**The Perceptions and Experiences of School Management Teams regarding Continuing Professional Development of Teachers in Digital Literacy**

Raj Mestry

\*rajm@uj.ac.za

Jenna Wade

University of Johannesburg

**Abstract**

Since the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic gripped the world in 2020, the South African government, through the National Coronavirus Command Council (NCCC), introduced rigid regulations to curb the deadly novel coronavirus from spreading. The forced closure of schools was a bold step to take to manage the surge of the pandemic and save lives. While many schools resorted to online teaching, it became evident that many teachers lacked the necessary digital skills to manage online teaching programmes. Also, the lack of technological resources impacted negatively on teaching and learning in primary schools.

This study aimed to determine the perceptions and experiences of School Management Teams (SMTs) and teachers regarding the provision of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers in digital literacy. The study explored ways that SMTs can support their staff through CPD in enhancing their digital literacy skills; and to investigate how SMTs can strengthen CPD for teachers and better equip them with digital literacy knowledge and skills.

A qualitative research design situated within a constructivist interpretivist paradigm was selected to understand the perceptions and experiences of SMTs regarding CPD for teachers in digital literacy. Using a phenomenological approach, data was collected by means of interviews at four primary schools in the Eastern Cape Province.

The study found that most SMT members did not make digital literacy a priority because they lacked the necessary knowledge and skills. SMTs were not supporting their staff, through CPD, in enhancing their digital literacy skills, as digital literacy is not currently a priority in the schools

It is recommended that teachers and SMTs should be trained in using digital platforms so that teaching and learning can be enhanced.

**Key words**: continuous professional development, school management teams, digital literacy, online learning, digital skills development, teacher empowerment, technological resources

\*Corresponding author