

**THE EXPERIENCES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS WITH THE NATIONAL
READING STRATEGY IN MBABANE CIRCUIT, INGWAVUMA.**

BY

FRANK JOSEPH MENSAH

I.M.I.S (DIP. U.K). BA (UNISA). HONS (UNISA). P.G.C.E

(STUDENT NUMBER 201454851)

A Dissertation submitted to the

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

For the award of M.Ed. (Research Methodology)

SUPERVISOR PROF. P.T. SIBAYA

CO-SUPERVISOR Dr. PRAVINA PILLAY

Date submitted.....January 2017

ABSTRACT

Given the need to employ effective reading strategies in the primary school, this article sets out to address the question of primary school educators' experiences with the National Reading Strategy (NRS).

The study focuses on six (6) primary schools in the Mbabane Circuit at Ingwavuma in UMkhanyakude District of South Africa. Forty (40) primary school educators from the selected schools within the circuit took part in a quantitative survey. Pearson's chi-square was employed to explore the relative effects of teachers' biographical data and their experiences with the NRS.

The findings suggest that teachers' gender, job title, teaching phase, experience in years and qualifications had an influence on their experiences with the NRS. On the other hand, teachers' age was shown to have no relationship with their experiences with the NRS.

The study confirms the appropriateness of understanding how teachers' biographical data relate to and impact on reading intervention strategies.

Keywords: National Reading Strategy, primary school, educators' experiences, demographic characteristics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the late Prof. P.T. Sibaya, my supervisor, and Prof. D.C. Sibaya, the Dean of the Faculty of Education, for their guidance, encouragement and constructive criticism from the proposal stage to the completion of my dissertation.

I wish to acknowledge the advice and support of my co-supervisor, Dr. Pravina Pillay, who assisted greatly in literature search, and provided guidance and suggestions throughout all of my drafts.

I extend my thanks to lecturers Mr. Chibisa and Mrs. Mbatha for their patience and time in putting the pieces together.

Sincere thanks and support goes to my wife, Mrs. Freda Mensah, for her support and patience throughout my study.

To my dear mom, Anna Olivia Asmah, my late grandmother Auntie Lucy Asmah, I say a big thank you for investing so much in my education. I Am indebted to Mr and Mrs. Amos for being true parents to me.

I owe gratitude to the principals of the following primary schools, Mzondi, Empumelelweni, Efingose, Kwa Qondile, Kwa Makhoyeni and Nethezeka Primary School for allowing their staff to participate in this study.

Special thanks also goes to Pastor and Mrs. Steyn for their support and encouragement as well as Mr. Dumisani Mtshali, my former principal who took great interest in my study and urged me to proceed in my studies.

To my friends, Mr Gumede, Mr Wundow Mahama, Mr Alex Boateng, Mr Robert, Mr Ernest Abu, Dr. Kwesi Offei, Mr. Kwabena Opare and Nzante Ekiyie, you have been a pillar of strength and support throughout this study.

Finally, I give glory to God almighty without whom nothing would have been made that was made.

ORIGINALITY DECLARATION

Names and Surname	Mensah Joseph Frank
Student Number	201454851
Title of dissertation	The Experiences of Primary School Educators With The National Reading Strategy In Mbabane Circuit, Ingwavuma

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University policies and rules applicable to postgraduate research. I certify that I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, complied with their requirements.

In particular, I confirm that I had obtained an ethical clearance certificate for my research (Certificate Number UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2016/330) and that I have complied with the conditions set out in that certificate.

I further certify that this mini-dissertation is original, and that the material has not been published elsewhere, or submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university. I declare that this mini-dissertation is, save for the supervisory guidance received, the product of my own work and effort. I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, complied with the University's Plagiarism Policy and acknowledged all source of information in line with normal academic conventions.

I have subjected the document to the University's text matching and /or similarity-checking procedures.

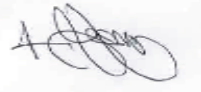
Candidate's Signature	
Date	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Statement of the problem.....	4
1.3	Research question.....	4
1.4	Aims of the study.....	4
1.5	Hypotheses.....	5
1.6	Method of investigation.....	5
1.6.1.	Literature review.....	5
1.6.2	Field work.....	5
1.6.3	Sampling.....	5
1.7	Instrument for data collection.....	6
1.8	Method of scoring	6
1.9	Method of data analysis	6
1.10	Definition of terms.....	7
1.11	Plan of study	8

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction.....	9
2.2	The nature of the NRS.....	9
2.3	The theory underpinning the NRS.....	11
2.4	Reading achievement in South African Schools.....	15
2.5	International comparative study in reading.....	15

2.6	Reading research in South Africa.....	17
2.7	Experiences of educators.....	20
2.8	Factors affecting learners' reading achievement.....	21
2.9	The home as a determinant of reading.....	22
2.10	Teacher competency	24
2.11	School related factors	25
2.12	Staff training and support	26
2.13	Teacher age and reading achievement	28
2.14	Teacher gender and reading achievement.....	30
2.15	Home language and reading achievement	31
2.16	Teacher job title and reading achievement	33
2.17	Teaching phase and reading achievement	35
2.18	Teacher years of experience and reading achievement	35
2.19	Teacher qualifications and reading achievement	37

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction.....	39
3.2	Research design.....	39
3.3	Research method.....	40
3.4	Research instrument.....	40
3.4.2	Scoring procedures.....	41
3.5	Sampling design and statistics.....	42
3.6	Description of procedures.....	44

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1	Introduction.....	46
4.2	Presentation and analysis of data	46
4.2.1	Analysis of data	46
4.2.2	Testing the hypotheses.....	46
4.2.2.1	Educators' experiences with the NRS.....	47

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1	Introduction.....	52
5.2	Summary of study.....	52
5.3	Aims of the study	52
5.4	Methodology.....	52
5.5	Findings.....	53
5.6	Recommendations.....	56
5.7	Limitations.....	57
5.8	Conclusions.....	58
	REFERENCES	59

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: Participant informed consent.....	67
ANNEXURE B: Researchers' declaration.....	69
ANNEXURE C: Ethical clearance application form.....	70
ANNEXURE D: Research questionnaire.....	72
ANNEXURE E: Ethical clearance certificate.....	76
ANNEXURE F: Department of Education ethical clearance certificate.....	77

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Distribution of questionnaires.....	43
Table 1.2	Educators' experiences with the NRS.....	47
Table 1.3	Relationship between teacher age and their experiences with the NRS	48
Table 1.4	Relationship between teacher gender and their experiences with the NRS.....	49
Table 1.5	Relationship between teacher job title and their experiences with the NRS.....	49
Table 1.6	Relationship between teaching phase and educators' experiences with the NRS.....	50
Table 1.7	Relationship between educators' years of teaching experience and their experiences with the NRS.....	50
Table 1.8	Relationship between educators' qualification and their experiences with the NRS.....	51

CHAPTER 1

MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the motivation for the study, statement of the problem, research question, the aim of the study as well as a brief discussion of the research methodology, procedures for data collection, operational definition of terms and organisation of the study. The rationale for eliciting the experiences of primary school educators with the National Reading Strategy (NRS) is also highlighted.

One of the aims of education is to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In support of this, an equal opportunity for all learners irrespective of race, religion or creed, to develop holistically through education in South Africa, has become the main focus. In this respect, literacy is one of the areas which has come under the spotlight (Naidoo, Reddy & Dorasamy 2014). Research in applied linguistics and reading research show a strong correlation between reading proficiency and academic success at all ages with many experts agreeing that poor reading skills lead to poor academic performance which in turn adversely affects students' overall development (Bharuthram, 2012).

A small number of studies have disclosed teachers' level of instructional expertise and related learner reading achievement. This is evidenced in both national and regional literacy assessments in South Africa (Zimmerman & Smit, 2014). Learners' achievements are often used as indicators on the efficiency of an educational system. A number of national and international studies have shown that South African learners' achievements are poor for both mathematics and reading. With regard to reading, the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ II, 2000) found that the overall reading level of Grade 6 learners in South Africa stood at Level 3 (basic reading). The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2006) showed that South African Grades 4 and 5 learners scored 302 points, which is below the international mean of 500 points.

Likewise, the South African Department of Education Systematic Evaluation (2007) showed that the Grade 3 achievement score for literacy was 36%. The results of these national and international tests indicate that a large number of South African learners cannot understand what they are reading (Kruizinga & Nathanson, 2010).

According to Singh (2011) there is a growing corpus of research which suggests deep problems in the South African education system, linked to learners' low levels of literacy achievement. She posits further that the root of these problems lie in the ineffective teaching of reading in schools and learners' inability to learn to read across the curriculum independently.

The ineffectiveness of teaching reading in schools can be traced to a variety of pre-existing factors such as the class size, learner literacy levels combined with educator knowledge and the quality of literature available. Rural schools tend to face a host of these problems.

To promote literacy and stem the tide of failures in the education system as a result of a poor background in reading, the National Reading Strategy (NRS) was introduced. The NRS was launched in the year 2008. The aim of the NRS is to promote a nation of lifelong readers and lifelong learners (DoE, 2008b). Lifelong reading and lifelong learning is the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual, which occurs through experiences encountered in the course of a lifetime (Volodina, 2011). These experiences could be in the form of formal training, mentorship, and the pursuit of higher education. The main goal of the NRS is to improve the reading level of all learners in the country including those who experience barriers to learning and those learners who are at special schools and youth care centres (DoE, 2008b). According to Singh (2011), the implementation of the NRS was an initiative to assist educators to address the issue of poor literacy in schools, but educators are not implementing it as it should be. This is because almost seven years since the implementation of the NRS, the aims of the programme seem very distant.

In a study on reading instruction, teacher change and implications for training, Klapwijk (2012) observed that educators who are taught in comprehension strategies as part of their teaching instruction begin in a state of either confusion or rejection before taking conscious control. According to Klapwijk (2012), while ample attention is paid to the professional development of educators for teaching reading, little, if any, attention is paid to the professional development of comprehension instruction. He further states that there are no studies about the professional development of educators and comprehension instruction and new educators still enter schools with the understanding of how to teach comprehension based on how they were taught to read.

The NRS (DoE, 2008b) emphasises that improving reading is part of nation building.

The desired outcome is that “all children must be able to read basic texts by the end of Grade 3”. Seven reading activities are highlighted for educators which are: reading aloud, shared reading, guided and group reading, independent reading, word and sentence level work, vocabulary, and comprehension. However, the Foundation for Learning Campaign (DoE, 2008a) highlights nine teaching activities, which could be confusing to educators.

Although neither the NRS (DoE, 2008b) nor the Foundation for Learning Campaign (DoE, 2008a) mention any theoretical base to support their decisions, the activities they recommend support reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, independent writing, and letter and word study (Kruizinga & Nathanson, 2010). Despite this positive development, both the NRS and the Foundation for Learning Campaign fail to offer educators a clear explanation of reading and its theoretical underpinnings. Consequently, it is likely that South African educators could become confused about what reading entails. This could result in individualistic teaching practices and uneven reforms (Singh, 2011).

Although the framework for the implementation of instructional practices exists in theory, this is not the situation in practice. Educators continue to adopt and implement new instructional practices and curricula on almost a daily basis. Yet, as Swanepoel (2009)

points out, initiatives aimed at the implementation of educational change fail regularly, often because educators' role in the change process is underestimated.

The rationale for this study arose when the researcher, who is also a languages educator realised through informal conversations and contacts with fellow educators that, although volumes of reading materials exist, there is no unified approach to teaching reading among primary school educators. Based on this, the researcher embarked on a quest to find out the views of educators about the NRS which is a document developed to aid the teaching of reading with particular emphasis on primary schools.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The NRS was introduced with the aim of combating illiteracy, and to promoting a nation of life-long readers and life-long learners. Studies conducted by both government and independent research organisations show that literacy levels have not improved since the inception of the NRS six years ago.

The disparity between the existing knowledge of educators and the requirements of the NRS is a challenge in the realisation of the stated objectives of the NRS. Furthermore, there has been little research on the experiences of educators with regard to the NRS. This study, therefore, seeks to find out the experiences of educators with the NRS in Mbabane circuit, Ingwavuma.

1.3 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1.3.1 What are the experiences of primary school educators with the NRS?

1.3.2 What is the relationship between the experiences of primary school educators and their demographic characteristics?

1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 To determine the experiences of primary school educators with the NRS.

1.4.2 To determine the relationship between educators' age, gender, home

language, job title, teaching phase, years of teaching experience and qualifications and their experience with the NRS.

1.5 HYPOTHESES

Appropriate hypotheses will be formulated based on the aims of the study.

1.6 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

1.6.1 Literature Review

The available literature related to the aims and research questions will be reviewed.

1.6.2 Field Work

A descriptive study will be conducted using a structured questionnaire. The content validity of the questionnaire will be ensured by the promoters of this study.

The assistance of principals and Heads of Departments (HODs) of the respective schools will be sought in the administration of the instrument.

1.6.3 Sampling

The population will be drawn from primary schools within the Mbabane Circuit at Ingwavuma. The location is deeply rural. Sampling will cover the foundation and the intermediate phase. The sample size from the respective schools is anticipated to be 10. A random selection of six schools will be done for the purpose of analysis. A sample size of 60 respondents from the 6 participating schools is expected.

