. Schools principals were just informed that the programme was going to be implemented in their schools and their task was just to inform parents of learners who attend their schools about the impending implementation of the programme. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the participative leadership model which, according to Bottery (2004), highlights the need for members of any organization to fully participate in decision making which affects them as stakeholders in an organization. Full participation encourages the stakeholders to own decisions and abide by them. By doing so, people adopt an “all sink or swim” approach in that they reap the fruits of success together and take full responsibility for the failure gracefully together. The fact that principals were not involved in the advocacy of the programme made them less informed about the programme. This in return contributed to the deficiencies on the imperative directives of the programme. According to the World Food Programme (WFP) study in 2011, one of the lessons to be learnt from the Kenyan School Nutrition Programme is that of “being in the room” when policy decisions are made. The fact that principals were not involved in any other stage of the programme except implementation is an indication of the top down approach which the Department has adopted with regard to the programme. This approach reserves the right of policy formulation for those who are in positions of power and input from the masses is not sought. Also, this approach ignores the fact that local service deliverers have knowledge of the challenges which exists on the ground and are better placed to propose purposeful policy (Paudal, 2009).

One of the benefits of the bottom up approach is that it ensures that the views of implementers are sought when policies are formulated. I believe that this approach would benefit the programme immensely since the all stakeholders would be involved from policy formulation to implementation. This means that school principals must be involved from the structuring and advocacy stages to the implementation of the programme. The fact that school principals are not overly concerned about not being part of the advocacy of the programme is another indication of this deficiency and the only way to correct it is to involve school principals in every aspect of the programme since the programme is implemented at schools.

5.2.2 The work of the school nutrition committees and the views of principals on the work of these committees

The School Nutrition Committees are the cornerstones of the implementation of the NSNP and the successful implementation of the programme largely depends on the functionality of these committees.

The study revealed that all the schools which participated in the study have School Nutrition Committees though their composition is not the same. What became significance in the composition of the SNCs is the lack of representation of learners and food handlers. According to the Implementation Guidelines for Schools (2011/12), the SNC should comprise of the following members:

1x food handler

2x SGB members (preferably the chairperson and treasurer)

3x Educators (one educator for each of the following: sustainable food production and school feeding and nutrition education)

1x SMT member responsible for school nutrition

1x learner from the Representative Council for Learners (RCL), secondary schools only.

This means that schools do not follow implementation guidelines when selecting their SNCs. The participatory leadership model is referred to as the model which gives voices to those who may be perceived as holding insignificant positions in an organization and allows them to share ideas with those who are perceived as superiors. Also, the model focuses on respect and engagement and increases commitment to decisions and enhances relations between management and subordinates (wise Geek, 2013). The absence of learners and food handlers in these committees means that their ideas are ignored. This therefore means that principals should ensure that learners and food handlers become part of the SNCs.

Also, the findings revealed that the principals are generally happy with the work of the SNCs and believe that they understand their responsibilities. The principals cited the responsibilities of SNCs as ensuring the smooth day to day running of the programme, budgeting, monitoring of food handlers and reporting on the progress of the programme to the Department.

The Implementation Guidelines for Schools (2011/12) state detailed responsibilities of the SNC which include, amongst others, ensuring that the

procurement process at school level is in compliance with the relevant departmental requirements and procedures. This means that the SNC must obtain quotations, evaluate and select suppliers, order supplies, receive goods, pay suppliers, store goods and manage stock control (DOE, 2011). According to the data collected, there seems to be a complete flouting of this guideline since schools source food the way that is convenient to them. Relevant departmental requirements and procedures as prescribed by the Public Finance Management Act are completely ignored and none of the respondents regard this as an important function of the SNC. It therefore becomes important that the guidelines for the implementation of the programme should be followed to the letter.

