
Division of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

# Leadership practices in two successful primary schools in Soweto, South Africa educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation

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**Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my original work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not, in its entirety, or in part, been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

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Brianetta Hoosier 11 January 2019

In memory of my momma

Dr. Myra J. Hoosier

(1953-2016)

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## List of Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **ANA** | Annual National Assessment |
| **DBE** | Department of Basic Education |
| **DET** | Department of Education and Training |
| **DoE** | Department of Education |
| **GDE** | Gauteng Department of Education |
| **HoD** | Head of Department |
| **IMD** | Index of Deprivation |
| **NEIMS** | National Education Infrastructure Management System |
| **NGO** | Non-Governmental Organization |
| **SAIMD** | South African Index of Multiple Deprivation |
| **SAIMCD** | South African Index of Child Multiple Deprivation |
| **SMT** | School Management Team |
| **SOWETO** | South Western Townships |
| **UCT** | University of Cape Town |
| **WITS** | University of the Witwatersrand |
| **UCCCSR** | University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research |

**Abstract**

This thesis is a case study of two Soweto township primary schools. The study investigated the ways in which principals and other school leaders navigated issues of multiple deprivation to achieve high academic performance. The study was grounded in the theoretical framework of the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton, & Luppescu, 2010), which proposes five essential supports (5Essentials) for successful schools. The framework was the lens used to understand whether or not successful school leaders implemented these five essentials supports in response to their learners' battle with multiple deprivation.

The main research question of the study is: what can we learn about school improvement from the leadership practices of successful school leaders in primary schools educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto? Interviews were conducted with two principals, three School Management Team (SMT) members, and three educators. Using thematic content analysis, recurrent themes emerged including stakeholders involvement, policy, academic support, progress monitoring, collaborative teachers, teacher quality, team building, parental involvement, and distributed leadership.

In the South African context, this study expands the 5Essentials framework through a contribution toward the emergence of a model of leadership practices of successful school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in primary township schools. In this model, the four core leadership practice with related themes, explain the leadership practices that underpin learner achievement. The core leadership practices and themes includes: (1) safety practices: stakeholder involvement and policy; (2) instructional practices: collaborative teachers;

(3) teacher quality and teambuilding academic practices: academic support and progress monitoring; and (4) family engagement practices: parental Involvement (Biological or Proxy).

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide preliminary background information to contextualize the study. It clarifies the focus of the study and highlights critical elements that will be unpacked in greater detail in the subsequent chapters. Also, it specifies the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, and significance of the study. Lastly, this chapter states the limitations and delimitation of study; and, it outlines the structure of the thesis.

Gorard and See (2013) stated, "to understand disadvantage in education one needs to understand its causes" (p. 4). In the South African context, the blueprint formulated for educational equality during the first years after apartheid put in place a worthy ideal; however, two decades later, the post-apartheid development has failed to live up to that ideal (Booyse, Le Roux, Seroto, & Wolhuter, 2013).

Fleisch (2008) points out that, 40% of South African primary school learners are illiterate or two levels below their expected reading levels. Both statistical research and empirical research (Lake & Pendlebury, 2009; Moloi & Strauss, 2005; Pendlebury, UNICEF, 2012; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015) suggest that the overwhelming majority is from schools and communities afflicted by multiple deprivation.

In this post-apartheid era, redress in education has included a singular department of education, a more fair infrastructural funding mechanism, the eradication of fees for the economically deprived, grants to transport learners residing far beyond the boundaries of their nearest school, and, allowances for free meals and uniforms to schools that qualify for such support (Maringe, 2015). Unfortunately, in national performance measures, there has been no noteworthy improvement. Furthermore, some findings reveal that the achievement gap is

widening between schools facing multiple deprivation and their advantaged counterparts (Fleisch, 2008).

One truth is that most South African students face multiple disadvantages, which when combined, places them at a distinct disadvantage resulting in consistently producing average scores below that of privileged learners (Hillman, 1996). Nevertheless, there is another positive and encouraging truth that there are always some disadvantaged students from poorly resourced schools who excel despite obstacles (Christie, 2001). Some schools located in the most impoverished communities provide some of the highest quality education. These schools serve as role models for the educational system, as they perform heroic deeds notwithstanding the affliction of multiple deprivation (Taylor, Muller, & Vinjevold 2003).

Many variables could be explored to explain this phenomenon of heroic deeds, but leadership is the focus of this study. Leadership is central to the success of schools. Christie (2001) argues, "leadership is a key ingredient to school functioning" (p.11). Bush, Bell, and Middlewood (2010) concur by stating that effective leadership is critical for a school to be successful. Leithwood et al., (2007) emphasize that as an influence on pupil learning, school leadership is only second to classroom teaching. Furthermore, they add that there does not exist one single documented case of a school successfully rerouting the trajectory of its pupil achievements and the presence of talented leadership.

Consequently, this study explored leadership practices in successful primary schools educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation. It aspires to contribute new knowledge aimed at improving student achievement in underperforming schools, through leadership development. Also, it desires to assist policymakers in their effort to create a truly national system of equivalent schools, so the quality of education received in no way depends on

residency or status; thus, eliminating the need for travel farther than the nearest school (Gorard et al., 2013).

## Background to the Study

### Apartheid and Separate Systems of Education

South Africa boasts one of the highest rates of formal enrolment of all developing countries and allows 14% of the government expenditure on education (Jansen, 2009). However, Jansen (2009) adds that, the link between access and success is incredibly weak—more than 50% of learners fail to succeed—in comparison to less well-funded school systems in the southern African region. Much of the disconnection between access and success can be contributed to South Africa being categorized by two parallel economies. Former South African President stated:

> The First Economy [white] is modern, produces the bulk of our country's wealth, and is integrated within the global economy. The Second Economy [black] is underdeveloped, contributes little to the GDP, contains a large percentage of our population, incorporates the poorest of our rural and urban poor, is structurally disconnected from both the First and the global economy, and is incapable of self-generated growth and development (Mbeki, 2003).

Consequently, the two economies have produced two educational systems. Fleisch (2008) described the first system as well resourced, mainly populated by former white and Indian schools, and consisting of a small although growing independent sector. The learners are the children of the elite, white-middle and new black-middle classes and they account for the majority of university scholars and graduates. The second system learners are the children of the vast majority of the working-class and poor. The institutions themselves are inadequate, which in turn exacerbates the struggle to ameliorate the learners' deficits. In addition, the health, family and community-related issues of deprivation the learners bring along to school further

complicate the situation. The acquisition of knowledge and skills is exceptionally restricted when compared to first system learners. Learners read at a very limited functional level, their writing lacks fluency and confidence, and the use of inappropriately concrete mathematical methods limit their application of basic numeric operations.

**Disparity between Formal Access and Epistemological Access**

Lake & Pendlebury (2009) noted "education is a human right. This means that there is a universal moral imperative for all people, irrespective of citizenship or national legislation, to have opportunities for formal education" (p.1). It states, in Section 29 [1] [a] of South Africa's Constitution, "everyone has a right to basic education, including adult education" (Lake et al., 2009). As it relates to children, this involves the compulsory period of schooling from 7-15 years old or until the end of Grade 9. However, there is a difference between formal access (physical access) and epistemological access (access to knowledge) to education.

While all learners have formal access to education, there is considerable disparity in their epistemological access (access to knowledge) to education. The distribution of knowledge to learners in schools is not equal. The victims of this inequality are typically learners attending historically disadvantaged schools. It is widely known that in many of these schools the intellectual and professional quality of teachers is incredibly inadequate. This is demonstrated by staff absenteeism, infinite reasons for not teaching and frequent school disruptions (Christie, 2008; Jansen, 2009; Fleisch, 2008). Thus, adding to an already extensive list of factors that impede student achievement.

Morrow (1994) insists that, in addition to academic support, it is crucial that schools make support available to students that include facilities and resources to accommodate both their physical and mental health. Educational policy and planning enforced by government

consistently fail to yield its intended results, because macro-policies are developed without considering the contextual differences based on geographical, economical, and social differences among schools and communities (Maringe, 2015). As at May 2011, only 24, 793 sites located across nine South African provinces had access to physical infrastructure (see Table 1.1).

**Table 1. 1.** Number of schools with access to physical infrastructure as of June 2016

| **Province** | **No. of Sites** | **Electricity** | | **Water** | | **Toilets** | | **Lack of Teaching Resources** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | None | Unreliable | None | Unreliable | None | Pit Only | Library | Laboratory | Computer Centre |
| **Western Cape** | 1441 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 648 | 963 | 587 |
| **Eastern Cape** | 5433 | 177 | 1511 | 53 | 1958 | 62 | 1893 | 4974 | 5121 | 4843 |
| **Northern Cape** | 534 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 54 | 0 | 10 | 385 | 444 | 241 |
| **Free State** | 1227 | 32 | 51 | 27 | 57 | 6 | 223 | 798 | 900 | 792 |
| **KwaZulu Natal** | 5839 | 343 | 676 | 91 | 1522 | 0 | 1380 | 4428 | 5172 | 3897 |
| **North West** | 1485 | 3 | 152 | 0 | 260 | 0 | 146 | 1141 | 1202 | 844 |
| **Gauteng** | 2069 | 0 | 105 | 0 | 81 | 0 | 1 | 759 | 1380 | 408 |
| **Mpumalanga** | 1715 | 13 | 57 | 0 | 235 | 0 | 392 | 1388 | 1504 | 1025 |
| **Limpopo** | 3834 | 1 | 336 | 0 | 829 | 0 | 941 | 3585 | 3606 | 3259 |
| **Total** | **23577** | **569** | **2923** | **171** | **5004** | **68** | **4986** | **18106** | **20292** | **15896** |
| **Total in %** | | **2%** | **15%** | **1%** | **21%** | **.5%** | **21%** | **77%** | **86%** | **67%** |

*Note.* Information used in this table was retrieved from "Department of Education (2016). *National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)*. Pretoria: DoE

Many South African schools are lacking the basic modern conveniences expected to be a norm in an upper-middle-class income country. The results show that 17% of schools have inadequate sources of electricity, 22% lack a sufficient water supply, and 21.5% have no sanitation or a pit to dispose of human waste. More than 60 studies, spanning over nearly two decades, have shown a measurable connection between student achievement and school libraries (Achterman, 2008; Lance, 2002; Lonsdale, 2003; Small, Shanahan, & Stasak, 2010). This research provides clear evidence that learners in schools with resource-rich libraries and credentialed school librarians learn more, earn better grades, and score higher on standardized tests than their peers in school without libraries. Yet, 77% of South African schools do not have libraries. Computer resources afford learners the opportunity to engage meaningfully with a wide-ranging variety of information. In this age of information, information literacy has become universal currency for accessing knowledge locally and globally. This is especially essential for learners as they must be equipped to access, use, and evaluate information competently in both print and electronic formats (Scholastic Research & Results, 2008).

However, 67% of South African schools lack access to computer centers. Laboratory investigations play an integral role in science teaching. The knowledge learners' gain in classrooms, and from textbooks, is ineffectual without attaining an understanding of the processes and methods involved through hands-on experiences. Conducting experiments, examining them closely, developing logical reasoning, and replying to analytical comments are a few of the valuable proficiencies that assist in preparing the next generation of scientists, engineers, and medical doctors (Anonymous, 2014). Nevertheless, 86% of South African schools are not equipped with science laboratories.