The instrument will include demographic data of each respondent (age, gender, home - language, job title, teaching phase, years of teaching experience and educator qualifications), and their experience with the NRS.

1.7 INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

A questionnaire will be developed. The instrument will be divided into sections covering each aspect of the aims of the study. The following format is proposed:

Section A: Questions about the respondent; (age, gender, home language, job title, teaching phase, years of teaching experience, educational qualifications)

Section B: This section will extract information about the experiences of educators with the NRS.

The questionnaire in section B, will contain a four-point scale item to measure:

Aim number 1.4.1: These questions will elicit views on the experiences of an educator with the NRS in relation to practical classroom norms such as code switching, curriculum change and management, instructional time, subject integration, parental and community support as well as School Management Team (SMT) support amongst others.

Aim number 1.4.2: Questions will centre on the experiences of educators with the NRS and its relationship with respondents' demographic data.

1.8 METHOD OF SCORING

Data will be generated about the background (age, gender, home language, job title, teaching phase, years of teaching experience and educational qualifications) from the information supplied in Section A for use in correlation analysis. Biographical data captured in Section A will be used for the analysis. The four point scale in Section B will be rated 1 for the most positive response and 4 for the least positive response.

1.9 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Basic descriptive statistics will be used and presented in tables. Inferential statistics would be used to compare responses on the experiences of educators with the NRS.

1.10 Definition of terms

This part provides clarification on the operational definition of key terms used in this study and gives a clearer understanding to readers.

Educator: The National Education Policy Act of 1996 defines the term educator as any person who teaches, educates and trains other persons or assists in rendering education services provided by or in an education department.

Foundation phase: According to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (1996), the term foundation phase refers to the lowest level of the General Education and Training Band (GET). This term is used in the study to refer to grades 1, 2 and 3, previously known as junior primary.

Intermediate phase: According to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (1996), the term intermediate phase refers to grades 4, 5 and 6.

Learner: Learner means any person and even university students receiving education in an educational institution. In this study the term learner will bear specific reference to a person receiving education at a primary school.

Primary school: Primary school in this study will refer to Grades 1 to 6.

Reading strategy: A reading plan or skill acquired by students to be able to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts.

Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS): A new curriculum built on the NCS to improve curriculum implementation. It comprises the policy documents stipulating the aim, scope, content and assessment for each subject listed in the NCS for Grades R-12 (DBE, 2011)

Constructivist learning theory: A theory of learning in which individuals create their own new understandings on the basis of an interaction between what they already know

and believe and ideas and knowledge with which they come into contact (Richardson, 2003).

1.11 PLAN OF STUDY

This study is arranged in five chapters:

Chapter 1

This provides the introduction and background to the study. It introduces the statement of the problem, aims and objectives, significance, limitations, research design and methodology, data analysis, ethical considerations and concept clarification.

Chapter 2

This presents the literature review and theoretical framework on primary school educators' experiences with the NRS.

Chapter 3

This concerns the methodology of the study and will include the research design and the sample design, research instrument, its scoring, data analysis, and description of procedures. Also, ethical considerations and the anticipated problems will be discussed.

Chapter 4

The actual field work, including administration of the research instrument, data presentation and discussion of results is undertaken in this chapter.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study are discussed in this section. In addition to that, the findings are expanded upon for the formulation of theory to further the study in future.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Reading is foundational and the bedrock of all learning processes. A child who cannot read definitely cannot write and do basic mathematics because the ability to comprehend is nonexistent. Most children in public primary schools in South Africa have a reading and writing problem. Evidence can be found in the Annual National Assessment (ANA) of the Department of Basic Education and in other international bench mark tests on reading and comprehension such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

The blame for the poor performance of students in these tests has always been attributed to the socio-economic background of the learners, the history of education before the current democratic dispensation and educators. There has been little attention paid to the feasibility of the intervention strategies imposed on both educators and learners by policy makers.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the nature of the National Reading Strategy (NRS), a policy document introduced in 2008 with the purpose of facilitating reading in primary schools. The theory underpinning the study will also be examined, as well as a review of previous literature related to the study. This chapter concludes with a discussion of reading within South Africa and the international context.

2.2 Nature of the National Reading Strategy

The NRS was introduced in 2008 by the Department of Basic Education in South Africa. The need for such an intervention strategy arose after very poor results of two (2) national systemic evaluations by the provincial Department of Education as well as other international bodies.

The outcome of these tests was as follows: shockingly low literacy levels; students from 5 years to 18 years in the basic education section who tested below average in reading. Apart from that, less than 50% of students showed adequate literacy ability and lacked basic reading skills (DoE, 2008b).

The challenge to the Department of Basic Education was to map out a reading strategy programme to remedy the situation. Further to this, there was the need to understand the underlying problems inhibiting a learner's ability to read, write and do mathematics. A diagnosis by the Department of Basic Education on the reading problem revealed that most public schools lacked libraries. In instances where schools had libraries, the books available were not age appropriate and therefore not suitable for the learners. The preference for teaching and learning in the home language of school children was also one of the factors identified (DoE, 2008b).

The rationale for the NRS is that since the reading problem is not peculiar to only South Africa; a comparative analysis within the sub-regional and global context should be made. On the global level, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation statistics prior to 2008 showed that most South West Asian countries and sub-Saharan countries in Africa have a literacy deficit (UNESCO, 2008).

The NRS was, therefore, developed as part of an international effort in conjunction with United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) campaign to eradicate poverty through initiatives such as UNESCO's Education for All campaign (EFA). This offered a uni-directional approach to combat the reading problem with the broader aim of helping to improve poverty, health and education in South Africa (DoE, 2008b).

The NRS is premised on four (4) main principles. This basic idea stipulates that every child of school going age be given a fair and an equal opportunity to a quality education. The principle seeks to ensure quality education for all learners and assumes that every child can be taught to read, given the appropriate support. Furthermore, there is the recognition that reading is foundational to all teaching and learning processes and this

can be achieved when learners are given the right to read and learn in their mother tongue at the foundation phase level (DoE, 2008b).

The broad objective of the NRS is to improve the reading level of all learners in the country with equal attention given to children in special schools and youth care centres. The NRS emphasises the need to ensure a smooth academic progression of all learners through the various phases in education with a resultant effect in the matriculation results. The general perception is that learners are increasingly being taught to pass tests while intrinsic motivation has become an afterthought. Furthermore, the multiplier effect of reading in the educational progression of all children, especially in the area of communication and the employability of graduates upon the completion of school is emphasised (DoE, 2008b).

The Department of Basic Education advocates a complementary approach between the NRS and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in teaching and learning. All stakeholders are enjoined in this process with the learner as the focus.

The six pillars identified by the NRS in the success of implementation are the monitoring of learner performance, teaching practice and methodology, teacher training development and support, the management of the teaching of reading, resources and research partnerships and advocacy (DoE, 2008b).

2.3 Theory underpinning the NRS

The NRS does not explicitly state the theory upon which it is based. On the other hand, a careful study of the document reveals a theoretical approach toward constructivism. This approach informs that, the instructional leader or teacher makes room for learners' different learning styles. In addition to that, prior knowledge or metacognition with regards to reading techniques must be factored in, to help students reach appropriate reading levels. Stakeholders are also required to factor in the social context with a specific focus on language in its implementation.

Other requirements deemed necessary for the implementation process are teacher training and teaching methods. This section will discuss the theory of constructivism in relation to learning and the process requirements of a reading intervention strategy.

Constructivism and Behaviourism are the two main theories which have dominated education planning and discussion in recent times. Increasingly, policy makers and education practitioners are inching towards the preference for Constructivism. Constructivism can be said to be an active and experiential kind of theory which takes into account a learner's prior knowledge, beliefs and experiences in the learning process. Constructivism is learner centered. The central principle of this approach is that learners can only make sense of new situations in terms of their existing understandings (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002). The teacher plays a facilitative role in the process of knowledge construction and understanding of concepts through an active process of engagement. In constructivism the teacher is not viewed as the sole repository of knowledge, neither is knowledge viewed as a mechanistic construct that must be transferred from the teacher to the learner. Rather, knowledge is seen as a construct which must be developed through an active process to the learner's advantage. As Ultanur (2012:196) rightly states 'in constructivism we do not find knowledge, we construct it'.

Theorists whose views have shaped the discussion and continue to influence the debate on constructivism are Piaget and Vygotsky. It must be noted that although both are in the same lens of study, their research orientations operate from separate paradigms. Piaget can be described as a positivist whose work emphasises the analysis of causal relationships. According to Sjoberg (2007), Piaget's biological background in several fields in the natural sciences is displayed in his use of mathematical logic and group theory to expound his ideas. This explains why most of Piaget's examples in his study of intellectual development came from observations and clinical interviews with children similar to traditional textbook examples (Sjoberg, 2007).

On the other hand, Steiner and Mahn (1996) describe Vygotsky as a constructivist with a naturalistic approach to understanding phenomena. According to Steiner and Mahn (1996), Vygotsky believed that knowledge could be developed and understood by a person in his or her environment or real world settings, through interaction with the immediate learning environment. Learning is thus considered to be situation-specific and a context bound activity (Hualin & Matthews, 2005).

In the field of education, behaviourism hitherto was held in high esteem. Behaviourism is premised on the belief that educators can play a significant role in effecting learning by determining what to teach with objectives based on desired behaviour (Pham, 2011). Under this theory, the teacher is not only responsible for the outcome of the teaching and learning process, but is also accountable. This theory places enormous burden on the educator in terms of performance objectives.

According to Jones and Brader-Araje (2002), the Behaviourist Movement led to a long series of strategies for schools such as management objectives, outcome-based education and teacher performance evaluation systems such as the integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) in South Africa. A rethink on Behaviourism emerged after failures were recorded in education systems that adopted them. There was also the realisation that teaching and learning does not take place solely within the confines of the classroom and the school. The other problem was that Behaviourism detached the process of teaching and learning from social interaction without understanding that social communities had a strong impact on constructed meaning (Pham, 2011). In the end, Social Constructivism was preferred to Behaviourism in most education systems. Unlike Behaviourists, Social Constructivists emphasise the importance of participation by a learner's significant others in knowledge construction. The participation of a learner's significant others such as parents and guardians fosters encouragement, collaboration, communication and the application of academic knowledge in real life (Pham, 2011; Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002; Swan, 2005). The root of social

constructivism is the home. This begins when a child starts asking the basic 'why and how' questions concerning phenomena. Upon entering school, the child gets some - of the answers to these basic questions through harnessing multiple realities both at school and the social environment.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a key feature of Zygotsky's theory. ZPD presents multiple realities through a shared interest in knowledge construction. Jones and Brader-Araje (2002) define ZPD as the development of the intellectual potential of an individual with assistance from a knowledgeable adult or a more advanced child. In addition to the active process of knowledge construction, artifacts or Learner Support Materials (LSMs) such as books, videos, wall displays, scientific equipment and a computer environment support intentional learning (Thompson, 2013).

Thompson (2013) explains that artifacts enhance teaching and learning. Apart from that, the educator has a choice of choosing an appropriate learning style that takes into account the cognitive, affective and physiological make-up of the learner. As good as artifacts may be to the process of teaching and learning, they do not work in isolation. Educators who make use of them must have a proper understanding of how they impact on learning and expand the frontiers of learning for the learner through social interaction. Furthermore, educators can have a better appreciation of teaching support materials and learning styles through training and careful observation of their students' learning patterns.

In a study on preservice educators, constructivist teaching scores based on their learning styles, Kablan and Kaya (2014) found that factors such as rigid school climate, student response, inadequacy of physical space, academic time devoted strictly to teaching and the lack of Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSMs) inhibited their ability to modify their teaching practices towards Constructivism. This situation is not different from educators currently in the service who might view a change from the conventional mode of teaching reading to a social constructivist one as an intrusion and may be unwilling to change their teaching practices.

2.4 Reading achievement in South African schools

South Africa's reading problem has taken centre stage in education policy discussions recently. The reason for the rising concern is partly due to the high drop out and failure rates recorded within the education system. Spaul (2013) describes South Africa's public education system as one in crisis and a major obstacle to development. According to Spaul (2013), of 100 students that started school in 2003, only 48 wrote matric in 2014, 36 passed and 14 qualified to go to the university. Of the limited number that make it to the university, Bharuthram (2012) notes that these students lack the ability to analyse, critique, evaluate and synthesise reading information from various sources. The current situation informs that the primary and high school phases of the education system lack clear policy guidelines, resources and an appropriate teaching strategy with respect to reading.

Prior to the introduction of the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) Annual National Assessment (ANA) tests in 2011, the national systemic evaluations report of the DBE, and international comparative study in Literacy and Numeracy such as the Progress in International Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium Study in Mathematics (SACMEQ 2) provided policy makers, researchers and stakeholders in education a diagnostic tool for critical assessment and remedial action.

For the purposes of this study, the key findings of the PIRLS report of 2011 will be discussed. The bench mark for the assessment will also be examined together with similar studies conducted post NRS and related to this research to give a clearer insight into the reading situation in South Africa.

