

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF POLICY STUDIES AND LEADERSHIP

TOPIC: Strategies Employed by Schools for Curriculum Continuity in the wake of Covid-19: A Case of schools in Ekurhuleni North District of South African department of Education.

SUBMITTED BY

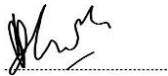
FUNGAI MAKUWAZA

REG NO. R192854N

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor's Degree of Education in Educational Management and Leadership

DECLARATION FORM

I **FUNGAI MAKUWAZA**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of my own study and research to the extent indicated in the acknowledgment, references and comments included in the body of the research, and that to the best of my knowledge, it has not been submitted either wholly or in part thereof for any other degree at any other University.



Student's Signature

...02/04/2021.....

Date

.....

Supervisor's Signature

...../...../.....

Date

DEDICATION

This dissertation is a special dedication to my son Albert and my wife Mankazana. I thank you for the support you gave all the time.

“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”

~Philippians 1:6

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to God Almighty for seeing me through my Bachelor of Education Degree in Educational Management and Leadership, and the great opportunity to successfully complete my dissertation.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Wonderful Dzimiri for his guidance and academic support throughout my research.

I am also thankful to my relatives and friends for their continuous support, and very importantly I would like to thank my colleagues for their encouragement and kindness.

I also want to give thanks to all the respondents who participated in my research. This dissertation could not have been possible without their invaluable contribution.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION FORM	Error! Bookmark not defined.
DEDICATION	Error! Bookmark not defined.ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Error! Bookmark not defined.
TABLE OF CONTENTS	Error! Bookmark not defined.
LIST OF TABLES	xi
ACRONYMS.....	xii
ABSTRACT	Error! Bookmark not defined.ii
CHAPTER 1	Error! Bookmark not defined.
PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1 Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.2 Background of the study	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.3 Statement of the problem.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.4 Aim of the study	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.5 Research Objectives	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.6 Research Questions	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.6.1 Main Question.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Sub-Questions	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.7 Significance of the study	Error! Bookmark not defined.

1.8 Assumptions of the study	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.9 Delimitation of the study	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.10 Limitations of the study	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.11 Definition of terms	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.12 Chapter summary	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER 2	Error! Bookmark not defined.
LITERATURE REVIEW	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.1 Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.2 Theoretical framework.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.2.1 Disaster Management Theory (Thurningham and Kimson, 1996).....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.2.2 Elaboration Theory (Steveson, 2007)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3 Effects of Covid-19 on curriculum continuity	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3.1 Disrupted learning progression	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3.2 School dropouts	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3.3 Disrupted social relationships	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3.4 Poor academic performance of children.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3.5 Health effects on parents of children.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.4 The capacity of schools to implement interventions for curriculum continuity	Error! Bookmark not defined.

2.5 The nature and source of support for schools in efforts to provide for curriculum continuity.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.5.1 Reliable communication infrastructure	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.5.2 Suitable digital learning resources	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.5.3 Friendly learning tools	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.5.3 Effective learning methods.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.5.5 Effective support services for teachers and learners	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.5.6 Close cooperation between Governments, Enterprises and Schools.	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.6 Strategies put in place by schools for curriculum continuity	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.6.1 Adjustments of academic calendar	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.6.2 Rolling out hygiene practice campaigns.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.6.3 Offering open and distance learning	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.6.4 Creating Social platforms	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.6.5 Artificial intelligence	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.7 Resources that must be available to ensure curriculum continuity.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.8 Chapter Summary	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER 3	Error! Bookmark not defined.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.1. Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.2 Research Methodology/approach	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.3 Research design	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.4 Population of the Study.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.5. Sample and sampling procedure	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.5.2 Sampling procedure	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.6 Research instruments	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.6.2 Questionnaire.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.7 Data collection procedure	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.8. Data Analysis	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.9 Research trustworthy	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.9.1 Credibility	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.9.2 Transferability.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.9.3 Dependability.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.10 Ethical considerations	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.10.1. Informed Consent.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.10.2. Confidentiality.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.10.3. Voluntary participation.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

3.11 Summary.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER FOUR.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	Error! Bookmark not defined.
defined.	
4.0 Introduction	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.1 Response rate.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2 Demographic participation	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2.1 Gender distribution of respondents	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2.2 Teaching Position	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2.3 Teaching Experience	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2.4 Education	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.2.5 Computer literacy	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.3 Key findings	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.4 Main Theme 1: Effects of Covid-19 on curriculum continuity	Error! Bookmark not defined.
defined.	
4.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Disrupted learning progression.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.4.2 Sub-theme 2: School dropouts.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Poor academic performance.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.4.4 Sub-theme 4: Disrupted social relationships of learners	Error! Bookmark not defined.
defined.	

4.5 Main Theme 2: Capacity of Schools to Implement Interventions for Curriculum Continuity	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Reliable network infrastructure	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Suitable digital learning resources	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.5.3 Sub-theme 3: Effective teacher support services	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.5.4 Sub-theme 4:	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.6 Nature and source of support for schools in efforts to provide for curriculum	Error!
Bookmark not defined.	
4.6.1 Sub-theme 1: Effective teacher support services from the government.....	Error!
Bookmark not defined.	
4.6.2 Sub-theme 2: Reliable network and communication infrastructure	Error!
Bookmark not defined.	
4.6.3 Sub-theme 3: Parental involvement	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.7 Strategies employed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity	Error! Bookmark not defined.
not defined.	
4.8 Provisions which were employed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity for learners of different needs and backgrounds	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4.9 Chapter Summary	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER 5	Error! Bookmark not defined.
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONSE	Error! Bookmark not defined.
defined.	

5.0 Introduction **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

5.1 Summary..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

5.2 Conclusions **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

5.3 Recommendations **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Questionnaire response rate.....	44
Table 4.2: Interview participation rate.....	45
Table 4.3: Gender distribution of respondents.....	46
Table 4.4: Teaching positions of participants.....	46
Table 4.5: Experience of participants.....	47
Table 4.6: Education of participants.....	48
Table 4.7: Computer Literacy of participants.....	49

ABSTRACT

Curriculum continuity enables fluidity of content thereby stimulating learners, and subsequently enhancing overall performance. The investigation was influenced by the adoption of varying strategies by schools in Ekurhuleni North District of Gauteng Province in South Africa during covid-19 induced hard lockdowns. This study investigated the Strategies Employed by Schools on Curriculum Continuity in the wake of Covid-19. A Case of schools in Ekurhuleni North District of South African department of Education. Based on the contrasting nature of previous findings, five research questions emerged with an aim to examine the Strategies Employed by Schools on Curriculum Continuity in the wake of Covid-19 within Ekurhuleni North District of South African department of Education.

A number of frameworks have been put in place by many countries. For example, the Chinese Ministry of Education has launched the “disrupted classes and undisrupted Learning” initiative, providing flexible online learning to over 270 million students from their homes. The primary purpose of this initiative was to ensure curriculum continuity. In Afghanistan, the Ministries of Education and Health launched a hygiene good practices awareness campaign through schools, television, and social media platforms for schools to practice hygiene when children attend schools. The same applies to Russia, Moscow city and Moscow who moved to a free regime of school attendance. These testimonies showed that the pandemic has affected school curriculums for most jurisdictions

Keywords: Strategies, Curriculum continuity, Covid -19 pandemic

ACRONYMS

ICT- Information Communication Technology

MOOCs- Massive Open Online Courses

OER- Open Educational Resources

PHEIC- Public Health Emergency of International Concern

SA-SAMS- South African School Administration and Management Systems

CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1 Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak across the globe has forced schools and educational institutions to suspend learning in order to curb the spread of the virus. The pandemic has impacted tremendously on the traditional face-to-face teaching and learning practices within schools. This has immensely affected the continuity of the school education curriculum (Chitotombe, 2020). Therefore, this study seeks to examine the strategies employed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity in the wake of Covid-19. Thus, presented in this chapter is the background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions and objectives. Significance of the study, delimitations, limitations and assumptions of the study are as well presented in this chapter.

1.2 Background of the study

The current COVID 19 pandemic has impacted tremendously on the curriculum continuity worldwide. While COVID-19 is primarily affecting public health, spillover effects can already be observed in education, stemming largely from extended school closures (HEDCOM, 2020). According to the World Bank (2020), 150 countries were reporting school closures by the end of March 2020. It can be noted, on one hand, that despite the low rates of infection among children, school closures were a critical pillar of

the social distancing tools to mitigate the spread of the disease (Zayapragassan, 2020). Recent guidance from the United States Center for Disease Control (2020) suggests that school closures do serve a purpose, in particular if COVID19 cases are school-based, to allow for decontamination and contact tracing. On the other hand, extended interrupted education that disengages students from the learning process has the potential cost of reversing gains in learning results (Wiki, 2019). An even higher cost comes from the disengagement of students with learning challenges (academic, socio-economic, students with special/diverse educational needs or persons with disabilities) who may not effectively cope with remote learning strategies or cannot access the information. This greatly affected curriculum continuity not only in South Africa but globally.

However, countries have begun preparing a response in anticipation of an extended period of school closure for curriculum continuity. Given the health and the social impacts of COVID 19, the extended lockdown and school closures is greatly affecting the learning of children as many children remains aloof from school learning activities (Singh & Thurman, 2019). The United States Centre for Disease Control report (2010) proposed that schools must devise strategies to ensure that the learners get the minimum learning content during the extended school closures in order to enhance curriculum continuity in the face of COVID-19.

A number of frameworks have been put in place by many jurisdictions. For example, a survey by Huang, Liu, Tlili, Vang and Wang, (2020) revealed that during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Chinese Ministry of Education has launched the “disrupted classes and undisrupted Learning” initiative, providing flexible online learning to over 270 million

students from their homes. The primary purpose of this initiative was to ensure curriculum continuity. In Afghanistan, the Ministries of Education and Health launched a hygiene good practices awareness campaign through schools, television, and social media platforms for schools to practice hygiene when children attend schools. At the same time, Andrews (2020) carried out a survey in Finland and reported that while most schools were closed and remote learning and teaching was taking place with the support of educational technology, kindergartens continue operating with preventive measures and were open for families who needed childcare. In addition, primary schools had to organize contact teaching for those grades 1-3 students whose parents work in critical positions (such as health, education, logistics, supermarkets and so on). The same applies to Russia, Moscow city and Moscow oblast moved to a free regime of school attendance. These testimonies showed that the pandemic has affected school curriculums for most jurisdictions. However, the surveys carried out, although they showed the magnitude of school closures worldwide, they did not show the strategies adopted by schools for curriculum continuity for various types of learners. Thus, the present study examines the strategies employed by schools for curriculum continuity in the wake of covid-19 in case of schools in Ekurhuleni North district.

Furthermore, COVID-19 has also affected curriculum continuity in African Countries. Reports suggest that most African countries, especially those that battled the Ebola outbreak in 2014-15, governments used the education physical and human resources to address the epidemic (Phainos, 2019). In Ethiopia, for example, the Ministry of Education distributed communication material for students and parents on how to reduce risk of exposure. Given their level of education and profile within communities of

low literacy, educators can serve as advocates and resources that would increase awareness and provide guidance (Maisen & Naison, 2020). In Uganda, teachers were trained on protocols for screening of children for fever once schools resumed. They also benefited from teachers expanding awareness about the causes of infection and symptoms. In Zimbabwe, a number of Statutory Instruments were gazzetted, for example, S.I 99 of 2020 which restricted movements and closure of schools and S.I 2020-099 on COVID-19 Prevention and Containment, which directed all schools to close and pupils to stay home for an indefinite period. This highly affected the teaching and learning of curriculum content in schools. In Botswana, Nickolson, (2020) reported that schools were encouraged to do online learning amidst of school closures. Thus, there is dearth of researches on strategies adopted by schools in African countries and hence the need for this study.