Another finding with regard to the SNC was that, though school principals are satisfied with the work of the SNCs, they have raised concerns such as the work of the committee affecting teaching and learning, shortage of skills and even suggested linkages with other stakeholders to improve skills capacity. This finding confirms other findings of the studies conducted on the implementation of the NSNP. The Public Service Accountability Monitor (PSAM) study in 2010 found that educators complain of too much paperwork involved in the NSNP which takes a lot of their time (PSAM, 2010). Also, a study conducted by the United Nations Children fund (UNICEF) in 2008 found out that there is an extra workload on teachers responsible for the implementation of the programme (UNICEF, 2008). The fact that this finding was identified by other studies as long ago as 2008 and it still persists even in 2013 means that serious interventions are needed to remedy the situation. One of these can be found in the Brazilian

nutrition programme. According to the World Food Programme (2011), the federal government has developed partnerships with universities to train staff and optimize food supply. Also, the Education Department has a partnership with the Department of Social Development to ensure food security and the Health Department to ensure healthy eating habits and vaccination of learners. These are some of the lessons we can learn from other countries and create partnerships with other departments and institutions of higher learning. This will assist in capacitating people involved in the programme and lessen their burden so that they can dedicate more time to teaching and learning.

5.2.3 Selection of food suppliers, food handlers and the views of principals on their work

This is one area where the researcher found out that there has been huge improvement. According to the DoE (2010) report there were a number of irregularities with regard to the selection of food suppliers. Amongst the findings, there was corruption in the awarding of tenders for food suppliers, double payment of food suppliers and food suppliers being paid without rendering services. The researcher found that this is no longer the responsibility of the Department. The Department deposits monies to schools so that they can source food the way they choose. The researcher also found out that the majority of schools buy their own food and are not using food suppliers and principals indicated that they are happy with this arrangement. This also means that schools buy food from supermarkets and nothing is done to promote local

economic development and this works against one of the aims of the programme which is to promote procurement of local supplies (KZN, DoE, 2011). According to the Brazilian Ministry of Education (2012), one of the strong aspects of their programme is the promotion of local procurement. The Ministry of Agriculture organizes and trains small producers to become suppliers of the school feeding programme (WFP, 2011). This means that effort should be made to promote the sourcing of food from local suppliers so that the programme can contribute to local economic development.

With regard to the selection of food handlers, the researcher found that schools are complying with the criteria set by the Department though there are areas of concern. The Guidelines for Administration of Meal Servers (2009) set out clear guidelines for the selection of food handlers which are (i) for every 200 learners there should be one food handler, (ii) a parent selected should have a child in that school, and (iii) keeping a file with minutes of a meeting where food handlers were appointed. Much as there is general compliance with the criteria, a lot needs to be done since some principals have raised issues such as xenophobia and discrimination around health issues in the appointment of food handlers. Also with regard to food handlers, the researcher found that the respondents are not happy with the number of food handlers and believe that their number should be increased. As this is a vital aspect of the programme, the Department should increase the number of food handlers since this will go a long way in improving the programme.

Literature reviewed for the study indicated that the programme is indeed facing challenges regarding human resource availability. Kallman (2005), when conducting a study on the NSNP, found out that there are inadequate human resources both in schools and districts. It is for this reason that partnerships become important. The fact that the Indian Education Department has partnered with NGOs to increase capacity can serve as a mitigating factor for our programme.

5.2.4 Feeding time, menu guidelines and the five day feeding requirement of the programme

The Implementation Guidelines for Schools (2011/12) states clearly that feeding at schools should take place before 10H00 everyday of the week for five days and stipulated menu guidelines should be followed every time. However, studies conducted on the programme indicate that there is a general non-compliance by schools to these crucial policies (PSC, 2008). In most instances learners are fed less than five days a week and food is not served to learners before 10H00. Also, according to the Public Service Commission 2008 report, 70% of respondent schools from ten districts surveyed in the Eastern Cape indicated that learners were served with food during the first break which is between 10H00 and 12H00. These findings were further confirmed by a study conducted by UNICEF (2008), which amongst its findings state that schools are not complying with the prescribed feeding time. The study concluded that the background and importance of feeding before 10H00 may not have been clearly understood by

principals. It was for these reasons that the researcher wanted to find out from school principals why this was the case. The findings of this study confirmed what the previous studies found. The researcher found that school principals do not comply with the implementation guidelines. Learners are not fed before 10H00, menu guidelines are not followed all the time and learners are at times not fed five days a week.