2.5 International Comparative Study in Reading Literacy

The latest broad based international comparative study on reading literacy undertaken in South Africa is the PIRLS in 2011. The PIRLS comprised 45 countries across

continents. The achievement results of the PIRLS was reported on a scale ranging from 0 – 1000, however, most learner performance ranged from 300 – 700.

The point of reference for performance was the centre point or average of (500) which is also the international centre point and is constant between assessments (Howie, van Staden, Tshele, Dowse and Zimmerman, 2011). In other words, countries above the international centre point of 500 were ranked as high performers in reading literacy, whereas countries below this point were viewed as having a reading deficit. The study involved grade 4 and 5 learners in South Africa. These grades were selected because a criterion for the PIRLS, was that, the target grade should be the grade that represents four years of schooling. This was based on UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level one. In South Africa this translates into the Grade 4 level.

Considering the fact that the language of instruction for the majority of learners changes at the Grade 4 level and that most of the vernacular languages are subsequently taught as subjects from Grade 4, schools were sampled according to their medium of instruction during the first 3 years of schooling (Howie, Venter & Van Staden, 2008).

Grade 5 was included because the National Research Centre and Steering Committee realized that the standard of reading required was substantially beyond the level of the Grade 4 learners. The inclusion of Grade 5 learners, therefore, afforded researchers the opportunity to detect differences in reading knowledge and skills from one grade to the next within one schooling phase (Howie, et al., 2008).

The outcome of the study showed that Grade 4 learners tested in African languages achieved well below the mean point despite having written an easier assessment.

On the other hand, only 6% of the Grade 4 learners under study were able to read at an advanced level, whereas 71% read within and below the basic level.

The Grade 5 result was no different. All grade 5 learners in the study achieved below average scores in both English and Afrikaans. The notable difference between the grades 4 and 5 performance was that girls in grade 5 outperformed boys in the test. (Howie et al., 2011).

The PIRLS revealed many challenges within the educational system. Prominent among which are the language problem and phase transitional problems both in content and context. The transition from grade 3 to grade 4 informs that the home language of learners, which is the medium of instruction in the foundation phase, become a subject in the intermediate phase while they are immersed in an instructional language in which they are less competent. This marks a shift from the reading of predominantly narrative texts to the reading of dense informational or expository texts. Moreover, the volume and quantity of reading increases because the subject areas become more expansive (Sibanda, 2014; Lenyai, 2011).

The racial dynamics of the system as revealed by the test, disadvantaged most South African Black learners, especially in the foundation and intermediate phases. Whereas most White, Indian and Coloured learners continue to receive their schooling in the same language of instruction from Grades 1 to 12 which is English and/or Afrikaans, Black learners undergo a major shift where by more than 80% of them have to read to learn in a language of instruction other than their home language (Howie, et al., 2008). This, coupled with pre-existing factors both at home and at school, identified in the PIRLS study, has a negative and a long term impact on the majority of school going children in the country.

2.6 Reading Research within South Africa

The lack of a proper prognosis on the reading problem in South Africa, and the debilitating effects on the entire education system has led to the corpus of studies by interest groups and other stakeholders to critically examine the problem with the view of finding a solution. Research in this area has been vast and varied, with attention on the primary, secondary, tertiary and teacher training sectors (Singh, 2011; Meier, 2011; Bharuthram, 2012; Klapwijk, 2012; Bertram, 2006 & Mudzielwana, 2014). These studies have focused on reading across the curriculum, reading strategy instruction and teacher competence.

Singh (2011) studied foundation phase educators' knowledge and attitudes to the implementation of the NRS, but her research did not cover the intermediate phase. This study therefore seeks to broaden the research to also elicit the experiences of intermediate phase primary school educators about the NRS. Singh (2011) finds that there is a lack of understanding by foundation phase educators on the correct approach to teach reading. Besides, factors identified as inimical to the implementation and use of the NRS is the lack of reading and comprehension strategies in teacher training programmes, the language problem and multilingualism, lack of reading resources as well as educators' attitudes to change.

In the same vein, Klapwijk (2012) examined reading instruction and teacher change in selected schools. The focus was on intermediate phase educators from grades 4 to 6 in schools with low socio-economic backgrounds, a situation common to most public schools in South Africa. Klapwijk (2012) identified the lack of intervention strategies in teacher training as one of the key factors affecting teachers' ability to teach reading and comprehension. Others were pre-existing factors, which the reading teacher had no control over which included: school attendance; language of teaching and learning; multilingual classes; administrative burden; class size; learner literacy levels; teacher expectations; reading resources; reading culture and teaching of reading and teacher knowledge.

Mudzielwana (2013) investigated educators' ability to bridge the gap in teaching comprehension strategies. In the study she finds that, although educators were well aware of the reading difficulties experienced by their learners, they had little knowledge of appropriate strategies to deal with the problem.

In the same vein, Bharuthram (2012) observed that students entering tertiary institutions were not prepared for the volume of intensive reading required of them. She asserts that reading research at the University of South Africa finds that psychology and sociology students read at frustration level. This means students read texts with less

than 90% decoding accuracy and 60% comprehension. The resultant effect is poor academic performance.

In a related research on a frame work for teaching reading strategies for both in-service and third and fourth year university student educators between a period of 2 to 3 years, Klapwijk (2015) observed that educators sampled lacked comprehension strategies or related approach to teaching reading. Bertram (2006) investigated the reading competence of educators enrolled for a distance education programme at a South African University. The educators were tested on their ability to read and comprehend the study guide and an academic text. The findings were that, only 23.5% of the educators tested could read an academic text independently, 37.9% read the academic text at frustration level while 58.2% read the study guide at an independent level. The inevitable situation is that, the reading and comprehension deficit teacher will not be able to implement an appropriate reading and comprehension strategy due to pedagogical limitations. The impact on student achievement in general is therefore very obvious.

A number of national and international studies have shown that South African learners' achievements are poor for both mathematics and reading (Kruizinga & Nathanson, 2010). The NRS recognises that reading failure begins in early grades, and it is at that level that interventions must be made (DoE, 2008b). This intervention which bears the name 'reading strategy' is in a form of a systematic plan that has been consciously adapted and which will be monitored. The goal is to improve learner's performance in reading. A complementary document to the NRS is the Foundations for Learning Campaign which is a four (4) year campaign to create a national focus to improve the reading, writing and numeracy abilities of all South African children from grades R to 6 (DoE, 2008). The reading strategies for both the NRS and the Foundations for Learning emphasise the following components: reading aloud, guided and group reading, shared reading, independent reading, phonics, word and sentence level work, vocabulary and comprehension.

The incorporation of inclusive education in the teaching of a reading strategy calls for dynamism and dedication in teaching. The understanding of the term strategy and its application in this context is very important to educators who are the primary stakeholders in the process of teaching and learning.

Klapwijk (2015) explains that reading strategies are the actions skilled readers perform to ensure that they understand what they read. It is also an indication of how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read and what they do when they do not understand. These range from simple fix-up strategies such as simply re-reading difficult segments and guessing the meaning of an unknown word from context, to more comprehensive strategies such as summarising and relating what is being read to the reader's background knowledge (Janzen & Stroller, 1998).

2.7 Experiences of Educators

Ewijk and Vanderwerf (2012) explain that although a teacher can gain new knowledge about a subject matter, the teacher can still be influenced by their beliefs as to how practical or feasible the acquired knowledge is. On the other hand, if a teacher is deficient in content and the context of what he or she is expected to deliver, then a state of confusion arises. In the art of teaching, a teacher brings extensive experience acquired both in and out of his or her professional training to enrich the process of knowledge construction and impartation.

A shared experience will mean that the teacher must undergo some form of practical experience in relation to the subject matter to be taught. Numerous research points to the fact that the teaching of reading and comprehension strategy does not form a comprehensive part of the training curriculum of teacher trainees. On the other hand, when these strategies are introduced in schools, educators are not made to have first-hand practical experience of the strategy. These strategies are therefore given subjective interpretations by the respective educators leading to incoherence in implementation within the education system. Again most educators resort to the traditional mode of teaching reading which does not consider the conscious use of

reading strategies (Farrell, 2011). The traditional method of teaching reading occurs when learners are instructed to read passages and answer follow-up questions. In this case, the 'how' of answering comprehension related questions is assumed by the teacher to be known by the learner.

Added to these difficulties, policy makers and education planners fail to manage the change process in the implementation of the strategy (Klapwijk, 2012; Singh, 2011, Meier, 2011). For instance, the NRS was implemented after a week of training for both foundation phase and intermediate phase language educators in 2007 and 2008 respectively. Training for the senior phase which was originally part of this strategy was shelved. Although no explanation was given, the assumption could be the popular belief that reading is a primary school problem. To make matters worse, the core of the training organised for the foundation and intermediate phases, centred on time allocation for reading on a daily basis and challenges to implementation. No follow up workshops were organised (Singh, 2011). The ad-hoc approach to the implementation of the NRS leaves educators to adopt and implement strategies as they see fit.

In a study of reading strategy instruction and teacher change, Klapwijk (2012) finds that the educators sampled, lacked knowledge in content when they were made to experience the strategy instruction to be introduced. In some instances, both educators and learners were unable to distinguish between fictional and non-fictional texts. This brings to the fore the discussion of teacher knowledge.

Ewijk and Vanderwerf (2012), posit that teacher knowledge can be classified into three categories, namely pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge implies a teacher's knowledge about how to teach, while content knowledge refers to the subject matter that a teacher has to teach. Pedagogical content knowledge relates to the teacher's knowledge and ability to make a subject matter easily understandable to the learner by using appropriate learning styles. As explained by Klapwijk (2012), when educators are exposed to evidence based strategy in reading research through explicit instructions, attitudes

change, experience is gained- and confidence built in the educators to be able to constructively teach learners through self-regulated strategies.

2.8 Factors Affecting Learners' Reading Achievement

The education sector is made up of component parts that make it functional and effective. If a component of this sector is weak, the ripple effect can be felt by the whole. Several factors account for the poor state of education in South Africa. These can be grouped into four, namely: the home, school management, teacher related factors and policy making.

It must be noted that no component of the education system is independent of the reading problems plaguing the sector. The NRS (2008b) notes that strategies to teach reading cannot be considered in isolation. Again, factors that correlate with reading fail to explain it because many experiences contribute to reading development without being a pre-requisite to it. Since there are many pre-requisites and no single one can be considered sufficient (Snow, Burn & Griffin, 1998), the onus, rests on all stakeholders to take responsibility in ensuring that learners are not disadvantaged in the area of reading.

2.9 The home as a determinant of reading

Parental support and contribution to effect a change in the reading behaviour of a child is paramount. The parent or guardian is regarded as the first teacher of every child and key in modeling the love for reading in the emergent reader. The ability of the parent to develop intrinsic motivation towards reading and academic success depends on a number of factors. Research has shown that, the socio-economic status of parents notably, poor families and families with little education are major determinants in the successful reading outcome of the school going child (Snow, Burns & Griffin 1998; Legotlo, Maaga, & Sebogo, 2002; Olivier, Anthonissen & Southwood, 2010). The home effect of reading can be shared genetics, in other words of a biological nature from the

family or environment (Snow et al., 1998). The environmental effect arises when children grow in an area where the levers of community support towards reading are non-existent.

The levers of community support in the environment could be the lack of a community library, diverse cultural and linguistic differences between the home and school environment and the general level of poverty in the area. It is also important to note that the socio-economic status of learners, as often sighted with respect to South Africa, is not independent of itself and not the final determiner of a child's failure to read at the right grade or age level. According to Snow et al., (1998), the socio-economic status of learners must not be used as an important risk marker in learners reading achievement. However, the effects are stronger when used as an indicator of the status of a school, circuit or district. It must also be noted that a child from a low status community in a moderate or upper level school will be less at risk compared to a child in a low status community school.

The PIRLS 2011 study illustrates the dynamic interaction between the home and school context and reading achievement for grade 4 learners in South Africa. The variables examined by the study included the following: resources at home (books at home); parents' level of education; children's own bedroom and the availability of an internet connection at home (Howie et al., 2011). With respect to achievement in reading and this study, the last two variables, namely children's own bedroom and internet connection can be viewed as outliers, as they cannot be viewed as the main determinants in reading achievements. On the other hand it was included in the study because it formed part of the criteria for the PIRLS, international comparative study analysis.

As was the case internationally, the study found that the achievement gap between learners who had many resources at home and their counterparts who had fewer resources was 204 points. The difference between learners whose parents had a positive attitude towards reading and those whose parents did not was 50 points (Howie

et al., 2011). This trend highlights the direct correlation between the home environment and learners' reading achievement.

2.10 Teacher competency

Few topics in education have captured as much attention from policymakers and practitioners as the connection between teaching quality and student achievement. Research has clearly shown that the quality of teaching matters to student learning, and the correlation between the two has been consistently identified as the most important school-based factor in student achievement (Klapwijk, 2012; Meier, 2011; Neeta & Klu, 2013). Conversely, competence demonstrated by a teacher must not only promote effective teaching and learning, but transform the teaching and learning environment to help the learner achieve his or her full potential (Ilukena, 1998). A corpus of contextual factors such as the poor state of a school's physical structures and learning resources acts as intermediating factors that can either enhance or constrain the effectiveness of a teacher.

