

School Manager's Role on the Curriculum Delivery in Teaching and Learning Practices: A Perspective from Poorly and Well Performing Schools

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Abstract

This study quantitatively examined school managers' curriculum delivery roles that have direct impact on the academic performance of learners in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. Participants were purposefully selected from 10 secondary schools which were information rich to the purpose of the study. Questionnaires were administered to 300 learners from the five poorly- performing schools and also from the five well - performing schools in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. Data from questionnaires were analyzed using computer program SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and were reported in graphs, mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) tables. The overall results of this study indicated that school managers from well- performing schools had strong monitoring system to effect frequent testing of learners, content coverage earlier than end of June, and high lesson attendance by educators whereas poorly- performing schools had weak monitoring system only specializing on monitoring written work, non – completion of content coverage if not late than end of June, and very low rate of lesson attendance by educators. The study recommended that school managers should improve their supervision and monitoring of teachers by having compulsory accountability meetings between the SMT and the principal and also apply compulsory period attendance register to monitor and encourage lesson attendance if they were to improve the academic performance of learners.

Keywords: school manager, learner's academic performance, poorly- performing school, well- performing school, curriculum delivery.

1. Introduction

Principals of schools are the servants of their vision of success for all students, as they convey this vision to teachers and students through their actions or behaviours. Their interaction with students and teachers is categorized as instructional focus, instructional evaluation and monitoring of student progress. Instructional focus is when principals support teacher's instructional methods and resourcing them as well as conducting classroom visit. Instructional evaluation is when principals make frequent classroom visit and provide feedback on instructional methods and materials. They also make use of data to decide on the improvement strategies, instructional approaches and staff development activities. When monitoring student's progress, effective principals lead the team of subordinates in analyzing student data; and evaluate appropriate staff development activities (Mendez-Morse, 2013:1-2). The objectives of this study was to investigate the school managers role on curriculum delivery in teaching and learning practices in both well and poorly performing schools in Vhembe district of Limpopo Province in South Africa.

It is important to note that leadership and management of school managers is based on certain theories of leadership and management. Therefore, this study was underpinned by four theories of leadership and management that are discussed in detail in the following sub – section.

2. Theoretical framework on leadership and management

The study was underpinned by four leadership theories, i.e. task- oriented leadership theory, relationship – oriented leadership theory, path- goal leadership theory and functional leadership theory (Basu, 2013, Cross, 2013, Martin, 2012, Muwaga, 2010, Friedman, 2013; Kokemuller, 2013; and Duggan, 2013; Marxwell, 2003:96,188; Covey, 2004:21 and House,1996:326-327, 336-343).

Task – Oriented leadership theory is about leaders who succeed by putting more emphasis on the task itself. These leaders are task oriented leaders. Task –oriented leadership is applicable in environment where team members have problem or fail to meet the deadlines. In a school situation, this occurs especially when dealing with submissions like schedules, statistics and tests date. It is also suitable in a law enforcement environment and manufacturing assembly lines because instructions, guidelines and procedures are more important to get the job done than creativity and innovations. This leadership can demoralise team members because it doesn't promote creativity and innovations by the team members. Self-motivated team members can rebel against it (Friedman, 2013; Kokemuller, 2013; and Duggan, 2013).

Relationship – Oriented leadership theory is about leaders who succeed by developing good relationship with the group. These leaders are relationship oriented leaders (Basu, 2013).Relationship-oriented leadership is more applicable in unstructured environment where repeated rules and procedures are not necessary to get the job done. It promotes creativity and innovations by the team members. It improves team member's morale and lead to high production (Basu, 2013).In school, managers who are more concerned with social issues like birth day's celebrations, funerals, stokvels and always allow sub-ordinates to be the ones who take decisions on every matter related to work performance can be classified under relationship-oriented leadership.

Path – goal theory leadership requires a leader to embark on activities that complement subordinates in order to build subordinate's satisfaction and work performance. The leader must be achievement oriented, directive, participative, and supportive (Martin, 2012).

Functional theory of leadership requires a leader to make sure that the group needs are taken care of. A leader is regarded to have done well his job if he achieved group effectiveness and cohesion. It has most often applied to team leadership (Muwaga, 2010).Therefore, a school manager who delegates duties like learner's discipline, leave matters, monitoring of educators work, learners late coming and absenteeism, procurement etc to sub-ordinates and encourages them to take full responsibilities of the task and concentrate more on offering necessary support and monitoring to get the job done can be referred to be functional leader. All theories of leadership assist school managers to improve academic performance of learners.