With regard to the feeding time, principals indicated that issues such as food handlers unable to finish cooking before 10H00, shortage of cooking utensils and huge learner numbers were some of the causes of non compliance. But, when the researcher was analyzing school time tables from the respondents' schools, he found out that all their time tables' break times are beyond 10H00. This clearly indicates that there are no attempts by schools to try and comply with the feeding time. Also, with regard to menu guidelines and five day feeding time, principals indicated that late transfer of funds is the main reason for not complying. This therefore means that the Department should ensure that funds are transferred to schools in good time. Also, as indicated above, issues of capacity should be addressed so as to improve compliance with the 10H00 feeding time. School principals should be encouraged and assisted so as to improve delivery on this key aspect of the programme.

Studies conducted both nationally and internationally have indicated the importance of provision of breakfast or mid-morning snack to learners (Briggs, 2008). These studies recommend breakfast or mid-morning snack since this will alleviate short term hunger, and improve cognition and concentration (Briggs,

2008). However, according to Kallman (2005), another serious challenge which is facing the programme is non-compliance by schools with regard to feeding times and menu guidelines.

5.2.5 The views of principals on the impact of the programme on the improvement of teaching and learning

According to the Child Health Unit (1997), one of the aims of the programme is to foster better quality education and encourage regular attendance. This therefore means that for the programme to be deemed successful the above aim should be achieved and the success of the programme should manifest in the improvement of teaching and learning.

The researcher found that the majority of school principals who participated in the study indicated that the programme has had a positive impact on the improvement of teaching and learning. Also, the researcher confirmed that school attendance and punctuality have improved drastically because of the programme. Although there is general happiness on the impact of the programme, much more needs to be done as one respondent indicated that he is still concerned about the impact of the programme on teaching and learning.

These positive results of the NSNP are further confirmed by studies conducted on school feeding. Studies conducted established that school feeding programmes have a positive impact on teaching and learning (Del Rosso, 1999). Children who are hungry have more difficulty concentrating and performing complex tasks, even if otherwise well nourished, while improving nutrition and

health can lead to better performance, fewer repeated grades and reduced drop outs (Del Rosso, 1999).

5.2.6 The views of principals on their role in the implementation of the programme when juxtaposed with their responsibility of running the schools

The Implementation Guidelines for Schools (2011/12) state that it is the responsibility of the SNC to implement the programme and principals should be at the centre of this committee since they are accounting officers in their schools. This is confirmed by Harris (2008) when describing distributed leadership as working together of vertical (formal) and lateral (elected) leadership structures. This means that there should be collaboration between the principal, SNCs, SGBs and RCLs. The fact that the majority of principals felt that the programme was an added responsibility means that collaboration is missing. Participatory and distributed leadership models emphasize working together of all stakeholders irrespective of the positions they are holding in an organization. In this way responsibility is shared and this will mean fewer burdens on school principals.

The study revealed that majority of principals felt that the programme was an added responsibility to their huge tasks of managing the schools and felt that they should be relieved of their responsibilities of accounting on the programme. However, the study also revealed that a well-functioning SNC goes a long way in easing the burden on school principals. This therefore means that issues of

capacity of the SNC members contribute to the huge burden placed on the principals by the programme and continuous training can eliminate this challenge. Another aspect which needs to be explored, as stated above in the discussion, is that of collaboration with other stakeholders. This collaboration can increase capacity and lessen the burden on everyone, involved including the principals.

5.3 Challenges encountered by principals in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme

5.3.1 Provision of basic resources and challenges encountered

When the programme was launched, millions of rand were spent on the provision of basic resources (cooking and eating utensils) for the programme. Studies conducted on the programme have, amongst other challenges facing principals, indicated lack of basic resources as one of the underlying causes of the challenges facing the programme (PSAM, 2010). The findings revealed that all the respondents indicated that although the resources were provided to them as schools, they were not enough and, as a result, this hinders the effective implementation of the programme. Also, respondents indicated that, on their budget allocations, no money is allocated for the purchase of basic resources and they are not allowed to deviate from the budget. Given this finding, the effective implementation of the programme cannot be achieved. According to the WFP (2011) one of the success stories of the Kenyan nutrition programme is the

introduction of a computer-based monitoring system. This innovation helps in managing information and assists the education ministry in planning and decision making at review meetings. In the case of our programme, this can assist in managing these resources, assist in keeping records, and make projections so as to avoid shortages. Also, as a short term solution, budget deviations for buying resources should be allowed.