Within the cycle of education, it is the responsibility of the teacher to provide, plan and teach an effective reading programme that will enable the learner to develop the appropriate reading and word attack skills to be able to read to learn. Many causal factors hinder the attainment of this objective. One of these is teacher training and professional development.

According to the Department of Education handbook on Teaching Reading in the Early Grades, it is the responsibility of every teacher in the foundation and intermediate phase, grades 1 to 6 regardless of subject specialization to teach reading (DoE, 2008). The handbook further proposes that children not only be taught the skill to read, but must be able to comprehend what they read.

For many reasons, most content subject educators simply do not see themselves as responsible for the teaching of reading, and those who do, have no clue about the

appropriate strategy to use. This has led to the often held view that since the teaching of reading and comprehension has a specific place in language teaching, the language teacher must own the problem (Bharuthram, 2012; Klapwijk, 2015).

Within the domain of teaching, most educators fail to understand that there is a difference between reading and comprehension. Reading is the first step, and an understanding of what has been read can only be proven through comprehension, which is an interaction between the reader, the text and context.

According to Klapwijk (2015), existing literature on reading strategy points to the lack of proper teacher education and professional development for the non-uptake of strategy instruction by educators. Apart from that, educators view the teaching of reading instruction as a difficult task and are unconvinced as to the positive effects of strategy instruction on teaching in general. Teacher competency in teaching strategy instruction is further complicated by constant changes in the curriculum which comes with its own forms of pressure. For instance, the implementation of the Foundations for Learning Campaign (FFLC), a four year programme on literacy and numeracy met a similar challenge.

One of the biggest challenges of the FFLC was accommodating it in the school timetable in most schools. The FFLC was not taken seriously because educators had to contend with more work load in addition to their overburdened administrative duties such as work schedules and lesson planning. Coupled with a lack of adequate training as observed in the implementation of the NRS, the FFLC failed to achieve the intended objectives (Singh, 2011). To make the implementation of the NRS effective, teacher training institutions and professional development workshops for educators must focus on teaching reading strategies for both content area and language educators to ensure language- proficiency and competency in the medium of instruction at the primary education level.

2.11 School Related factors

Effective leadership is crucial to the success of a school reading programme. According to Msila (2007), when schools have few good educators, it is usually as a result of the hard work and dedication of those specific educators, on the other hand, when a school has many good educators, it is the result of good leadership.

The leadership functions of the principal in steering the school reading programme therefore comes into focus. The NRS informs that principals provide instructional and management functions toward reading in schools. In other words, this feat must be achieved through the following: staff training and support; the recognition of educators and learners' achievement and the involvement of parents (DoE, 2008b).

2.12 Staff training and support

The core purpose of a principal is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which quality teaching and learning takes place (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Rooyen 2009). It is the responsibility of the principal, together with the school management team, to unite the entire staff in support of a collective vision of a reading instruction. As observed by Legotlo et al., (2002) there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of a talented leadership.

To be able to offer adequate training and instructional support to educators, principals must have adequate knowledge in reading strategy instruction and current critical reading issues in line with the curriculum. Studies show that principals who lack sufficient knowledge in reading instruction tend to resort to misguided means for making decisions instead of grounding their decisions in reliable information and research (Jacobson, Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1992).

In the 2011 PIRLS study, one of the items examined the introduction of reading skills and strategies in the school context as reported by principals. The aim was to find out the extent to which reading strategies adopted by the 45 participating schools were in line with the curriculum. Apart from a few principals answering this question, the

responses of those who did differed from a similar question put to educators (Howie et al., 2011).

This means that principals are not familiar with what is being taught in class. Such a situation may only arise if principals themselves are not very conversant with the curriculum in use. When principals are not conversant with the curriculum in use, they may fail to perform their function as instructional leaders in reading.

Apart from that, they will not be in a position to adequately marshal resources, schedule time within the curriculum for teaching reading and staying the course where milestone achievements are concerned. This will inevitably affect staff training and support in reading strategy implementation.

Educators and learners achievement can be recognised through sound and well coordinated reading policies and motivation. Motivation refers to reasons underlying behaviour with attributes such as values, beliefs, needs and goals of an individual (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1999). Motivations toward teacher and student achievement help build confidence and trust. For learners, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to reading are developed (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1999).

According to Bush et al., (2009) the recognition of educators' and students' achievements must be addressed as part of a whole school evaluation of the reading programme. The success of a whole school programme partly depends on a fruitful interaction between the school and the home. According to Meier (2015) positive parental involvement in schooling leads learners to improved academic achievement and socioemotional development. In order to reap the full benefits of this achievement, parents must thoroughly understand the schools' expectations for outside reading, the nature of the reading programme and the strategies that they can use at home (Diamond, 2006).

Meier (2015) explains that effective communication is never uni-directional, but always allows for and encourages communication from the parent to the teacher and from the family to the school. The predicator of effective parental support in reading at home is

the educational background of the parent. Wigfield and Asher (1983) contend that although social class is an important factor, it appears that the home reading environment is actually a better predictor of children's attitudes towards reading than social class membership.

For the effectiveness of a school wide reading programme, parent education and engagement is vital, especially in the early grades. Parents must be made to understand their role in a reading strategy programme, what books they are to use and also the appropriate learning style for children with additional support so they can receive reading instruction through well trained parent volunteers.

2.13 Teacher age and reading achievement

Admittedly, research on a teacher's age relative to reading achievement is sparse if not scarce, compared to the many attempts to study teacher demographics. Much of the literature on teacher characteristics in relation to reading achievement has focused on the correlation between years of teaching experience and age.

Researchers such as (Myrberg & Rosen, 2008; Huang & Moon, 2009; Armstrong, 2014; Rahimi & Asadollahi, 2012) find that age is correlated with teachers' years of teaching experience in the determination of the quality of teaching. Most of the studies on the relative effect of teacher age and teaching experience, which is the norm in most cases, have relied heavily on historical data with a cross-sectional approach in terms of analysis. This is an attempt to represent individual outcomes as a function of a multilevel structure in the form of a hierarchy.

In the case of teacher quality, several investigators have found a curvilinear age function with productivity, beginning at the first few years on the job, after which their performance tends to level off (Rice, 2010; Armstrong, 2014; Ruth, 2010, Buddin & Zamarro, 2009). Contrary to these findings, researchers such as (Harris & Sass, 2006; Sawchuk, 2015; Fakeye, 2012; Rockoff, 2004) argue that, a teacher's numbers of years in the service can impact positively on students' achievement. This inevitably affects

age since the number of years spent on the profession is not independent of a teacher's age.

In a study of the relation between aging and rated teaching effectiveness of academic psychologists at the University of Western Ontario, Horner, Murray and Rushton (1989) find that age accounted for 8% of the variance in general teaching effectiveness. According to Horner et. al. (1989), there are two problems associated with most studies relating age to teaching performance. First, age has generally been considered a between-subjects variable at one measurement time, rather than a within-subjects variable longitudinally. By using within subjects design, the researcher manipulates an independent variable by testing each subject at each level of the variable.

In a study of the teaching styles of Iranian EFL teachers, and their relationship to their demographic characteristics, Rahimi and Asadollahi, (2012) find that there is a positive correlation between age and experience in the thinking style of teachers. In effect, older teachers could easily explain cause and effect relationships. Apart from that, there is the tendency for older teachers to have a logical approach to classroom practice and management. They also find that younger teachers with less experience were good at sensing type activities. This implies that younger teachers were more practical and concrete in their teaching approach and grounded in execution of the content. This is consistent with Armstrong (2010) who finds that younger teachers are better able to improve the mean mathematics performance of students compared to their older counterparts.

Although, Myrberg and Rosen (2008) agree on the correlation between age and experience, they posit that it has no positive effect in relation to reading achievement according to their study. Horner et al., (1989) urges caution in the sole reliance of linear analysis in arriving at such conclusions. According to them, the curvilinear age function reported in most recent research by (Hammond, 1999) and others, could be a factor of slowing biological and intellectual processes and or changes in personality variables including motivation. When this is operative, it will in turn decrease the perceived effectiveness of teachers in the long term.

2.14 Teacher gender and reading achievement

The perception of quality differences relative to teacher gender on student reading achievement runs deep in most educational settings. On the whole, the impact of teacher gender on student outcomes in primary schools has received less attention (Antecol, Eren, Ozbelik, 2015). Much of the research known to date have focused on gender differences in learner achievement (Howie et. al, 2011; Hoque, Razak, Zohora, Islam, 2013; Kuecken & Valfort, 2012, Chudgar & Sanker, 2008).

Teachers consciously or unconsciously often perpetuate sex role stereotypes in their lessons in the classroom either through their behaviours, abilities, interaction and different skills (Robert, Owiti & Ongati, 2013). These have a socio-cultural leaning which establishes the gender role and behaviours of teachers in this case.

Ever since elementary primary school education was introduced in the United Kingdom in 1870, teaching young children was then and now regarded as female work (Coffey & Delamont, 2000). This has reinforced the notion that teaching especially in the primary schools is an extension of a woman's child care responsibilities.

The entrenchment of this stereotype has an impact on learners' subject preference and career choices. In a longitudinal study on learners in early childhood development in the United States, Freeman (2004) finds that, upon entering kindergarten, boys and girls perform similarly on tests of general knowledge, reading and mathematics.

However, by the spring of the third grade, boys have slightly higher mathematics' scores and lower reading scores. The subject-specific gender gaps appear to expand as students advance through the elementary and secondary grades. According to Stoet and Geary (2013), sex differences in mathematics may be related to male spatial abilities, while girls' advantage in reading and writing may be related to an early advantage in many language-related competencies that facilitate learning to read.

Furthermore, reading comprehension might require social-cognitive processes for which girls have an advantage. The genesis of the level of reading achievement among male and female primary school students and the variation in reading achievement in the middle and high school stages is a microcosm of societal perceptions, on fixed gender roles where females are generally treated to and accorded less difficult tasks compared to their male counterparts.

A study on the impact of student-teacher gender interactions on learning outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa by Kuecken and Valfort (2012) finds that both boys and girls perform better in reading with a female teacher rather than with a male teacher, but find the inverse to be true for mathematics. A recent empirical analysis of a sample of 17 schools within six (6) states in the United States of America found no evidence that sex differences among teachers was the main cause of underachievement for boys in reading and for girls in mathematics (Antecol et al., 2015) . On the other hand, when school context variables such as socio-economic status (SES) of learners were added, the results showed that girls underperformed compared to boys in mathematics in poor neighbourhoods. This implies that the inverse may be true, and could go a long way in shaping entrenched perceptions relative to teacher gender and student reading achievement in primary schools.

2.15 Home language and reading achievement

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2010) for the first-additional language, Grades R - 3, assumes that children start school competent in their home language and that they can use their home language to learn an additional language (Lenyai, 2011). The CAPS is an improvement of and replaces the Revised National Curriculum Statement, Grades R - 9 (RNCS) of the Department of Education (2003). CAPS states that, by the end of Grade 3 children must reach a high level of communicative competence and be able to read well (DBE, 2010: 7-9). Numerous research show that, due to the historical and legal challenges, there still exist a dichotomy between learners' reading achievement and the requirement stipulated by

CAPS (Lenyai, 2011; Matjila & Pretorius, 2004; Jansen, 2013; Howie et al., 2008; Howie et al., 2011).

In most schools, the language of instruction changes in Grade 4. It is also a fact that more than 80% of South African pupils learn in a second language, which is either, English or Afrikaans, whereas most White, Indian, and Coloured learners receive instruction in English or Afrikaans from Grades 1 to 12 (Howie et al., 2008).

A discussion of the languages in education vis-à-vis the curriculum cannot be done without a careful study of both languages since African languages are structured differently from English and Afrikaans (DoE, 2008).

On the other hand, the fervor towards English as the primary language of instruction is fast growing within the ranks of Black South Africans. In his article entitled 'Wrest Power from English Tyranny' Jansen (2013) asserts that Black parents prefer to have their children study in English, no matter what politicians might say about indigenous education, or the Pan South African Language Board about language rights.

Black parents make the correct calculation that virtually the entire economy is now organised on English terms and therefore the chances of success are much greater in the colonial language. Realism must replace idealism in content and context with respect to the language policy. This is in view of that fact that a general application of the theory that learning to read in one's 'mother tongue' or first language enhances a child's achievement relative to that of children obliged to learn to read in a second language by researchers such as (Cummins 1984; Eisenchlas, Schalley, & Guillemin, 2013; Matjila & Pretorius, 2004; Cummins, Bismilla, Chow, Cohen, Giampapa, Leoni, Sandhu, & Sastri, 2005; DoE, 2008b) is inconclusive.

Wagner, Spratt and Ezzaki (1989), contend that the exclusive use of a learner's mother tongue must not be regarded as a necessary precondition for teaching and learning.

According to Wagner et al., (1989), while the use of the home language may aid the learning of an additional language, research indicates that it is rather a particular kind of primary language proficiency that is associated with success in the educational context namely, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, (CALP).

In the same vein Matjila and Pretorius (2004) explain, that the relationship between language proficiency and reading is asymmetrical. Therefore, being proficient in a language does not guarantee that one can read in that language. In a sense, language ability is necessary for reading but not an end in itself; as reading is a unique ability that must be acquired and practiced through extensive exposure to written language.