All the above leadership theories assist the school manager in managing curriculum delivery in schools. Therefore the following part of this study will deal with teaching and learning in the classroom, curriculum coverage, written work, monitoring and support as aspects of leadership and management to be taken care of by the school manager in order to improve the academic performance of learners.

3. Management of curriculum delivery

3.1 Teaching and learning in the class room

Studies conducted revealed a strong correlation between teacher's quality and academic performance of students at schools as students performance was found to be depending on the amount of learning that takes place in the classroom and no education system can rise above the quality of educators in the education system(Mji and Makgato,2006:254 and Akinsolu,2010:86-87, 100). According to the study conducted by Mji and Makgato (2006:254) about the factors associated with high school learners poor performance in Mathematics and Physical Sciences; outdated teaching strategies, lack of content knowledge, under qualified educators, unqualified educators, overcrowded classrooms and unequipped classrooms resulted in poor teaching standard. The study identified outdated teaching strategies, lack of content knowledge and understanding, motivation and interest, laboratory usage and syllabus non completion as the direct factors towards poor performance of learners in Maths and Science whereas language and parental involvement were identified as indirect factors towards poor academic performance of learners (Mji and Makgato, 2006:259-261).

The attitudes of learners towards learning and a subject is also the most important factor towards performance of learners in teaching and learning practices. Positive attitude towards a subjects brings a positive performance in that subject, so motivation of the students and correct study strategies can help to build positive attitudes in students which will result in improved academic performance (Mohamed and Waheed, 2011:277-280; Rikard and Banville, 2006: 385-400).It is the responsibility of the school manager to monitor teaching and learning in order to improve learners academic performance as Too, Kimutai and Kosgei (2012: 299 - 306) discovered the head teacher's supervisory roles to teacher's teaching practices as a major impact on learners academic performance .

3.2 Management of curriculum coverage in teaching practices

The studies revealed positive relationship between student's performance and curriculum coverage or completion as some studies indicated curriculum coverage as one of the important factors contributing to the performance of learners. It was identified that non completion of syllabus was one of the direct factors towards poor performance of learners (Mji and Makgato, 2006:259-261). Therefore, monitoring of curriculum coverage by school management team (SMT) will give learners more opportunities to pass as supported by Too, Kimutai and Kosgei (2012: 305) who found that head teacher's inspection of work covered had positive relationship with student's performance.

3.3 Management of written work in teaching and learning practices

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) in South Africa require a teacher to conduct continuous assessment to learners which forms integral part of teaching and learning. The outcome of the assessment must be recorded formally and will contribute towards a final mark a learner will obtain in that subject. Failure to maintain a file with assessment tasks constitutes an act of misconduct by the teacher concerned. In case a learner failed to submit any assessment task, a learner should be given chance three weeks before the final examination to submit the missing assessment task (DoE, 2012: 16, 18; DoE, 2007:7, 10-11, 17; DoE, 2011:4-7). If school management team (SMT) monitor written work, learners will get more practice and as a result improve in performance. This is supported by the study conducted by Lydia (2009: 84 – 90) regarding the practices in good and poor performing schools which discovered that schools with high performance conduct frequent testing whereas poorly performing schools stressed the issue of lack of time to conduct frequent testing.

3.4 Management of teacher's attendance to teaching and learning

The school manager is expected to manage teaching and learning time by even ensuring that teachers are available for teaching during teaching and learning time as stated that "all educators should be at school during the formal school day, which should not be less than seven hours per day, except for special reasons and with the prior permission of the principal and the seven hours includes the breaks and the periods in which the learners are not at school" (Personnel Administration Measures, Chapter A, section 3.2 in Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998).

The school manager is responsible for managing teaching and learning by also managing teacher's leave of absence to avoid unnecessary disruption of teaching and learning time through unqualified sick leave of teachers. It is stated that "in instances where a pattern in the utilization of sick leave has been established, a certificate may be required for absences of less than three working days Employer may refuse to grant further sick leave on the grounds of further medical advice and the absence shall be considered as leave without pay" (Personnel Administration Measures Chapter J, 8(8.4) in Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998)". The school manager must monitor the leave of absence in order to deal with the pattern of sick leave that disrupts teaching and learning time unnecessary.

Besides monitoring of teachers work or performance that was discussed earlier, teachers must be monitored even on their attendance to work on a daily basis because if they don't come to work, teaching will be affected hence the performance of learners.

An investigation into the ways to encourage teachers to increase their rate of attendance to work was conducted by Duflo and Hanna (2006:2-29). The study investigated whether the introduction of incentives in compensation for teacher's attendance at work would increase the rate of teacher's attendance and reduce teacher's absenteeism in rural Indian schools. The findings of the study were that:

- Direct or straight forward monitoring of teachers and incentives programme can effectively increase teacher attendance and reduce teacher's truancy.