Beyond the impact the government has on education, there are others factors more related to the family structure that challenge the goal of educating all learners. Jansen (2009) brings to light various factors that prohibit physical access to education for learners including cultural, economic, and health factors. Cultural factors block access to education in communities that disregard formal education as a necessity for girls, yet they enable boys to attend. Economic factors block access to education in homes where poor parents have to decide if they can forego income by sending a healthy child to school rather than to earn a meager, yet vital, income on the streets or in the fields. On the other hand, health factors prevents access to education, as a steadily growing number of older children involuntarily take on the role of caretaker to younger siblings in families where parents are deceased or incapacitated due to HIV/AIDS. Although much has been achieved in gaining formal access to schooling for South African children, even more, must be done to ensure that all children experience and achieve success inside and beyond the classroom once enrolled (Jansen, 2009).

## A Brief Overview of the Notion of Leadership in Successful Schools

This section provides a brief review of the literature related to this study—a more extensive discussion of the literature review is presented in chapter two. "What makes school work?" is a widely researched topic. The findings of the various studies have formed a consensus of the characteristics of effective schools. Lezotte (1990) acknowledges the characteristics of effective schools as the 7 correlates to include: (1) safe and orderly environment, (2) climate of high expectation for success, (3) instructional leadership, (4) clear and focused mission/vision, (5) opportunity to learn and student time on task, (6) frequent monitoring of student progress, and (7) home-school relations. Additionally, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, and Hopkins, (2006) identifies these characteristics as four core practices,

namely: (1) creating vision and setting directions, (2) developing people, (3) restructuring the organization and redesigning roles and responsibilities and (4) managing teaching and learning. However, there is minimal published research on how successful school leaders in South African primary township schools navigate issues of multiple deprivation to achieve high academic performance.

This study is investigated through the lens of the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (UCCCSR) 5Essentials supports which include (1) effective leaders, (2) collaborative teachers, (3) involved families, (4) supportive environments, and (5) ambitious instruction (Bryk et al., 2010). It should be noted that the UCCCSR 5Essentials studied successful school leadership practices outside of the context of South Africa. Nevertheless, it provides a basis for understanding and casting light on how success can be achieved by school leaders in South African township schools. This study aims to verify and substantiate evidence of the UCCCSR 5Essentials through providing a contextualized understanding of successful school leaders in two carefully selected primary township schools.

## The Notion of Multiple Deprivation

Maringe and Moletsane (2015) explain that the concept of multiple deprivation resulted from a concern involving the influence of poverty on communities in different parts of the world. Furthermore, they conceptualize multiple deprivation as, "a confluence of factors which depress learning and place unique challenges on leadership and which acts in combination rather than in isolation" (p.1). According to Noble et al., (2009) the purpose of a multiple deprivation index is to measure the number of people in a specified area who experience diverse forms of deprivation. Also, the evidence of higher indices indicates more severe levels of deprivation in specified areas. While the South African Index of Multiple Deprivation (SAIMD) and the South

African Index of Multiple Deprivation for Children (SAIMDC) will be introduced and defined in this section, they will be outlined in greater detail in Chapter 3.

**South African Index of Multiple Deprivation (SAIMD)**

- Income and Material Deprivation Domain: The proportion of people in a specified area experiencing income and/or material deprivation.
- Employment Deprivation Domain: The proportion of people in a specified area living in households where people experience involuntary unemployment.
- Health Deprivation Domain: The proportion of people in a specified area living in households where relatively high numbers of people die prematurely.
- Education Deprivation Domain: The proportion of people in households in a specified area with low levels of education.
- Living Environment Deprivation: The proportion of people in a specified area living in poor quality environments.

**South African Index of Multiple Deprivation for Children (SAIMDC):**

- Income and Material Deprivation Domain: The proportion of children in a specified area experiencing income and/or material deprivation.
- Employment Deprivation Domain: The proportion of children in a specified area living in workless households.
- Education Deprivation Domain: The proportion of children in a specified area who are not in school.
- Biological Parent Deprivation Domain: The proportion of children in a specified area whose biological parents have both died, or who live in a child-headed household.

- Living Environment Deprivation Domain: The proportion of children in a specified area living in poor quality environments.

**Statement of Problem**

The majority of schools afflicted by multiple deprivation in South Africa are situated in townships—the country's densely populated black urban residential areas—which are decrepit and laden with crime, with the vast majority of its students failing to pass their exams (Taylor, 2008). Even more alarming, there appears to be a trend in decreased performance on the Annual National Assessment (ANA). Third grade learners have the strongest performance, the performance lessens in the 6$^{th}$ grade and lowers more in the 9$^{th}$ grade. However, despite these challenges, some South African primary schools facing multiple deprivation in townships can produce above average ANA pass rates.

While there is a considerable body of current literature focused on schools facing multiple deprivation, there is scarce research on leadership enactment and leadership forms in schools afflicted by multiple deprivation, particularly in the South African context. Therefore, this study investigated the leadership practices of successful primary school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation.

**Aim of the Study**

This study aims to contribute to a better understanding and theorization of leadership practices in South African primary school educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation.

**Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were to:

1) Identify leadership practices of successful primary school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto

2) Understand how successful primary schools leaders in Soweto define, identify and navigate issues of multiple deprivation in their schools
3) Determine which leadership forms appear to be most closely associated with school improvement among successful primary school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto

**Key Research Question**

The main question of the study is: What can we learn about school improvement from the leadership practices of successful school leaders in primary schools educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto?

**Sub-questions and Rationale**

To fully explore the key research question, the following sub-questions were addressed:

1) What are the leadership practices of successful school leaders?

   *Rationale*: Lezotte (1991), along with many of his contemporaries, identify particular correlates of successful schools. He further distinguishes seven correlates of effective schools: (1) safe and orderly environment, (2) climate of high expectations for success, (3) instructional leadership, (4) clear and focused mission, (5) opportunity to learn and student time on task, (6) frequent monitoring of student progress, and (7) home-school relations. In addition, Lezotte (1991) defines their level of effectiveness by *The First Generation* and *The Second Generation,* which will be explained in detail in chapter four of the proposal. Consequently, this question aims to provide evidence of the implementation of the seven correlates and to determine the level of effectiveness in implementation.

2) How do successful school leaders define, identify, and navigate the issues of multiple deprivation in their school?

   *Rationale:* Christie (2001) cautions that constructions of school leaders' leadership practices that over-generalize and fail to engage seriously—with the local conditions and the daily experiences of school leaders—are likely to provide a distorted illustration of school leaders' leadership practices. This question aims to understand how leaders conceptualize and negotiate issues of multiple deprivation in the context of their school, to provide a scope for potential generalizations to be explained in the findings or implications.

3) Which leadership forms appear to be most closely associated with school improvement among successful school leaders in schools facing multiple deprivation?

   *Rationale:* There are five leadership theories that tend to be recurrently linked to leadership and deprivation including instructional leadership, transformational leadership, distributed leadership, asset-based leadership, and servant leadership. This question aims to determine which of these leadership styles, if any, appear to be most commonly adopted by successful school leaders in the Soweto primary school context. This will potentially illuminate if particular leadership styles are more impactful for leaders facing multiple deprivation.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

This study followed a qualitative case study approach utilizing semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentary data as methods for data collection. The study involved exploring what could be learned about school improvement through the leadership practices of successful primary school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple

deprivation in township schools in South Africa. Only two primary schools were investigated due to the time constraints involved in interviewing, observing, and shifting through documentary data, in addition to, the subsequent data analysis process. Furthermore, the researcher wanted to ensure that the scope of the research was neither too ambitious nor expansive to be completed within the suggested timeframe for a Ph.D. thesis.

The results of this study could be generalizable to primary school leaders who (1) lead learners who are afflicted by multiple deprivation, (2) located in township schools in South Africa, and (3) have been classified by the DoE as a dysfunctional school, or successful schools that desire to further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their schools.

**Overview of Methodological Approach**

This study was situated in the framework of qualitative research. Common to previous research conducted in South Africa related to school quality, this study was regarded as exploratory as oppose to conclusive. To identify a sample of schools five specific criteria were used to include (1) Gauteng public school, (2) SOWETO township, (3) primary school, (4) quintile 1-3, (4) passing marks in maths on the Annual National Assessment (ANA) from 2012-2014, and (5) impacted by three or more domains of the South African Index of Child Deprivation (SAICD). From the 22 schools that met the criteria, the top two highest performing schools (see Table 1.2) that were willing to participate in the research were chosen for more in-depth study.

**Table 1. 2**. School Information

| Schools | Province | Township | Type of School | Level of School | School Quintile | Passing marks in math on ANA (2012-2014) | Domains of Deprivation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **School A** | Gauteng | SOWETO | Public | Primary | 3 | Yes | (1) Income and Material<br>(2) Employment<br>(3) Education<br>(4) Biological Parent<br>(5) Living Environment |
| **School B** | Gauteng | SOWETO | Public | Primary | 2 | Yes | (1) Income and Material<br>(2) Employment<br>(3) Education<br>(4) Biological Parent<br>(5) Living Environment |

Schools were visited for two to three days to capture data for the study. Aligning with the genre of qualitative research, the findings of this study were based on documentary data and transcribed interviews with two principals, three School Management Team (SMT) members, and three educators. The objective was to interpret the data from each school and analyze them individually and across schools to identify themes and patterns. The more specific focus was to

highlight some of the dynamics of the schools in their operation that contributed to their success in spite of their afflictions resulting from multiple deprivation. Though limited in scope and depth, the findings from the two case studies revealed clear patterns of analysis. The silhouettes of these patterns form the basis of this study.

**Significance of the Study**

From the foundational phase of education and beyond, the vast majority of learners afflicted by multiple deprivation (black Africans) are not acquiring the basic level of mastery in reading, writing, and mathematics (Fleisch, 2008). Leadership is critical to students achieving academic success. Therefore, this research is significant as it endeavors to assist township primary school leaders in dysfunctional schools afflicted by multiple deprivation through the illumination of leadership practices of successful school leaders educating learners facing multiple deprivation in townships, identification of strategies to navigate issues of multiple deprivation in township schools, and determination of leadership forms employed by successful township primary school leaders educating learners impacted by multiple deprivation.

After an extensive review of literature related to leadership, I found that there was a significant body of research on the topic. After clarifying the aim and objectives of my study, I began to pursue literature on effective leadership and multiple deprivation, and the available literature was sufficient. However, when I attempted to understand leadership practices, the options for empirical reading became scarce. Harris (2002) supports this occurrence by pointing out that few research studies have focused exclusively on leadership practices. My access to empirical research eventually dwindled down to nothing as I added the keywords “successful primary school leaders”, “multiple deprivation”, “South Africa”, and “townships”. Hoadley and Ward (2008) assert that, while there exists a “normative framework” (often not local) concerned

with what principals *should do*, there is minute consideration of the reality of the work of principals in specific contexts, and what they *do* do. This experience was not unique as Mbokazi (2013) shares "within the South African township context there is little work published on successful principals that details the kinds of everyday challenges they face in their disadvantaged township communities" (p. 14). Furthermore, he adds that his study was the first to focus on an in-depth exploration of successful school leadership practices in township secondary schools. What makes this study unique is its emphasis on primary schooling, which too often goes overlooked.