It has been noted with great concern that in South Africa, COVID-19 has affected the educational activities. School closures in South Africa became one of the measures put in place to contain the spread of the disease. As such, there is limit of physical contact by reducing social and extra-curricular activities (Gauteng Department of Education Curriculum Recovery Plan, 2020). It restricted or cancelled extra-curricular, athletic, or community activities as a measure of reducing physical contact. This has been rolled out by individual schools, regionally, or nationally by governments looking to enforce social distancing. In this regard, South Africa has implemented a framework for a curriculum recovery plan – post COVID-19 on 11 April 2020. The framework for curriculum recovery centres around the extension of teaching and learning time; curriculum interventions, curriculum trimming and reorganization and accelerated

learning programmes. As such, the South African Ministry of Education has encouraged districts to oversee, monitor implementation and provide the necessary support systems to schools (HEDCOM, 2020). Further, schools were mandated to mobilize support for and implement curriculum recovery plan. Thus, schools in Ekurhuleni North District have suspended the face to face teaching in a bid to contain the disease. Hence, this study seeks to examine the strategies employed by Ekurhuleni North District Schools to maintain curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID-19.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and the virus has now spread to many countries and territories. As the pandemic continues spreading in many countries of the world, how to keep learning in disruption has become a major challenge to the global education community. The naïve concern is on the extent of the time loss and the curriculum content that could not be covered as a result of this pandemic. Space, safety precautions, curriculum, time recovery, efficient teaching approaches, learner support materials, parental involvement, exam preparation and other mitigating factors were the major concerns which needed to be strategized in schools. Hence, in order to recoup the lost time and content in the curriculum, new lots of changes to instructional learning approaches were inevitable in the wake of indefinite school closures which affected curriculum continuity. It is against this problem that the study seeks to examine the strategies employed by Ekurhuleni North District schools to maintain curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID-19.

1.4 Aim of the study

This study aims at examining the strategies that were employed by Ekurhuleni North District schools to maintain curriculum continuity in the wake of Covid-19.

1.5 Research Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine how Covid-19 affected curriculum continuity;
2. To determine the capacity of schools to implement interventions for curriculum continuity;
3. To assess the nature and source of support for schools in efforts to provide for curriculum continuity;
4. To examine the resources that were availed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity;
5. To examine the various provisions that were employed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity for learners of different needs and backgrounds.

1.6 Research Questions

This study intends to answer the following research questions:

1.6.1 Main Question

What strategies were employed by Ekurhuleni North District schools to maintain curriculum continuity in the wake of Covid-19?

1.6.2 Sub-Questions

1. How did Covid-19 affect curriculum continuity?

1. How capacitated were schools to implement interventions for curriculum continuity?
2. What was the nature and source of support for schools in efforts to provide for curriculum continuity?
3. What resources were available to ensure curriculum continuity?
4. What provisions were employed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity for learners of different needs and backgrounds?

1.7 Significance of the study

This study is significant to the following beneficiaries:

1.7.1 To the researcher

The study is significant to the researcher as it provides a better understanding of the effects of COVID-19 on curriculum continuity and the strategies employed by schools in order to maintain curriculum continuity. This is important because appropriate strategies and resources will be devised given the different types of learners (special needs, children with disabilities, children from poor families). Further, the study is beneficial to the researcher in that it articulates the South African Education policy on Covid-19 Education response so that a number of strategies are put in place to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on curriculum continuity.

1.7.2 To school administrators

The study will help school administrators in coming up with more effective and efficient strategies to address the effects of COVID -19 on curriculum continuity. The results of the study will provide recommendations on the strategies that schools in the district and beyond could implement to avoid the spread of COVID-19 to children, at the same time ensuring curriculum continuity. The study also benefits school administrators by fully orienting them to the post Covid-19 environment, the “dos” and “donts”. Resultantly, the teachers and learners will benefit too as the school environment will be safe for learning.

1.7.3 To policy makers

The study is significant to policy makers as the conclusion and recommendations from this study highlights key points to be either developed or strengthened for the proper implementation. Policy makers benefit from the study as more COVID-19 methods of teaching and learning will be devised in order to ensure safe and COVID free environment for children

1.7.4 To the body of knowledge

This study provides a framework for other students who wish to undertake research in related field. Moreover, it is hoped that the findings will be valuable to the academics, who may find useful research gaps that may stimulate interest in further research. Furthermore, the study contributes to the available literature as it provides a useful framework of strategies that are implemented by schools to ensure curriculum continuity.

1.8 Assumptions of the study

It is tacit in this inquiry that:

- schools made efforts to provide for curriculum continuity in the wake of Covid-19 induced school closures;
- provisions and strategies for curriculum continuity during Covid-19 induced school closures disenfranchised other disadvantaged learners;
- Schools require support from all stakeholders in order to ensure safe curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID-19.

1.9 Delimitation of the study

This study concentrates on investigating the strategies employed by schools in maintaining curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID-19. The study focuses on examining the effects of Covid-19 on curriculum continuity, the strategies which were put in place by schools, the resources that were available and how did schools implement the strategies given their different types of learners in terms of access to electronic gadgets, network connectivity, supervision, lack of pupil-pupil interaction and so forth. Further, the study confined to Ekurhuleni North District Schools. The study will be conducted from October 2020 to April 2021 which is reasonably enough time to conduct a study.

1.10 Limitations of the study

Firstly, the data for the study will be subject to usual limitations of a case study research design. The study uses schools in Ekurhuleni North District in South Africa, which is a single district. It may not typify all schools in Gauteng Province and South Africa as a

whole. Given the commonality of challenges brought about by COVID-19 on the learning of children, other districts may learn from the strategies implemented by schools in Ekurhuleni North District in South Africa. Further, the methodology adopted for this study will be affected by the COVID-19 where it will be difficult to access participants as a result of lockdown restrictions. To mitigate this limitation, phone call interviews were administered and online distribution of questionnaires was done to participants who were beyond the reach of the researcher. Further, lockdown protocols and social distancing measures were observed when collecting data from the participants. Thirdly, the respondents may hide under the pretext of time to avoid participating in the study. The researcher therefore had to seek rapport between the participants and the researcher by seeking informed consent based on the importance of the study.

1.11 Definition of terms

1. Strategies – These are provisions that are employed to address a given problem (Mangezi, 2020). Contextually, strategies refer to the provisions employed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity in schools given the school closures as a result of COVID-19.
2. Curriculum – refers to the education plan for which was devised to provide the learning content for learners.
3. Curriculum continuity – refers to the progression and completion of learning syllabuses and learning content after some stoppages as a result of COVID-19.

1.12 Chapter summary

The chapter presented the introductory sections of the dissertation. The chapter discussed the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and questions. Significance of the study, delimitations, limitations of the study and research assumptions as well as definition of terms were also outlined. The next chapter will be looking at review of related literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the introduction to the study where the background, problem statement and research purpose were outlined. The purpose of this review of literature is to evaluate and bridge the gap between various scholarly views and opinions in relation to COVID-19 and the implementation of strategies by schools to ensure curriculum continuity. Craig (2016) opines that literature review is a search and evaluation of the available literature in one's given subject or chosen topic area. Thus, the researcher evaluates what other authors say about the effects of COVID-19 on the learning of children, the strategies employed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity, the resources required to ensure curriculum continuity and strategies to accommodate all the children given the differences in learning needs of children. Related theories would be examined in support of the literature. The chapter summary will then conclude the chapter.

2.2 Theoretical framework

There are several theories that guides the present study

2.2.1 Disaster Management Theory (Thurningham and Kimson, 1996)

Disaster management theory is premised on the assumption that many communities are often unprepared because disasters do not happen often. The theory states that

communities are often caught unaware by disasters, as such, there should have disaster management response strategies to alleviate them from the effects of disasters (Thurningham and Kimson, 1996). Thus, communities, schools and homes that are unsafe and unprepared result in learners, teachers and other personnel being killed, injured, disabled and traumatized. This is supported by UNICEF (2012) that each time a disaster occurs, masses of children are excluded from school, many never to return. The rights of all children to both education and safety must be safeguarded simultaneously. Teachers may be overwhelmed by their own personal losses. They also get displaced and may migrate. Thus, the theory states that communities should provide measures that place them at a better side when disasters occur. Disasters also impact on teachers and ancillary staff that teach and assist in the care of these children when they are at school. Save the Children (2016) says that significantly, many teachers lost their homes and had no alternative accommodation and therefore did not return to school when schools opened after an earthquake in Bangladesh. This theory is relevant to the study by providing awareness to the schools, governments and the community to provide necessary measures in responses to natural disasters such as diseases, the current global pandemic COVID-19. As such, schools have to devise strategies that help contain the disease from spreading.

2.2.2 Elaboration Theory (Stevenson, 2007)

The elaboration theory integrates elements from the content analysis technique and from task analysis technique within a coherent schema that attempts at improving their deficiencies. The result is a proposal of elaborative sequences as a way of sequencing learning contents. The elaboration theory is premised on a number of principles that

learning contents should be in order so as to leave the simple and general elements in the first place, and incorporating the more complex and detailed elements progressively later on. According to this theory, it would be advisable to present a global view of the main aspects of the learning content first, dealing with the elaboration of each part alone later on, and going back to the global view from time to time in order to enrich and enlarge it. In this way and once part of the initial view has been elaborated, in a first analysis stage, the starting point is resumed so as to place the elaboration in the global vision. Each part is dealt alike until all of them have reached a first stage of complexity.

The theory is relevant in this study in that students can handle the learning contents in the complexity level that suits best their state of knowledge. The Elaboration Theory postulates that the learning results will be better from the qualitative and quantitative aspects when the organisation of teaching follows a model that presents the content that is the learning object in general and simple terms, within a general viewpoint

2.3 Effects of Covid-19 on curriculum continuity

Extant literature suggests that COVID-19 has posed a number of challenges on the learning and curriculum continuity. The COVID-19 Disruption has led to a national shutdown which led to school closures. As such, COVID-19 has a plethora of effects on curriculum continuity.

2.3.1 Disrupted learning progression

COVID-19 has the net effect of disrupting the learning progression of school children, stealing the content time of learning. Saveedra (2020) reported that what should we be worried about in this phase of the crisis that might have an immediate impact on

children are losses in learning, increased dropout rates, children missing their most important meal of the day. Jameson (2019) claimed that major disease outbreaks such as cholera, Ebola and Swine flu have disrupted school learning when children were absented from school in a bid to contain the outbreaks. Moreover, most countries have very unequal education systems, and these negative impacts will be felt disproportionately by poor children (Saveedra, 2020). Thus, there is a general consensus in the literature that COVID-19 has caused disruption of learning progression of children.

2.3.2 School dropouts

It was reported by many academics that the percentage of school drop-outs increased as a direct results of COVID-19. Dropout rates are still very high in many countries, and a long period of disengagement can result in a further increase. Wiki (2019) reported that school closures in many countries worldwide during the spread of COVID-19 made more than 376.9 million learners being excluded from the learning process. Mathius (2020) reported that school dropouts arose from 13% to 25.7% at the end of April 2020. Even though various attempts were made to use online tools and platforms to try and salvage curriculum completion, it can be said that due to the inequality within our system, many learners just do not have access to the online platforms. This was supported by Evidence and Fionna (2020) that the learning methodologies implemented by schools do not benefit all the children especially those from poor families who do not afford online learning materials.

2.3.3 Disrupted social relationships

The current COVID-19 pandemic has impacted tremendously on the traditional face to face teaching and learning practices within our schools. This has disrupted the continuity of emotional and social relationships of children because the children would not be learning face to face with each other. Saveedra (2020) argued that going to school is not only about learning math and science, but also about social relationships and peer-to-peer interactions. It is about learning to be a citizen and developing social skills. Vygotsky's (1962) theory of socio-cultural learning stresses the interplay between a learner, the environment, and the people in the environment. The theory emphasizes that children's cognitive and language development does not occur in isolation from the social environment. That is why it is important to stay connected with the school by any means necessary. Evidence and Fionna (2020) claimed that group work, games and social interactions have been disturbed by the school closures and the subsequent national lockdown. For all students, this is also a time to develop socio-emotional skills and learn more about how to contribute to society as a citizen (Saveedra, 2020). Hence, school closures have cut social relationships of children where peer support, group discussions and children learning games were cut, as a result.

2.3.4 Poor academic performance of children

School closures in many countries worldwide during the spread of COVID-19 made more than 376.9 million learners being excluded from the learning process. Saavedra (2020) reported that the World Bank's learning poverty indicator (2020) reported that the percentage of children who cannot read and understand at age 10 stood at 53% of

children in low and middle-income countries before the outbreak started. This pandemic has the potential to worsen these outcomes even more if we do not act fast. Saveedra (2020) believed that richer countries are better prepared to move to online learning strategies, although with a lot of effort and challenges for teachers and parents.