External monitoring through community involvement and camera system (cameras with time and date stamp which takes teachers photo at the beginning and end of the school day) can succeed in reducing teacher absenteeism. Camera system was to replace unfaithful school principals who mark teachers present whereas the teacher was absent.

Learners as beneficiaries for teaching and learning have the right to expect teachers to be present to “teach their classes, assist them with difficulties, and report on their progress and to look after their wellbeing” (ELRC, 2003:B38).

If school manager monitors teachers attendance to teaching and learning, work will be completely covered and as a result improve learners performance as supported by Too, Kimutai and Kosgei (2012: 305); and Akinsolu (2010: 88 – 100) who found out that teacher’s attendance to all lessons have positive relationship with performance of students.

3.5 Management of learner’s attendance to school

South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 indicated that learners must attend school compulsory from the age of seven to fifteen years of age or until they reach Grade 9, whichever comes first. The parent of a learner is responsible to ensure that the learner attend school from the prescribed age until the end of compulsory education as failure to do that constitute a legal offence that may lead to fines or imprisonment to the maximum of six months. It is stated that the right to education gives a learner an obligation to attend school regularly. Parents are expected to report any absences of a learner to the school authorities and teachers (ELRC, 2003: B5, B38). The principal’s management of learner’s school attendance will assist learners to attend their school regularly and never miss periods or lessons. This will help learners to improve in their performance. This is supported by Too, Kimutai and Kosgei (2012: 305 – 306) who discovered after conducting a study about principal’s supervision of teachers, that there is positive relationship between the attendance to all lessons by teachers and learners with regard to learners improvement in academic performance.

4. Research methodology

The population of this study is Vhembe District of Limpopo Province which consists of approximately 742 schools, 742 school managers, 12183 educators and 16068 Grade 12 learners (Limpopo Education Department, 2012). The participants of the study were 10 secondary schools, and 300 learners from each category of poorly-performing and well- performing schools were purposefully sampled. Learners answered semi – structured questionnaires on teaching and learning practices.

The researcher in this study employed quantitative research design which involved the use of quantitative data that could be statistically processed through computer programme i.e. SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Sciences) in order to get statistical comparisons (Mc Daniel and Gates, 2006: 354 – 365; Gravetter and Forzano, 2006: 390 – 391. In this study, questionnaires delivered by hand were used because it was convenient, quicker and cheaper compared to mailed questionnaires. Questionnaires were designed with five point Likert scale i.e 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= strongly disagree, 4= disagree and 5= do not know.

Validation and reliability of questionnaire as quantitative data collection instrument was satisfied as stated through the use of statistical data processing machine i.e. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results of the test were found to be reliable with Cronbach alpha of 0.776. The reason of using SPSS test was to assess the validity and reliability of the measuring instrument that was used to collect quantitative data from the respondents (Mc Daniel and Gates, 2006: 354 - 365). Therefore, the main reason for conducting Cronbach Alpha test in this study according to Maree (2007: 216) and Malhotra (1999: 126) was to test survey’s instrument internal consistency. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. The higher the score, the more reliable is the generated scale. The results for the reliability test performed are shown below

Cronbach Alpha Reliability test results

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.776	.774	19

The above test indicates the reliability results with a Cronbach’s alpha of **0.776**. This shows that the questionnaire can collect reliable data. According to Field (2009:675), Cronbach’s alpha indicating the overall reliability of a questionnaire and values around 0.8 and 0.7 are good for reliability tests. Therefore, the questionnaire in this study was confidently reliable since it has item correlation of **0.776** coefficients.

5.Results and discussions

In this study, data collected through semi- structured questionnaires were edited to ensure thorough completion of questionnaires, coded or grouped according to their nature of responses, coded data were processed using computer data analyzing device i.e. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and were reported through graphs indicating frequency distribution on the teaching and learning practices in well and poorly- performing schools in Vhembe District of Limpopo Province (Mc Daniel and Gates, 2006: 354 – 365; Gravetter and Forzano,2006: 390 – 391). For easy recording, presentation and analysis of the results from the SPSS, the following key words or codes for differentiation of variables were developed and used when presenting analysis of results in graphs i.e. **WE** – Writing exercises , **WT** – Writing tests, **RE** – Revision prior exam, **TB** – Text book availability, **TAL** – Teachers attending lessons , **MME** – More Maths and Maths Literacy exercises, **RT** – Remedial teaching , **ST** – Setting targets, **PML** – Principal meetings with learners, **APIP** – Learners Academic Performance Improvement plan, **CLB** – Checking learners books, **SG** – Study groups, **EP** – Experiments and practical, **SCJ** – Syllabuses completion by June, **FE** – Fieldwork and excursions , **LA** – Learners absenteeism , **LDL** – Learners dodging lessons , **CV** – Class visit , **TA** – Teachers absenteeism. The following graph shows percentages of frequencies distribution on the agreement to the statements on the learner’s questionnaires about the teaching and learning practices in well- performing schools as per results after scales 1-2 were combined to be agreed and scales 3-4 to be disagreed.