The South African educational system and the citizens place great emphasis on and give much attention to secondary schools. Christie (2008) suggests that "problems in the school education system tend to manifest themselves more clearly at the secondary level of education because this is where the outputs of 12 years of schooling are displayed to the nation" (as cited in Mbokazi, 2013). Considering that students' performance on the Grade three ANA is lower by Grade six and only about 25% of students who start Grade one graduate from Grade 12, the researcher carries the assumption that the root of the problem is in primary schooling. In support of this assumption, Fleisch (2008) asserts:

> The evidence points to inextricable conclusions. While the studies use different "standards" or yardsticks to measure achievement, some deliberately avoiding judgments of "pass rates" altogether, they all, directly and indirectly, point to the predicament of primary education achievement. This is the predicament of deficient average primary education attainment levels . . . the vast majority of children attending disadvantaged schools do not acquire a basic level of mastery in reading, writing, and mathematics . . . South Africa's primary education gap, with its distinct bimodal distribution, begins in the Foundation Phase, at the very earliest days of formal schooling, and continues unbroken to the end of primary education and beyond (p. 30).

Despite the disturbing reality of South African public schooling, there remain a few township schools afflicted by multiple deprivation that are performing well (Christie, 2001;

Fataar, 2008). In response to this national crisis in public education, this study contributes to the South African education system and the educational field of research, through an empirical exploration of what can be learned about school improvement from the leadership practices of successful school leaders in primary schools educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in townships.

## Structure of Thesis

This study will be reported in six chapters. The following is the structure of the thesis:

**Chapter 1** introduces the background and context of the study. In addition, it briefly addresses the notion of leadership in successful school and the notion of multiple deprivation. It states the problem, research aim, objectives, and questions. Also, this chapter provides an overview of methodological approach and explains the significance of the study.

**Chapter 2** examines related literature on the impact of leadership on multiple deprivation, along with educational performance, and multiple deprivation. The literature review examines existing studies and educational debates on notions of leadership to provide a sound conceptualization of the study. Furthermore, it unpacks the conceptual framework, which connects to the purpose of the study. It addresses the theories of leadership most closely related to the phenomenon of successful school leadership practices in instances of multiple deprivation. Lastly, it details the theoretical framework that grounds the research.

**Chapter 3** introduces the methodology. It includes detailing the target group, sample, sampling plan, data collection instruments, research paradigms, research methods and design, data analysis, transferability, trustworthiness, triangulation, and ethical considerations.

**Chapter 4** presents the research findings of the two case schools, and provides a cross-case analysis with connections to the theoretical and empirical literature. They will primarily be established through the main themes that emerged from the literature and the case studies.

**Chapter 5** comprises of the summary, discussion, conclusion, and recommendations. The chapter illustrates how the research questions have been answered and speaks to the significance of the study. Also, the chapter presents an emerging model of successful leadership in township schools.

## Chapter Overview

This chapter introduced the focus of the study as an exploration of leadership practices in successful primary schools educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation. It contextualizes the study by highlighting the impact of apartheid on the disadvantages in public education, along with, casting light on the disparity between formal and epistemological access. Further, it provided a brief overview of the notion of leadership in successful schools and the notion of multiple deprivation. Also, it highlighted the statement of problem, research aims and objectives, research questions, and rationale. Lastly, this chapter incorporated an overview of methodological approach and explained the significance of the study.

The next chapter examines relevant literature on the impact of leadership on multiple deprivation and educational performance, and multiple deprivation. Also, it examines existing studies and educational debates on various notions of school leadership.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW, CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## Introduction

This chapter provides a review of South African and international literature on successful school leadership in multiply deprived contexts. The selection of the literature was informed by a systematic review connected to the three key themes of the research questions: leadership practices of successful school leaders, an understanding of issues of multiple deprivation and its impact on academic achievement, and forms of leadership most closely associated with successful academic performance.

The selection strategy included an examination of electronic databases utilizing keywords related to school leadership practices (leaders, school management team, principal) and multiple deprivation (disadvantaged, challenging circumstances, poverty). The approach to selecting literature involved predominantly electronic searches of abstracts, tables of contents and reference lists of journals connected to educational leadership. The search led to the examination of books, articles in peer-reviewed journals, theses, dissertations, conference papers, research reports and Powerpoint presentations from educational leadership courses.

This chapter reviewed literature that throughout the analysis of the source materials appeared to be most closely related to leadership in historically disadvantaged schools that, both locally and internationally, contributed to academic success. Moreover, Northhouse (2013) stressed that leadership involves influence, which concerns how the leader affects the followers. He further explains that leadership does not exist without influence, as influence is the sine qua non of leadership (p. 6). While this section aims to highlight the relevant literature surrounding the impact of various notions of leadership in schools facing challenging circumstances, it cannot

be addressed irrespective of those they lead. Burns (1978) state that leaders and followers must be understood in relation to each other and collectively (as cited in Northouse, 2013, p. 6). As a result, a review of the literature on educational performance and multiple deprivation will be featured to enhance the understanding of challenges common to leaders managing issues of multiple deprivation.

Next, this chapter begins explains the conceptual framework for this study. This includes the impact leadership on the management of teaching and learning, school improvement, and multiple deprivation. Next, the chapter presents the theoretical framework that includes theories of leadership relevant to the study—transformational leadership, instructional leadership, distributive leadership, servant leadership, and asset-based leadership. Lastly, University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (UCCSR) 5Essentials will be explained.

## Multiple Deprivation

Banerjee (2016) asserts that a child who is born into a family qualifying for multiple deprivation is extremely vulnerable and will inevitably face challenges all throughout life starting early on. The challenges include compromised learning trajectories, limited employment opportunities and lesser income--which combined set a trend of disadvantage. The author defines the term disadvantage as "the absence of certain conditions as in other more privileged sub-groups who face lesser hardships in life and encounter fewer barriers during their learning trajectories" (p.17).

> A study conducted by American researchers at the UCCCSR (2010) offers the concept "truly disadvantaged schools." Truly disadvantaged schools are illustrated as such:
>
> On average, 70 percent of residents...had incomes below the poverty line...the student population...was 100 percent African-American...the communities had the highest crime

> rates...highest percentages of children who were abused or neglected...residents were most likely to live in public housing and least likely to attend church regularly or believe they could affect positive change in their communities (p.1)

In truly disadvantaged schools, students were seven times more likely to stagnate in math and twice as likely in reading as compared to racially integrated schools. Nevertheless, the authors found that even the most disadvantaged schools can beat the odds if they implement proper organizational structures. Their finding showed that over the seven year period of the study 15 percent of the truly disadvantaged schools--46 schools were involved--showed significant academic progress.

The academic performance gap between learners from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds in England is identified as one of the largest among OECD countries (OECD, 2014). In the British context, the concept of "schools facing challenging circumstances" (SFCC) is used to describe "attainment below what is deemed to be an acceptable threshold" (MacBeath et al., 2007, p. 4). Moreover, it includes all schools with 35 percent or more pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) (Ansell, 2004). Globally, free/reduced lunch schools meals is an indicator used to describe schools facing issues of multiple deprivation. An understanding of this measure is highly relevant to studies focused on schools serving disadvantaged learners in the context of a South African township.

According to the 2017 South African General Household Survey report, the percentage of people vulnerable to hunger is 12.1 percent. The 2016/2017 report on South Africa's National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), administered by the DoBE, notes that program fed approximately 9 million learners in 20,300 primary, secondary and special schools. The report highlights the continued success of the program as what began as an initiative focused on

primary schools learners has grown to include secondary schools and is striving to expand to serve orphans and vulnerable children.

## Leadership and Multiple Deprivation: The South African Perspective

### Educational Leadership and Multiple Deprivation

Each year, media outlets flood the nation with stories based on matriculation results. The story that resounds most profoundly is that of highly successful learners from disadvantaged families in poorly resourced schools (Fleisch, 2008). Advocates for education would assume that policymakers would view this success as a beacon of hope for other schools coping with the devastations of multiple deprivation. It would be plausible to expect that this success would inspire policymakers to collaborate with educational researchers, at the very least, associated with the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), both world-renown and highly ranked internationally, to investigate the leadership practices in those successful schools to systemically improve their leadership development efforts.

Unfortunately, policymakers choose to view the success through a different lens. It is the lens that often leads to a popular misconception that all learners can succeed, and that the impact of multiple deprivation is not an excuse (Fleisch, 2008). The problem with this lens is that the view is distorted. It ignores what policymakers know to be the truth, and what empirical research proves - that within the current educational system, those successful schools will not become a standard, rather they will remain the exception to the standard. This is attributed to the legacy of inequality in education still being upheld today. Thus, prohibiting exceptions to the standard from becoming the standard.

It is without debate that the inequality in the quality of education provided in the poorer provinces, mainly educating black students, is an extreme cause of concern. However, even in the wealthier provinces students in poorly resourced schools (mainly black students attended)

receive an education inferior to students in historically white schools (virtually all white students attend), who receive an education comparable to the best in the world (Booyse et al., 2013). This is best seen in the Western Cape where 62.5% of learner in Grade three can read and write at appropriate levels, yet, the corresponding figure for learners from disadvantaged families in poorly resourced school is 0.1% (Western Cape Department of Education [WCED], 2004). However, there remains a continuation of championing the exception to the standard as opposed to dealing with the harsh realities of the standard.

Viewing the relationship between deprivation and student performance, through an undistorted lens of truth based on empirical studies, there is unfailingly a positive correlation with a negative impact. This further dispels the misconception that multiple deprivation is not a justification for low academic achievement. Reddy (2005) attributes poverty, resources and infrastructure, low teacher qualification, poor learning cultures, and poor language proficiency as contributing factors to low academic achievement. Moloi et al., (2005) concluded from their study on levels of reading mastery in South Africa, that more than half of the children in South Africa's primary schools do not possess a minimal level of reading to allow them to survive. Furthermore, while that is a distressing figure for the nation, the situation is even bleaker in the poorest provinces where only 10% - 16% of learners read at the minimal level. Although poverty in abstract is not the source of underachievement, the unambiguous deprivation linked with poverty are barriers to students' academic success. Consequently, poverty is a strong indicator of low achievement and contributes to school failure (Fleisch, 2008).

## Leadership and Multiple Deprivation

Leadership and multiple deprivation independently are multi-faceted concepts with meanings that vary in different contexts. However, when you look at them in relation to each

other, there are numerous correlates. To frame the conditions under which school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in South Africa operate, the most pressing issues will be discussed including school-based factors, family factors, bureaucratic demands, and poor leadership and management. Related empirical studies will follow.

**School-based Factors**

Schooling intends to decrease the influence of social, family, and economic background (Gorard et al., 2013). According to Harris and Gorard (2010) one of the major reasons developed countries provide universal, compulsory, government-funded education for children is so that individuals are not disadvantaged by their family background, parents' educational attainment, inability to pay, or lack of educational resources in the home. However, in South Africa, the vast majority of schools are still impacted by the very disadvantages they are intended to eradicate.

Schools facing multiple deprivation suffer a myriad of socio-economic challenges (Harris & Thomson, 2006). The students are at risk for low achievement and failure for reasons such as poverty, teenage pregnancy, low self-esteem, truancy, child abuse and neglect, alcohol and drug abuse (Zill, Morrison & Coiro, 1993). Gorard et al., (2013) argue that individuals who reside in remote areas, from families with less prestigious backgrounds, with lower income, the unemployed and economically inactive—which is characteristic of many deprived South African learners—are less likely than average to participate in any episode of formal education or training after the age of 16. This concurs with the reality of many South African schools, which have severe issues with student attendance and student retention. In 2007, the DoE commissioned the study "Learner absenteeism in the South African schooling system" (DoE, 2007). The findings revealed numerous contributing factors to absenteeism including inadequate

transport systems, illness, food insecurity, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, classroom overcrowding, violence and bullying at schools, lack of basic services at schools, negative attitudes among learners, poor academic performance, negative relationships between learners and educators, lack of parental involvement, and the disintegration of family units. As a result, schools impacted by multiple deprivation had to extend beyond normal efforts due to the challenges that their learners bring with them to school (Maden, 2001).