2.16 Teacher job title and reading achievement

A measure of teacher competence relative to their experience with the NRS is a teacher's job title. The School Management Team (SMT) hand book of 2014, outlines the job title in the Department of Basic Education from the level of a teacher (Post level 1), head of department (Post level 2), deputy principal (Post level 3) and Principal (Post level 4) (DoE, 2014). In a school setting, the teacher is the lead primary implementer of learning programmes regarding content, assessment, record keeping and reporting with the aim of improving learner outcomes. This function is overseen and supported by the SMT which comprises the HOD, deputy principal and the principal.

Within the school context, it is the duty of the SMT to create an environment that promotes reading and the teaching of reading (DoE, 2008b). This can be done through sound and proactive leadership and management in all aspects of teaching and learning. In the context of school leadership and management, Hallinger, Bickman and Davis (1996) explain that collaboration between teachers and management can positively impact student learning in reading and mathematics.

In the same vein, Bush et al., (2009) suggest that leadership and management explains about 5 - 7% of difference in learner achievement across schools, with the outcomes likely to be greater where there is direct leader involvement in the oversight of and participation in curriculum planning, coordination, teacher learning and professional development.

It is worth noting that the relationship between the support offered by the SMT to teachers towards learners' reading outcomes is not independent of selected school

context variables. This is because if one starts with the assumption that management is a contextually dependent variable, a variety of other antecedent variables are of potential interest as well. Hallinger, Bickman & Davis (1996) explain some of these antecedent variables to include features of the school and its community that sets the context for leadership. In addition to that Hallinger et al., (1996) contend that managements' prior experiences and backgrounds shape their perspective towards their respective roles in the achievement of learning outcomes. This explains why the NRS, includes relevant stakeholders such as parents, the immediate community of learners and the Department of Education (DoE) in the achievements of planned reading objectives.

There is no consensus on the debate concerning the effectiveness of a school principal as the leader of the school management team to individually and effectively bring about change in a school's reading outcome.

In a study of principal leadership on student reading achievement in 87 elementary schools in the United States, Hallinger et al., (1996) finds that there is no direct effect of a principals' instructional leadership on student achievement. The result did, however, support the belief that a principal can have an indirect effect on school effectiveness through the actions that shape a school's learning climate. This includes, but is not limited to learners' socio-economic status (SES), parental involvement and gender.

The problem of management support to teachers in the implementation of learning programmes, have similarities across nations. In a study of managing teaching and learning in eight (8) schools in two (2) provinces within South Africa, Bush et al., (2009) concludes that most SMTs in the respective schools surveyed lack awareness of the requirements of the National Curriculum in literacy and numeracy; there is no clear system for evaluating and monitoring teaching and learning. In addition to that, instructional leadership is confined to checking work completed rather than making informed judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. In this instance, pre-existing factors, such as learners SES, lack of parental involvement, language competence and resources is substituted for a lack of management initiatives that can, to some extent, address learner outcomes in reading.

2.17 Teaching phase and reading achievement

The foundation and intermediate phases of the South Africa education system presents a complex dichotomy to children's reading achievement. According to the NRS (2008b), learners in the foundation phase must be instructed in their home language prior to their entering the intermediate phase. The challenge of this policy is that instructional requirements in the intermediate phase is different and the number of subjects increases dramatically (Sibanda, 2014; Lenyai, 2011).

The matter of curriculum and language policy has been seen as two separate areas requiring parallel and separate discussions. Although both discussions were initiated by the Department of Education (DoE) towards the end of 1995, they were never integrated. Hence, Curriculum 2005 was announced ahead of the Language in Education Policy in 1997 (Heugh, 2002). Since then, revisions to the curriculum have created policy confusion where the reading requirements in terms of language for both the foundation and intermediate phases have widened.

2.18 Teachers' years of experience and reading achievement

An important measure of teacher quality is years of teaching experience. Experience is relevant and widely viewed as an advantage to competency and effectiveness in every profession. Experience gained over time enhances the knowledge, skills and productivity of workers (Rice, 2010).

Most studies in education on the relationship between teachers' years of teaching experience relative to students' reading outcomes are inconclusive. A large proportion of these studies have been carried out in Western countries where standardised test scores relative to students' reading and mathematics test scores have become topical educational issues. Teaching experience, together with certification status and educational attainment has often been used by policy makers to determine the basis of teacher compensation (Huang & Moon, 2009).

Although variations exist in terms of context on cross national levels, there are similarities between countries where the variable of SES is disaggregated. Studies by (Rice, 2010; Buddin & Zamarro, 2009) find that high poverty schools tend to have experienced teachers who are less effective. This may be due to teachers not keeping abreast of the latest curriculum and pedagogical advances or simply a case of burnout (Rice, 2010). A key aspect on the debate in the years of teaching experience of a teacher relative to student outcomes has been the methodology in data collection and control of fixed teacher and student effects. This is because there is a difficulty in comparing cohorts of students taught by teachers of varied experience levels with different training backgrounds (Sawchuk, 2015; Harris & Sass, 2010; Huang & Moon, 2009).

Huang and Moon (2009) investigated several teacher characteristics with a focus on two measures of teaching experience and their association with 2nd grade students' achievements in low poverty schools in Mid-Atlantic state. The findings showed that traditional teacher quality characteristics, including total years of teaching experiences, was not a significant predictor of student achievement. Rather, years of teaching experience at a particular grade level was significantly associated with increased student reading achievement.

Another study that finds a statistically significant relationship between teaching experience and student performance is that of Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2007). These authors use North Carolina data to investigate the relationship between teacher characteristics and student performance. Since the early 1990s, the state of North Carolina has administered standardised mathematics and reading tests to all students between grades 3 and 8 (Clotfelter et al., 2007). Furthermore, it is possible to match students to their teachers for each year. The authors are able to identify the teachers of at least 75% of grades 3, 4 and 5 students in the state's education system between 1993/1994 and 2003/2004, rendering it possible for them to conduct analysis on the impact of teacher characteristics on both the levels of mathematics and English performance and the gains in performance from year to year (and therefore controlling

for various student and school-level effects, the gains that may be tentatively associated with the teacher) (Clotfelter et al., 2007: 675; Armstrong, 2014).

2.19 Teacher qualifications and reading achievements

It is increasingly recognised that there is no consensus on a definitive and absolute definition of a teachers' qualification given the transient nature of teaching and the complexity of a teachers' role (Liakopoulou, 2011). However, researchers have established that teacher incentives to induce teachers to change their credentials, upgrading the disciplinary preparation of teachers through certification and providing opportunities for professional development in addition to licensing and teacher education (Zuzovsky, 2008; Hammond, 1999; Hanushek, 2010) are essential prerequisites to teacher quality.

Contrary to findings in advanced countries, there is a paucity of research on teacher qualifications relative to student reading achievement in sub-Saharan Africa. Researchers such as Zuzovsky (2008) attribute the limited research on teacher qualifications relative to student reading achievement to psychometric difficulties in assessing teachers by their normative attributes, especially the logical and psychological aspects which tend to differ across cultures. Therefore, the tendency to evaluate teacher quality on the basis of student achievement takes precedence over teacher qualifications.

In the same vein, Hanushek (2010) also explains that the 'outcome' question has been the main motivating factor that drives teacher education research and policy making. Since the outcome factor is also the motivating factor in sub-Saharan Africa, studies by (Van Staden & Bosker, 2013; Klapwijk, 2012; Klapwijk, 2015; Howie, et. al. 2011) have had their focus on reading methodologies, adequacy of content, the language problem and socio-economic factors as the yardstick to measure reading achievement among primary school learners, with little focus on the impact of teachers on primary school students reading achievement.

In a study of fifty (50) state policies on teacher quality, Hammond (1999) finds that policy investments in the quality of teachers may be related to performance. In relation to teacher quality and standards, Harris and Sass (2011) have established that educational background and professional certification in teaching have a direct positive effect on student achievement. In the same vein, Myrberg and Rosen (2008) have established that a possible explanation for a strong relationship between teacher education and student achievement is having a consistent teacher for a specific number of schooling years. On the other hand, Budden and Zamarro 2009 suggest that measured teacher characteristics and initial teacher training have little effect on student achievement. Rather, teacher content knowledge and experience have a bearing on student achievement. Budden and Zamarro (2009) contend that, while content teachers were found to be good at mathematics, the more mature teachers performed well in teaching English and reading at the primary and middle school level.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on how the research was conducted. The research investigates the experiences of educators with the National Reading Strategy at Mbabane Circuit in Ingwavuma.

This chapter, therefore, lays out the research design, research method and the research instrument; its nature and relation of items to the aim of the study; the scoring procedure, and validity of the instrument used. Others include the sampling design used, description of procedures for the administration of the instrument and control of confounding variables as well as ethical considerations

3.2 Research design

A research design refers to the degree of control the researcher manages to exert over his or her research environment (Maree, 2010). It is a plan of study conceived so as to obtain answers to the research questions (Sibaya, 2014). The layout details what the researcher will do from writing the hypotheses if any and implications to the final analysis of the data.

Research design has two basic purposes, firstly to provide answers to the research questions and secondly to control variance (Kerlinger, 1986). Without particular stress on the research questions and the use of an appropriate design to help answer the research questions, the investigation being conducted will generate weak results.

Descriptive design is the most widely used approach in field experiments including educational research. It can be used to gauge opinions, perceptions or views, attitudes and experiences. Analysis of data to support such research can be wide and varied, incorporating descriptive measures such as inferences, hypothesis testing and special statistical tests.

This research is designed to investigate the experiences of educators with the National Reading Strategy. The research design is descriptive because certain variables cannot be controlled.

These research variables are said to be inherently non-manipulative (Kerlinger, 1986). Another reason for choosing a descriptive design for this study is because the research problem being investigated is a present status of events in a natural setting which can only be reasonably evaluated using a descriptive approach.

3.3 Research method

Research methods are ways of collecting and analysing data relative to each aim of study. The study, therefore, aims to collect data exactly related to the aim of this study, which is the experiences of educators with the National Reading Strategy in Mbabane Circuit.

This type of research is best conducted either through personal interviews or questionnaires. A questionnaire was used because of the potential effect of social desirability on responses. Questionnaires elicit the principle of anonymity and in such circumstance one expects a higher degree of honest responses than in interviews where respondents might fear victimisation.

3.4 Research Instrument

The questionnaire will employ closed ended questions with ordinal properties. It is easy to collect and analyse responses from the questionnaire, as well as ensure the validity or trustworthiness of the research. A four point scale similar to the Likert scale type questions was used in constructing the questionnaire.

The questionnaire includes two sections: Section A which elicits demographic information such as age, gender, home language, job title, teaching phase, years of teaching experience and educator qualification; Section B which consists of items to rank on the experiences of educators with the NRS. The questionnaire contains 22 items in total. Apart from the seven items in section A, that is (demographic

information), all other items were ranked on a scale of 4. The content and face validity of the instrument was established by having it read and corrected by experts.

The section on biographical data provides information about the age, gender, home language, job title, and teaching phase, years of teaching experience and educator qualification. This would provide answers to Aim 1.4.2 which relates to educators' characteristics which include age, gender, home language, job title, teaching phase, years of teaching experience and qualifications. Responses to items in Section B will provide information about educators' views and experiences with the NRS.

A cross-tabulation of responses to sections A and B would help in a more direct way in relating age, gender, home language, job title, teaching phase, years of teaching experience and educator qualifications to their experiences with the NRS.

3.4.2 Scoring procedures

Section A

1. The age range is coded 1 for 18 – 19 years, 2 for 20 – 24 years, 3 for 30 – 44 years, 4 for 45 – 49 years and 5 for 50 years and above.
2. Male and female are coded 1 and 2 respectively.
3. Home languages are coded as follows: 1 – isiZulu, 2 – isixhosa, 3 – isiNdebele, 4 – Siswati, 5 – Sesotho, 6 – Sepedi, 7 – Setwana, 8 – Tsonga, 9 – Tshivenda, 10 – English, 11 – Afrikaans.
4. Job title is coded as follows: 1 – Post Level 1, 2 – Head of Department (HOD), 3 – Deputy Principal, 4 – Principal.
5. Teaching phase is coded as follows: 1 – foundation phase, and 2 – intermediate phase.

6. Years of teaching experience in the primary school is coded as follows:
Less than one year – 1, 1 – 5 years – 2, 6 -10 years – 3, 11 – 14 years – 4,
16 – 20 years – 5, 21 – 25 years – 6, 26 years and above – 7.
7. Educators' qualification is coded as follows: 1 – matric; 2 – teacher certificate;
3 - teacher diploma; 4 – undergraduate degree; 5 – Honours degree;
6 – Masters degree; 7 – doctoral degree; 8 – other.

Section B

Items 1 – 15, are rated 1 for "not a problem", 2 for "minor problem", 3 for "moderate - problem", and 4 for "serious problem".

3.5 Sampling design and statistics

This research is confined to the study of educators' experiences with the National Reading Strategy in the foundation and intermediate phases. The target population is educators in Mbabane Circuit at Ingwavuma in UMkhanyakude District. Mbabane circuit cluster was selected among four (4) circuit clusters in Umkhanyakude District. Mbabane circuit is a predominantly rural community with nineteen (19) primary schools.