Figure 1: Simple Two – Dimensional Bar graph for teaching and learning practices in well - performing schools

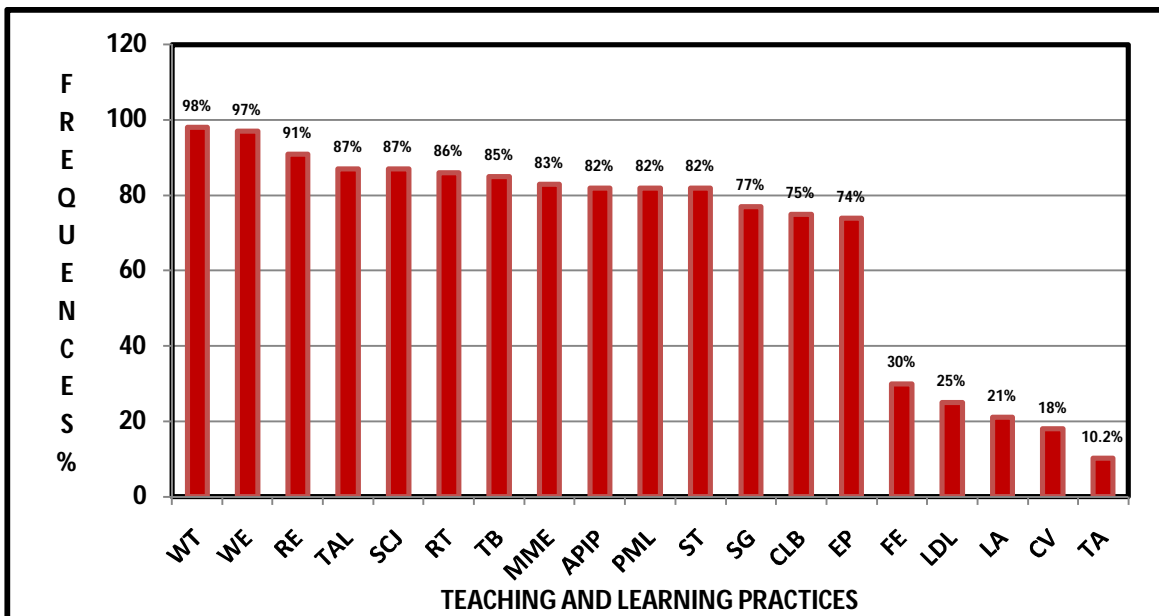


Figure1 above shows the teaching and learning practices in well- performing schools ranging from the most frequent practiced to the least or most often practiced. It shows that written tests, written exercises, revision of work before examinations, teachers attendance to lessons, syllabus completion before June of each year, remedial teaching or correction of work after marking every test, allocation of textbook to every learner for every subject, giving of more than 10 weekly written exercises in Mathematics and Mathematical literacy, involvement of learners in developing academic performance improvement plan, principal frequent meeting with Grade12 learners, setting of targets, learners study groups, checking of learners books by school management team and experiments and practical’s are practiced above average in well- performing schools whereas field work and excursions, learners dodging of lessons, learners absenteeism, class visit and teachers absenteeism are practiced below average in well- performing school.

This is supported by Lydia(2009:84 – 90); Armana (2011:68 – 75); Bamboh (2012); Cabrera, Colbeck and Terenzini (2001:343) and Murtagh and Baker (2009:20) who identified frequent testing, remedial teaching, feedback to learners and revision before examinations as characteristics of well- performing schools and emphasized the importance of feedback as a motivating factor that can lead to better performance of learners. The following table supports figure1 above as it shows measures of central tendencies with *mean* and *standard deviation* of the teaching and learning practices in well-performing schools.