**Family Factors**

While demography is not destiny, students' social and economic family characteristics are a powerful influence on their relative average achievement (Rothstein, 2004). MacBeath et al., (2004) opined, "what happens outside schools is more telling than what happens within them" (p. 40). The interplay between poverty, family, and community has yet to be completely comprehended (Thompson, Grandgenett, & Grandgenett, 1999). Consequently, family poverty continues to cue a chain of events that when combined construct inflexible obstacles blocking the path to school achievement (Fleisch, 2008).

Parental support is an essential component in academic achievement; yet, it is a rare occurrence in South African schools. The lack of involvement results from the common issue of illiteracy among parents, which prohibit them from reinforcing learning at home. Even more devastating reasons that inhibit involvement are immobility due to health issues such HIV and AIDS, and instances where there are no parents, and children are the head of household (Kamper, 2008). These debilitating issues present school leaders with the daunting and seemingly impossible task of "effectively overcoming severe poverty-related issues such as hunger, homelessness, illiteracy, unemployment, gangsterism, drug abuse and a fatalistic mindset" (Taylor, 2006, p.73).

**Bureaucratic Demands**

Due to paradoxical demands in South Africa, principals are commonly office-bound and more concerned with meeting the demands of the DoE and policymakers, rather than the needs of learners (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu, & Van Rooyen, 2009). Macbeth et al., (2004) further noted:

> School leaders are confronted with a series of paradoxical expectations: think long term but deliver now; innovate but avoid mistakes; be flexible but follow the rules; collaborate but compete; delegate but retain responsibility; encourage teamwork but assess individual performance; build capacity but focus on narrow instrumental outcomes (MacBeath et al., 2004, p. 42-43).

Due to paradoxical demands in South Africa, principals are commonly office-bound and more concerned with meeting the demands of the DoE and policymakers rather than the needs of learners (Bush et al., 2009). According to Bush et al., (2010) external restructuring changes aimed at raising standards of achievement, initiated by national state or local authorities, causes school leaders to increasingly work in a political context which exerts priority over their vision for school improvement. Furthermore, they cast light on the dilemma school leaders face, which is how to manage the implementation of a labor-intensive external change agenda, while simultaneously promoting school-initiated improvement.

An added dimension to the dilemma mentioned above is that many school leaders in historically disadvantaged schools, especially those who were leaders in the apartheid era, have little to no experience as agents of change. Fleisch & Christie (2004) make us reminiscent of the three core functions in which apartheid undermined their authority and activity by giving them (1) no budgetary authority or influence over the flow of resources such as textbooks, (2) little or no influence over the hiring and dismissal of staff, and (3) almost no decision-making power over the curriculum. School leaders were consistently at the receiving end of a top-down

management system working in a structured milieu and receiving direct instruction from the department officials. Consequently, systemic changes in education have resulted in school principals being under-prepared for their new role (Fleisch, 2002). Christie (2008) is also concerned about the performance of schools and school leaders' capacity to lead and manage their schools.

**Poor Leadership and Management**

Effective leadership is critical for a school to be successful (Bush et al., 2010). Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins (2008) emphasized that as an influence on pupil learning, school leadership is second only to classroom teaching. He adds that there is no documented case of a school successfully rerouting the course of its student achievement without the presence of talented leadership. The process designed to produce the best possible leadership and management for schools must be deliberate and not left to chance (Bush, 2008). In many developed and developing countries around the world, there are two increasing realizations which are (1) the role of school leadership is different from teaching, and it requires separate and specialized preparation, and (2) to provide the best education for learners schools require effective leaders and managers (Bush et al., 2010).

There are still many countries that have not come to the aforementioned realization (Bush et al., 2010). Thus, their school leaders begin their professional careers as teachers and make a gradual progression into headship. Viewing principals as headteachers underpin the belief that a teaching qualification and teaching experience are the only necessary prerequisites for school leaders. As a result, there is no specialized preparation or development for school leaders (Bush et al., 2010). NCLS (2007) insists "leadership must grow by design, not by default" (p. 17).

In South Africa, teachers with a record of success are often appointed as school leaders with the implicit assumption that this provides a significant starting point for school leadership (Bush, 2008). That empirically disproven assumption has led to the appointment of principals with poor management and leadership, resulting in the creation of an array of problems that make schools much more difficult to lead (Mestry & Singh, 2007). Taylor (2006) observed the condition of schools in several poor South African communities noting "nearly 80% of schools provide education of such poor quality that they constitute a very significant obstacle to social and economic development" (p. 7). Bush et al., (2010) added that where there is failure, often a major contributory factor is inadequate leadership and management. Lupton (2004) intensifies the argument by asserting that the socio-economic context of deprivation in those communities does not in itself determine school failure, and the issue of poor quality in many deprived schools lies within the schools themselves, with poor management and professional practice as the direct cause.

**Leadership and Multiple Deprivation: The International Perspective**

While examining international empirical studies related to leadership and multiple deprivation a particular theme became a trend across several studies. Leaders facing issues of multiple deprivation develop a vision for the school and devise a plan of action to manifest the vision. Moreover, the literature resoundingly suggests it is accomplished by the development of the people within the school and the distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities.

A study conducted by Klar and Brewer (2013) investigated the methods principals in high-needs schools used to enact core leadership practices together with their immediate contexts to institutionalize comprehensive school reforms and support student learning. Three North American middle schools that displayed steady increases in academic achievement after the

arrival of their principals were selected for this study. Data collection was done through interviews with principals, teaching and non-teaching staff, and parents. Although core leadership practices were enacted to fit the unique context of each particular school, there were common threads. Their findings showed that each principal built a shared vision, created high-performance expectations, and communicated the direction of the school.

Those findings align with the results in a study by Jacobson, Johnson, Ylimaki, and Giles (2005) which suggests that even in the face of challenging circumstances, the principals were able to set and maintain a sense of purpose and direction for their schools and had a positive influence on people's willingness to follow their lead. This study examined the leadership practices of seven successful principals in challenging schools using a case study of seven high needs schools in New York—five primary school, one middle school and one high school. There was diversity among the study's' participants. The demographic characteristics of the sample included five women and two men, three African-Americans and four Caucasians, two principals with doctoral degrees, five with more than 30 years experienced as educators, and three had at least 19 years of administrative experience at multiple sites, while for four it was their first placement.

A two-stage framework was used to analyze the data. It began with Leithwood and Riehl's (2003) three core leadership practices—(1) direction setting, (2) developing people, and (3) redesigning the organization—to determine whether the leaders were enacting the necessary practices for success. Subsequently, it developed and described accountability, caring, and learning as the three principles that enabled the principals to translate their core practices into school success. While the group was demographically diverse, the findings showed that they

shared some common characteristics. All seven principals demonstrated facility with the core leadership practices of direction setting, developing people, and redesigning the organization.

To the contrary, Fullan (1992) criticizes visionary leaders. He argues that a vision can damage as oppose to improve a school has it as the potential to be misleading. The author suggests that it can be blinding and misleading to present as a role model a high-powered, charismatic principal who in four to five years transforms a dysfunctional school. Further, Fullan claims that in such schools where success is achieved, there is often a significant decline when the leader leaves the organization.

Nevertheless, in the South African context the concept of a leader with a vision is embraced as Minister Motshega (2010) stated that a good school is lead by a principal with a vision and gets others to buy into the vision. This supports the indication by Bush (2003) that a vision is increasingly regarded as an essential component of effective leadership.

An inductive exploratory study by Leigh Sanzo, Sherman, and Clayton (2011) explored the leadership best practices of successful middle school principals as they lead accountability and standards-driven school environment. The sample consisted of 10 principals (five males and five females) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The years of experience as a principal ranged from 3 to 11 years, with total years of education ranging from 13 to 39 years. Previous experience as assistant principal ranged from 5 to 17 years. The number of licensed staff, the principals supervised ranged from 20 to 90. Learner population ranged in size from 350 to 1,200 students. The school populations were either majority Caucasian or majority African-American with fewer than 10 percent Hispanic and Asian in all schools. The socioeconomic status ranged from 15% to 80% disadvantaged.

To explore how this group of successful principals conceptualize their practices, the researchers developed three questions (1) How do leaders develop a shared understanding of their organizations, (2) How do leaders support and sustain school performance, and (3) What do leaders do to facilitate change? Common themes of practices enabling the principals to serve effectively in their schools emerged from the analysis. The finding revealed five themes including sharing leadership, facilitating professional development, leading with an instructional orientation, and acting openly and honestly.

Those findings overlapped with a study by Harris (2002) which identified developing and involving others as an alternative approach to school improvement. This qualitative study outlined the findings from a research study that explored effective leadership in schools facing challenging contexts (SFCC). Case studies of ten secondary schools—located within a range of socioeconomic and cultural situation that demonstrated improvement—were used as data. The findings proposed that leadership in SFCC is defined by an individual value system that embraces empowerment, equity and moral purpose. The idea of moral purpose is illustrated in the work of Fullan (2001) whereby he states moral purpose relates to both the ends and means. The author explains that an important end is to make a difference in the lives of those we lead; however, the means must include integrity, being fair and treating others well. Moreover, Fullan states, “the moral purpose must be accompanied by strategies to realizing it, and those strategies are the leadership actions that energize people to pursue a desired goal” (p. 19). This study by Harris also suggested a form of leadership that is democratic and centrally concerned with distributed leadership within the school.

Another study facilitated by Chapman (2004) reflected on recent research and evaluation work that suggested that there was a common process that effective leaders—operating in urban

and challenging contexts in England—followed to generate and sustain tangible improvements. The data sources included two research projects and one evaluation project involving 30 secondary schools representing a range of contexts and school based characteristics. Inspection reports and performance data were used to identify effective leadership within improvement within 18 schools. The remaining 12 schools were selected for the evaluation of the schools facing challenging circumstances (SFCC) and represented a range of leadership and levels of effectiveness.

The results revealed four central themes for leadership improvement in SFCC: (1) dispersing leadership, (2) relationships with external agents, (3) importance of social capital, and (4) importance of context. It is recommended that leaders must match and evolve their general leadership approach to the school's development stage if short-term improvements are to be transformed into powerful, sustainable gains.

Distributed leadership places an emphasis on the relationship between stakeholders and their context (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). As noted by Harris (2013), the distribution of leadership has the ability to be destructive and damaging if it is not implemented properly. Camburn and Han (2009) support that claim by stating that distributed leadership has to be carefully implemented.

In the South African context, research by Grant (2008), Williams (2011), Bush (2013), Botha and Triegaardt (2014), and Maringe and Moletsane (2015) advocated for distributed leadership in schools. However, studies by Bush and Glover (2016) and November, Alexander and Wyk (2010) confirm that the legacy of apartheid schools still reigns in the South African educational system. In response to this dilemma Williams (2011) asserts:

> "To impose distributed leadership regardless of the prevailing conditions would be imprudent. In other instances varying degrees of distributed leadership might be desirable. By the cognisance of situational factors many of the perceived limitations of distributed leadership can be moderated" (p.198).