The circuit structure consists of strata. Therefore, stratified sampling design was the preferred choice. Out of the 56 questionnaires given out to the 6 schools, 40 were completed (a response rate of 71%). The researcher also took cognisance of the fact that the circuits are homogenous in nature.

The 6 selected schools who agreed to participate in the research are Empumelelweni Primary School, Mzondi Primary School, Kwa Qondile Primary school, Nethezeka Primary School, Kwa Makhoyeni Primary School and Efingosi Primary School.

All educators who agreed to participate in the study were permitted to do so without prejudice to their gender.

Table 1.1 DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

School	Questionnaire distribution		
	Number supplied	Number completed	% response
Efingose Primary School	7	4	57%
Empumuleleweni Primary School	10	10	100%
Kwa Qondile Primary School	8	7	87%
Kwa Makhoyeni Primary School	10	5	50%
Nethezeka Primary School	12	5	42%
Mzondi Primary School	9	9	100%
TOTAL	56	40	71%

The lists of schools and the number of participants in each school that completed the questionnaire is displayed in Figure 3.1. The responses are low at Efingose Primary School and Nethezeka Primary School. This was partly because the principals of both schools were in an acting capacity and were not very enthusiastic about following through with the questionnaires and impressing upon the educators the importance of completing them.

The principals of Empumuleleweni Primary School and Mzondi Primary School, where a 100% response rate was recorded, were very enthusiastic and supportive. They collected the questionnaires, together with a register, administered them and returned them personally to the researcher.

3.6 Description of procedures

To gain access to schools, permission was sought through the Head of Department of the KwaZulu Natal educational department, the circuit manager of Mbabane Circuit, school principals and educators. In accordance with the relevant laws and ethical guidelines pertaining to this study, the researcher sought permission from participants through an informed consent form; Annexure A. The researcher also took cognisance of the fact that the language policy under the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) encourages the use of the home language which is IsiZulu in most public schools.

Annexure B, is the researcher's declaration as required by the Ethics Committee of the University of Zululand, together with Annexure C, which is the ethical clearance application form required for data collection.

The research instrument was Annexure D. In accordance with education by-laws; permission was sought and obtained from the Head of Department of the KwaZulu Natal education department in Pietermaritzburg using Annexure C. The District Education Office in Obonjeni, under which Mbabane circuit cluster falls, granted permission through Annexure D. This enabled the principals of the participating schools to offer willingly to assist by granting the researcher permission to talk to the educators of the respective schools through Annexure E. The Heads of Departments (HODs) of the respective schools assisted with the administration of the research instrument. This exercise lasted 15 minutes.

The researcher made sure that all the participating educators taught in in the foundation and/or the intermediate phases. Care was taken to ensure that educators filled out the research instruments meticulously. This was done to control the influence of confounding variables which may have the potential of negatively affecting the outcome of the research.

The timing for the completion of the research instrument did not in any way interfere or interrupt the contact time of the respective schools. The researcher was available to explain any grey areas concerning the items in the questionnaire, although there were no queries thereof. The researcher thanked the educators and principals who helped in the entire process after completion and assured them of prompt feedback in the form of a research report once the research was completed.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data. The hypotheses formulated in chapter three (3) are tested in this chapter.

4.2 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The questionnaire was administered to 40 primary school educators drawn from six (6) schools within the Mbabane Circuit and selected schools within the Jozini Municipality of Kwazulu-Natal Province.

The results of the analysis of the demographic characteristics with respect to educators experience with the NRS is summarised in Table 1.2. This evaluation is used to answer part of the research question 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 as well as address the aims of the study in subsections 1.4.1 and 1.4.2.

4.2.1 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The aim of the study was to investigate the experiences of primary school educators with the National Reading Strategy in Mbabane circuit and to determine the relationship between their biographical data such as their age, gender, home language, job title, teaching phase, years of teaching experience and their educational qualification.

4.2.2. Testing the hypothesis

The data presented in this section are the results of cross tabulating educators' biographical data and their experiences with the NRS. Chi-square test was used to compare observed and theoretical frequencies of independent variables and the associated-dependent variables. The sample size of 40 educators from six schools makes testing hypothesis about proportions using chi-square test relevant to this study.

Chi-square tests are also appropriate when the outcome of the test statistic is discrete. This could be in the form of dichotomous, ordinal or categorical levels of measurement. Apart from being non-parametric, chi-square tests do not require assumptions about the shape of the underlying normal distribution. In chi-square tests the test data are assumed to be a random sample.

The expected frequency for each category must be at least one and no more than 20% of the categories and should have expected frequencies not less than 5. Therefore, the level of confidence used to reject or accept each of the formulated hypotheses is 0.05.

Table1. 2 Educators’ experiences with the National Reading Strategy (N=40)

Educators’ experiences with the NRS						
Educators	Not a serious problem		Serious problem		Results	
	n	%	n	%	χ^2	ρ
	19	47	21	53	8.1	0.05

The calculated chi-square value 8.1, at 3.8, is significant at 0.05 levels. This reveals that there is a statistically significant relationship.

The null hypothesis that primary school educators do not differ in their experiences with the NRS is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) which states that primary school educators differ in their experiences with the NRS is accepted.

The second task of the analysis was concerned with determining whether the age of educators in the sampled schools would have an influence on their experience with the NRS. Hypothesis, 1.1, predicted that the age of educators would not influence their experiences with the NRS the results of testing the hypothesis are presented in table 1.2.

Table 1.3 The relationship between the age of educators and their experience with the NRS (N=40)

Age (in years)	NRS EXPERIENCE			
	Not a problem	%	Serious problem	%
25 – 29	1	36	2	64
30 – 44	8	40	12	60
45 – 49	5	38	8	62
50yrs and above	5	71	2	29

The outcome of the statistical analysis is that the calculated chi-square value equals 5.4 at $df = 3$ with a contingency co-efficient (C) =0.12. This is statistically insignificant because the statistical hypothesis is less than the critical value of 7.815 therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no relationship between educators' age and their experiences with the NRS is upheld and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that, there is a relationship between educators' age and their experiences with the NRS is rejected. It is also worth mentioning that the result of the statistical test is due to chance factors.

The essence of this section is to determine whether there is any significant relationship between educators' experiences with the NRS and their gender. The null hypothesis H_0 being tested, states that, the gender of educators would not influence their experiences with the NRS.

Table 1.4 The relationship between the gender of educators and their experiences with the NRS (N = 40)

EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES				
Gender	Not a problem	%	Serious problem	%
Male	7	88	1	12
Female	13	40	19	60

The results of the hypothesis testing showed that the chi-square at 0.05 = 6.62 is greater than the critical value of 3.841 at $df = 1$. This is statistically significant and proves that male and female educators have different experiences with the NRS.

This statistical evidence therefore rejects the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that the gender of educators would not influence their experience with the NRS.

In contrast, the alternative hypothesis (H_1), that "the gender of educators would influence their experience with the NRS", is accepted.

Table 1.5 Relationship between job title and educators' experiences with the NRS (N = 40)

EXPERIENCE WITH THE NRS				
Job title	Not a problem	%	Serious problem	%
Post Level 1	14	40	21	60
SMT Level	3	60	02	40

The calculated chi-square value for the variable of job title equals 10.18, with $df = 1$, is not significant at .05 level. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that educators' job title influences their experiences with the NRS is accepted. Whiles, the H_0 , that educators' job title does not influence their experiences with the NRS is rejected. It must be noted that the observed differences are due to chance factors.

The test of hypothesis here is to determine whether educators teaching phase influences their experiences with the NRS. The hypothesis states that there is no relationship between teaching phase and the NRS experiences of educators.

The results of testing the hypothesis are indicated.

Table 1.6 The relationship between teaching phase and educators experience with the NRS (N = 40)

EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES				
Teaching phase	Not a problem	%	Serious problem	%
Foundation phase	9	56	7	44
Intermediate phase	6	25	18	75

The test result indicated that chi-square at $df = 1$, equals 6.40, is statistically significant, and suggests that educators in both the foundation and intermediate phase in this study, have different experiences with the NRS. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0), that there is no relationship between the teaching phase of educators and their experience with the NRS is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1), which states that, there is a relationship between educators teaching phase and their experience with the NRS is accepted.

Table 1.7 The relationship between educators' years of teaching experience and their experiences with the NRS

EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCE				
Experience in years	Not a problem	%	Serious problem	%
1 – 5	4	36	7	64
6 – 10	3	30	7	70
11 ≥	10	62	6	38

The result of the analysis indicates that chi-square equals 12.65, with a correlation coefficient of 0.9 is statistically significant.

The null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no relationship between educators' years of teaching experience and their experiences with the NRS is therefore rejected.

On the other hand the alternative hypothesis (H_1) that there is a relationship between educators' years of teaching experience and their experiences with the NRS is accepted.

Table 1.8 The relationship between educators' qualifications and their experiences with the NRS

EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCE				
Qualifications	Not a problem	%	Serious problem	%
Matric + Diploma	14	40	21	60
Degree + Honours	3	60	2	40

The outcome of this analysis of data suggests that chi-square equals 21.48 at $df = 1$, is significant at .05, and greater than the critical value of 3.8. This means that educators have different experiences with the NRS in terms of the respective qualifications they hold. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) that, there is no relationship between the variable of educators' qualification and their experiences with the NRS is rejected.

On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis that there is a relationship between the variable of educator qualification and their experience with the NRS is accepted.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings in this section will be reported in the same sequence as they appear in the aims of the study.

5.2 SUMMARY OF STUDY

In this study the problem investigated was primary school educators' experiences with the National Reading Strategy (NRS) in Mbabane Circuit.

5.3 The aims of the study

The first aim of the study was to find out whether there is any relationship between primary school educators and their experiences with the NRS. The second aim of the study was to determine whether there is a relationship between the biographical data of educators and their experiences with the NRS. Variables such as educators' age, gender, home language, job title, teaching phase, years of teaching experience and qualifications were considered.

5.4 Methodology

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one consists of the introduction, motivation for the project, statement of the problem, aims of the study and a plan of organisation for the entire research.

Chapter two provides an introduction into the NRS and the theoretical background. Chapter three details the research design and methods used in this study. This includes the measuring instrument constructed and standardised with the help of my supervisors.

Chapter four concerns the presentation and analysis of data. Chapter five concludes with a discussion of the findings, recommendations as well as limitations of the study.

5.5 Findings with regard to the experiences of primary school educators with the NRS

The statistical analysis presented in chapter 4 indicates a significant relationship between primary school educators and their experiences with the NRS in general. In other words primary school educators differ in their experiences with the NRS. This finding is consistent with the literature (Klapwijk, 2012; Klapwijk, 2015; Bertram, 2006; Meier, 2011). The results suggests that although educators may be relatively positive towards teaching reading, their knowledge and level of confidence to implement reading programmes such as the NRS is limited. The lack of reading courses in initial teacher preparation as well as in-service professional development in teacher training institutions may also be a factor.

The findings in this section suggest that there is no relationship between the age of educators and their experiences with the NRS. This supports the findings of (Myrberg & Rosen, 2004; Hammond, 1999), whose study reveals that there is no correlation between an educators' age and student achievement in reading. The study also finds that although there seem to be a linear relationship between the age of an educator and student reading achievement generally, rather an additive and cumulative effect on reading achievement can be proven when other related variables such as gender and certification are taken into consideration.

The result of the study reveals a significant relationship between educators' gender and their experiences with the NRS. The finding agrees with (Robert et al., 2013; Kencken & Valfort, 2012; Chudgar & Sanker, 2008).

The study finds that female teachers produce better results in reading compared to their male counterparts. Apart from that, female teachers also differ in terms of their classroom management practices and beliefs in students especially in primary schools.

An observation in this study and a review of literature suggests that research on the relationship between teacher gender and student reading achievement is limited within the South Africa education context. Evidence suggest that, most studies on reading achievements have focused on variables other than gender differences and their impact on reading in primary schools.

The study indicates that all educators sampled had isiZulu as their home language. This is consistent with the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) and a principle of the NRS which seeks to promote teaching and learning in learner's home language. Cummins 1984: Eisenchlas et al., 2013: Matjila & Pretorius, 2004: Cummins et al., 2005 & Nazary, 2008) find that learning to read in one's 'mother tongue' or first language enhances a child's achievement relative to that of children obliged to learn to read in a second language.

The language barrier with respect to learners' ability to respond and participate actively in the classroom with confidence is therefore bridged. Learners will also have the advantage of a progressive introduction in additive bilingualism which is the ultimate goal of the LiEP.

The findings in this section indicate that educators differ in their job titles, relative to their experiences with the NRS. This is in tandem with findings from other studies by (Howie et al., 2011; Bush et al., 2009). The study finds that there is no direct effect of school management on student reading achievement.

In the same vein, Hallinger et al., (1996) find that, where there appears to be a positive correlation between management and student achievement, a constellation of intervening variables such as a positive school climate, parental interest in school advancement and motivated teachers may be the driving force.

An empirical study under a different research design with an expansive sample size on the effect of school management on student achievement in reading may help to properly inform a discussion on the relationship between educators' job title and reading achievement.