5.3.2 The views of principals on the school nutrition budget

The success of the programme largely depends on funding. Funding has in most instances been cited as the major challenge which hampers the programme. The study revealed that all the principals indicated that the school nutrition budget was not enough and money is not always deposited at the appropriate time. This means that schools are unable to fulfil their obligation of delivering on the programme. As indicated above, this lack of funding and late deposit of budget allocation contributes to menu guidelines not being followed and learners not being fed for five days a week. Rukmani (2011), states that one of the key solutions to India's challenge of lack of funding is the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and corporate business in the programme. This involvement helps to mitigate the budget shortfall experienced by the Indian education ministry. This is one lesson we can learn and mobilize NGOs and big business to be part of the programme. Schools can start partnerships with NGOs and businesses so as to ensure that budget shortfalls are eliminated.

5.3.3 Availability of infrastructure for the programme and the views of principals regarding this infrastructure

Every school which participates in the programme must have a kitchen and a storage facility and failure to provide these could have disastrous results for the programme. Studies conducted on the programme indicated lack of kitchen and storage facilities. Many schools resort to using classrooms meant for teaching and learning as storage facilities and kitchens while other schools keep their food in general all-purpose storerooms (PSAM, 2010).

With regards to kitchens, the researcher found that schools do not have suitable kitchens and are forced to convert a classroom into a kitchen. In some instances, this has led to fusion of two classes and this leads to overcrowding which, in turn, affects teaching and learning negatively. Another finding with regards to kitchens was that they do not meet the health and safety standards as prescribed by the law.

Another finding with regard to infrastructure for the programme was the non-availability of proper storage facilities. The researcher established that classrooms are converted into storage facilities and at times food is stored in all-purpose storage facilities or places which are not well secured. According to the PSAM (2010), this lack of kitchen and storage facilities it seems, is going to remain a challenge for the programme in the Eastern Cape which has massive infrastructure backlogs.

It is for this reason that partnerships with NGOs and big businesses become imperatives. Big businesses have a social responsibility to plough back some of their profits into communities whom they are serving while NGOs have capacity to seek funding locally and abroad. In this way, schools can be assisted with regard to their infrastructural challenges.

5.3.4 Active food garden and community involvement

The establishment of active food gardens at schools and in immediate communities is seen as an important performance indicator of the programme because it ensures sustainability of the programme in the long term and also improves food security of school communities (UNICEF, 2008). Amongst the aims of the programme is to promote sustainable food production initiatives (food gardens) at schools and the promotion of nutritional education and healthy eating lifestyles (PSAM, 2010). Coupled with these aims the programme, through the establishment of food gardens, seeks to create job opportunities for local communities. This should be done through the engagement of the Departments of Education, Agriculture and Economic Development in identifying existing community-based projects and agricultural co-operatives within local communities that should be trained and equipped to work as production centres of food items consumed in schools (Kwa Zulu-Natal Department of Education (KZN, DoE) 2011).

Studies conducted on the programme indicated that the majority of provinces have not made any significant strides in the establishment of food gardens

(UNICEF, 2008). As it is the case with this study, the researcher found that schools do not have food gardens and little has been done by schools to make sure that learners establish food gardens. Principals cited lack of capacity as the reason they do not have food gardens. This finding indicates the fact that there is little or no commitment from the respondents to establish these food gardens. This statement above is affirmed by the fact that schools have prioritized objectives that are directly linked to feeding (buying of food from supermarkets) above those that are indirectly linked to school feeding. As stated above, the example of the Brazilian nutrition programme (that of procuring food from local suppliers) is a perfect example to be followed. Also, we need to go back to basics and mobilize communities by showing them the benefits of being part of the programme. As the findings revealed lack of community involvement in the programme, this community mobilization would help to galvanise communities behind the programme since their involvement is key to the success of the programme.

5.4 The views of principals regarding training received on the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme

Training of people responsible for the implementation of the programme is very important for it to succeed. Since the programme is new at schools and teachers and parents do not have the necessary skills to implement the programme, training would go a long way in mitigating this anomaly. However, research conducted on the programme shows high levels of non-compliance by principals

with regard to the implementation of the programme (PSAM, 2010). This non-compliance by school principals must not be viewed as an act of defiance by school principals since no principal in the studies conducted has voiced his opposition to the programme but it must be viewed as lack of capacity which is a result of lack of training. Various studies do confirm this assertion and principals have indicated their support for the programme since it has yielded positive results (PSAM, 2010).