Sergiovanni (2001) describes the concept of distributed leadership and its connection to collaborative leadership as "leadership density." Leadership density asserts that the leadership in the school becomes more dense as it involves more people in leadership roles and responsibilities within the school. Collaborative leadership is closely related to "participative leadership" (Neumon & Simmons, 2000) and "teacher leadership" (Harris, 2003; York-Barr and Duke, 2004). Hallinger and Heck (2011) suggest that "collaborative leadership focuses on strategic school-wide actions that are directed towards school improvement and shared among the principal, teachers, administrators and others" (p. 97). Further, collaborative leadership involved the implementation of organizational processes and governance structures that empowered students and staff, encouraged broad participation in decision making and fostered shared accountability for student learning.

A study by Hallinger and Heck (2011) reported findings collected from a series of empirical analyses that evaluated the effects of collaborative leadership on school improvement capacity and student learning from a sample of 198 US primary schools over a period of four years. Quantitative studies were used to compare four conceptual models. A *direct effects model* that conceptualizes leadership as the primary driver for change in student learning. A *mediated effects model* where leadership drives growth in student learning by shaping and strengthening its capacity for improvement. A *reversed effects model* in which the school's results drive the change in school improvement capacity and leadership. A *reciprocal effects*

*model* that conceptualises leadership and school improvement capacity as a mutual influence process that contributes to growth in student learning. Although models one and three were deemed to have no significant impact, model two was found to have a positive impact on student achievement in the areas of reading and math. However, the results favoured model four and also aligned with the authors' belief that this model was the most theoretically compelling of the four.

Closely related to the findings of Hallinger and Heck, was a study conducted by Somech (2005) using a sample of 140 teams selected from 140 different elementary schools in northern Israel, the researcher assessed the relative influence of a directive leadership approach in comparison to a participative leadership approach on school-staff teams' motivational mechanisms (empowerment and organizational commitment) and effectiveness (team in-role performance and team innovation). Data were collected with the use of surveys. The findings suggested a positive relation between directive leadership and organizational commitment, as well as a positive relation between directive leadership and school-staff team in-role performance. In addition, organizational commitment functioned as a mediator in the directive leadership-performance relationship.

Regarding participative leadership, the results implied a positive relation between participative leadership and teachers' empowerment, and a positive relation between participative leadership and school-staff team innovation. Empowerment functioned as a mediator in the participative leadership-innovation relationship. The study recommended managing tensions between the directive and participative activities as a method of impacting teachers' high performance. Fullan (2001) concurs as he states that, "the power of collective capacity is that it enables ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things for two reasons...knowledge about

effective practice becomes more widely available and accessible on a daily basis...more powerful...working together generates commitment" (p. 72).

A study by Mulford (2005) in Tasmanian and South Australian schools found that successful school reform was linked to distributive and transformational leadership, development and learning, context, and a broader understanding of student outcomes. Day et al. (2005) notes that there will never be a simple manner in which to precisely define successful leadership as it does not consist of a singular or even a series of values, qualities or skills held or applied; but, it is the combination of these through which school leaders have the ability to "make a difference" in their schools and communities. Consequently, Hallinger (2003) proposes a theoretical model of integrated leadership as a way for organizations to learn and produce at the highest levels and to achieve sustainable change. He strongly suggests that transformational leadership is a key element for principal in obtaining the commitment of teachers. Moreover, he asserts that teacher participation is essential in sharing leadership functions and teachers adopting the role of effective instructional leaders themselves.

Another study by Valentine and Prater (2011) assessed the relationship between principal managerial, instructional, and transformational leadership, and student achievement (each of these forms of leadership will be defined and explained in the next chapter as they inform my theoretical framework). Leadership surveys were administered to 155 high school principals and teachers from 131 of those schools in Missouri. Data from the state's high-stakes, performance-based assessment test was analyzed for student achievement.

The evidence suggested that principal leadership behaviors promoting instructional and curriculum improvement were linked to achievement. Within transformational leadership, the principal's ability to identify a vision and provide an appropriate model had the greatest

relationship to achievement. The principal educational level also positively correlated with each leadership factor. Also, day-to-day managerial skills such as effectively organizing tasks and personnel, developing rules and procedures, evaluating employees, and providing appropriate information to staff and students are vital to successful school operation.

Hallinger's proposition of integrated leadership has been noted by Bush and Glover (2003) as an appropriate approach to gaining an understanding of successful leadership within the context of South African township schools. The authors recommend using four distinct leadership approaches: (1) contingency leadership which takes into consideration the context of the school, (2) transformational leadership as the basis for the articulation and carrying out of the school vision, (3) instructional leadership which is the main priority of the school, and (4) managerial leadership which is needed to ensure that the policies stemming from the outcomes of the transformational approach are effectively implemented.

The next section will unpack the adopted conceptual framework for successful school leadership. It will also outline the theoretical framework for the study.

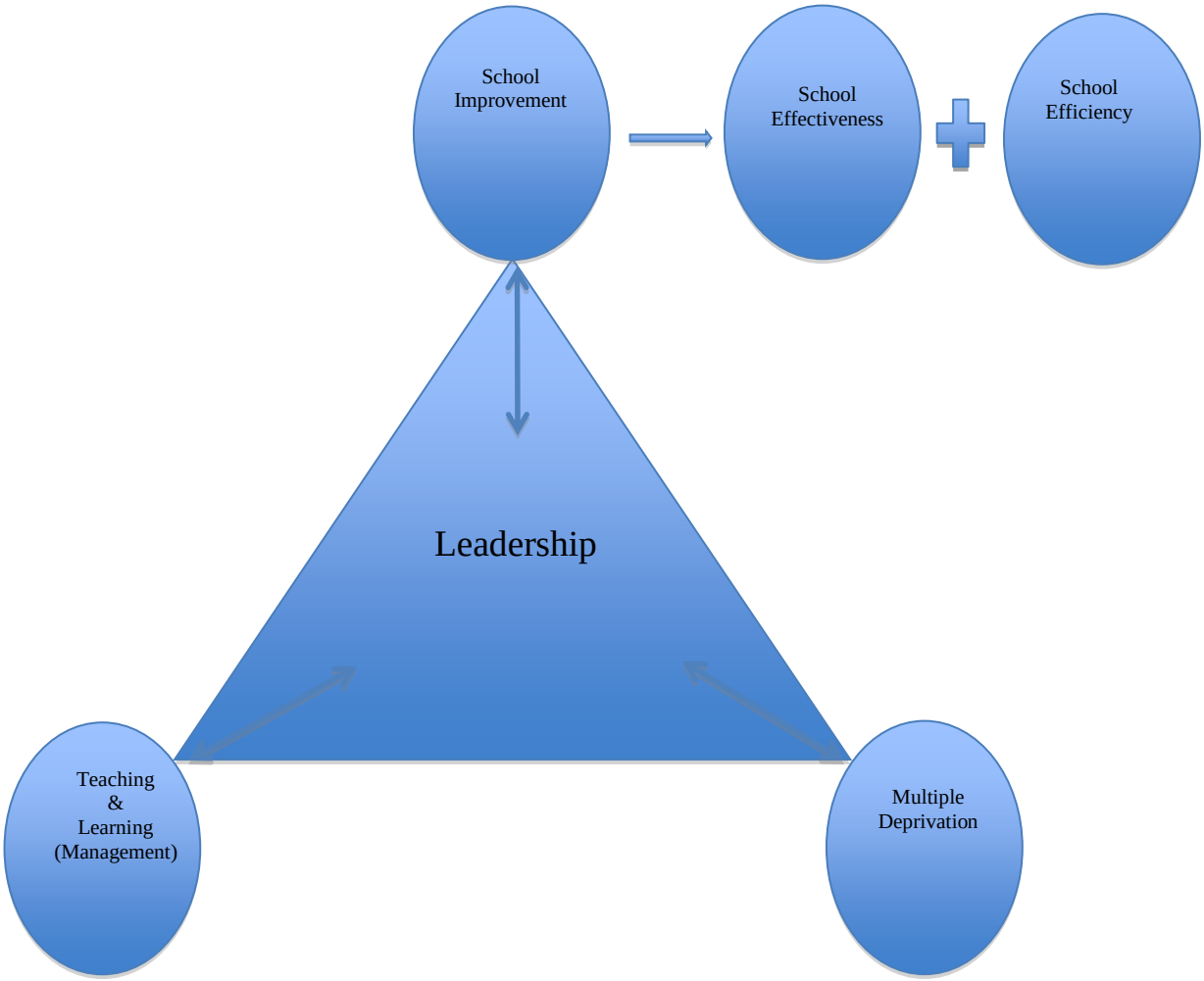
**Conceptual Framework**

Shields and Rangarajan (2013) asserts that a conceptual framework is an abstract representation, connected to the purpose of the research study, which directs the collection and analysis of data. Additionally, it is particularly useful as an organizational device in empirical research. A conceptual framework has been adopted—as an analytical tool utilized to make conceptual distinctions and organize ideas—to assist the researcher in achieving the aim of the study. Figure 3.1 depicts the conceptual framework for this study. While leadership is the primary focus, the elements of leadership to be explored are its relationship with school improvement (which is driven by school effectiveness and school efficiency), teaching and

learning (management), and multiple deprivation in successful primary township schools in South Africa.

These four challenges have been selected as the aim of this study is to determine what can be learned about school improvement by the investigating the successful leadership practices of school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation. School improvement happens when performance standards are met (school effectiveness) and achieved with limited resources (school efficiency) (Botha, 2010). Thus, school effectiveness is an antecedent of school efficacy and combined they lead to significant school improvement. Further, Fleisch (2008) reasons that irrespective of any challenges South African learners face, the underlying problem in the educational system is about what happens in the classroom. Consequently, one of the most important activities for principals and school leaders be the management of teaching and learning (MTL) (Bush & Glover, 2009).

**Figure 3. 1.** Conceptual Framework




## Leadership

We instinctively understand what the word leadership means. Yet, it embodies different meanings, for different people, in different contexts. However, there is a universal consensus among scholars in the field of leadership, which is that they cannot agree on a shared definition of leadership. Rost (1991) evaluated materials written about leadership ranging from 1900 to 1990 identifying more than 200 different definitions of leadership.

While conceptualizations of leadership are plenteous, Northouse (2013) identified components that are central to the phenomenon: (1) leadership is a process, (2) leadership involves influence, (3) leadership occurs in groups, and (4) leadership involves common goals. In consideration of those components, Northouse (2013) defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 5). Cuban (1988) asserts that leadership is influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends; therefore, leaders are people who shape the goals, motivation, and actions of others. It takes much ingenuity, energy, and skill (as cited in Bush et al., 2010, p.5).

Bush et al., (2010) added another dimension to the conceptualization of leadership—that will be acknowledged for this study—suggesting that the influence process is independent of formal authority. Consequently, the notion of leadership can extend beyond headship or other senior formal roles to include anyone in the school, although principals retain considerable power.

## The Management of Teaching and Learning

Fleisch (2008) noted that the major source of the crisis in primary education in South Africa is directly related to the classroom. Fleisch (2008) attributes this to teaching failure such as "absenteeism from the classroom, underutilized resources, and ineffective teaching methods. In addition to, weak subject knowledge, lack of proficiency in reading ordinary reading text, and a misunderstanding of the demands of the curriculum" (p. 121).