The result shows that educators in both the foundation and intermediate phases have different experiences with the NRS. This is consistent with the findings from (Lenyai, 2011; Sibanda, 2014; Howie et al., 2008). The result shows that the transition from the foundation to the intermediate phase presents a lot of challenges for educators.

Whereas the language policy, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and the NRS emphasise home language as the medium of instruction in the foundation phase, this changes in the intermediate phase where the instructional language learners are accustomed to becomes a subject and again learners are immersed into an instructional language they are less competent in, within an array of complex additional subjects.

The result shows that educators in both the foundation and intermediate phases have different experiences with the NRS. This is consistent with (Lenyai, 2011; Sibanda, 2014; Howie et al., 2008). The result shows that the transition from the foundation to the intermediate phase presents many challenges for educators.

Whereas the language policy, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and the NRS emphasise home language as the medium of instruction in the foundation phase, this changes in the intermediate phase where the instructional language learners are accustomed to becomes a subject and again learners are immersed into an instructional language they are less competent in, within an array of complex additional subjects.

The study finds that educators differ in terms of their years of teaching experience and their experiences with the NRS. This concurs with the findings of (Ruth, 2008; Armstrong, 2014). On the other hand, a longitudinal study by Clotfelter et al., 2007 reveal that, teachers with teaching experience of between 6 to 10years and 31 to 35years have their students performing better on test scores with larger effect on mathematics than in reading in primary schools.

These findings presuppose that there is no finality to research on educators' experience relative to student performance especially in reading. Never the less, conclusions can be drawn based on context specific situations, such as the finding contained in this study with different pre-existing situations and variables.

The finding is consistent with (Hammond, 2000; Ruth, 2013) whose study reveals that educator qualifications have little or no effect on student reading achievement particularly at the primary school level. The study also finds that most educators hold a post matriculation certificate with the least being a diploma. This is commendable, due to the fact that the NRS attributes the lack of effective reading intervention in the primary school to poor certification or the lack of foundation phase educators.

On the other hand the fact that there is no correlation between student reading achievement and teacher qualification suggest that factors independent of teacher qualifications such as the language background of educators, resources available at a school and socio economic conditions of the learners may be the cause.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

While this study found that primary school educators do not have a favourable experience with the NRS with respect to most of the demographic variables examined in this study, it also acknowledges that the lack of reading comprehension strategies in teacher training institutions and educators' knowledge in reading strategy programmes and implementation are not the sole requirements for a successful implementation of the NRS.

Arrays of questions remain to be answered to make educators have a positive experience with the NRS and be effective in its implementation.

Recommendations for future study include the following:

- (i) The study of the relationship between educators' age and years of teaching experience.
- (ii) The study of the instructional functions of principals towards reading within the context of the CAPS curriculum in rural areas.
- (iii) An evaluation of teacher training workshops towards reading within the context of the CAPS curriculum.
- (iv) The relationship between teacher gender and reading achievement in primary schools.

5.7 Limitations

Although this study has achieved its objectives, several limitations exist. These limitations are with regard to sampling, instrument used and research design.

The operational definition of the experiences of educators is not all encompassing. The term embraces several attributes. Experience amongst others might mean the actual living through an event, therefore, the study is limited in the course of determining the experiences of primary school educators' experiences with the NRS.

Another inherent limitation is the study sample. This was limited because only primary schools that were willing to act as respondents were included in the sample. For schools that participated, the response rate was reasonable enough for a quantitative study to be carried out. Educators' responses to certain questions could not be fully guaranteed from personal prejudices.

The reliability of the scale used can be categorised as good, although the values could be subject to change with a more representative sample. On the other hand, a qualitative study will enable the researcher understand the phenomena of educator experiences in context specific settings.

The data obtained were analysed by the use of assumptions and probability testing. The statistical test used was Pearson's chi-square test.

In spite of the limitations outlined above, the result of the study, ecological validity based on populations with homogenous characteristics such as the setting used can be ensured.

5.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is important to briefly reflect on the implications of the findings contained in this report. The present study indicates the need to employ effective reading intervention strategies particularly in primary schools.

Chronologically, reading modules must be embedded in learning programmes developed specifically for initial teacher training institutions, as well as in service professional development workshops as a form of reinforcement. This recommendation will enable graduate teachers to acquire not only knowledge but increase their level of confidence to implement reading programmes.

The findings also suggest that teacher demographics such as gender, job title, teaching phase, experience in years and qualifications had an influence on their experiences with the NRS. This is as a result of teachers, learners and most school level effects remaining constant in the sampled schools.

Age was shown to have no relationship with teacher experience with the NRS. On the other hand, when other variables such as gender of teachers and certification are taken into consideration, a linear relationship will possibly develop.

REFERENCES

- Anning, A. & Edwards, E. (1999). *Promoting children's learning from birth to five*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Antecol, H., Eren, O., & Ozbeklik (2015). *The effect of teacher gender on student achievement in primary school*. University of Chicago Press. *Journal of Labour Economics*, Vol. 33. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/677391>. Accessed on 15 May 2016
- Armstrong, P. (2014). *The impact of teacher characteristics on student performance: An analysis using hierarchical linear modelling*. Department of Economics. University of Stellenbosch.
- Bertram, C. (2006). *Exploring educators. Exploring educators' reading competences: a South African case study*. University of KwaZulu Natal. *The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 21:1, 5-18
- Bharuthram, S. (2012). *Making a case for the teaching of reading across the curriculum in higher education*. *South African Journal of Education*. Vol.32. 205-214.
- Buddin. R. & Zamarro. G. (2009). *Teacher qualifications and student achievement in urban elementary schools*. RAND Corporation.
- Bush, T., Joubert, R. Kiggundu, E. & Rooyen, J.V.(2009). *Managing teaching and learning in South African Schools*. *International Journal of Education Development*.
- Chudgar A., & Sanker, v.(2008) *The relationship between teacher gender and student achievement: evidence from five Indian states*. *A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. Vol 38. Iss 5.
- Clotfelter, Charles T., Helen F. Ladd, and Jacob L. Vigdor. 2007a. "How and Why Do Teacher Credentials Matter for Student Achievement?" CALDER Working Paper 2. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Coffey, A. & Delamont, S. (2000) *Feminism and the classroom teacher: Research, praxis and pedagogy*. University of Cincinnati. Routledge Falmer. London.
- Cummins, J. (1984). *Bilingualism and special education: Issues in assessment and pedagogy*. Clevedon England.

- Cummins, J., Bismilla, V., Chow, P., Cohen, S., Giampapa, F., Leoni, L., Sandhu, P. & Sastri, P. (2005). *Affirming identity in multilingual classrooms*. vol. 63. 2005, 38-43
- Department of Education, (DoE) (2008b). *National Reading Strategy*. Government Gazetteno.75.Pretoria Government Printers.
- Department of Education 2008. *Foundations for Learning. Assessment Framework, Foundation Phase*.Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Department of Education (DoE). (1997). *Language in education policy*. Pretoria:DoE.
- Department of Education (DoE). (2011) *School management team (SMT). Handbook*.Kzn
- Department of Education (DoE). (2011) *Report on the Annual National Assessment (ANA)*.
- Diamond, L.(2006). *Implementing and sustaining an effective reading program. Consortium on reading excellence*.
- Eisenclas, S.A., Schalley, A.C., & Guillerman, D. (2013). *The importance of literacy in the Home Language*. The view from Australia. SAGE Publications.
- Ewijk, D.C. & van der Werf, G. (2012). *What educators think about self-regulated learning: Investigating teacher beliefs and teacher behaviour of enhancing students self-regulation*. Education Research International.
- Fakeye. O.D. (2012). *Teacher's qualification and subject mastery as predictors of achievement in English Language in Ibarapapa Division of Oyo State*. Global journal of Human Social Science. University of Ibadan. Nigeria
- Farrell, T.S. (2011). *Teaching Reading Strategies: 'it takes time! Reading in a foreign – Language*. 13 (2). Nanyang Technological University: Singapore.
- Freeman. E.C. (2004). *Trends in educational equity of girls and women. National Center for Education Statistics*. U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education sciences, NCES. 2005-016
- Hallinger, P., Bickman, L., & Davis, K. (1996). *School context, principal leadership, and student reading achievement*. The elementary school journal, vol. 96. No. 5. Pp. 527 – 549.

- Hammond, D.L. (1999). *Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence*. Center for the study of teaching and policy. University of Washington.
- Hanushek, E.A. (2010). *Economic aspects of improving teacher quality*. National Bureau of Economic Research, and CESifo. Stanford University.
- Harris. D. & Sass. R.T. (2006). *The effects of teacher training on teacher value – added*. Florida State University.
- Harris, Douglas N., and Tim R. Sass. 2007. “*Teacher Training, Teacher Quality, and Student Achievement*.” CALDER Working Paper 3. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Heugh, K. (2002). *The Case Against Bilingual and Multilingual Education in South Africa*. Perspectives in Education. 20 (1); 171 – 196
- Hoque, K.E., Razak, A.Z.A., Zohora, F.M., & Islam, R. (2013). *Impact of teacher-gender on primary students’ achievement: a study at Malaysian standpoint*. University of Malaya. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Horner, L.K., Murrary. G.H., & Rushton, P.J. (1989). *Relation between aging and rated teaching effectiveness of academic psychologists*. University of Western Ontario, London, Canada.
- Howie, S.J., Van Staden, Tshele, M., Dowse, C. & Zimmerman, L. (2011). *PIRLS 2011: South African children's reading literacy achievement summary report*. Pretoria:Centre for Evaluation and Assessment: University of Pretoria.
- Howie, S.J. Venter, E. van Staden, S. (2008). *The effect of multilingual policies on performance and progression in reading literacy in South African primary schools*. University of Pretoria. South Africa.
- Hua Liu, C. & Matthew, R. (2005). Vygotsky’s philosophy: *Constructivism and its criticisms examined*. International Education Journal, 6(3), 386-399
- Huang, F.L., & Moon. R.T. (2009). *Is experience the best teacher? A multilevel analysis of teacher characteristics and student achievement in low performing schools*. Educ Asse Eval Acc (2009) 21:209–234
- Ian, T. (2013). *The mediation of learning in the zone of proximal development through a Co-constructed writing activity*. University of Oxford.
- Ilukena, A. (1998). *Qualities and competences of the professional teacher*. Journal for Educational Reform in Namibia. vol. 7.

- Jacobson, J., Reutzel, D.R., & Hollingsworth, P.M. (1992). *Reading Instruction: Perceptions of Elementary School Principals*. Brigham Young University. Vol. 85. No.6
- Jansen, J.D. (2013). *Wrest power from English tyranny*. [online]. Available at: <http://www.mg.co.za> (accessed on September 2016)
- Janzen, J. & Stoller, F.L. (1998). *Integrating Strategic Reading in L2 instruction*. Northern Arizona University.
- Jones, G.M & Araje-Brader, L. (2002). *The impact of Constructivism on Education: Language, Discourse and Meaning*. American Communication Journal. Vol. 5, Issue 3.
- Kablan, Z., & Kaya, S. (2014). *Preservice Teachers' Constructivist Teaching Scores Based on Their Learning Styles*. Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 39(12). <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2014v39n12.5>
- Kerlinger, F.N. (1986). *Foundations of behavioural research* (3rd ed), New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Klapwijk, N. (2012). *Reading strategy instruction and teacher change: Implications for teacher training*. South African Journal of Education. Vol.32. Stellenbosch University.
- Klapwijk, N. (2015). *EMC2=Comprehension: A reading strategy instruction framework for all educators*. South African Journal of Education. Vol.35.No:1
- Kruizinga, A. & Nathanson, R. (2010). *An evaluation of guided reading in three primary schools in the Western Cape*. A journal for learning. . 67-6.
- Kuecken, M., & Valfort, M.A. (2012). *The impact of student-teacher gender interactions on learning outcomes. Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa*. School of economics. Pantheon Sorbonne University. Paris.
- Leder, G. C., Forgasz, H. J., & Jackson, G. (2014). *Mathematics, English and Gender Issues: Do Educators Count?* Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 39(9).
- Legotlo, M.W. Maaga, M.P., Sebego, M.G. (2002). *Perceptions of stakeholders on causes of poor performance in Grade 12, in a province in South Africa*. South Africa Journal of Education. Vol. 22, 113-118.