These findings of the various studies are confirmed even in the findings of this study. The study revealed that principals received one day training on the implementation of the programme. They also indicated that it covered the basics and was not comprehensive hence they felt it was not enough given the complex aspects of the programme. Another finding was that members of the SNC and food handlers were part of this training but no follow up training has since been provided. This has resulted in schools doing things according to their own initiatives and not what the policy directs. The fact that there is a total disregard of feeding time by school principals is an indication of lack of training. According to the WFO, 2012, report, one of the success stories of the Brazilian nutrition programme is the establishment of Collaborating Centres in Feeding and School Nutrition (CCFSNs) (WFP, 2011). These centres train teachers, food service staff, dieticians and school feeding committees, and these training sessions are continuous. These centres also assist in sensitizing communities on issues such as locally composed menus. Given the current state of affairs regarding our programme, such models provide us with opportunities to learn. We need to

ensure that there is continuous training of the people involved in the programme so as to eliminate any challenge.

5.5 Assistance provided to schools by the districts

Section 38 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 1999 considers Heads of Departments as accounting officers (Department of Finance (DoF) 1999). The Act states the responsibility of accounting officers as having to do with 'effective, efficient, economical and transparent use of resources transferred to their respective departments and they must maintain an "effective, efficient and transparent system of financial and risk management" and take appropriate steps to prevent unauthorized, irregular and wasteful expenditure (DoF, 1999).

Since the NSNP is funded by a Conditional Grant, further regulations govern how the money is spent (PSAM, 2010). The Division of Revenue Act (DORA) which deals with Conditional Grant allocations states that the receiving departments must use the money for the purpose for which it had been allocated (DoF, 1999). In the case of the programme, monies should be used to effectively implement the programme. This requires strict monitoring of schools by the districts since failure to use money for the purpose it had been allocated for results in the withholding of funds (PSAM, 2010).

It is against this background that districts need to be very vigilant in ensuring the smooth implementation, monitoring and reporting in the programme. District officers are expected to monitor the implementation of the programme through

regular visits to schools. According to the Implementation Guidelines (DoE, 2004) district offices should, amongst other things:

- (i) conduct training for schools,
- (ii) liaise with schools on a regular basis, and
- (iii) Draft monthly reports relating to the NSNP to the ECDoE.

Furthermore, districts must visit five schools per day and phone every other school in the district every day to monitor the state of feeding. Districts must also collect monthly reports from schools which indicate the number of learners fed in each school on a daily basis. Reports sent to the ECDoE by districts should contain programme performance information such as number of schools targeted, actual number of feeding days, number of learners fed and details of food production initiatives and capacity building workshops (PSAM, 2012).

If one takes into account the situation in the Eastern Cape, the province has improved its staff complement. It has improved from a province which was characterised by 'high vacancy rate' (DoE, 2008) to a relatively well staffed province of 21 support staff, 5 registry clerks (Head Office) and 58 officials in 23 districts (DoE, 2011). Given the fact that the province feeds and monitors 4 680 schools (DoE, 2011) and considering the distance that has to be covered by district officials when visiting schools, the province remains understaffed (DoE, 2011).

The findings revealed that assistance provided to schools by the Department is very minimal. All the respondents also indicated that they have had one visit from district officials since the start of the programme in their schools and there are no

phone calls from the district enquiring about the progress of the programme. The only time the Department enquires is towards the end of the month when they require monthly reports. Also the researcher established that the duration of the visits is about one hour and the areas of focus are the kitchen, the storage facility and the reports. The findings also revealed that the visits by the districts only occur when there is going to be a visit by the National Department.

This therefore means that monitoring is lacking, policy directives are not followed and hence there are challenges. It therefore becomes imperative that the staff complement both at the Head Office and districts be increased and continuous training be provided to these officials so as to ensure effective implementation of the programme.

5.6 Summary

Although the findings have revealed many positives with regard to the implementation of the programme, there are areas which still need much improvement. Principals indicated that the issues such as lack of infrastructure, budgetary constraints and lack of training are amongst the issues which hinder the effective implementation of the programme. Also, another area of concern by principals was lack of support from the district offices. The findings also revealed that there is non-compliance by schools to the 10H00 feeding time, menu guidelines and the five day feeding requirements of the programme. Other findings of the study are lack of commitment in the establishment of food gardens and lack of community involvement.