It is agreeable among most educational researchers that the greatest influencer on learner achievement is what happens in the classroom. Spillane (2004) and Taylor (2007) indicated that sound, and proactive leadership, and MTL is a fundamental requirement for developing effective teaching and learning in schools. Moloi (2007) noted that in the South African context there is a

developing awareness of the significance of MTL in enhancing classroom practice and improving learner outcomes. However, Hoadley (2007) stressed that there are very limited research and literature on the topic.

The South African Standard for School Leadership recognizes the effective MTL as the central purpose of principalship. The core purpose of principalship is to provide leadership and management in all areas of the school to enable the creation and support of conditions under which high-quality teaching and learning take place and which promote the highest possible standard of learner achievement (Department of Basic Education, 2016).

Hoadley (2007) indicated that while there is a consensus on the importance of MTL and it is a core module in South Africa's national school leadership program; it remains, that principals have little experience with instructional leadership. In a survey of more than 500 Gauteng principals, Bush and Heystek's (2006) findings suggest that MTL was ranked only 7$^{th}$ out of 10 leadership activities. Furthermore, it was found that the main concern of principals was focused on administrative tasks such as financial management, human resource management, and policy issues.

Bush et al., (2009) suggested that South African school leaders who strongly focus on MTL engage in the subsequent activities:

- Oversee the curriculum across the school
- Ensure that lessons take place
- Evaluate learner performance through scrutiny of examination results and internal assessments
- Monitor the work of Heads of Department (HoDs) through the scrutiny of their work plans and portfolios

- Ensure that HoDs monitor the work of educators within learning areas
- Arrange a program of class visits followed up by feedback to educator
- Ensure the availability of appropriate learning and teaching support materials

## Multiple Deprivation in South Africa

Since 1994, a key aim of the South African government has been the improvement of the quality of life of all South Africans and the reduction of inequality and poverty (Noble et al., 2009). Moreover, the South African constitution mandates the Parliament to ensure that financial resources are distributed equitably among provincial and sub-provincial governments, based partially on levels of disadvantage and poverty (Alderman, Babita, Demombynes, Makhatatha, & Ozler, 2002).

Being poor is not exclusively equivalent to possessing insufficient funds. More broadly, it is a lack of access to resources to obtain a minimum standard of living and participation within one's society. Poverty is not solely about low income, but it is about deprivation (Cappellari & Jenkins, 2006). Deprivation is commonly understood as the lack of basic necessities in society due to an individual's inability to afford them (Gordon et al., 2000). Multiple deprivation is when an individual is impacted by numerous forms of deprivation identified within their society.

In the South African context, the basic necessities related to deprivation are categorized into five domains: (1) income and material deprivation, (2) employment deprivation, (3) education deprivation, (4) health deprivation, and (5) living environment deprivation. Influenced by the England Index of Multiple Deprivation, the South African Index of Multiple Deprivation (SAIMD) conceptualizes multiple deprivation as a composite of diverse domains of deprivation experienced by individuals, and expressed by area level using relative measures (Noble, Dibben, & Wright, 2010).

The subsequent section will elaborate on each domain of deprivation including its purpose, the indicators, and the census questions used to develop each indicator based on the SAIMD 2001 as reported by Noble et al., (2009).

**Income and Material Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to capture the proportion of the population experiencing income and/or material deprivation. There are three indicators of this domain:

1. The number of people living in a household that has a household income that is below 40% of the mean equivalent household income. The associated census questions included: "*What is income category that best describes the gross income of (this person) before tax?"* and "*What is (the person's) date of birth in completed years?"*
2. The number of people living in a household without a refrigerator. Ownership of a refrigerator represents a fundamental basic asset for safe storage of food. The associated census question included: *"Does the household have any of the following (in working condition): radio, television, computer, refrigerator, telephone in the dwelling, cell-phone?"*
3. The number of people living in a household with neither a television nor a radio. Ownership of a radio or television represents an important mode of accessing information critical to one's life and livelihood. The associated census question included: *"Does the household have any of the following (in working condition): radio, television, computer, refrigerator, telephone in the dwelling, cell-phone?"*

**Employment Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to measure employment deprivation conceptualized as involuntary exclusion of the working age population from the world of work. There are two indicators for this domain:

1. The number of people who are unemployed (15-65 years old inclusive). The associated census questions included: "*What is (the person's) date of birth and age in completed years?" "In the seven days before 10 October did (the person) do any work for pay (in cash or kind) profit or family gain, for one hour or more?" "What is the main reason why (the person) did not have work in the seven days before 10 October?" "In the past four weeks before 10 October has (the person) taken active steps to find employment?"* and *"If offered work, how soon could (the person) start?"*
2. The number of people who are not working due to illness and disability (15-65 years old inclusive). The associated census question was: "*What is the main reason why (the person) did not have work in the seven days before 10 October?"*

**Health Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to identify areas with relatively high rates of people who die prematurely. There is one indicator for this domain:

1. Years of Potential Life Lost. This is measured by the level of unexpected mortality weighted by the age and gender of the individual who has died. The associated census questions included: "*What is (the person's) date of birth and age in completed years?" "Is (the person) male or female?" "What was the age in years at death?"* and *"What is the sex of the deceased?"*

**Education Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to capture the extent of deprivation in education qualifications in a local area. This measure primarily focuses on adults ages 18 to 65 years inclusive. There is one indicator for this domain:

1. The number of 18 to 65 years old (inclusive) who have no schooling at secondary level or above. The associated census question was *"What is the highest level of education that (the person) has completed?"*

**Living Environment Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to identify deprivation relating to the poor quality of the living environment. There are six indicators for this domain:

1. The number of people living in a household that has no access to a telephone. The associated census question was "w*here do member of this household mainly use a telephone?"*
2. The number of people in a household that has no piped water inside the dwelling or yard nearby. "*In which way does this household obtain piped water for domestic use*?" was the associated census question.
3. The number of people living in a household that has no use of electricity for lighting. The associated census question was, "*what type of energy/fuel does this household mainly use for cooking, for heating, and for lighting?"*
4. The number of people living in a household that is a shack. The associated census question was, "*which type of dwelling or housing unit does this household occupy?"*

5. The number of people living in a household that has neither a pit latrine with ventilation nor a flush toilet. The associated census question was, "*what is the main type of toilet facility that is available for use by this household?"*
6. The number of people living in a household that has two or more people per room. The associated census question was, "*how many rooms, including kitchens, are there for this household?"* This information was used in conjunction with a count of the number of people per household.

## Child Deprivation in South Africa

The South Index of Multiple Deprivation for Children (SAIDMC) 2007 was developed from the same 2001 Census data used for the SAIMD 2001 (Wright & Noble, 2009). In addition, it was constructed using data from the 2007 Community Survey. The 2007 Community Survey was conducted in February 2007 and covered 274,348 dwelling units across all the provinces, and attained a 93.9% response rate (Statistics South Africa, 2007). From the data sources, five domains of deprivation were produced to form the SAIMDC 2007, namely: (1) income and material deprivation, (2) employment deprivation, (3) education deprivation, (4) biological parent deprivation, and (5) living environment deprivation.

This section will detail each domain of deprivation including its purpose, and the indicators explaining the national picture of child deprivation in South Africa based on the SAIMDC 2007 as reported by Wright et al., (2009).

### Income and Material Deprivation Domain

The purpose of this domain is to capture the proportion of children experiencing income and/or material deprivation in an area. There are three indicators for this domain, namely:

1. The number of children living in a household that has a household income that is below 40% of the mean equivalent household income (approximately R1003 per month in February 2007
2. The number of children living in a household without a refrigerator
3. The number of children living in a household with neither a television nor a radio.

**Employment Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to measure the proportion of children living in workless households in an area. There is one indicator for this domain:

1. The number of children living in households where no adults aged 18 or over is in employment.

**Education Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to capture the extent of children's educational deprivation in an area. This domain has one indicator:

1. The number of children (7-15 years inclusive) who are not in school.

**Biological Parent Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to capture children in an area whose biological parents have both died, or who live in a child-headed household. There are two indicators for this domain including:

1. The number of children whose mother and father are no longer alive
2. The number of children living in a child-headed household

**Living Environment Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to identify children in an area living in poor quality environments. There are five indicators for this domain:

1. The number of children living in a household without piped water inside their dwelling or yard
2. The number of children living in a household without a pit latrine with ventilation or flush toilet
3. The number of children living in a household without use of electricity for lighting
4. The number of children living in a shack
5. The number of children living in a household that is crowded

**National Picture**

The levels of child deprivation across South Africa as a whole are astounding (see Table 3.1). More than three-quarters of children are living in households with incomes below R1003 per month. Two in five children do not have working adults in their households. One in twenty children aged 7-15 are not attending school. One in twenty children have no living parents or are in a child-headed household. More than seven in ten children experience living environment deprivation. There is clearly much more work required to address child deprivation in South Africa. However, this crisis cannot be tackled in isolation from the living conditions of the rest of the South African population.

**Table 3. 1.** National Picture of the domains of deprivation in South Africa

| **Domains of Deprivation** | **Percentage of Child Deprivation** |
|---|---|
| Income and Material Deprivation | 78% |
| Employment Deprivation | 41% |
| Education Deprivation | 5% |
| Biological Parent Deprivation | 5% |
| Living Environment Deprivation | 72% |

*Note*. Information used in the preparation of this was retrieved from Wright, G., & Noble, M. (2009). *The South African index of multiple deprivation 2007 at municipality level*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education (DBE).

## School Improvement

The emphasis on school improvement resounds globally, however, the complexities of achieving desired systemic changes have been given short shrift in policy, research, training, and practice (Hopkins & Levine, 2000). It is necessary that school improvement efforts begin with a clear framework that clearly defines what changes needs to be made and provides prescriptions for how to get from "here to there" (Elmore & City, 2007). Hopkins et al., (2000) argued that school improvement is as much about students' results, as it is about meeting the real needs of teachers and students; and, it involves continuous learning collectively on the part of all individuals and the institution. Improvement manifests differently depending on school contexts. Elmore et al., (2007) cast light on the reality that improvements are usually visible in the classrooms before they show up on external measures. The growth is not obvious due (1) evaluating through annual tests rather than the daily work of teachers and students in the classroom, (2) using tools designed to detect big changes rather than the smaller ones that lead to the big ones, and (3) prohibiting sufficient time for familiarization with new curriculum and the

implementation of effective instructional strategies before assessing for growth. As schools improve, three distinct yet related processes are taking place including (1) an increase in the level of knowledge and skill that teachers and administrators bring to the work of instructional practice, (2) an increase in the level of agreement and alignment across classrooms around powerful practices due to teaching shifting from an individual to a collective activity and internal accountability, and (3) schools align their resources around instructional improvement.

In South Africa, an effort to improve schools was made through the introduction of a new curriculum, and it came with the allotment for most educational institutions to govern their institutions in the bid to drive school effectiveness and school efficiency (Botha, 2010). However, a prerequisite for visibly measurable success in school improvement is to understand its relationship with school effectiveness and school efficiency.

## School Effectiveness

School effectiveness refers to the level of goal attainment of schools (Scheerens, 2013). It is a shared belief that an effective school is essentially the same as a successful or good school. Based on that notion, empirical studies have led to the development of a more precise definition of school effectiveness. School effectiveness is determined by the performance of a school—in which the performance is expressed through the "output" of the school—and then measured by the average achievement of the learners at the end of a period of formal schooling (Scheerens, 2000).