2.3.5 Health effects on parents of children

The Educational institution closures come with significant and enduring adverse impacts on health, education, economic and social inequities (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Moreover, as currently configured, education closures may come with adverse impacts on the healthcare system itself, due to essential staff having to look after their children. Conservative estimates from the United States suggest this may be 15 percent of their healthcare staff. It can be noted that during the corona virus period, all teaching activities become online. This raises the challenge of providing the appropriate online instruction in a flexible way, by considering the characteristics of students and learning. Saveedra (2020) stressed that although many countries are showing a lot of creativity, many ministries of education are worried that relying exclusively on online strategies will imply reaching only children from better-off families. Thus, the literature is agreeing that COVID-19 has caused health problems to both the children and parents who should provide necessary resources which support online and distant learning.

2.4 The capacity of schools to implement interventions for curriculum continuity

The literature gathered suggests that schools in many provinces of South Africa and beyond were struggling to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on curriculum continuity. According to the Chinese Ministry of Education (2019), schools' capacity to intervene

the COVID 19 curriculum disruption, schools must have reliable communication infrastructure, suitable digital learning resources, friendly learning tools, effective learning methods, instructional organizations, effective support services for teachers and learners, and, close cooperation between Governments, Enterprises and Schools. For instance, Manasseh (2020) found that most schools across the globe were yet to in position to undergo awareness creation; improvement of ICT infrastructure; Development of policies on ICTs, eLearning and institutional repository; and selection and implementation of appropriate eLearning technologies for course management system. This shows that there is still a long way to go for schools in various districts to get the capacity to ensure a safe and reliable environment for the teaching and learning of children. Moyo (2021) stated that the current COVID-19 pandemic has impacted tremendously on the traditional face-to- face teaching and learning practices within schools. Even though various attempts were made to use online tools and platforms to try and salvage curriculum completion, it can be said that due to the inequality within the school system, many learners just do not have access to the online platforms because the schools have not yet put proper mechanisms to support curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID 19. This is supported by (Moyo, 2020) that due to the complexities created by the pandemic, it is prudent not to overwhelm the system and place undue pressures on parents, learners and teachers. Thus, the above sentiments suggest that schools were not yet ready to tackle the challenges brought about by COVID-19, as scenarios with actionable plans were explored to try and salvage the current curriculum challenges.

2.5 The nature and source of support for schools in efforts to provide for curriculum continuity

Extant literature suggests that schools require financial and non-financial support from all stakeholders including the government, teachers, parents and the community at large. The nature and source of support

2.5.1 Reliable communication infrastructure

It can be noted that for the online and distance learning to be successful, reliable communication infrastructure must be available. In this regard, a reliable network infrastructure is crucial to support different activities, such as synchronous cyber-teaching using video conferencing, asynchronous cyber-learning by accessing or downloading digital learning resources, and collaboration with peers via social software (Huang, et al., 2020). Thus, Singh & Thurman (2019) supported and asserts that schools should test and evaluate the network bandwidth and increase it if necessary. To ensure a reliable network infrastructure that can support millions of students studying at the same time, schools, parents and organisations have to find reliable data or network services that provide reliable learning for children.

2.5.2 Suitable digital learning resources

The term 'digital learning resource' is used to refer to materials required that support the learner's achievement of the described learning goals (Huang et al., 2020). These materials consist of a wide variety of digitally formatted resources including graphics images or photos, audio and video, simulations, animations, prepared or programmed learning modules (Epigeum, 2019). Further, digital technological gadgets that supports

digitally formatted learning such as laptops, smart phones, cameras, printers, scanning machines, Wifi gadgets and so forth. However, Saveedra (2020) believed that richer countries are better prepared to move to online learning strategies, although with a lot of effort and challenges for teachers and parents. However, Saveedra (2020) highlighted that in middle-income and poorer countries, the situation is very mixed because of the vast inequality of opportunities. Although scholars above are in agreement that flexible learning enhance curriculum continuity in the face of COVID-19, poor people and those in rural areas have challenges in getting these resources. Many children do not have a desk, books, internet connectivity, a laptop at home, or supportive parents. However, others do and the situation causes the vast inequality of opportunities. Zayapragassan (2020) stressed that what educationists need to avoid or minimize as much as possible is for those differences in opportunities to expand and cause the crisis to have an even larger negative effect on poor children's learning. In addition, some countries will be able to increase their teachers' digital skills. Regards to the modality of the resources, flexibility can be indicated by using a range of media formats, such as podcasts, narrated screen capture, the full video of lectures and software (Gordon, 2014). Open Educational Resources (OER) can also provide flexibility in the way of using learning resources since they are under an open license. For instance, an educator can use, mix, adapt a given OER to fit his/her learning context. These modalities require a number of resources such as internet connection, computers, which might not be easily bought by poor families.

2.5.3 Friendly learning tools

The literature gathered showed that the resources to be available for the learning of children must be user-friendly. Ozdemir and Bonk (2017) have pointed out that searching and locating specifically high-quality educational resources that are learner friendly is a difficult task. Therefore, teachers and parents should carefully choose the quality of educational resources to use by referring to well-known national and international repositories. Zayapragassan (2020) asserts that ease of adaptability of resources enhances friendliness of learning tools. As such, educators should choose resources which are easy to adapt in their context, that is, resources which can be easily mixed or modified to fit a specific learning context. For instance, PPT presentations can be good resources as they can be easily readapted. The media should be presented in an acceptable way, so as not to cause visual fatigue, especially for younger students; and suitability of resource organization different types of learning resources can be effectively organized, such as video, animation, text, electronic teaching materials, virtual experiments, and so forth, in order to make the layout clear and the content suitable, and students will not be confused.

2.5.3 Effective learning methods

Effectively selecting and using learning methodologies is beneficial to learners in finding and processing information, constructing knowledge, collaborating with peers, expressing understanding and evaluating learning effects in concrete ways (Gordon, 2014). A range of teaching and learning strategies can be used in online contexts to make flexible instructions (Petrina, 2011). Wiki (2019) noted that the lecture method,

also known as direct instruction teaching strategy, mainly focuses on teacher-directed approaches and is the most commonly used teaching method. In this method of teaching, the content needs to be prepared and organized in advance. Also, the instructor needs to be aware of student requirements for the lessons or sessions. This strategy is effective for imparting knowledge to students in a step by step structured way and involves active student participation. Others believed that case study method is more effective especially using online methods. A detailed analysis is made of some specific, usually compelling event or series of related events so that learners will better understand its nature and what might be done about it (Gordon, 2014). For example, learners in a technology lab might investigate the wear and tear of skate boarding on public works. Furthermore, discussions are another teaching methodology effective for enhancing curriculum continuity. It occurs when a group assembles to communicate with one another through speaking and listening about a topic or event of mutual interest (Gordon, 2014). To illustrate, a group of learners convenes to discuss what it has learned about global warming. Thus, the effectiveness of all the above learning methodologies depends on the type of learners involved. hence, choosing the best learning method is required for the continuity of the curriculum.

2.5.5 Effective support services for teachers and learners

Effective support services are the key to ensure quality online education. The support services of online education include two types, namely support services for teachers' online teaching and support services for students' online learning. Both services can be provided in collaboration with the government, schools, enterprises, families, society and so forth (Wiki, 2019). Efforts should be paid to improve teachers' online teaching

ability as both the synchronous and asynchronous online teaching tools are unfamiliar with most of the teachers. It includes online teaching strategies, information technology applications, epidemic prevention cases in schools and local teacher training cases, so as to promote the rapid improvement of teachers' online teaching abilities (Gordon, 2014). The supports for teachers include how to use the synchronous cyber-learning software, how to utilize the learning management system and how to conduct learning activity design. The effectiveness of supportive services for learning is reflected in two aspects. It can promote the students' effective learning and personality development (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Effective learning refers to the growth and improvement of students' knowledge, cognition, intelligence and skills; personality development mainly involves the cultivation of positive attitude towards life, good thinking, basic communication and cooperative skills, the consciousness of rules, integrity, perseverance and innovation.

2.5.6 Close cooperation between Governments, Enterprises and Schools.

Governments, enterprises, and schools should closely collaborate together to ensure high-quality learning content, diverse learning activities, and effective learning outcomes when students learn online. The G-E-S collaboration should have the features such as flexible instructions; self-regulated learning; on-demand selection and respect for differences; open resources, scientific and technological support (HEDCOM, 2020). It was supported by Wiki (2020) that the G-E-S collaboration should be led by the government and organized by schools. The G-E-S collaboration should involve the family-school interaction and social participation. In the face of the current needs of online education during the epidemic and its future development, the government

should play multiple roles in policy guidance, overall coordination and effective supervision (Huang et al., 2020). The government should also coordinate enterprises, schools, research institutes, families, the society to build smooth communication platforms, select suitable learning resources, provide convenient learning tools, encourage diverse learning methods and support flexible teaching methods. Effective support services for online education will be provided through the close cooperation of multiple parties.

2.6 Strategies put in place by schools for curriculum continuity

As the emergency phase dissipates, communities, schools and policy makers have moved into a “recovery” mode and governments implement policies and measures to regain lost time. When amidst the crisis, they move to “coping” and thus, implementing measures to minimize the negative impact. This can include the following:

2.6.1 Adjustments of academic calendar

Research has shown that adjustment of academic calendar and school terms is one of the strategies in which schools maintain curriculum continuity. The South African Framework for Curriculum Recovery (2020) centres around the extension of teaching and learning time of children, curriculum interventions such as curriculum trimming and reorganization as well as accelerated learning programmes. Masambe and Chitotombe (2018) agrees and alluded that in times of educational disruptions, school terms adjustment is important in order to cover up the lost time and content curriculum material. Thus, employer-based learning has recently emerged as a new delivery method, which enables students to combine work with study, bringing together higher

education providers and employers to produce innovative learning opportunities from a broad view (UK Universities, 2018). The process of reopening of schools might be gradual, as authorities will want to reduce agglomeration or the possibility of a second wave of the pandemic, which can affect some countries. In that uncertain context, it might be better to make decisions assuming a longer, rather than a shorter scenario. The good news is that many of the improvements, initiatives, and investments that school systems will have to make might have a positive long-lasting effect (Saveedra, 2020). Thus, shifting of academic calendar to the time which they deemed less threat is critical to recoup the lost academic content, hence maintaining curriculum continuity.

2.6.2 Rolling out hygiene practice campaigns

Education can encourage students to become advocates for disease prevention and control at home, in school, and in their community by talking to others about how to prevent the spread of viruses (Saveedra, 2020). Maintaining safe school operations or reopening schools after a closure requires many considerations but, if done well, can promote public health (Petrina, 2011). As such, schools should enforce regular hand washing with safe water and soap, alcohol rub/hand sanitizer or chlorine solution and, at a minimum, daily disinfection and cleaning of school surfaces. Reports from China reveals that children are sanitized before entering school busses, classrooms, and classes are disinfected daily to contain the disease. It was also reported that social distancing and wearing of masks were some of the hygiene practices in China. Schools should provide water, sanitation and waste management facilities and follow environmental cleaning and decontamination procedures (Huang et al., 2020). Schools should promote social distancing (a term applied to certain actions that are taken to

slow down the spread of a highly contagious disease, including limiting large groups of people coming together). It is important to note that schools reinforce frequent hand washing and sanitation and procure needed supplies (HEDCOM, 2020). As such, schools should prepare and maintain hand washing stations with soap and water, and if possible, place alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizers) in each classroom, at entrances and exits, and near lunchrooms and toilets. Thus, hygiene practices are important for the learning of children in the wake of COVID-19 because the pandemic is contained by practicing hygiene.

2.6.3 Offering open and distance learning

Extant literature gathered suggests that with the development of information and communication technologies, new learning modes have appeared that can open more opportunities for flexible learning, such as open learning and online learning. Open learning is the use of teaching methodologies that can help students construct their own learning pathways (self-regulated) and be actively contributing to knowledge building (Huang et al., 2020). Online learning is defined as learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices (e.g., mobile phones, laptops, etc.) with internet access. In these environments, students can be anywhere (independent) to learn and interact with instructors and other students (Singh and Thurman, 2019). Saveedra (2020) suggested that to ensure curriculum continuity, the use of online tools assure that lesson plans, videos, tutorials, and other resources are available for some students and probably, most teachers. A number of frameworks have been put in place by many jurisdictions. For example, Huang et al., (2020) reported that during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Chinese Ministry of Education has launched the

“disrupted classes and undisrupted Learning” initiative, providing flexible online learning to over 270 million students from their homes. The primary purpose of this initiative was to ensure curriculum continuity.