Table 1: Measures of central tendencies on teaching and learning practices in well-performing schools

Statements / indicators	FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION										M	SD
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Don't know			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Learners write many tests in this school	129	78.2	33	20	2	1.2	1	0.6	0	0	1.2	0.5
Teachers attend their lessons without failure	69	42	74	45	5	3	16	10	1	0.6	1.8	0.9
Learners write many exercises in this school	111	67	50	30	2	1.2	1	0.6	1	0.6	1.4	0.6
Learners mostly dodge lessons	15	9	26	16	57	35	53	32	14	8	3.2	1.1
There is high rate of learners absenteeism	6	3.6	29	18	46	28	71	43	13	7.9	3.3	1
There is high rate of educators absenteeism	6	3.6	11	6.7	100	61	45	27.3	3	1.8	3.2	0.7
Learners are involved in developing performance improvement strategies	68	41	68	41	12	7.3	12	7.3	5	3	1.9	1
All subjects syllabuses are finished by the end of June	34	21	53	32	31	19	43	26	4	2.4	2.6	1.2
The Principal frequently holds meetings with Grade 12 learners	73	44	63	38	10	6.1	19	12	0	0	1.8	1
Educators give learners more than 10 written work in Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy per week	101	61	37	22	6	3.6	19	12	2	1	1.7	1.1
There is an evidence that learners books are checked by SMT	64	39	60	36	8	4.8	19	12	14	8.5	2.1	1.3
The Principal or SMT member sometimes visit Grade 12 class and sit down while educators are teaching	12	7.3	18	11	64	39	54	33	17	10	3.3	1
The principal assist learners to set their pass targets	89	54	47	29	10	6.1	13	7.9	6	3.6	1.8	1.1
Thorough revision is done before exam in all subjects	99	60	51	31	4	2.4	10	6.1	1	0.6	1.6	0.9
Remedial teaching or correction is always done after every test has been marked	73	44	69	42	8	4.8	14	8.5	1	0.6	1.8	0.9
Learners form study groups	67	41	60	36	14	9	18	11	6	3.6	2	1.1
More experiments and practical are conducted in this school	73	44	50	30	15	9.1	13	8	14	8.4	2.1	1.3
Learners go outside the class or school to see what they learnt in class	20	12	30	18	52	32	51	31	12	7.3	3	1.1
Every learner has a textbook for every subject	110	67	29	18	6	3.6	18	11	2	1.2	2	1

Table 1 shows measurements of central tendencies found in responses to statements measuring teaching and learning practices in well-performing schools. The above table presents results of descriptive analysis (i.e. frequency, percentage, means and standard deviations) about the teaching and learning practices in well-performing schools in Vhembe district in Limpopo Province. According to above table, the item with the highest score is 'Learners write many tests in this school', where 129 (79%) of participants 'strongly agreed' that learners write many tests, with mean score ($M=1, 2$) and standard deviation ($SD= 0, 5$). The second highest score was on 'Learners write many exercises' together with 'Every learner has a textbook', where 111 (67%) of participants 'strongly agreed' that learners write many exercises, with a mean score ($M= 1, 4$) and standard deviation ($SD= 0, 6$) whereas 110 (67%) of the participants 'strongly agreed' that every learner has a textbook, with a mean score ($M=2$) and standard deviation ($SD=1$).

The third highest score was on the statement ‘Educators give learners more than 10 exercises of written work in Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy per week’, where 101 (61%) of participants ‘strongly agreed’ that learners write more than 10 written exercises in Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy, with a mean score ($M=1,7$) and standard deviation ($SD=1,1$). The fourth highest score was on ‘Thorough revision is done before examinations in all subjects’, where 99 (60%) of participants ‘strongly agreed’ that revision is thoroughly done before examinations in all subjects, with a mean score ($M=1, 6$) and standard deviation ($SD=0, 6$). The fifth highest score was on the statement ‘The principal assists learners to set their pass targets’, where 89 (54%) participants ‘strongly agreed’ that learners are assisted by the principal to set pass targets, with a mean score ($M=1, 8$) and standard deviation ($SD=1, 1$). Therefore, the writing of tests and exercises, allocation of textbooks to each learner for every subject, thorough revision before examinations and setting of targets are the most frequent practices in well- performing schools since they score above average (i.e. 50% above) amongst the responses to questions about teaching and learning practices in well-performing schools.

The following bar graph represents the highest frequent practices on teaching and learning as per the responses in agreement with the questionnaire statements. Scale 1 and 2 were combined to be “agreed” and scale 3 and 4 were combined to be “disagreed”.