In the South African context, school effectiveness is determined by the Department of Education (DoE) through its national standards for the achievement of the aims and goals (Botha, 2010). How a school fares in relation to the pass rates associated with the national standards qualifies it as either a successful school or a dysfunctional (failing) school. For the

purpose of achieving the highest possible success, the school determines the manner in which it operates in all its division (Lockheed & Hanushek, 1994). For this study, schools that meet the pass rate standards established by the DoE will be deemed effective schools.

## School Efficiency

In South African schools, there is a struggle in the production of high quality outputs (school performance) for the given inputs (resources). The development of the interrelationship between economics and education was birth through a research analysis of human capital formation and rates of return on investments in education. The concept of school efficiency emerged in response to a concern with schools functioning with fewer fiscal resources (Daggett, 2009). Its response was to develop human resources by using an economic model production theory to understand the education process in schools (Hanushek, 1986). The concern of school efficiency is cost in relation to school performance. It refers to keeping a constant output for a limited input, or using fewer inputs for greater output (Botha, 2010). Consequently, school efficiency will be interpreted as managing to achieve higher student performance with fewer resources.

## Theoretical Framework

Labaree (2013) defines theory as a well-established principle that has been developed to explain a phenomenon. He adds that theories arise from repeated observation and testing. Furthermore, theory incorporates facts, laws, predictions, and tested hypotheses that are widely accepted within a particular discipline. Thus, a theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains the existence of the research problem to be studied (Swanson & Chermack, 2013). The theoretical framework for this study was adopted as a means of analyzing data, in addition to prescribing and evaluating solutions to the problem that underpins the

research (Sutton & Staw, 1995).

Based on a review of scholarly studies on leadership and multiple deprivation, five theoretical approaches to leadership were selected. These include transformational leadership, instructional leadership, distributed leadership, servant leadership, and asset-based leadership; along with, the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (UCCSR) 5Essential theoretical framework. Particularly in the South African context, the most widely implemented form of leadership is managerial leadership; however, it was not included in the theoretical framework of this study. Therefore, this section begins with the acknowledgement of this leadership approach and an explanation for its exclusion. In addition, it provides justification for the five leadership approaches included in the theoretical framework.

## Theories of Leadership

### Educational Leadership and Management

Managerial leadership remains the most prevalent model of leadership in South Africa despite its association with the previous Apartheid dispensation (Bush, 2007). Nevertheless, the author states leadership and management need to be given equal importance if schools are to provide the best level of education for their learners. There are some researchers for example Ingvarson, Anderson and Gronn (2006) who suggest that leadership and management are two distinct concepts. In contrast, other researchers contend that they are two distinct yet interrelated concepts, both essential in the school context (Botha, 2011; Bush, 2013; Bush & Glover, 2016).

Cuban (1988, xx) is often credited with providing one of the clearest distinctions between leadership and management:

> I do distinguish, then, between leading and managing….While there are problems with these definitions, they have the advantage of being familiar and close to what must people would define as leadership and management in daily affairs…

> By leadership, I mean influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals . . . leadership . . . takes . . . much ingenuity, energy, and skill…
>
> Managing is maintaining efficiently and effectively current organizational arrangements. While managing well often exhibits leadership skills… the overall direction is toward maintenance rather than change. I prize both managing and leading and attach no special value to either one since different settings and times call for varied responses.

Bush (2007) notes that while there is a global interest in leadership and management, there is a lack of clarity regarding leadership behaviors that are most likely to generate the most favorable outcomes. Furthermore, he states, "Awareness of alternative approaches is essential to provide a set of tools from which discerning leaders can choose when facing problems and dealing with day-to-day life." This study moves beyond managerial leadership as it the most prevalent leadership style in the South African educational system. The aim of this study is to explore effective theories of leadership that have led to schools defying the odds so that other school leaders can couple leadership approaches with management.

Several approaches to educational leadership have gained prominence in the past few decades. Among these approaches is a shared understanding of school leadership as an evolving process. Although there are more, the following five approaches selected for this study have been associated with effective forms of leaderships enacted by school leaders in South Africa: transformational leadership, instructional leadership, distributed leadership, servant leadership and asset-based leadership (Jansen 2000; Christie & Linguard, 2001; Bush & Glover, 2009; Heystek, 2010; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015; Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015; Botha, 2016).

**Transformational Leadership**

The term transformational leadership was introduced by Downton (1973) and emerged as an important approach to leadership through the work of Burns (1978). Christie and Lingard

(2001) highlight that the idea of transformational leadership was the reaction to the rapid change of any organization today. Furthermore, interest in transformational leadership may be interpreted as a part of a broader set of concerns regarding the emotional and symbolic aspects of leadership influences, which emerged in leadership theories during the 1980s. Transformational leadership is a process whereby the leader engages with the follower and establishes a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in them both. The characteristics and activities of a transformational leader are (a) creating a vision, (b) motivating, (c) being a change agent, (d) building trust, (e) giving nurturance, and (f) acting as a social architect. Although the transformational leaders play a vital role in advancing change, in the transformation process, the followers and leaders are inseparably bound together (Northouse, 2013).

Since its introduction in the 1970s, transformational leadership has been the focal point for a large body of research on leadership. Transformational leadership as an effective form of leadership is justified by substantial evidence. It has been extensively researched from prominent leaders of qualitative studies to chief executive officers in large, highly recognized companies. It deals with leadership from the perspective that it is a process that transpires between followers and leaders. Transformational leadership provides an expanded image of leadership that gives attention to the needs and growth of followers. It suggests that leadership as a moral dimension makes it distinctive from all other approaches to leadership. This inclusion of morals eliminates the coercive use of power, by the likes of Hitler and Jim Jones, to be accepted as models of leadership (Northouse, 2013). Bass (1998) classifies their practices as pseudotransformational leadership as they are transforming but in a negative way. This approach to leadership is self-consumed, exploitive, and power-oriented with warp moral values (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Avolio (1999) argued for four different factors that are incorporated into transformational leadership. Idealized influence is leaders acting as a strong role model for the follower. Inspirational motivation refers to leaders communicating high expectations to followers and inspiring them through motivation to become committed to and engaged in the shared vision of the organization. Intellectual stimulation is leaders stimulating followers to be creative, innovative and challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and the organization. Individualized consideration refers to leaders providing a supportive climate in which they listen closely to the individual needs of the followers. Jansen (2000) argues that for followers to participate in the transformation process leaders must make an assessment of their readiness, ensuring that followers possess the required skills, training and emotional maturity to engage in the change process.

In South African schools, transformational leadership can be taught at all levels to impact its performance positively. Transformational leadership provides a wide-ranging set of generalizations of the distinctive practices of leaders who transform. It provides a broad way of thinking about leadership that stresses ideals, inspiration, innovation, and individual concerns. Transformational leadership demands that school leaders be conscious of how their behavior relates to the needs of their stakeholders and the varying dynamics within their schools (Northouse, 2013). Modisaotile (2012) challenges South African school leaders which the task of ensuring that transformational leadership prevails in their schools.

**Instructional Leadership**

Since the turn of the century, the American infatuation with performance standards has become an international love affair; and, internationally school leaders find themselves at the nexus of accountability and school improvement with an increasingly explicit expectation that

they will function as instructional leaders (Hallinger, 2005). A portrait of instructional leadership by Spillane (2004) illustrates the school principal as a person who spends a considerable amount of time resolving instructional problems in the school. Bush & Glover (2009) added that the primary focus of the instructional leader is the management of teaching and learning. However, Bush and Glover (2016) uncovered that principals in South African schools are unable to allocate the majority of their time to the management of teaching and learning. The researchers observed in most cases that the administrative work of South African principals distracted their focus from the core business of schooling. Consequently, Maringe and Moletsane (2015) argue that there is a need for in-service professional development to prepare principals to become effective instructional leaders who create a conducive learning environment and contribute to the transformation of the South African educational system.

There exist several notable models of instructional leadership. However, the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model will be used to conceptually define instructional leadership because it has been the most frequently used model in empirical research (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). There are three dimensions of the instructional leadership of the principal, and each has multiple functions. The first dimension is *defining the school mission*, and its two functions are framing clear school goals and communicating clear school goals. The second dimension is *managing the instructional program,* and its three functions are supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, and monitoring student progress. The third dimension is *creating a positive school climate,* and its five functions are protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and proving incentives for learning.

Instructional leadership was first introduced in the 1980s and has since become a frequently studied school leadership model, and its scope of research has been extensive and global. The preponderance of evidence suggests that (1) school principals contribute to school effectiveness and student achievement indirectly through actions they take to influence school and classroom conditions, (2) the most influential avenue of effects concerns the principal's role in shaping the school's mission, (3) the school context has an effect on the type of instructional leadership exercised by principals, and (4) instructional leaders also influence the quality of school outcomes through the alignment of school structures and culture with the school's mission (Hallinger, 2005, p. 9).

**Distributed Leadership**

There is a growing realization that the antiquated organizational structure of schooling does not fit the requirement of learning in the twenty-first century. It has been replaced by an upgraded model of schooling based on collaboration, networking, and working with external constituencies. Consequently, these new and increasingly complex forms of schooling warrant fresh and more responsive approaches to leadership (Harris & Spillane, 2008). Distributed leadership emerged to take on these demands.

Distributed leadership acknowledges that there are multiple leaders and that the leadership activities are widely dispersed within and between organizations (Harris, 2007; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). It adopts a perspective on leadership that values the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practices, not simply those who are formally designated or classified as leaders (Harris et al.,, 2008). Harris et al., (2008) suggest that there are three main reasons for the popularity of this approach. Firstly, it has normative power in that it eradicates the singular, heroic leader model and promotes teams, and places greater emphasis

on teacher, support staff, and students as leaders (Harris, 2004). Secondly, it has representational power in that it allows for the restructuring of leadership teams including the creation of new roles to meet the increased external demands and pressures on schools. Lastly, it has empirical power in that there is an increase in evidentiary support from research that distributed leadership makes a positive difference to organizational outcomes and student learning (Leithwood et al., 2007; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

Distributed leadership is not to be equated with simply flattening the hierarchy or delegation of leadership. Its premise is built on providing an alternative lens for viewing leadership that challenges the tacit understanding of the relationship between leaders and followers. It allows for the possibility of recognizing that the follower may be a vital element in defining leadership within the school (Harris et al., 2008).

If implemented well, distributed leadership can make a significant contribution to improved student achievement (Botha, 2016). Nevertheless, Williams (2011) notes that the majority of schools in South Africa operate in contexts which are generally not conducive to distributed leadership. Bush (2013) concurs, stating that those with formal leadership roles at times can encourage or prevent others from taking opportunities to lead new initiatives or facilitate change.

The findings of a study conducted by Grant (2008) in the KwaZulu-Natal reported that most school cultures believed in the ultimate authority and decision-making by the school leader; resultantly, the aspect of distributed leadership was unsuccessful. A more recent study by Bush and Glover (2016) revealed that while there is a development of leadership and management in South African schools, prevailing challenges remain which include inadequate learner achievement, disunity in teacher unions and unhealthy relationships between school leaders and

their governing bodies. There is still work that needs to be carried out to educate South African school leaders in the area of distributed leadership (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015).

**Servant Leadership**

Northouse (2013) describes servant leadership as "a paradoxical approach to leadership that challenges our traditional beliefs about leadership and influence . . . it emphasizes that leaders should be attentive to the needs of followers, empower them, and help them develop their full human capacities" (p. 248). The origin of the term servant leadership is linked to the writings of Greenleaf (1970), who aimed to explore the functionality of institutions and ways in which they could more effectively serve society.