Furthermore, open learning aims at making learners more self-determined and independent, while teachers became more as learning facilitators (Wiki, 2019). Learner-centered philosophy serves as an underpinning theory for this flexibility dominated educational practices (Lewis & Spenser, 1986). In flexible learning environments, barriers that might prevent students from attending a given educational context, for example, classrooms are removed (Andrea, 2021). But also, the use of podcasts and other resources that require less data usage is critical. In this regard, (Manaseeh, 2020) suggested that working with telecommunication companies to apply zero-rate policies can also facilitate learning material to be downloaded on a smartphone, computers and other material which more students are likely to have. For example, what is happening in Zimbabwe where the government in conjunction with Netone where learners are being given data to use when doing online learning and researches. This enhances the effectiveness of online and distant learning.

Worth noting is that the learner's choices can be offered using several instructional approaches, such as lectures with tutorials, independent study, discussion, seminar groups, debates, student-led discovery approaches and educational ramification (Gordon, 2014). For instance, the University of British Columbia (2020) has recently used different methods, such as blended learning, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and experiential learning, to offer more opportunities for learners to control their own learning process and improve their learning from home and helps them

develop self-management skills. In addition, other schools also organized group-based student discussions by using the platform ZOOM so that all participants can interact with each other more conveniently. Video-based one-on-one tutoring was used by the instructors at Renmin University Affiliated-Sanya High School so that students can have a better emotional perception while they are addressing the course work with real-time help from the instructors. It can be noted from the literature that although most scholars and policy makers agree that online learning can promote curriculum continuity, it disadvantages children from rural children and those from poor economic backgrounds, whose parents cannot afford resources required for online learning.

2.6.4 Creating Social platforms

The creation of social platforms is ideal in the learning of children. Social platforms and learning communities help students discuss, debate and reach agreements with group members or learning community members (Singh & Thurman, 2019) and complete knowledge construction in discussion or online collaborative interaction. Zayapragassarazan (2020) contends that online lecture sessions using software like 'Zoom' can be made more interactive by dividing the whole batch into sub-groups with limited number of students. This will help teachers to monitor their students' participation and can actively involve them by questioning and soliciting questions.

2.6.5 Artificial intelligence

A myriad of scholars has argued that artificial intelligence is a new approach to the learning of children. There are a number of tools and techniques that can be used to enhance the learning of children in the absence of the teacher. Zapata (2016) stressed

that a variety of web 4.0 tools can be used to help learners generate content and interact with peers, such as blogs, wikis, and social networks. Additionally, several technology-based communication mediums, such as emails and instant messages applications, made the instructors and administrative staffs' work much more convenient. A blended way to deliver a course with the theme of English Language for pre-school kids in China provided by New Oriental Education and McGraw Hill allows students to use an Artificial Intelligence-driven mobile application to access the learning resources and study on their own paces during the weekdays (Gordon, 2014). The supplementary activities include imitating the reading process, automatic grading, and group discussions via social network applications. During the weekend, the lecture is delivered online by the instructors as live virtual classrooms. This is another form of online learning that reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19, at the same time maintaining curriculum continuity.

2.7 Resources that must be available to ensure curriculum continuity

There are a number of resources that are required by school learners in their learning to ensure curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID-19. Ozdemir and Bonk (2017) have pointed out that searching and locating specifically high-quality educational resources, among the thousands that are published, is a difficult task. Therefore, teachers should carefully choose the educational resources to use to ensure curriculum continuity.

2.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the researcher made a review of what other authors say about the effects of COVID-19 on curriculum continuity. There was a general consensus in the literature

that COVID 19 has made devastating effects on curriculum continuity as it reduced children performance, drop-outs, disrupted learning progression and disrupted social relationships. As such, the literature was agreeing that schools have made major strides in implementing strategies to maintain curriculum continuity such as adjusted academic calendar, online learning, engaging on hygiene practices and so forth. In doing this, the Disaster Management Theory and the elaborative theories were scrutinised in order to guide the research study. The conceptual framework was reviewed as well as others related issues. It is important to note that this chapter provides a point of reference in discussing and interpreting of the findings of the study. The next chapter will be looking at the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter looked at the literature review where related scholarly perspectives concerning curriculum continuity were reviewed. This chapter presents the research methodology adopted for this research study. Research methodology is a thorough description of all the activities and procedures which would be undertaken during the course of the research. As such, major concepts like research approach, research design, population, and sampling techniques are presented in this chapter. Further, research instruments, data collection procedures and data presentation and analysis as well as ethical considerations are also reviewed in this chapter.

3.2 Research Methodology/approach

The research methodology can be defined as a relatively well-defined and comprehensive research method that seeks to develop conceptually rich theories grounded in observations from empirical studies (Burglear, 2015). There are three types of research methodology, namely, qualitative, quantitative and mixed method methodologies. However, this study adopts a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research methodology, according to Crosswell (2007), is a methodology which rejects the existence of any possible correct reality (Annum, 2015) and supports the view that there are many truths and multiple realities (Dyer, 2016). This type of methodology is rooted from the constructionist or interpretive philosophy which seeks to

understand why such phenomenon exists. Qualitative research methodology focuses on the experiences of people as well as stressing the uniqueness of individuals. Creswell (2003) cited in Craig (2016) notes that a qualitative approach is most appropriate when a researcher seeks to explore social phenomena in its natural setting if a true, clear and complete picture is to be depicted in line with the present research. Thus, the choice of this research approach was influenced by the explorative nature of research questions of this study which seeks to find out the strategies adopted by schools in Ekurhuleni Province in South Africa to ensure curriculum continuity in the wake of the pandemic-COVID-19. The approach was considered necessary for capturing data from all stakeholders, including the School head teachers/principals, parents and the school governing body members on how to enhance curriculum continuity after the disruption of learning by school closures as a result of COVID-19. Further, the researcher adopted the qualitative research methodology in order to understand the meaning of the social situation from the point of view of those who live it (Creswell, 2007). Brammar (2007) went on to add that in a qualitative research methodology, the questions often asked not only for information and option but also allowed the interviewer to probe the richness of emotions and motivations related to the topic.

3.3 Research design

According to Kerlinger as cited in Kumar (2017), a research design is a strategy used to investigate through its plan and structure that is considered to get answers for research questions. The research study is exploratory in nature and takes the form of a case study that applies in qualitative methodology. A case study approach was deemed appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to gather information from a

single group of people with common characteristics. According to Yin (2006) a case of study is an enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Thus, exploratory research design allows the researcher to understudy the how and to what extent schools ensure curriculum continuity in the face of COVID-19. The research used the case study design with the intention to gain an understanding of underlying perceptions and opinions over the effects and after-effects of COVID-19 on education of children and how to counter such effects by ensuring curriculum continuity. This was deemed to help provide insights into the problem or help develop ideas in line with the thrust of an exploratory research design. Caldwell, (2015) puts forward that exploratory research design focuses on explaining aspects of a study in a detailed manner. Thus, the major reason for choosing this design was that it emphasises on the contextual analysis of a series of events and their interrelation. In the same vein, the design was well-matched with the use of numerous qualitative methods of collecting data such as interviews, observations and key informant interviews as would be done in this study.

3.4 Population of the Study

According to Stanfield (2016), population is defined as all elements (individuals, objects and events) that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. According to Leedy (2017), population is the full set of cases from which a sample is taken or any group of individuals that are of interest to the researcher. Contextually, the population for this study refers to the inhabitants of an area of concern (Morris, 2010) and comprises schools in Ekurhuleni North District in South Africa. According to the ministry of

education district office report (2019), the *district has 21 primary schools. This is the population from which the sample would be drawn. As such, principals, parents and the school governing body members were actively involved in this study.

3.5. Sample and sampling procedure

Sampling is the process of selecting a given number of people from a defined population under study (Leedy, 2017). In this study, a combination of purposive sampling and convenience sampling would be used for this study. Purposive sampling is one whereby a researcher selects a sample on the basis of their knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of research aims (Babbie, 2014). It is a sampling technique that is under non probability sampling that deals with case selection of participants that are representative of the population. Purposive sampling and convenience sampling were used to select 4 schools in the district, which the researcher was easily accessible to. Thus, principals, parents and the School Governing Body (SGB) members from each school selected constituted the sample of this study, with a maximum of 20 participants. These sampling methods were found relevant to the present study because the researcher would select the schools which are easily accessible to him. From the participants, Newman (2010) cautioned that a sample can lead to the production of biased information if it is selected without proper care. Muchengetwa (2015) posits that a maximum of fifteen to twenty participants is used as sample in order to produce quality results. This motivated the researcher to use twenty participants as a sample.

3.5.2 Sampling procedure

The sampling procedure is a process of choosing or extracting a proportion of participants from the population for the sake of the research study. Ary, Jacobs and Razavier (2014) concur that a sampling procedure is the process of systematically choosing a sub-set of the total population one is interested in. In this study, the researcher adopted purposive sampling and convenience sampling techniques for the study. The researcher would approach the District Education Officers to get the permission to carry out the study in the district. When the permission is granted, engagements would be made with school administrators of the selected schools to get the permission to carry out the study in their schools. After that, participants would be engaged in order to make appointments. The researcher would employ five (5) participants from each school selected. The sampling techniques employed are fair and representative of the entire population of this study.

3.6 Research instruments

Research instruments are the tools that are used for collecting the data and information needed to get the solutions to the problem under investigation. Leedy (2013) states that, the research instruments are tools which serve to assist the researcher to collect relevant data that helps to answer research questions. According to Pierce (2016), research instrument can be a survey, questionnaire, test, scale, rating, or any tool designed to measure the variable(s), characteristic(s), or information of interest, often of a behavioral or psychological characteristic. There are several instruments that can be

used to collect data like observations, interviews, questionnaires, test and exercises and document analysis. However, this study used interviews, and questionnaires.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Cohen, Morrisson and Manion (2011) state that an interview is a conversation between two people in which the interviewer initiates the conversation so as to get the relevant information. Thus, an interview involves gathering data through direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is ideal to use an interview when the researcher wishes to know the emotions and experiences of participants, especially when dealing with sensitive issues. This study made use of semi-structured interviews. This type of interviews, unlike structured interview that involves a rigorous set of questions which does not allow one to divert, a semi-structured interview is open (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2016), allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a fairly open framework which allows focused, conversational, two-way communication (Yin, 2017). The interviewer follows a guideline but is able to follow topical trajectories in the conversation that may stray from the guide when it seems appropriate. Not all questions are designed and phrased ahead of time. The majority of the questions are created during the interview, allowing both the interviewer and the person being interviewed the flexibility to go into details when needed. The interview guides were prepared by the researcher in order to guide the researcher during the interviews. Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) stated that it is ideal to use an interview when the researcher wishes to know the emotions and experiences of participants especially when dealing with sensitive issues such as the effects of COVID-19. The

researcher would use interviews to obtain information from the headmasters and school administrators. This allows the researcher to get quality responses from the participants since the follow up questions would be probed for further clarity.

3.6.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument which consists of a series of questions to be answered by a group of people in order to get information from participants (McQueen and Knussen, 2014). This study made use of questionnaires to elicit primary data from the participants. Semi-structured questionnaires would be used in the current study in order to collect data from the respondents. Thus, the questionnaires would be administered in order to triangulate the research instruments to enhance the credibility of the research findings. The semi structured questionnaire was chosen for the study as it allows the respondents to expand their responses at the same time guided by the researcher. The questionnaires are constructed in line with research questions and objectives. This research tool is advantageous in that it provides an efficient way in collecting large amounts of data from large number of people in a short period of time (Kuhn, 2015). They also allow the respondent to think critically before answering and this enhances the chances of the data being accurate. However, Cresswell (2013) argues that they can also be disadvantageous in that they are difficult in allowing people to expand their answers and respondents may misinterpret the questions and hence the respondents do not have an opportunity to ask questions for clarity. This calls for caution when interpreting results.

3.7 Data collection procedure

The researcher got permission from the research supervisor to go for data collection. The researcher got the letter from the faculty that granted him the permission to carry out the study. The researcher approached the school administration to get the permission to conduct the interviews at their schools. After that, potential participants were contacted, some through emails and some whom the researcher had access to their phone numbers through phone calls. Appointments were made and interviews were done at participants' convenience times. Questionnaires were distributed online via respondents' emails and whatsapp platforms. The duration of the interviews was between 10 and 15 minutes. An outline interview schedule was used to guide the interview. The participants were free to deviate from it and the interviewer intervened only to clarify issues or introduce a new theme.