Figure 2: Simple Two- Dimensional Bar graph for teaching and learning practices in poorly - performing schools

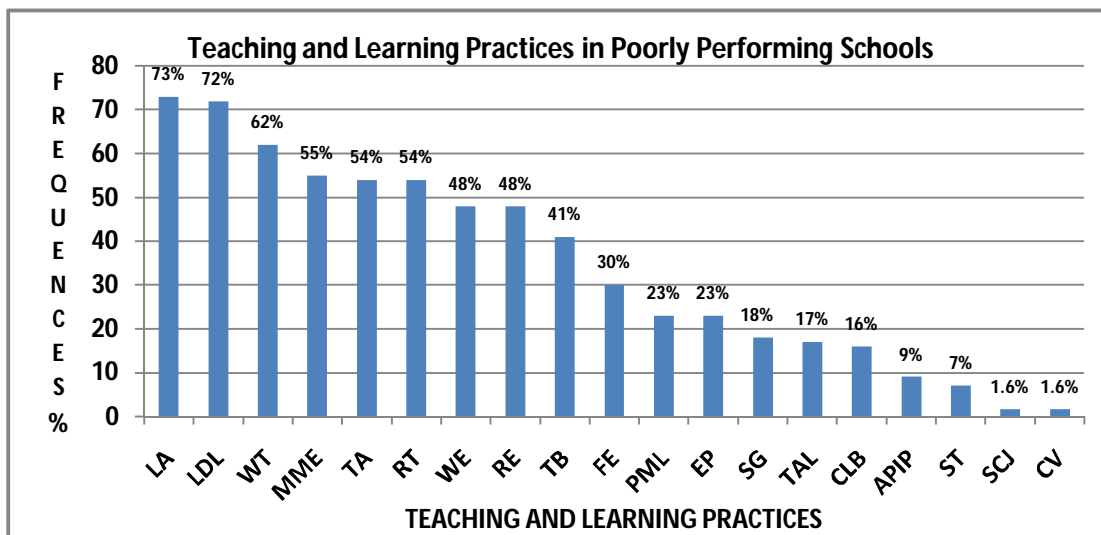


Figure 2 above shows teaching and learning practices in poorly- performing schools from the most to the least frequent teaching and learning practices. The results show that learner’s absenteeism, learners dodging of lessons and teacher’s absenteeism are high in poorly- performing schools. The results also shows that written tests and exercises in Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy as well as correction of learner’s work or remedial teaching are practiced above average (i.e. 50% above) in these schools. Therefore the poor performance of these schools can be accounted to high rate of learner’s absenteeism, teacher’s absenteeism and learners dodging lessons as well as low level of teacher attendance to lessons, lack of class visit, lack of setting of targets, lack of checking of learner’s books by the SMT, and failure to complete syllabuses before end of June each year. This is supported by Lydia(2009:84 – 90); who revealed low consideration for frequent testing, feedback, remedial teaching, revision and lack of time to complete syllabus as characteristics of poor performing schools whereas Mji and Makgato(2006:259 – 261) identified non completion of syllabuses as direct cause for poor performance of learners. Duflo and Hanna (2006:2 – 29) supported that educators high rate of absenteeism is another cause for poor performance of learners because if they do not come to work, it affects teaching and learning, hence performance of learners. Portin, Alejaro,Knapp and Marzolf (2006:1) and Dhuey (2011:2021) supported that lack of checking of learners work by School Management Team(SMT) can be one of the causes of poor performance of learners because it is stated that the Principal monitors and supervises the work through the service of the heads of departments and the Deputy Principal. The following table supports figure2 above as it shows measures of central tendencies with *mean* and *standard deviation* of the teaching and learning practices in poorly-performing schools.