Also, the findings of the study raised issues of capacity with regard to SNCs and food handlers to the extent that respondents proposed integration of nutritionists in the programme to assist with the technical aspects of the programme. Also, the findings revealed lack of participatory leadership where some of the role players are left behind from the formulation to the implementation of the programme.

6 CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to look at the perceptions of school principals regarding their role in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme. The summary of findings is organized around the themes that were abstracted from the research questions. This will be followed by a brief conclusion and recommendations.

6.2 Summary of the research findings

6.2.1 Advocacy and the views of principals on the advocacy programme

The study showed that principals were not involved in the advocacy of the programme. School principals were just informed that the programme was going to be implemented in their schools and their role was just to inform parents of learners who attended their schools about the impending implementation of the programme. The study also revealed that principals were not much concerned about not being involved in the advocacy of the programme.

6.2.2 The work of the school nutrition committees and the views of principals on the work of these committees

The study revealed that all schools which participated in the study have school nutrition committees. The study also revealed that the nutrition committees do not include all the people who should be represented on the committees, especially the learners and food handlers. Again, the study revealed that though principals are generally happy about the work of the committees, they indicated, however, that the works of the SNC affect teaching and learning since educators who are members of the committee have to dedicate a lot of their time to managing the programme. Also the study revealed that though members of the SNC are aware of their responsibilities, they are not followed to the letter.

6.2.3 Selection of food suppliers, food handlers and the views of principals on their work

The study revealed that schools no longer use food suppliers; instead they buy their own food. The money is deposited by the Department to schools so as they can buy their own food. The study also revealed that procurement procedures are not followed and schools use supermarkets to buy food and nothing is done to promote local economic development which works against the aim of the programme of promoting local economic development.

Also, with regards to food handlers, the study revealed that schools do comply with the criteria set by the Department in the selection of food handlers. The study also revealed that principals are not happy with the number of food

handlers they have. Again, principals raised concerns about issues of discrimination in the appointment of food handlers such as xenophobia and discrimination based on health issues.

6.2.4 Feeding time, menu guidelines and the five days feeding requirement of the programme

The study revealed that there is total disregard of the 10H00 feeding time. The researcher confirmed that schools do not comply with this directive citing infrastructure challenges and shortage of food handlers. The study also revealed that the schools do not comply with the menu guidelines and the five day feeding requirement. School principals indicated their unhappiness with these requirements citing late transfer of funds as the major reason. Issues of capacity were also raised and there were suggestions of partnerships with other departments.

6.2.5 The views of principals on the impact of the programme in the improvement of teaching and learning

The research findings indicated that principals were happy about the positive impact of the programme on teaching and learning. The study also revealed that punctuality and school attendance have improved drastically. Although there was general happiness, much more needs to be done. This therefore means that areas of concern regarding the implementation of the programme should be

addressed urgently so as to see whether any other problem exists with regard to learner performance so that other interventions can be done.

6.2.6 The views of principals on their role in the implementation of the programme when juxtaposed with their responsibility of running the schools

The study revealed that principals have conflicting views regarding the workload added by the programme. The majority of principals felt that the programme was an added responsibility to their huge task of managing the schools and felt that they should be relieved of their responsibility of accounting on the programme. However, the study also revealed that a well-functioning SNC goes a long way in easing the burden on school principals.

6.3 Challenges encountered by schools in the implementation of the National School Nutrition Programme

6.3.1 Provision of basic resources and the challenges encountered

The study revealed that, although basic resources (cooking and eating utensils) were provided to schools, these were not enough and, as a result, this hinders the effective implementation of the programme. Respondents also indicated that on their budget allocations no money is allocated for the purchase of basic resources and they are not allowed to deviate from the budget.

6.3.2 The views of principals on the school nutrition budget

The researcher established that school principals felt that the nutrition budget was not enough and money was not always deposited at the appropriate time. This means that schools are unable to fulfil this obligation of delivering on the programme. The study also revealed that this budget shortfall contributes to the fact that implementation guidelines are not followed.