3.8. Data Analysis

The researcher would use thematic analysis in analyzing the collected data and the themes would be derived from the research objectives. Dennis (2016) stated that thematic analysis is one of the common forms of analysis in qualitative research. Brown (2015) adds that thematic analysis is performed through the process of coding in phases to create established meaningful patterns. The researcher would code interview notes carefully by reading them several times to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on the overall meaning of the respondents' words as well as to understand the contents as described by (Creswell, 2009). The points from the interviews would be coded and chunked together with the coding from the

questionnaires. The data would be coded by identifying key words in contexts and word repetitions (Patton, 2015). Coding and arranging the data into appropriate themes would be done with the help of three colleagues. The thematic analysis is deemed appropriate because it provides the researcher with a flexible method of analyzing data and allows the researcher with various methodological backgrounds to engage in this (Boxal, 2013). Also thematic analysis is deemed more reliable because of a wide variety of interpretations that may arise from the themes.

3.9 Research trustworthy

Research trustworthiness is the truth value of a piece of research and to gather the truthfulness on how congruent the findings are with reality. Schuler (2010) says the criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research are closely tied to the paradigmatic underpinnings of the particular discipline in which a particular investigation is conducted. A research project is trustworthy when it reflects reality and ideas of the participants (Brown, 2015). Thus, in order to ensure trustworthy of the research study, credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability factors would be ensured.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to how confident the qualitative researcher is in the truth of the findings of the study (Gunawan, 2015). This boils down to deal with the degree of congruency of the research findings with reality. According to Merriam (2015), “the qualitative researchers use the concept of credibility, which is much equivalent to internal validity used in quantitative research”. Thus in this study credibility of the study would be

achieved by means of triangulation of qualitative data. The data from the semi-structured interviews would be triangulated with the data from questionnaires. This is done to ensure the truthfulness and the authenticity of the data. Credibility of the study also would be achieved by comparing the congruency between the findings of the study and those of other researchers reviewed in the literature. This is supported by Gunawan (2015) that triangulation can come inform of data triangulation, where a range of documents may also be employed as sources of materials. Lincoln and Guba (2013) agreed and proposed that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness.

3.9.2 Transferability

Research transferability in qualitative research implies that results of the research study can be applicable to similar situations or individuals. Transferability can be equated to reliability of the research results in quantitative studies. In this study, the findings of the study, like experiments, are compared to already theoretical propositions (Stake, 2010, Yin, 2017).

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability in the traditional sense refers to the extent the research findings can be replicated by other similar studies (Linda, 2012). However, in qualitative study, Guba and Lincoln (2015) argue that qualitative research does not cover enough of an expanse of subject and experiences to provide a reasonable degree of reliability but the

most important question is whether the findings are consistent and dependable with the data collected. DeCock (2013) says dependability brings an evaluation of the quality of the integrated processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation. Dependability could be looked at as the researcher's account of the changes built into any setting in addition to changes to the research design as learning unfolded. Qualitative researchers recognize that reality is socially built and constantly changing, and the dependability of this study originates from capturing the changing conditions which appear in the setting and the study design as a result of this reality (Christy, 2015).

3.9.4 Confirmability

The concept of confirmability corresponds to the notion of objectivity in quantitative research (Linda, 2012). On confirmability, the implication is that the findings are the result of the research rather than an outcome of the bias and subjectivity of the researcher. To achieve confirmability in this study, the researcher identifies and uncovers the decision trail for public judgement. As such, audit trail, ongoing reflection by the way of journaling as well as recording field notes and transcripts saves the researcher and the reader an opportunity to assess the findings of this study.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethics deal with the interaction between researchers and the people under study. Anyone involved in social scientific research needs to be aware of the general agreements shared by researchers about what is proper and improper in the conduct of

scientific inquiry (Babbie, 2013). The present study would adhere to the following ethical principles:

3.10.1. Informed Consent

Informed consent involves giving details about the research to all respondents for them to make an informed decision to take part in the research. Respondents in the present study shall authorize their participation in the research study verbally. The respondents shall be informed of the procedures of the research including any potential risks associated like victimization. Other information which shall be given includes purpose of the research, expected duration, procedures and limits of confidentiality. They shall be given time to carefully consider the risks and benefits and to seek clarity to any issues of concern to them before making a decision to take part in the research.

3.10.2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality entails ability by the researcher not to divulge information that relates to the study to unauthorized persons (Creswell, 2013). Respondents would be guaranteed that any identifying information and individual responses would not be shared with anyone. Any identifying information would be avoided for example respondents would be instructed not to provide names.

3.10.3. Voluntary participation

As part of ensuring voluntary participation, the researcher shall provide the respondents with all the details of the study so as for the respondents to make the decision to willingly participate in the study. The respondents shall make their own uninfluenced decision to take part in the research that is all participants shall not be forced to take part directly or indirectly like promising to pay them since it is a form of coercion. The right of respondents to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once it has started without even giving reasons shall be observed. In the same vein, respect for intellectual property shall be observed by honouring patents, copyrights and other forms of intellectual property.

3.11 Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology adopted for this study. It discussed the key issues such as research philosophy, research design, population and sampling procedure, sample and sampling procedure, data collection procedures, research instruments and research trustworthiness. It was shown that the qualitative research was adopted and the data would be collected using semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires. Ethical considerations were also discussed and have to be adhered to for the success of the study. The next chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology adopted in this study. This chapter focuses on presentation and analysis of the research findings. Questionnaires and interviews were used as data collection instruments as deliberated in the previous chapter. The findings of the study are presented in themes derived from research objectives. The researcher believed that a better understanding of this phenomenon would be beneficial to the policy makers and strategists in schools to make informed decisions and strategies to ensure curriculum continuity.

4.1 Response rate

4.1.1 Questionnaire response rate

Table 4.1 showing questionnaire response rate

	Frequency	Percentage
Distributed	20	100
Returned	13	65
Response rate	13	65

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 4.1 above shows that a total of 20 questionnaires were distributed to the participants. However, only 13 questionnaires were completed and returned for analysis, giving 65% response rate. Six participants were representing teachers from the four selected schools, two were representing head teachers, three were representing parents and the other two were representing members of the School Governing Body (SGB). Seven scheduled participants failed to return the questionnaires as they had tight schedules during the data gathering period. Generally, the response rate was 13 out of 20 giving 65% response rate.

4.1.2 Response rate for the research interviews

Table 4.2 showing the interview participation rate

	Frequency	Percentage
Scheduled	8	100
Conducted	7	87.5
Response rate	7	87.5

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 4.1 above shows that 8 interviews were schedules. However, 7 interviews were conducted. One of them failed to turn up for the interviews as she had a tight schedule during the data collection period.

4.2 Demographic participation

The demographic analysis sought to identify the demographic characteristics of participants together with their gender, teaching position, teaching experience, education and computer literacy. The table(s) below shows the profiles and demographics of the participants to this research. These are the characteristics which are important because they are known to influence insights of the respondents and their understanding of the phenomenon under study.

4.2.1 Gender distribution of respondents

The study was interested in examining the gender of respondents in order to determine if the strategies employed by schools are skewed towards any gender.

Table 4.3 showing the gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency
Male	7
Female	6

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 4.3 above shows that there were more male respondents than their female counterparts. However, the difference was insignificant to affect the results of the study. This explains that the adoption of teaching and learning strategies for curriculum continuity is not gender sensitive in South Africa. Thus, the gender analysis was very

important for the study as it showed the equal representation of both males and females.

4.2.2 Teaching Position

Table 4.4 showing the teaching positions of participants

Position	Frequency
Head Teacher	3
Teacher	6
School Governing Body	2
Parents	2

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 4.4 above showed that the participants were taken from teachers and parents in order to get the views from both angles. This enhances the quality of findings of the study. This analysis was very important for the study because it allows the research to get balanced and rich data from both the teachers and parents' point of view concerning the effectiveness of the strategies employed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity during COVID-19. This enhances the quality and richness of the data collected.

4.2.3 Teaching Experience

Table 4.5 showing the experience of participants

Experience	Frequency
5 years & below	1
6 – 10 Years	7
11 – 15 years	4
16 – 20 years	1

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 4.5 above showed that the participants were had more many years in the teaching fraternity. As such, they may have learnt from the previous disasters and pandemics on the strategies to enhance curriculum continuity.

4.2.4 Education of participants

The study was interested in examining the education of participants.

Table 4.6 showing the education of participants

Participants	PhD/Prof	Hon/Masters Degrees	Diploma	Professional courses
Head teachers		3		
Teachers			6	
Parents & SGB members				4

Source: Field data (2021)

The findings of the research show that unanimously, all the participants of the study, with the highest being a holder of an honors/masters' degree. With these kinds of qualifications, one may vehemently conclude that the participants might have had the necessary knowledge and expertise to understand the phenomenon under study.

4.2.5 Computer literacy

The study was interested in examining the computer literacy in order to determine the ability of teachers to conduct lessons using digital gadgets and computer based applications.

Table 4.7 showing computer literacy of participants

	Frequency	Percentage

Computer literate	7	53.8%
Computer illiterate	3	23%
Mild literacy	3	23%

Source: Field data (2021).

The table 4.7 above shows that the majority of the respondents were computer literate while other three were mild literate and other three were not computer literate. This means that the efforts put by schools to implement remote and distance learning might be hampered by the incompetence of some teachers who are not able to use digital resources in the delivery of their duties.

4.3 Key findings

The findings of this study are presented in themes derived from research objectives. However, it is not the end of the categorisation since sub-themes also emerge from these overarching themes. In doing this, illustrative quotations from interview transcripts were used in an attempt to portray multiple participant perspectives and capture the richness and complexity of the subject matter. The illustrative quotations were presented in indented italics and pseudo names were used to maintain anonymity. As such, the following subsections present the themes together with their subthemes.

4.4 Main Theme 1: Effects of Covid-19 on curriculum continuity

The findings of the study revealed that COVID-19 has more destructive than constructive effects on curriculum continuity. This finding was obtained when the

majority of the participants both from the questionnaires and interviews indicated that COVID 19 culminated in disrupted learning progression, high school drop outs, early marriages, poor academic performance, disrupted social relationships of learners and even health effects on parents of learners.

4.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Disrupted learning progression

The study was informed that COVID-19 has affected curriculum continuity by disrupting learning progressions. This finding was revealed when 9 out of 13 of the questionnaire respondents indicated that the school closures as a result of COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns and curfews heavily affected curriculum continuity. Although other measures such as online learning and radio lessons were involved, not all learners benefited from such provisions given the different types of learners. This finding implies that school closures heavily affected the learning progression of learners where most learners stopped learning activities. This finding was further confirmed by the findings from the interviews conducted that COVID-19 disrupted the learning progression of learners. For example, participant Blue said:

“COVID-19 has the net effect of disrupting the learning progression of school children, stealing the content time of learning.... While COVID-19 is primarily affecting public health, spillover effects can already be observed in education, stemming largely from extended school closures.”

This was further supported by Participant Red who believed that:

“Extended interrupted education that disengages students from the learning process has the potential cost of reversing gains in learning results. An even

higher cost comes from the disengagement of learners with learning challenges (academic, socio-economic, students with special/diverse educational needs or persons with disabilities) who may not effectively cope with remote learning strategies or cannot access the information. Where school feeding is the norm, closed schools might preclude students getting school meals unless alternative arrangements are in place”

The above sentiments imply that COVID-19 has highly disrupted the learning progression of learners thereby affecting curriculum continuity. The finding of the study was found in line with Jameson (2019) that major disease outbreaks such as cholera, Ebola and Swine flu have disrupted school learning when children were absent from school in a bid to contain the outbreaks. This further supports Saveedra (2020) who found that most countries have very unequal education systems, and these negative impacts are felt disproportionately by poor children. Thus, the study was convinced that COVID-19 has greatly affected curriculum continuity through disrupted learning progression.