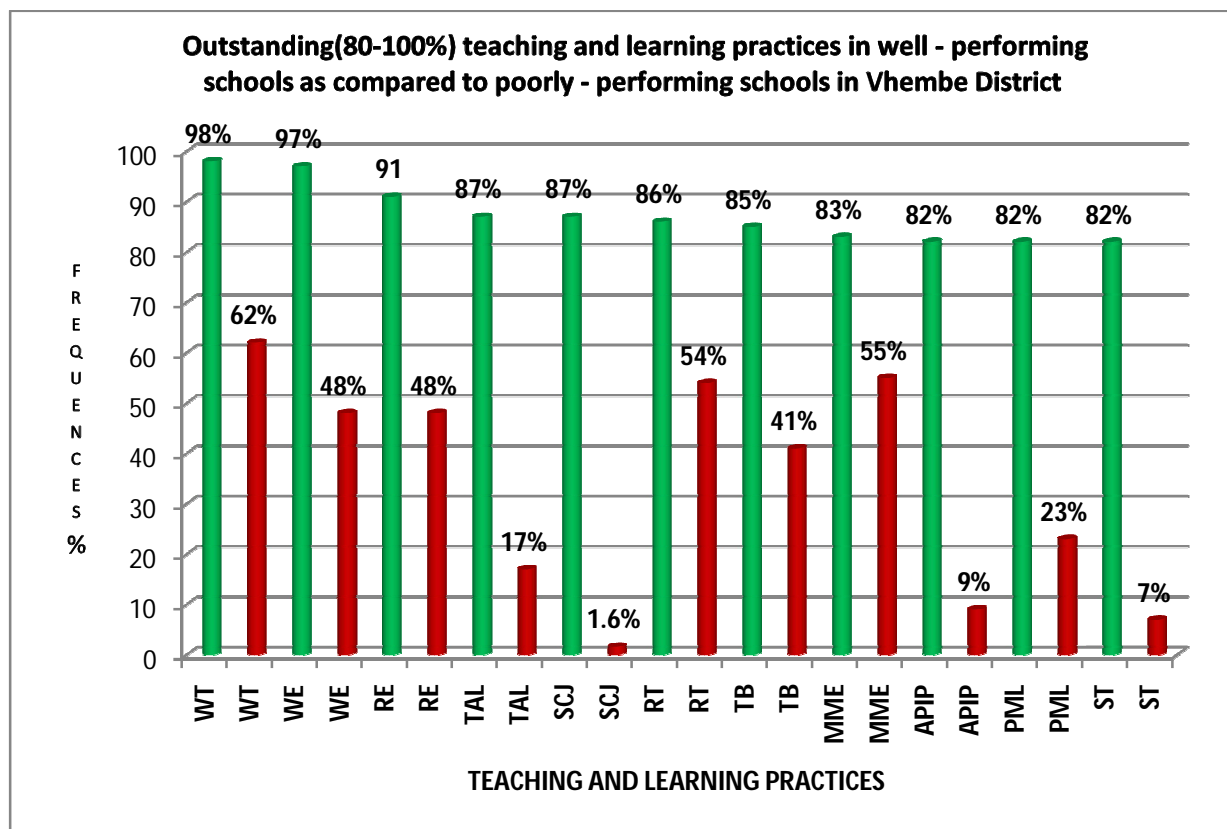
Table2: Measures of central tendencies on teaching and learning practices in poorly-performing schools

Statements / indicators	FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION										Mean	SD
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		I do not know			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Learners write many tests in this school	15	12	64	50	15	12	32	25	2	1.6	2.5	1
Teachers attend their lessons without failure	4	3.1	17	13	27	21	80	63	0	0	3.4	0.8
Learners write many exercises in this school	26	20	35	27	14	11	53	41	0	0	2.7	1.2
Learners mostly dodge lessons	32	25	60	47	15	12	17	13	4	3.1	2.2	1.1
There is high rate of learners absenteeism	25	20	69	54	5	3.9	25	20	4	3.1	2.3	1.1
There is high rate of educators absenteeism	14	11	55	43	26	20	29	23	4	3.1	2.6	1
Learners are involved in developing performance improvement strategies	1	0.8	10	7.8	63	49	52	41	2	1.6	3.3	0.7
All subjects syllabuses are finished by the end of June	1	0.8	1	0.8	79	62	45	35	2	1.6	3.3	0.6
The Principal frequently holds meetings with Grade 12 learners	4	3.1	26	20	61	48	34	27	3	2.3	3	0.8
Educators give learners more than 10 written work in Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy per week	46	36	25	20	8	6.3	41	32	8	6.3	2.5	1.4
There is an evidence that learners books are checked by SMT	5	3.9	15	12	42	33	63	49	3	2.3	3.3	0.9
The Principal or SMT member sometimes visit Grade 12 class and sit down while educators are teaching	1	1.6	1	0.8	88	69	36	28	1	0.8	3.2	0.6
The principal assist learners to set their pass targets	3	2.3	6	4.7	75	59	40	31	4	3.1	3.3	0.7
Thorough revision is done before exam in all subjects	25	20	37	29	23	18	43	34	0	0	2.6	1.1
Remedial teaching or correction is always done after every test has been marked	42	33	27	21	21	16	34	27	4	3.1	2.5	1.3
Learners form study groups	5	3.9	18	14	37	29	64	50	4	3.1	3.3	0.9
More experiments and practical are conducted in this school	12	9.3	17	13	51	40	47	37	1	0.7	3	1
Learners go outside the class or school to see what they learnt in class	21	16	18	14	36	28	49	38	4	3.1	3	1.1
Every learner has a textbook for every subject	29	23	24	19	60	47	11	8.6	4	3.1	2.5	1

Table 2 provides the results of the descriptive analysis (i.e. frequency, percentage, means and standard deviations) on the responses about the teaching and learning practices in poorly-performing schools. The first highest frequent score is on the statement ‘The principal or SMT member sometimes visits the grade 12 class and sits down while educators are teaching’ where 88 (69%) of the respondents ‘strongly disagree’ that the principal or SMT member sometimes visits the grade 12 class and sits down while the educators are teaching, with a mean score ($M=3.2$) and standard deviation ($SD=0.6$). The second highest frequent score is on ‘Teachers attend their lessons without failure’ where 80 (63%) of the respondents ‘disagreed’ with the statement that teachers attend their lessons without failure, with a mean score ($M=3.4$) and standard deviation ($SD=0.8$).