6.3.3 Availability of infrastructure for the programme and the views of principals regarding this infrastructure

The study revealed that schools lack the necessary infrastructure, such as kitchens and storage facilities. Schools were forced to convert a classroom to a kitchen or storage facility and this affects teaching and learning since this leads to overcrowding in classrooms. Another finding with regards to the kitchen was that these kitchens do not meet the health and safety standards as prescribed by the law. Also with regards to storage facilities, the study found that schools at times store food in all-purpose storage facilities which are not well secured.

6.3.4 Active food gardens and community involvement

The researcher confirmed that schools do not have food gardens and little has been done by schools to make sure that learners establish food gardens. This finding indicates that there is little or no commitment from the respondents to establish these food gardens. This means that schools have prioritized objectives

that are directly linked to feeding rather than those that are indirectly linked to the school feeding such as the promotion of local economic development.

The study also revealed that there is lack of community involvement in the programme. Besides the parents who are food handlers and those who serve in the SNC, there is no other involvement by members of the community. The fact that communities were not mobilized when the programme was launched contributes to this non-involvement of members of the community.

6.4 The views of principals on training received for the implementation of the programme

The study revealed that school principals received one day of training on the implementation of the programme. They indicated that it only covered the basics and was not comprehensive; hence they felt that it was not enough given the complex aspects of the programme. Another finding was that SNCs and food handlers were part of this training and no follow up training has since been provided. This has resulted in schools doing things their own ways and not according to the policy dictates.

6.5 Assistance provided to schools by the district

The study revealed that assistance provided to schools by the district was very minimal. All respondents revealed that they have had only one visit from the district officials since the start of the programme in their schools and there have been no phone calls from the district enquiring about the progress of the

programme. The only time the district enquires is towards the end of the month when they are enquiring about the monthly reports. The study also revealed that when a visit is conducted, it normally takes about an hour and the areas of focus are the kitchen, the storage facilities and the reports. Also, the study revealed that the visits by the district occur when there is going to be a visit by the National Department.

6.6 Conclusion and recommendations

The study revealed that distributed leadership is not practiced at schools with regard to the working of the SNCs and the same can be said about the participatory leadership model. This is shown, firstly, by the exclusion of principals in decision making around policies that are aimed at implementing the programme. Also, the fact that learners and food handlers are also excluded from the SNCs is an indication of the lack of the participatory leadership model. The study was interpretive in orientation and utilized qualitative data gathering techniques with all the four secondary school principals.

The need for collective leadership rose out of the research. The roles of principals and other stakeholders at schools should be enhanced through the theories and models used. The study revealed that the views of principals are vital and should be taken into account for the programme to be implemented effectively and efficiently. Also, issues of capacity and lack of infrastructure, if not addressed, can have a disastrous impact on the programme.

In the light of the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

- The Department must embark on a mobilization drive to educate communities about the programme.
- The Department should develop partnerships with other departments and Universities to assist in training and capacitating of all people involved in the programme and this should be continuous.
- The Department should build linkages with NGO's and corporate businesses so as to assist with infrastructural challenges.
- Increase the number of food handlers.
- Increase budget allocations to schools.
- The Department should ensure that transfers of funds to schools are made in time.
- The Department should ensure the establishment of food gardens and community gardens as source of supplies for the programme.
- Consolidate monitoring by employing more district officials and capacitate them through continuous training.
- There is a need for further studies to be conducted which must focus on community involvement.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I will first introduce myself to the members of the school community and then tell them about the purpose of my visit. I will also explain to them that, their participation is voluntary, that they have the right to withdraw from the process and our interaction is going to remain confidential. I will be interviewing four principals of the senior secondary schools which are participating in the National School Nutrition Programme.

1. ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NSNP

- 1.1. What was your role in the advocacy of the programme?
- 1.2. What are your views regarding the advocacy of the programme?
- 1.3. Does your school have a School Nutrition Committee?
- 1.4. How many people are in the Committee and how were they elected?
- 1.5. What is the work of the Committee?
- 1.6. Do you think that the Committee performs its duties competently? If yes, explain and if no, what are the challenges.
- 1.7. How are food handlers selected?
- 1.8. How many food handlers does your school have and what is your opinion on the number?
- 1.9. How are food suppliers selected?
- 1.10. How do you rate the service provided by the food supplier to your school?
- 1.11. What is your opinion with regard to the process of selection of both the food handlers and food suppliers?
- 1.12. When does feeding take place in your school and why?