4.4.2 Sub-theme 2: School dropouts

The study found out that the school dropout rate of learners increased significantly as a result of COVID-19 and subsequent school closures. The majority of the respondents indicated on the questionnaires that COVID-19 has increased the dropout rate of learners. The respondents believed that those learners who did not cope with the remote learning have dropped out from school. The results from the interviews

conducted also confirmed that dropout rates increased as a result of COVID-19. For instance, participant Green had to say:

“...longer school closures resulted in an increased risk of dropout for learners, particularly from lower income”

Participant Yellow also believed that the pandemic has heavily impacted on school dropouts especially on girl children. She said:

“There is fear that the pandemic and its fallouts might leave an adverse lasting impact on girls’ education after the crisis is over. Girls are likely to drop out of school to look for jobs to sustain families in post-pandemic economic crises”

This finding suggests that the COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown had net effect of raising the dropout rate of learners in South Africa. This might be true given that learners from less privileged families who cannot cope up with the remote learning requirements are forced by situation to leave school. This finding was found in tandem with Chavarika (2020) who found out that school closures in many countries worldwide during the spread of COVID-19 made more than 376.9 million learners being excluded from the learning process. Furthermore, the Liberia experience during the Ebola outbreak, where 21% of girls of primary school age girls did not go back to school might repeat itself across Africa. This supports the Malala Foundation (2021) estimates that, globally, about 10 million more secondary school age girls could be out of school after the COVID-19 crisis has passed. Similarly, Saavedra (2020) reported that the World Bank’s learning poverty indicator (2020) reported that the percentage of children who cannot read and understand at age 10 stood at 53% of children in low and middle-

income countries before the outbreak started. Therefore, the study submitted that the percentage of school drop-outs in Ekurhuleni North District increased as a direct result of COVID-19.

4.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Poor academic performance

The study findings revealed that the academic performance has decreased significantly as a result of the negative effects of COVID-19 on the teaching and learning process. The results from the questionnaires showed that the majority of the respondents (12 out of 13) agreed that the academic performance of learners has reduced significantly as compared to the pre-Covid era. The respondents believed that due to disrupted learning caused by school closures derailed learners from focusing on academic activities. This finding was also confirmed by the results from the interviews conducted that schools were recording low pass rates with some schools recording zero (0%) pass rate. For example, participant Brown testified that:

“End of last year results, we recorded 0% pass rate at our school and this pass rates can be attributed to the effects of COVID. Learners were at home for quite a long time, no schooling activities were being done. So we can’t blame learners”

This is further testified by Participant Cream who said:

“The national 2020 pass rate was not pleasing. Do you know that we recorded the average pass rate of 37% as a nation in contrast to previous years.”

This finding indicates that the performance of learners had significantly reduced as a result of disrupted learning due to COVID-19. The findings of the study was found

complimenting the survey by the World Bank's learning poverty indicator (2020) that the percentage of children who cannot read and understand at age 10 stood at 53% of children in low and middle-income countries before the outbreak started. This pandemic has the potential to worsen these outcomes even more if no fast intervention is taken. Saveedra (2020) believed that richer countries are better prepared to move to online learning strategies, although with a lot of effort and challenges for teachers and parents. Dropout rates are still very high in many countries, and a long period of disengagement can result in a sharp decrease of academic performance of learners. Wiki (2019) reported that school closures in many countries worldwide during the spread of COVID-19 made more than 376.9 million learners being excluded from the learning process. Mathius (2020) reported that school pass rates in Botswana dropped from 13% to 10.9% at the end of 2020. Even though various attempts were made to use online tools and platforms to try and salvage curriculum completion, it can be said that due to the inequality within our system, many learners just do not have access to the online platforms. This was supported by Evidence and Fionna (2020) that the learning methodologies implemented by schools do not benefit all the children especially those from poor families who do not afford online learning materials. This significantly resulted in poor academic performance of children in Ekurhuleni North District in South Africa.

4.4.4 Sub-theme 4: Disrupted social relationships of learners

The findings of the study revealed that the COVID-19 and the subsequent school closures have heavily disrupted the social relationships of learners. This finding of the study was revealed when 7 respondents indicated that the social relationships of the learners were heavily disrupted by the COVID-19 and the school closures. The results

of the study claim that education is not about learning major subjects only but learners as well learn some social skills from others and peer-to-peer interactions. This finding was found to be in line with the interview findings that learners were benefiting from social interactions and group works. For instance, participant Green said:

“My brother, learners go to school to get a number of skills. Going to school is not only about learning mathematics and science, but also about social relationships and peer-to-peer interactions. It is about learning to be a citizen and developing social skills. So when schools are closed, social relationships of learners are disrupted.”

Participant Black supported this by saying:

“The current COVID-19 pandemic has impacted tremendously on the traditional face-to-face teaching and learning practices within our schools. This has disrupted the continuity of emotional and social relationships of children because the children would not be learning face to face with each other.”

The findings suggest that learners benefit social skills from others when they are at school. As such, disruptions in learning as a result of school closures significantly affect activities such as play, group work and peer interaction. This finding is also in line with Vygotsky’s (1962) theory of socio-cultural learning which stresses the interplay between a learner, the environment, and the people in the environment. The theory emphasizes that children’s cognitive and language development does not occur in isolation from the social environment. That is why it is important to stay connected with the school by any means necessary. Evidence and Fionna (2020) claimed that group work, games and

social interactions have been disturbed by the school closures and the subsequent national lockdown. For all students, this is also a time to develop socio-emotional skills and learn more about how to contribute to society as a citizen. Thus, the researcher was convinced that COVID 19 has impacted curriculum continuity through disrupted social relationships of learners as children learn from their social environment.

4.5 Main Theme 2: Capacity of Schools to Implement Interventions for Curriculum Continuity

The findings of the study revealed that the schools under study were struggling to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on curriculum continuity. This was revealed when the respondents indicated that the schools were yet to develop and implement the interventions for curriculum continuity. The findings revealed that schools were not in the capacity to provide the following:

4.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Reliable network infrastructure

The study found out that the schools in Ekurhuleni North District were not yet prepared to provide reliable network infrastructure to conduct online learning. This finding was revealed when the majority of the respondents (10 out of 13) indicated that the network infrastructure was very weak to support large numbers of learners. Despite the incapacity of schools to provide reliable network and communication infrastructure, the respondents emphasized that reliable network infrastructure is crucial to support different activities, such as video conferencing, cyber-teaching and downloading digital learning material. This was further reiterated by participants in the interviews that for schools to provide effective learning during school closures, reliable network is an

important ingredient for effective teaching and learning. For instance, participant Brown had to say:

“I think reliable network broadband is the centre pin for effective teaching and learning because strong and reliable network support teaching and learning activities such as synchronous cyber teaching using video conferencing, asynchronous cyber learning by accessing or downloading digital learning resources, and collaboration with peers via social software, etc. but our school management seem not to consider the importance of this, I don’t know why?”

This was supported by participant Blue who said:

“For ensuring curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID-19, schools should test and evaluate the network bandwidth and increase it if necessary. To ensure a reliable network infrastructure that can support millions of students studying at the same time, a number of strategies can be applied depending on the school capacity to implement them.”

This gives the impression that there is still a long way to go for schools to be in a capacity to provide effective teaching and learning as efforts to ensure curriculum continuity. The schools have not developed network infrastructure that accommodates large numbers of learners at the same time. This finding was found contradicting the findings by Huang, Liu, Tlili, Yang, and Wang (2020) that most schools in China had reliable network bandwidths that support millions of learners at the same time. This might be true given that China is the first country to provide online education to its learners as a way to ensure curriculum continuity during COVID-19. However,

Mangwanda (2021) agrees to the findings of the study that most government schools in Zimbabwe had no electricity, no internet connectivity, especially rural schools. Thus, the study confirms that schools in Ekhurhuleni North District were struggling to provide reliable network connectivity to its learners in order to ensure curriculum continuity.

4.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Suitable digital learning resources

The study was informed that for schools to ensure curriculum continuity, there should be enough resources. The study findings were revealed when 12 out of 13 respondents indicated that large amounts of resources are required and have to be provided for teachers and students of schools at all levels, including digital resources that are synchronized with classroom teaching in primary and secondary school. They indicated that digital learning resources such as teaching plans, courseware, teaching videos, course material, problem sets and tests database are required. Additionally, the platform also provides digital learning resources for students, teachers and principals of schools at all levels, and resources for vocational education, safety education, moral education, education for physical, health and art are as well required. However, the respondents raised concerns that most schools under study were not in the capacity to provide those teaching and learning resources because they require a lot of funding, which is sometimes beyond the reach of the school administration. This finding was further confirmed by the findings from the interviews that schools under study were yet to provide digital learning resources for the effective teaching and learning of the curriculum content. For example, participant Blue said:

“Of course we’re providing online learning to our students, but not all students have laptops and smart phones that supports the learning applications. This is my greatest worry that students should have suitable digital learning resources...”

This was found supporting the concerns raised by participant Yellow who said that:

“Our teachers and our students do not have enough resources such as laptops, Wifi and data, smartphones and electricity. This greatly hampers the efforts for curriculum continuity. There is need for schools and the community to avail resources that support Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Small Private Online Courses, online video micro-courses, e-books, simulations, models, graphics.”

This finding shows that the schools do not have the capacity to accommodate large numbers of learners for curriculum continuity because most of the learners do not have suitable digital learning resources to conduct online lessons. This implies that with the development of ICT in education, digital learning resources like Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Small Private Online Courses, online video micro-courses, e-books, simulations, models, graphics, animations, quizzes, games, and e-notes are making learning more accessible, engaging, and contextualized. However, other participants cautioned that selecting suitable digital learning resources for learners should be on the design of online learning activities. These materials consist of a wide variety of digitally formatted resources including graphics images or photos, audio and video, simulations, animations, prepared or programmed learning modules. Thus the study was convinced

that the schools were not in the capacity to fully implement interventions efforts for curriculum continuity because of insufficient digital learning resources for both teachers and learners.

4.5.3 Sub-theme 3: Effective teacher support services

The study found out that effective support services are the key to ensure quality online education that enhances curriculum continuity. The findings from the questionnaires indicated that teachers have to be educated on how to use online platforms in their delivery of teaching content to the learners. Others claim that support services for online education involves two types namely support for teachers and support for learners on how to use online platforms in the learning of the curriculum content. Furthermore, findings from the interviews also confirmed that the government has a mitigatory role of ensuring that teachers are given short courses on how to deliver online lessons to the learners. For example, participant Amber had to say:

“Efforts should be paid to improve teachers’ online teaching ability as both the synchronous and asynchronous online teaching tools are unfamiliar with most of the teachers. It includes online teaching strategies, information technology applications, epidemic prevention cases in schools and local teacher training cases, so as to promote the rapid improvement of teachers’ online teaching abilities.”

The above sentiment suggests that most teachers are half backed when it comes to online delivery of lessons. This implies that the government should take robust

measures to provide short courses or teacher trainings to enhance their abilities to manage online teaching and learning.

4.6 Nature and source of support for schools in efforts to provide for curriculum continuity.

The study also sought to examine the nature and source of support in efforts to provide for curriculum continuity. The study findings revealed that schools require strong internet access or mobile data, effective teacher support systems and parental involvement.

4.6.1 Sub-theme 1: Effective teacher support services from the government

The study was informed that schools require much support from the government through tertiary teacher training colleges to combine teaching practice with ICT so that teachers will be able to conduct digital delivery of teaching materials. This finding was reached following the majority respondents who indicated that the teachers require effective online teaching trainings in order for them to effectively deliver their duties. This finding was confirmed by the results of the interviews conducted that most teachers lack the ICT and digital teaching experience. As such they require the government and its concerned stakeholders to give their hands in letting teacher ready for implementing the required interventions for curriculum continuity. Participant Yellow said:

“ I think we need a bit of panel beating when it comes to the use of digital and online teaching. As you can see that this is our first time to use online teaching, so we need some form of trainings in this regard”

This was reiterated by participant Brown that teachers especially the elderly are not well versed with digital teaching and learning and they require some assistance with mentoring and coaching. This finding shows that schools require support in form of competent staff who can be able to implement the strategies for curriculum continuity. The findings of the study were found consistent with the findings by Marombedza (2019) that lack of computer literacy in educationalist has a negative impact on the delivery of modern learning. Thus the study confirms that the schools require effective support services for teachers in terms of teacher trainings.

4.6.2 Sub-theme 2: Reliable network and communication infrastructure

It emerged from the study that schools had no reliable network connectivity to support large numbers of learners at the same time. This finding was obtained following the respondents who hinted that they require support from network operators to provide learners with mobile data packages that support online teaching and learning of curriculum content. This implies that even the available resources will not solve the crises without internet connection. Findings from the interviews reiterated these findings when participants pleaded that they want some assistance from mobile operators to be lenient to them when providing data services. Thus, the study was convinced that schools should work in conjunction with network providers in order to ensure that teachers and learners have access to data services that allow them to access learning materials.