The third high score is ‘All subjects’ syllabuses are finished by the end of June’ where 79 (62%) of the respondents ‘strongly disagreed’ with the statement that all subjects’ syllabuses are finished by the end of June, with mean score ($M=3.3$) and standard deviation ($SD=0.6$). The fourth highest score is the statement ‘The principal assists learners to set their pass targets’ where 75 (59%) of the respondents ‘strongly disagreed’ with the statement that principal assists learners to set their pass targets, with mean score ($M=3.3$) and standard deviation ($SD=0.7$). The fifth highest score is on the statement ‘There is a high rate of learners’ absenteeism’ where 69 (54%) of the respondents ‘agreed’ that there is a high rate of learners’ absenteeism, with a mean score ($M=2.3$) and standard deviation ($SD=1.1$). The last highest score above average, i.e above 50% is on the statement ‘learners write many tests in this school’ where 64 (50%) agreed that learners write many tests, with a mean score ($M=2.5$) and standard deviation ($SD=1$).The following graph shows how the poorly- performing schools matches in terms of the outstanding (80 – 100%) teaching and learning practices in well - performing schools in Vhembe District in Limpopo Province.

Figure 3: Outstanding (80 – 100%) teaching and learning practices in well - performing schools as compared to poorly - performing schools



Well - performing school
 Poorly - performing schools

Figure 3 above shows outstanding teaching and learning practices in well - performing schools as compared to what happened in poorly - performing schools. The presentation shows that poorly - performing schools are performing badly on the items that seems to be the basis of good performance in well - performing schools, especially with regard to teacher attendance to lessons, completion of syllabuses by the end of June, development of academic performance improvement plan with the involvement of learners, principals meetings with Grade 12 learners and assisting learners to set their pass targets. They seem to be giving learners more written tests but unfortunately, those tests are not preceded by written exercises to ensure that learners learn to answer some of the concepts that would be in the tests before they actually write the test. This may be the reason why they write many test but failed at the end of the year.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that compulsory accountability meetings should take place at all levels starting from school level up to the top senior officials of Vhembe District. The accountability meetings must enforce school level reports on monitoring of:

- Class visit
- Content coverage
- Lesson attendance
- Written work
- Educators attendance
- Learners attendance
- Intervention strategies to overcome challenges or shortcomings identified

These accountability meetings must be between the principal, HOD and Deputy Principal at school level. It is recommended to curb the findings that poorly- performing schools has non-completion of syllabus, high rate of educator's absenteeism, poor attendance to lessons and no class visit to educators.

It is recommended that the school managers must be held accountable for period attendance through strengthening and legislating as a policy the administration of period attendance register by Department of Education; to ensure and monitor the attendance of lessons by educators as it was found that poor attendance to lessons in poorly-performing school could be a direct cause of poor performance of learners. Educators will be motivated to attend their lessons as they will be signing for their attendance and the school managers will have evidence of attendance to lessons which can be used for getting understanding of the state of lesson attendance and also can be used as basis for engagement with educators.

From the finding that, there is a high rate of educators absenteeism in poorly- performing schools, it is recommended that the school managers must introduce camera system or finger print log on at the gate so that they may capture the attendance and movements of educators as it is necessary to ensure that educators are at work seven hours per day with or without learners. The presence of educators at work will ensure early completion of syllabuses as it was found to be not completed on time and will also motivate learner's attendance to school as all periods or lessons will be taught. This recommendation concurred with Duflo and Hanna (2006: 2 - 29) who recommended the use of camera system to reduce educators absenteeism in rural India. Computer system will work better than leave forms as it will automatically count and report data that could be used to assess the situation and as basis for engagement with teachers. Other good part of it is that it does not need the presence of school manager or time to calculate the data.

7. Conclusions

Literature review and empirical investigations was conducted in this study in order to find out teaching and learning practices in good and poor performing schools. Early content coverage, more written work exercises, revision prior exam, target setting, involvement of learners in developing academic performance improvement plans and protection of teaching time were found to be the indicators that differs well performing schools from poorly performing schools. The recommendations to accountability meetings, and compulsory legislated as policy administration of period attendance register was amongst others recommendations.

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