- 1.13. Does your school follow menu guidelines provided by the DBE?
- 1.14. Does your school comply with the five day feeding requirement of the programme?
- 1.15. What are your views regarding the impact of the programme in the improvement of teaching and learning?
- 1.16. What are your views on the role principals are expected to play in the programme when you juxtapose this with their responsibility of running their schools?

2. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY PRINCIPALS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NSNP

- 2.1. Were you provided with basic resources (cooking utensils) when the programme was launched in your school?
- 2.2. What are the challenges in terms of the basic resources provided to the school for the programme?
- 2.3. What is your opinion on your school nutrition budget? Is it enough to cater for all the needs of the programme?
- 2.4. Does your school have a kitchen and what is its condition?
- 2.5. What do you use for cooking (firewood, gas or electricity)?
- 2.6. Is this included in your budget allocations?
- 2.7. Does your school have a storage facility?
- 2.8. If yes, what is the condition of this storage facility?
- 2.9. If not happy about the condition of the kitchen and storage facility, what do you think should be done to improve these facilities?
- 2.10. Does your school have an active food garden?
- 2.11. If yes, how is the garden maintained?

- 2.12. If no, why is your school not having a food garden?
- 2.13. How is the community assisting in the implementation of the programme?
- 2.14. What are the other challenges faced by the school regarding the implementation of the programme?

3. THE VIEWS OF PRINCIPALS REGARDING TRAINING RECEIVED ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

- 3.1 Did you receive training when the programme was launched in your school?
- 3.2. Who else was trained in your school?
- 3.3. Which areas of the programme were covered during the training?
- 3.4. What was the duration of the training?
- 3.5. What are your views with regard to the following: facilitation of workshop, areas covered for the programme in the workshop and duration of workshop?
- 3.6. Has there be any follow up training sessions conducted since your first training?
- 3.7. Where you provided with resources such as Policy documents to assist you with the implementation of the programme after the workshop?
- 3.8. Do you find these documents helpful with regard to practical implementation of the programme?

4. ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO SCHOOLS BY THE DISTRICT

- 4.1. What kind of assistance is your school receiving from the Department?
- 4.2. How often does the department visit your school?
- 4.3. When visits are conducted, which are the areas of focus?
- 4.4 What is the duration of these visits?
- 4.5. Besides visits, how is communication with the department maintained?

4.6. How are monthly reports by the school communicated to the department?

4.7. What are your views with regard to, assistance from the department, visits to schools, areas of focus during visits and communication between the school and the department?

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

THE DOCUMENTS THAT I WILL ANALYSE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Minute books of SGB meetings, SNC meetings Staff meetings Procurement Meetings and Parents meetings.
- Policy Documents such as Menu documents, Implementation manual.
- Administration of PODs, Monthly reports submitted to the department.
- Attendance registers for food handlers.
- School timetable with break times.
- School Budget.
- School Log book.

2787 Thembisa
Kwa Dimbaza
5671

TO: THE RESPONDENT

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.....

CONSENT FORM FOR THE RESPONDENT

I.....fully agree to participate in Mr Paulos' research study. I promise that I will provide him with the necessary information which will be of help to his study. I am also aware of the fact that, I will be bound by the ethics of this study and I will exercise confidentiality as required by the study.

.....
Signature of the Respondent

.....
Date

.....
Signature of the Researcher

.....
Date

Faculty of Education
Department of Further and Continuing
Education
Stuart Hall, Alice

Phone: Alice: 040602412
| Email: nmayiya@ufh.ac.za |



09 September 2013

Principal

Dear Sir,

Re: Permission to Collect Data – Mr. S. B. Paulos (Student Number 201012976)

This is to confirm that Mr. Paulos is pursuing Master of Education degree at the University of Fort Hare. His research title is **“Perceptions of School Principals on their role in the implementation of National School Nutrition Programme”**. He is supposed to collect data from schools during the month of September 2013. Kindly grant him permission. I would also be grateful if you could kindly provide him with documents that may assist with information regarding the area of his study.

I would like to assure you that any information that will be collected will remain confidential and no name of school or person will be disclosed. The student will ensure that he does not disrupt ongoing activities during the period he will be collecting data.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Rembe', is written over the word 'Sincerely'.

Prof. S. Rembe
MEd and PhD Coordinator,
Alice Campus
Faculty of Education