4.6.3 Sub-theme 3: Parental involvement

It also emerged from the study that schools require parental involvement in order for them to fully implement the strategies for curriculum continuity. The respondents for the questionnaires unanimously agreed that parental involvement is very important as their efforts would enhance curriculum continuity. This might be true given that the parents are the ones who pay the fees, who buy learning resources such as laptops, mobile phones, and other resources. Thus, their commitment and involvement are very important for the implementation of strategies for curriculum continuity. Participant Green explained that:

“Parents are one of our pillars for school activities to be successful. Parents provide us with the required learning materials such as digital gadgets which are key for online and distance learning, they pay fees, they provide food for the learners. So their efforts are very important for the success of our initiatives”

The above finding suggests that schools require support from parents in order for the curriculum continuity interventions to be successful. This finding was found in tandem with Msimane and Thsoba (2017) that parental involvement is an important source of support for school initiatives to be successful. In the same vein, Haland and Ghanaina (2020) believed that parents provide all the resources learners must have in support of all school activities. Thus, the study confirmed that schools require parental involvement for their initiatives to be a success.

4.7 Strategies employed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity

The study was informed that as COVID-19 is still there and is far from being over, the schools have devised strategies for ensuring curriculum continuity. The respondents showed that schools have devised strategies such as adjustments to academic calendar, compressed syllabuses, online and distance learning, phased reopening of schools and enrolment of hygiene campaigns.

4.7.1 Adjustments of academic calendar

The study was informed that schools, under the consultation and mandate of the South African government, have adjusted the academic calendar in order to recoup the lost time during school closures as a result of COVID-19. The respondents unanimously agreed that the schools have, under the government directive, adjusted the academic calendar in order to cover up for the lost time for learners. The study thus considered the adjustment of academic calendar and school terms as one of the strategies in which schools maintain curriculum continuity.

The findings from the interviews also confirmed the academic calendars were re-adjusted in order to recoup the learning time lost during lockdown and school closures.

Participant Green had to say:

“We resorted to shifting of the academic calendar to the time which we deemed less threat to both our learners and our teachers. This is critical to recoup the lost academic content and maintain curriculum continuity.”

Participant Brown shared the same thought as he said:

“In times of educational disruptions such as COVID-19, Ebola, Swine Flu and other pandemics, school terms adjustment is important in order to cover up the lost time and content curriculum material.”

This finding indicates that schools have devised the adjustment to the academic calendar as a strategy employed by schools to ensure curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID-19. This finding was found consistent with the South African Framework for Curriculum Recovery (2020) suggestions such as the extension of teaching and learning time of children, curriculum interventions such as curriculum trimming and reorganization as well as accelerated learning programmes. Similarly, Masambe and Chitotombe (2018) agree and alluded to the fact that in times of educational disruptions, school terms adjustment is important in order to cover up for the lost time and curriculum content. Thus, the study was convinced that shifting of academic calendar to the time which they deemed less threat is critical to recoup the lost academic content, hence maintaining curriculum continuity.

4.7.2 Offering open and distance learning

The study was informed that schools have to resort to online and distance learning in their efforts to enhance curriculum continuity. This position was reached following the respondents who unanimously agreed that their schools adopted open and distance learning to its large numbers of learners. This implies that with the development of information and communication technologies, new learning modes have appeared that can open more opportunities for flexible learning, such as open learning and online learning. Even the interview findings also pointed to the notion that schools have

resorted to online learning for the students to embrace the learning content during school closures such that curriculum continuity is ensured. Participant Pink had to say:

“As a way to ensure curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID-19 and school closures, we are conducting online learning where learners are getting the curriculum content using online platforms.”

The sentiment above suggests that open learning involves the use of teaching methodologies that can help students construct their own learning pathways (self-regulated) and be actively contributing to knowledge building.

Participant White testified that:

“when doing online learning, learners have learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices (e.g., mobile phones, laptops, etc.) with internet access. In these environments, students can be anywhere (independent) to learn and interact with instructors and other students.”

The study findings imply that to ensure curriculum continuity, schools have employed online learning using open and distance learning platforms. The use of online tools assure that lesson plans, videos, tutorials, and other resources are available for some students and probably, most teachers have been rampant. The findings of the study were found in line with a number of frameworks which have been put in place by many jurisdictions. For example, Huang et al., (2020) reported that during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Chinese Ministry of Education has launched the “disrupted classes and undisrupted Learning” initiative, providing flexible online learning to over 270 million

students from their homes. The primary purpose of this initiative was to ensure curriculum continuity. Furthermore, the findings of the study did not show the barriers that might prevent students from attending a given educational context, for example, limited network and limited access to classrooms. Further, the University of British Columbia (2020) has recently used different methods, such as blended learning, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and experiential learning, to offer more opportunities for learners to control their own learning process and improve their learning from home and helps them develop self-management skills. In addition, other schools also organized group-based student discussions by using the platform ZOOM so that all participants can interact with each other more conveniently. Video-based one-on-one tutoring was used by the instructors at Renmin University Affiliated-Sanya High School so that students can have a better emotional perception while they are addressing the course work with real-time help from the instructors. However, on this issue the use of podcasts and other resources that require less data usage is critical. In this regard, (Manaseeh, 2020) suggested that working with telecommunication companies to apply zero-rate policies can also facilitate learning material to be downloaded on a smartphone, computers and other material which more students are likely to have. For example, what is happening in Zimbabwe where the government in conjunction with Netone where learners are being given data to use when doing online learning and researches. This enhances the effectiveness of online and distant learning. Therefore, the study was convinced that the use of open, distance online learning was another strategy that was adopted by schools to enhance curriculum continuity despite the challenges inherent in it.

4.7.3 Creating Social learning groups

The study revealed that schools in Ekurhuleni North District created social platforms such as whatsapp groups, zoom and google drive for google classrooms. These social groups were used as platforms for sharing learning materials that enhance curriculum continuity. Seven (7) respondents out of 13 indicated that they used whatsapp platforms to send audio recordings, 5 respondents indicated that they used google classroom and 1 indicated that they used zoom videos to conduct their lessons. This finding connotes that teachers have resorted to social groups teaching methods during lockdown and school closure as mechanisms to ensure curriculum continuity.

This finding was given concrete by interview participants who stated that they used whatsapp groups to send audios and learning materials. Participant White said:

“During school closures, I created a whatsapp group which I use to share voice notes for lesson, reading notes and other materials”

Other participants also claimed that:

“We have come to realise that google classroom is a useful platform to share learning materials especially when face to face learning is not an option”

This suggests that most teachers used social groups to conduct their lessons. This had the net effect of enhancing curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID-19. This finding is especially useful to the body of knowledge it confirms that social grouping is another strategy employed by schools in enhancing curriculum continuity. This was found supporting the findings by Prakash and Ayan (2020) that whatsapp and other

online social platforms are very useful in delivering online lessons during school closures. This is further reiterated in the study by Nikish and Marang (2021) that google classroom and emails were very useful in the delivery of learning content. According to Singh & Thurman (2019), social platforms and learning communities help students discuss, debate and reach agreements with group members or learning community members and complete knowledge construction in discussion or online collaborative interaction. Therefore, the study was convinced that creating social groups were found important for delivering curriculum content to the learners during lockdown.

4.7.4 Phased approach to school resumption

The study revealed that in a bid to offer a safe and healthy environment for teachers and learners, the schools together with the ministry of education have devised the phased approach to the opening of schools where critical classes, examination classes for instance, were given the first priority to attend face to face lessons with teachers so as to maintain limited number of learners in a classroom. This finding was revealed when the majority of the respondents agreed that they introduced the phased opening approach at their respective schools. This was also testified by interview participants who believed that the phased approach to school resumption was a safer strategy for managing the diseases at the same time ensuring curriculum continuity. She said:

“We are bracing for the phased approach to school reopening. Only examination classes are coming for face-to-face learning whilst the rest will go the online way of learning”

Participant Grey reiterated that:

“I think it’s a good strategy to give first priority to examination classes. Other classes will be considered three days per week schedule”

This finding implies that schools have employed a number of strategies as efforts to ensure curriculum continuity in the face of COVID-19. As schools considered the phased approach to school resumption after a long time of school closures, phased reopening of schools was considered a useful strategy of offering a safe and healthy curriculum continuity for both learners and teachers.

4.7.4 Rolling out hygiene practice campaigns

It also emerged from the study that schools also rolled out hygiene practice campaigns in order to create awareness on the need to practice hygiene, social distancing and wearing of masks. The majority of the respondents agreed that most school had stickers, fliers, text messages and other practices that create awareness to learners for the need to prevent COVID 19. This had the net effect of reducing the spread of COVID-19 among learners and saves the risk of school closures.

Participant White said that:

“Our staff members encouraged students to become advocates for disease prevention and control at home, in school, and in their community by talking to others about how to prevent the spread of viruses.”

This is supported by participant Brown who said:

“We underwent a hygiene exercise where we made it known to the public that schools should enforce regular hand washing with safe water and soap, alcohol

rub/hand sanitizer or chlorine solution and, at a minimum, daily disinfection and cleaning of school surfaces.”

This was important as it instill confidence in the community that their children will be safe at school. This finding was found in line with the mechanisms provided by the Chinese Ministry of education (2020) that China reveals that children are sanitized before entering school busses, classrooms, and classes are disinfected daily to contain the disease. It was also reported that social distancing and wearing of masks were some of the hygiene practices in China. Schools should provide water, sanitation and waste management facilities and follow environmental cleaning and decontamination procedures (Huang et al., 2020). It is important to note that schools reinforce frequent hand washing and sanitation and procure needed supplies (HEDCOM, 2020). Thus, hygiene practices are important for the learning of children in the wake of COVID-19 because the pandemic is contained by practicing hygiene. Thus, the study concludes that schools rolled out hygiene practices as measures to ensure safe environment for learners.

4.8 Chapter Summary

The chapter dealt with data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings. The chapter discussed the findings in relation to the objectives of the study. The chapter revealed that COVID-19 had significantly affected curriculum continuity as it disrupted learning progression, poor academic performance, high school drop outs, early marriages, disrupted social relationships of learners and even health effects on parents of learners. The study further revealed that most schools in Ekurhuleni North District

were not in the capacity to provide enough learning resources as no reliable network communications were in place, insufficient digital learning resources such as smartphones, laptops, projectors and Wifi as well as lack of teacher support services to conduct online lessons. The study further confirms that schools require reliable network infrastructure from network operators, qualified and competent teachers who are computer literate, parental involvement in the teaching and learning process, and government cooperation in order to ensure curriculum continuity. Furthermore, the study further confirms that schools have employed strategies such as adjusting the academic calendar, open and distance learning, creating social groups, rolling out hygiene campaigns, a phased in approach to the re-opening of schools. With these findings in mind, the next chapter will be looking at summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the research, conclusions and recommendations of the research study. The chapter seeks to summarise the whole research study on how the research was conducted. This provides the ground at which the conclusions and recommendations are to be made on the strategies employed by schools for curriculum continuity. Also, these recommendations will serve as guidelines to assist the policy makers in schools to devise better strategies that are effective for the teaching and learning of the curriculum content. Suggestions for future research will also be highlighted in this chapter.

5.1 Summary

The study sought to examine the strategies employed by schools for curriculum continuity. The study was prompted by the COVID-19 outbreak across the globe has forced educational institutions to suspend face to face learning in order to curb the

spread of the virus. Due to COVID-19 induced lockdowns across the globe, the active hours that day-scholars would spend in their classes for learning is being spent at home which means they are left behind in their routine learning activities. This has forced the teaching community to think of new avenues and alternate strategies for engaging the students and ensure curriculum continuity. The study sought to achieve five objectives namely to assess the effects of COVID-19 on curriculum continuity, the capacity of schools to implement interventions for curriculum continuity, the nature and support required by schools in efforts to implement interventions for curriculum continuity, the strategies employed by schools for curriculum continuity and to assess the provisions for different types of learners. In this regard, the disaster management theory was used to guide the study. Qualitative methodology was used and a sample of 20 respondents was used. The findings of the study revealed that COVID-19 had significantly affected curriculum continuity through disruption of learning progression, high rate of dropouts, poor academic performance of learners, disrupted social relationships of learners and caused child marriages. The study revealed that the schools under study had no capacity to implement curriculum interventions. Furthermore, the study revealed that schools require reliable network infrastructure from network operators, qualified and competent teachers who are computer literate, parental involvement in the teaching and learning process, and government cooperation in order to ensure curriculum continuity. The study findings showed that schools under study employed strategies such as adjusting the academic calendar, open and distance learning, creating social groups, rolling out hygiene campaigns, and adopted a phased in approach towards the re-opening of schools. In addition, as a result of inadequate infrastructure, schools had to

come up with rotational timetables where learners attended classes on different days in order to maintain social distancing.