- Lenyai, E. (2011). *First additional language teaching in the foundation phase of schools in the foundation phase of schools in disadvantaged areas*. South African Journal of Childhood Education. (1): 68-81
- Maree, K. (2010). *First steps in research*. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Matjilla, D.S. & Pretorius, E.J. (2004). *Bilingual and biliterate? An exploratory study of grade 8 reading skills in Setswana and English*. A journal for language learning. 1-21.
- Meier, C. (2015). *What do parents really want? Parents perceptions of their children's schooling*. South African Journal of Education, Vol. 35, Number 2.
- Miller, L. & Paige Smith, A. (2004). *Practitioners' beliefs and children's experiences of literacy in four early years settings*. *Early Years: An International Research Journal*, 24 (2): 121-133.
- Mudzielwna, A.P. (2014). *Educators' perception on foundation phase learners low reading performance: A case study of four rural schools in South Africa*. 19-29. University of Venda, Department of Early Childhood Education.
- Msila, V. (2007). *From Apartheid education to the Revised National Curriculum Statement: Pedagogy for identity formation and nation building in South Africa*. Nordic Journal of African Studies 16(2): 146–160
- Myrberg, E. & Rosen, M. (2004) *The Impact of teacher competence in public and independent schools in Sweden*. Gothenburg University, Sweden.
- Naidoo, V., Reddy, K., & Dorasamy, N. (2014). *Reading Literacy in Primary Schools in South Africa: Educator perspectives on Factors Affecting Reading Literacy and Strategies for Improvement*. *Int. J. Edu.* 7(1):155-167
- Nazary, M. (2008). *The Role of L1 in L2 Acquisition: Attitudes of Iranian University Students*. Novitas Royal. Vol:2 (2). 138 – 153
- Neeta, N.C., & Klu, K.E., (2013). *Educators' professional knowledge competence and second language education in South Africa*. *Int. J. Edu. Sci*, 5(3). 255-262.
- Olivier, A.M., Anthonissen, C., Southwood, F. (2010). *Literacy development of English Language learners: The outcomes of an intervention programme in Grade R*. SAJCD. Vol. 57.

- Pham, H. (2011). *Theory-based instructional models applied in classroom contexts*. Literacy Education and Computer Education Journal (LICEJ) volume 2, issue 2.
- Rahimi. M. & Asadollahi, F. (2012). *Teaching styles of Iranian EFL teachers: Do gender, age and experience make a difference?* International Journal of English Linguistics. vol.2. no.2. Tehran. Iran.
- Rice, J.K. (2010). *The impact of teacher experience examining the evidence and policy implications*. National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. United States of America.
- Richardson. V., (2003). *Constructivist Pedagogy*. Teachers College. Columbia University. Pp.1623 – 1640.
- Robert, K., Owiti, D.S.O., & Ongati, O. (2013). Teachers' gender and primary school pupils' achievement in mathematics in Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*. Vol. 4. No. 25.
- Rockoff. J.E. (2004). *The impact of individual teachers on student performance: Evidence using panel data*. American Economic Review. Vol. 94, issue 2, pages 247 – 252.
- Sawchuk. S. (2015). *New studies find that, for teachers experience really does matter*. Education week journal. <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/03/25/new-studies-find-that-for-teachers-experience.html>
Accessed: 12 June 2016
- Sibanda, L. (2014). *The readability of two grade 4 natural sciences text books*. South African Journal of Education 4(2): 154-175.
- Sibaya, P. (2014). *What is a research proposal*. Department of Educational Psychology and Special education. University of Zululand.
- Singh, P. (2011) *Foundation phase educator's knowledge and attitudes towards implementation of the National Reading Strategy*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Durban University of Technology.
- Sjoberg, S. (2007). *Constructivism and Learning*. International Encyclopedia of Education, 3rd Edition, Oxford: Elsevier.

- Skelton, C. (2003). *Male Primary Educators and perceptions of masculinity*. School of Education, University of New Castle. U.K Educational Review, Vol. 55. No.2.
- Snow, C.E., Burns, M. & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. National Research Council. New York.
- Southworth. G. (2002). *Leading Improving Primary Schools: The Work of Heads and Deputies*. Routledge.
- Spaull, N. (2013). *South Africa's Education Crisis: The quality of education in South Africa 1994-2011*. Centre for Development and Enterprise.
- Steiner, J.V. & Mahn, H. (1996). *Sociocultural approaches to learning and development: A Vygotskian Framework*. Educational Psychologist. 51 (314), 191-206.
- Stoet, G., & Geary, D.C. (2013). *Sex differences in mathematics and reading achievement are inversely related: within and across-nation assessment of 10 years of PISA data*. PloS ONE 8(3): e57988. Doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0057988
- Swan, K. (2005). *A constructivist model for thinking about learning online*. Research Centre for Educational Technology: Kent State University.
- Thompson. I. (2013). *The mediation of learning in the zone of proximal development through a co-constructed writing activity*. Research in the teaching of English. Vol. 47, No.3
- Ultanur, E. (2012). *An Epistemological glance at the constructivist approach: Constructivist learning in Dewey, Piaget, and Montessori*. International Journal of Education. Vol. 5, No:2
- UNESCO. (2006). *Understandings of Literacy: Education for All Global Monitoring report*.
- Van staden, S. & Bosker, R. (2013). *Factors that affect South African reading literacy achievement: evidence from prePIRLS 2013 using aspects of Carroll's model of school learning*. University of Pretoria.
- Vartuli, S. (1999). *How early childhood beliefs vary across grade level*. Early Childhood Research Quarterly. 14 (1): 489-514.

- Volodina, A.,(2011).*Evaluation in lifelong learning. International Conference on Interactive Collaborative Learning. (ICL 2011). University of Luxembourg.*
- Wagner, D.A., Spratt, J.E. & Ezzaki, A. (1989) *Does learning to read in a second language always put the child at a disadvantage? Some counter evidence from Morocco.* Applied psycholinguistics. University of Pennsylvania.
- Wenden. A. (1985). *Learner strategies.* TESOL Quarterly Newsletter, 14, 1- 4.
- Wigfield, A. & Guthrie, J.T. (1999). *Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breadth of their reading.* Journal of Educational Psychology. Vol 89. No.3
- Wigfield, A., & Asher, R.S. (1983). *Social and motivational influences on reading.* University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Yusuf. O.H. (2015) *Assessment of educators' attitude towards the teaching of reading in primary schools in Kaduna Metropolis.* Ahmadu Bello University. Zaria, Nigeria.
- Zimmerman, L., & Smith, B. (2014). *Profiling classroom reading comprehension development practices from the PIRLS 2006 in South Africa.* South African Journal of Education. Vol. 34. No. 3.
- Zuzovsky. R. (2008). *Teacher's qualifications and their impact on student achievement findings from TIMSS-2003 data in Israel.* School of Education, Science & Technology Education Center, Tel Aviv, Israel.

ANNEXURE A

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant)

Project title: The Experiences of educators with the National Reading Strategy in Mbabane circuit, Ingwavuma

Frank Joseph Mensah from the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Zululand has requested permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to find out the experiences of educators' on the National Reading Strategy.
2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/may request to see the clearance certificate.
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards creating reading awareness in Ingwavuma circuit and beyond.
4. I will participate in the project by completing the research instrument accordingly.
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research.
7. There may be risks associated with my participation.

- a) The principle of anonymity and confidentiality is observed through non-disclosure of participants' name.

- 8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of a research report. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

- 9. I will not receive feedback / will receive feedback in the form of a summary of the research report regarding the results obtained during the study.

- 10. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by my Principal or Head of Department (HOD).

- 11. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

- 12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurized in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

Participant's signature

Date

ANNEXURE B
RESEARCHERS' DECLARATION

I, declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
.....
- Requested him/her to ask questions if anything was unclear and I have answered them as best I can.
- I am satisfied that s/he sufficiently understands all aspects of the research so as to make an informed decision on whether or not to participate.
- The conversation took place in isiZulu / English.
- I used / did not use an interpreter.

.....
Researcher's signature

.....
Date

ANNEXURE C



UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (UZREC) ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION FORM (2016)

Project Title	The Experiences of Primary School Educators with the National Reading Strategy in Mbabane circuit.						
Principal Researcher(s)	Frank Joseph Mensah						
Student/Staff number	201454851						
Email Address	Joemencrow2@gmail.com			Contact Number: 072 4248 187			
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Prof. P.T. Sibaya			Dr. P. Pillay			
Department	Education						
Faculty	Educational Psychology						
Nature of Project	Honours/4 th Year	Master's Mini-dissertation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Master's Full dissertation		Doctoral	Departmental Projects
Research involves	Human Health	Animals		Human Health and Animals		Data collection from people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Children (Non-therapeutic research)	Children (Therapeutic research)	Other vulnerable persons		Special health and safety considerations		Desktop, field work or laboratory research only	
Environmental hazards/pollution	Interference with nature	Intellectual Property (IP)		Possible conflict of interests (researcher, funder or participants)		Social value/Benefits from this research	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Risk Classification	Low Risk	Medium Risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	High Risk		Other	

Documents submitted for ethical clearance consideration	Project proposal	X	Participant Informed Consent	X
	Survey Instrument/Questionnaire	X	Translation (where appropriate)	
	Translation (where appropriate)		Guardian Informed Consent	
	Open-ended question sheet		Translation (where appropriate)	
	Translation (where appropriate)		Letter requesting access to sites/ information/ participants	X
	Observation sheet		Letter granting access approval	
	Research instrument permission		<u>Other documentation:</u>	
	Copyright permission			

Faculty REC comments, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for recommendation to the UZREC • Why/how the benefits outweigh the risks associated with the research • Special conditions to be attached to the approval 		
	Faculty REC Chairperson's Signature	Date
	Print Name	

ANNEXURE D

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

RESEARCH TITLE: THE EXPERIENCES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS WITH THE
NATIONAL READING STRATEGY IN MBABANE CIRCUIT.

Completion of the questionnaire should take no longer than 15 minutes since responses have been structured and all you have to do is to select the appropriate option.

Your answers will be treated as **strictly confidential** and will not be made available as raw data.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please follow the steps accurately in order to minimize the time taken to complete the questionnaire.

SECTION A: EDUCATOR BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH THE FOLLOWING BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION RELATING TO THE PERSON COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

MARK THE CORRECT OPTION WITH AN (x) IN ONE OF THE SPACES PROVIDED.

1. AGE:

18-19 years	20-24 years	25-29years	30-44 years	45 -49 years	50 years or above

2. GENDER:

Male	Female

3. HOME LANGUAGE

IsiZulu	IsiXhosa	IsiNdebele	SiSwati	Sesotho	Sepedi	Setswana	Tsonga	Tshivenda	English	Afrikaans

4. JOB TITLE/POST LEVEL:

Post level 1	HOD	Deputy	Principal

5. WHICH PHASE DO YOU TEACH?

Foundation phase	Intermediate phase

6. YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL.

<1year	1-5years	6-10years	11-15years	16-20years	21-25years	26 years and above

7. EDUCATOR QUALIFICATION:

Matric	
Teacher's Certificate	
Teacher's Diploma	
Degree	
Honours	
Masters	
Doctoral	
Other (Specify)	

SECTION B

THIS SECTION BEGINS WITH STATEMENTS ON YOUR EXPERIENCES ON THE NATIONAL READING STRATEGY (NRS).

PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH STATEMENT BY MAKING AN (x) IN ONE OF THE SPACES.

Not a problem	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem
----------------------	----------------------	-------------------------	------------------------

COMPARED TO OTHER METHODS OF TEACHING READING, WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE ABOUT THE NATIONAL READING STRATEGY (NRS)?

No	Item description	Not a problem 1	Minor problem 2	Moderate problem 3	Serious problem 4
1	The NRS Facilitates curriculum and language policy in practice.				
2	The NRS is an effective method of teaching reading.				
3	Learners' home language makes it easy to use the NRS.				
4	The NRS allows for code switching.				
5	Curriculum policy change to CAPs affects my ability to implement the NRS.				

6	Limited instructional time on the time table affects my ability to implement the NRS.				
7	The lack of age appropriate reading materials affects my ability to implement the NRS.				
8	Administrative tasks affect my ability to implement the NRS.				
9	My colleague educators help teach reading through subject integration.				
10	Departmental workshops guide my implementation of the NRS.				
11	The NRS makes it easy to teach reading to students with reading problems in my class.				
12	I encourage my learners to read story books in their home languages.				
13	Parents are supportive of the NRS.				
14	The local library is supportive of the NRS.				
15	School management is supportive of the NRS implementation.				

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY!

ANNEXURE E

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>
Private Bag X1001
KwaDlangezwa 3886
Tel: 035 902 6887
Fax: 035 902 6222
Email: ManqeS@unizulu.ac.za

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2016/330				
Project Title	Experience of primary schools educators with the National Reading Strategy in Mbabane Ward, Jozini				
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	FJ Mensah				
Supervisor and Co- supervisor	Prof PT Sibaya		Dr Pillay		
Department	Educational Psychology & Special Education				
Nature of Project	Honours/4 th Year		Master's	x	Doctoral
					Departmental

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project proposal and the documents listed on page 2 of this Certificate.

Special conditions: (1) This certificate is valid for 2 years from the date of issue.
(2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date-31 October 2017]
(3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.

The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this Certificate, using the reference number indicated above, but may not conduct any data collection using research instruments that are yet to be approved.

Please note that the UZREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the UZREC
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

ANNEXURE F



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Inquiries: Ncmangisi Ngubane

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref: 2448/259

Mr. FJ Mensah
PO Box 1821
NONGOMA
3950

Dear Mr Mensah

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research titled: 'WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS' WITH THE NATIONAL READING STRATEGY IN MBABANE CIRCUIT, INGWAVUMA', in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 24 November 2015 to 30 November 2016.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kchologile at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMkhanyakude District

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 24 November 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu Natal, Republic of South Africa *...dedicated to service and performance*
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Arden Lambada House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel: 033 392 1004 *beyond the call of duty*
E-MAIL: ADDRESS: kchologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Ncmangisi_Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0660 596 363, Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: www.kzndoe.gov.za