5.2 Conclusions

In response to research objective one which sought to examine the effects of COVID-19 on curriculum continuity, the study concludes that COVID-19 adversely affected curriculum continuity through disruption of learning progression, high rate of dropouts, poor academic performance of learners, disrupted social relationships of learners and child marriages. The study in relation to objective two which sought to assess the capacity of schools in implementing interventions for curriculum continuity, the study concludes that the schools under study had no capacity to implement curriculum interventions. This conclusion was reached following the findings that the schools had no reliable network infrastructure, insufficient digital learning resources such as smartphones, laptops, projectors and Wifi as well as lack of teacher support services to conduct online lessons. This has negative implications in that learners were deprived of their right to quality education as the schools were unable to implement the required interventions. Furthermore, the study concludes that schools require reliable network infrastructure from network operators, qualified and competent teachers who are computer literate, parental involvement in the teaching and learning process, and government cooperation in order to ensure curriculum continuity. This implies that the nature of support required by schools requires a considerable funding from the government, local charitable organisations and other stakeholders. Given that the study sought to assess the strategies employed by schools for ensuring curriculum continuity, the study concludes that schools under study that employed strategies such as

adjusting the academic calendar, open and distance learning, creation social groups, rolling out hygiene campaigns, and phased in re-opening of schools achieved a considerable level of curriculum continuity. These online engagement strategies if applied for teaching, learning and assessment purposes will help our learners to continuously involve themselves in the learning process and will also foster good study habits in them without compromising their professional attitudes. However, the effectiveness of the strategies depends on the extent and capacity of the schools to implement the strategies to all learners from different backgrounds.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions reached, the study has come out with the following recommendations.

5.3.1 Recommendation for practice

The study recommends that:

- Online lecture sessions using software like 'Zoom' can be made more interactive by dividing the whole batch into sub-groups with limited number of students. This will help teachers to monitor their students' participation and can actively involve them by questioning and soliciting responses.
- As it emerged from the findings that teachers require some trainings on how to conduct lessons using digital methods, the study recommends that the school authorities must develop technologically and empower school leaders and their staff.

- The study further recommends that policy makers at schools must be promoting the use of school administration systems to manage curriculum coverage and the tracking of learner achievement. According to Mangezi (2020), it is important to incentivize the achievements of learners and teachers with grades, certificate of appreciation, reward for group performance, gamifying with badges and certificates, providing timely constructive feedback, adding self-assessment rubrics and more as it will encourage more teacher and student participation in online education.

5.3.2 Recommendations for policy

- The Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the government should introduce the funding scheme for schools to be able to acquire suitable resources and implement effective strategies for curriculum continuity.
- Given the different types of learners from different backgrounds, the district coordinators should organise sessions to promote the use SA-SAMS for the identification of learners in need of extra support, day-to-day administration and organisation of teaching and learning at the school including management and monitoring of educator and learner attendance.

5.3.3 Suggestions for future research

I feel that strategies employed by schools for curriculum continuity in the wake of COVID-19 is an interesting but complex subject which has many gaps which needs to be covered. Researchers and scholars interested in this subject can assess the role of

digitization of teaching and learning processes for curriculum continuity in the aftermath of COVID-19.

References

Gauteng Department Of Education Curriculum Recovery Plan Readiness Grade 12 & 7;
23 APRIL 2020

Gordon, N. A. (2014). *Flexible Pedagogies: technology-enhanced learning*. In *The Higher Education Academy*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/2.1.2052.5760>

HEDCOM South African Framework For A Curriculum Recovery Plan –Post COVID 19:
11 April 2020

Huang, R.H., Liu, D.J., Tlili, A., Yang, J.F., Wang, H.H. (2020). *Handbook on Facilitating Flexible Learning During Educational Disruption: The Chinese Experience in Maintaining Undisrupted Learning in COVID-19 Outbreak*. Beijing: Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University.

Ozdemir, O., Bonk, C. J. (2017). *Turkish Teachers' Awareness and Perceptions of Open Educational Resources*. *Journal of Learning for Development*, v4 n3 p307-321

Petrina, S. (2011). *Instructional Methods and Learning Styles*. In *Advanced Teaching Methods for the Technology Classroom* (pp. 91–122). <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-59904-337-1.ch004>

Singh, V., & Thurman, A. (2019). *How Many Ways Can We Define Online Learning? A Systematic Literature Review of Definitions of Online Learning (1988-2018)*.

Zayapragassarazan, Z. (2020). *COVID-19. Strategies for Online Engagement of Remote Learners*. *F1000Research*, 9:246 (document)
(<https://doi.org/10.7490/f1000research.1117835.1>)

UK Universities. (2018). *Flexible learning: The Current State of Play in UK Higher Education*. London, UK.

Wiki, (2019). *Open learning*.

Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_learning

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire on:

Strategies Employed by Schools for Curriculum Continuity in the wake of Covid-19: A Case of schools in Ekurhuleni North District of South African department of Education

My name is Fungai Makuwaza, a student at Midlands State University studying towards a Bachelor of Education in Educational Management and Leadership. I am kindly requesting for your valuable support to my research topic titled: "Strategies Employed by Schools on Curriculum Continuity in the wake of Covid-19: A Case of schools in Ekurhuleni North District of South African department of Education". Participation is actually voluntary and you can withdraw at any time if so pleased. Research findings shall remain confidential and meant for academic purposes only. With these topics in mind, may you kindly help me by responding to the questions below.

Please do not write your name anywhere

Please indicate with ✓ in the box that corresponds to your answer

1. 1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Teaching Position

Head teacher

Teacher

SDC

Parent

3. Teaching Experience

5 years and below

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-20 years

4. Education

Diploma

Degree/Masters

Professional Course

Any other, please specify

5. Computer literate

Yes

No

Section B: Effects of Covid-19 on curriculum continuity

6 a) Among the effects of COVID 19 on curriculum continuity, which of the following have impacted curriculum continuity?

Disrupted learning progression

School dropouts

Disrupted social relationships

Poor academic performance

Lack of electronic gadgets

Any other

.....

b) Justify why do you think the above elements affected curriculum continuity?

.....

Section C: Capacity of schools to implement interventions for curriculum continuity

7a) Does your school have the capacity to implement interventions for curriculum continuity?

Yes No

b) If Yes, does your school have the following

- Reliable internet connection
- Suitable digital learning resources
- Electronic gadgets
- Effective learning methods
- Close cooperation between government, enterprises and schools

c) Explain how you think the elements above ensure curriculum continuity.....

Section D: Nature and source of support for schools in efforts to provide for curriculum

8 (a) Do you think your school requires support from concerned stakeholders in efforts to ensure curriculum continuity? Yes No

b) If Yes, what support is required?

- Funding

- Digital learning resources

-Reliable internet and connectivity

- Competent teachers

- Compressed syllabuses

Close government and enterprises cooperation

c) Who do you think should support your school in efforts to provide for curriculum continuity in the provision of access to virtual teaching platforms?

- Government

- Parents

- Community

- NGOs

All of the above

None of the above

9. (a) Given the learners of different needs and backgrounds, which provisions were employed by your school to cater for the needs of all learners?

- Access to electronic gadgets

- network or connectivity

- supervision of learner participation

- social media platform for pupil-pupil informal interaction on school work

b) How do you think access to these resources to all learners enhances curriculum continuity?

Thank you for your responses. God Bless You !!!

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide

My name is Fungai Makuwaza, a student at Midlands State University studying towards a Bachelor of Education in Educational Management and Leadership. I am kindly requesting for your valuable support to my research topic titled: "Strategies Employed by Schools on Curriculum Continuity in the wake of Covid-19: A Case of schools in Ekurhuleni North District of South African department of Education". Participation is actually voluntary and you can withdraw at any time if so pleased. Research findings shall remain confidential and meant for academic purposes only. During the interview, I would like to discuss the following topics: The effects of Covid-19 on curriculum continuity; strategies which were put in place by schools to maintain curriculum continuity; the resources that must be available to ensure curriculum continuity; and how did schools implement the strategies given their different types of learners in terms of access to electronic gadgets. With these topics in mind, may you kindly help me by answering the questions I am going to ask.

Section A

Demographic Variables

1. 1. Gender

Male []

Female []

2. Teaching Position

School Head []

Deputy Head []

H.O.D []

Senior teacher []

3. Teaching Experience

5 years and below []

6-10 years []

11-15 years []

16-20 years []

4. Education

Diploma []

Degree/Masters []

Professional Course []

Any other, please specify

2. Computer literate

Yes []

No []

Section B

1. The effects of Covid-19 on curriculum continuity		
Main Question	Additional questions	Clarifying questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What are the effects of COVID 19 on curriculum continuity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Did the learning progression get disrupted at your school?○ If Yes, how did it affect curriculum continuity?○ What is your comment on the school dropout rate as a result of	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Can you expand a little bit?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In your own opinion, do you think the COVID 19 has any effect on academic performance of learners? 	<p>COVID 19 and the subsequent lockdowns?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you agree that the social relationships between learners were affected? If yes, how does it affect curriculum continuity ○ How are the learners performing in critical subjects in the wake of COVID 19? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you explain a little bit?
--	--	---

2. Strategies which were put in place by schools to maintain curriculum continuity

Main questions	Additional questions	Clarifying questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What strategies were 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Given that the school activities 	<p>Can you expand a</p>

<p>employed by your school to maintain curriculum continuity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As a teacher, do you perceive the teaching methods and criteria used to teach learning subjects and concepts as effective? 	<p>were disrupted by COVID 19 and the subsequent lockdowns and curfews, what measures did your school employ to ensure curriculum continuity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Did the adjustments to school calendar help in learning progression? ○ Did your school introduce online learning? ○ How frequent did your school sanitize and disinfect learning classrooms for learners? ○ Do you think the strategies employed are effective in ensuring curriculum continuity? If Yes, why do you think the strategies are effective? ○ Do you think the learners perceive the methods as 	<p>little on this?</p> <p>Can you give me some examples?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you tell me anything else?
--	--	---

	effective?	
3. The resources that must be available to ensure curriculum continuity		
Main questions	Additional questions	Clarifying questions
<p>○ In your view, what resources must be available to ensure effective teaching and learning during and after COVID 19?</p> <p>From your own experience and observations, do you think there are other effective methods of teaching and learning that can be employed by schools?</p>	<p>○ What resources do you think are required for both learners and teachers to enhance the teaching and learning during and after COVID 19?</p> <p>○ Does your school have reliable communication infrastructure?</p> <p>Confirm that your school has acquired suitable digital learning resources that enhance online and distance learning?</p> <p>How friendly are the learning tools adopted at your school?</p> <p>Do you think the old teaching methods should be improved, modified or maintained?</p>	<p>Any other materials you wish should be included?</p>
4. How did schools implement the strategies given their different types of learners		

in terms of access to electronic gadgets.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Given the different types of learners in terms of access to electronic gadgets, do you think the online platforms will be accessible to all learners? 	<p>Do you think all the learners from all backgrounds will be able to benefit from the new learning strategies?</p> <p>Are there other measures put in place to support those learners from low economic backgrounds</p>	
CONCLUSION OF INTERVIEW		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any other topics or issues that we have not discussed and that you find worrisome? <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you want to add anything on the topic under study? 		<p>How relevant is the additional information to the current study?</p>

Many thanks for taking time in participating in the interview. God bless you



MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

P. BAG 9055
Gweru
Zimbabwe

Telephone: (263) 54 260404/260337/260667/260450
Fax: (263) 54 260233/260311

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

.....
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES AND LEADERSHIP
.....

30 January 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer Fungai Makuwaza Reg Number R192854N is a BEd student at this university. He has to undertake research and thereafter present a Research Project in partial fulfilment of the degree programme.

In this regard, the university kindly requests both your institution and personnel's assistance in this student's research endeavours.

Your cooperation and assistance is greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Makuwaza'.

Dr L. Museva

Chairperson

MAKUWAZA R192854N

ORIGINALITY REPORT

16%	15%	2%	7%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	cit.bnu.edu.cn Internet Source	10%
2	blogs.worldbank.org Internet Source	3%
3	pubdocs.worldbank.org Internet Source	2%
4	Submitted to Great Zimbabwe University Student Paper	2%

Exclude quotes On

Exclude matches < 2%

Exclude bibliography On