To further clarify servant leadership, Spears (2002) conceptualizes it by identifying ten central characteristics: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Another significant contribution by Liden, Panaccio, Meuser, Hu, & Wayne (2014), is a model of servant leadership consisting of three key components: antecedent conditions, servant leader behaviors, and leadership outcomes. The three antecedents or existing conditions that impact servant leadership are context and culture, leader attributes and follower receptivity. The core of the process is the seven servant leader behaviors: conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting others first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community. The potential outcomes of servant leadership are follower performance and growth, organizational performance, and societal impact.

Fullan (2003) stressed that a strong system of education is the cornerstone of a civil, prosperous, democratic society, and emphasizes that, "one of the greatest strengths on needs, especially troubled times, is a strong sense of moral purpose (p.19). As the nation of South

Africa and the educational institutions within South Africa work toward democratization, it is vital that students learn to be reflective in their thinking, function at high levels of moral reasoning, and become autonomous decision-makers (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2012). Thus, it becomes central to the role of school leaders to provide the example and atmosphere to foster the aforementioned democratic ethos (Crippen, 2005).

Heystek (2010) argues that quality of South African education is threatened due to challenges which are rooted in the capacity to govern. Nienaber (2014) asserts that the key focus of servant leadership is providing service to others, without compromising self, to the good of the group. Furthermore, to contribute to the betterment of the group requires that an individual genuinely discharges his or her moral responsibility. Mbokodi and Singh (2011) express their doubt as to whether stakeholders in democratic governance in South African schools are sufficiently equipped to effectively discharge of their responsibility.

**Asset-Based Leadership**

Two divergent approaches can be taken when addressing multiple deprivation such as a needs-based approach or an asset-based approach. The needs-based approach focuses on problems and deficits that carry with them a range of potentially detrimental consequences for the recipient (Mathie & Cunningham, 2005). These consequences include the danger of entrapment in an endless list of problems and deficiencies-perception that only external experts can provide solutions to problems, thus, entrenching a cycle of disempowerment and dependency (Eloff & Ebersohn, 2001). Ammerman and Parks (1998) describe it as " . . . an endless revolving door of collecting the same morbidity, mortality, and socioeconomic data, writing a report designed to highlight all that is wrong with the community, and moving on without providing further assistance to address identified problems or issues" (p. 38).

On the contrary, the originators of the asset-based approach (Kretzmann, McKnight, & Network, 1993) define a shift in perspective from that of services to empowerment. It changes the mentality of professional dominance to one that embraces collaboration, dynamic partnerships, and participation. An asset-based approach to leadership focuses on what is currently present in the environment, in addition to the capacities inherent to the individuals and the environment. It has an intrinsic concentration on problem-solving and development, rather than an extrinsic concentration on problems and lack of resources. It stresses that all school stakeholders boast a unique combination of assets and capacities. Furthermore, it highlights that in every context each individual has something to contribute that has not yet been realized, or, there may be unacknowledged available resources (Eloff et al., 2001).

In South Africa the needs-based approach has planted a legacy of absolute reliance on external assistance and powerlessness on the part of the supposed beneficiaries, to the extent whereby people are unable to see anything of value around them (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015). An asset-based approach to leadership is suitable in the South African context especially considering the historical implication associated with low achievement in schools afflicted by multiple deprivation. Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane (2015) suggest that in the context of multiple deprivation, the asset-based approach is the most suitable as it addresses challenges by first looking inward. Furthermore, the authors challenge school principals to operate through asset-based thinking to achieve success, as it requires leaders to see themselves as their own saviors and intently behave fittingly.

**5Essentials Theoretical Framework**

School improvement efforts are an internationally recognized part of educational reform. To achieve school effectiveness, many schools rely on educational research. Among researchers

in the field of school improvement and leadership in challenging context, a framework for achieving effectiveness has evolved. While there are variations in the wording of the correlates, the underlying assumptions are the same. For this study, the researcher will use the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (UCCCSR) five essential supports (5Essentials) framework (Bryk et al., 2010) to guide the empirical research. The constructs include effective leaders, collaborative teachers, involved families, supportive environment, and ambitious instruction (Klugman, Gordon, Sebring, & Sporte, 2015).

It should be noted that the UCCCSR 5Essentials study was based on successful school leadership practice in a North American context. Nevertheless, these practices are significant for the study in that they cast light on how success can be achieved by school principals in South African townships. Furthermore, Byrk et al., (2010) maintain that the 5Essentials are necessary, but deficient, for success irrespective of context. To further support the need to adopt a theory outside of the South African context, I will highlight a similar choice in a study on leadership practices in South African schools conducted by Mbokazi (2015).

The significance of understanding these practices [four core practices of successful school leaders by Leithwood et al., (2006) within the South African township context is that there is little work published on successful principals that details the kinds of everyday challenges they face in their disadvantaged township communities.

Byrk et al., (2010) explain that the 5Essentials framework and surveys originated in Chicago. In the 1990s, educators asked a simple question - Why were some elementary schools improving dramatically, while others remained stagnant? A longitudinal study by the UChicago CCSR, from 1990 to 1996, involved more than 150,000 students (Byrk et al., 2010). They represented 236 elementary schools, where 118 schools had experienced academic growth on

national norms in reading; and the other 118 schools scored the same on national norms in the six-year period.

Those two widely divergent sets of outcomes led to the first articulation of the 5Essentials for school improvement framework (see Figure 3.2). The framework served as both a theoretical guide for developing surveys to measure each component (see Appendix 2.4) and as a clinical guide for practitioners (Klugman et al., 2010). Byrk et al., 2010 stated:

> The framework asserts that effective leadership, acting as a catalyst, is the first essential support for school improvement. The leaders must stimulate and nourish the development of four additional core supports collaborative teachers, involved families, supportive environments and ambitious instruction. While each of these supports is important on its own, the value of these supports lies in their integration and mutual reinforcement…the five essential supports reflect the vital connection between a school's organization and what happens in the classroom. While the teacher in his/her classroom has the most direct responsibility for raising student achievement, the broader school organization also must be structured in a way that supports teachers in their efforts to enhance student learning (p. 64).

**Figure 3. 2.** 5Essential Theoretical Framework

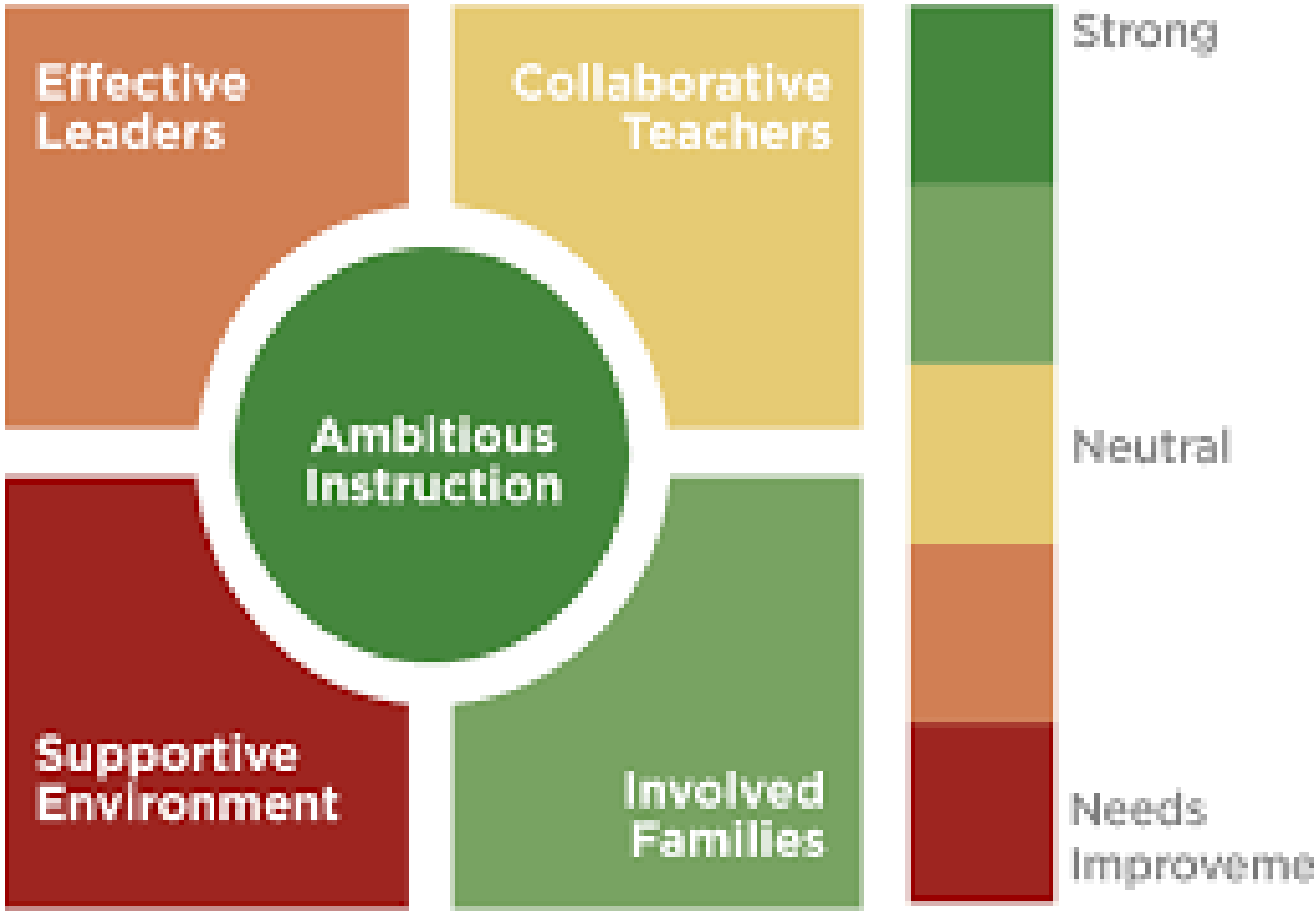



Figure 3.2. Examination of the five essential supports. Images on the right depict the five domains of the framework notably effective leaders, collaborative teachers, supportive environment, involved families, and ambitious instructions. Adapted from Klugman, J., Gordon, M.F., Sebring, P.B., & Sporte, S.E. (2015). *A first look at the 5Essentials in Illinois schools. Research Summary*. Retrieved from https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Statewide%205E%20Rep ort.pdf

Klugman et al., (2010, p. 6) describe each of the essential as such:

1. *Effective Leaders.* Effective leadership requires taking a strategic approach toward enhancing performance of the four other domains, while simultaneously nurturing the social relationships embedded in the everyday work of the school. Leaders advance their objectives, particularly concerning improving instruction, while at the same time seeking to develop supportive followers for change. In the process, they cultivate other leaders—teachers, parents, and community members—who can take responsibility for and help expand the reach of improvement efforts.
2. *Collaborative Teachers.* This construct encompasses the quality of the human resources recruited and maintained in a school, the quality of ongoing professional development focused on local improvement efforts, the base beliefs and values that reflect teacher responsibility for change, and the presence of a school-based professional community focused on the core problems of improving teaching and learning. The four elements of collaborative teachers are mutually reinforcing and together promote both individual and collective growth.
3. *Involved Families.* School staff reaches out to families and the community to engage them in the processes of strengthening student learning. Staff view parents or guardians as partners in their children's learning and report that they feel respected by those parents.
4. *Supportive Environments*. A safe and orderly environment that is conducive to academic work is critical to a supportive environment. Clear, fair, and consistently enforced expectations for student behavior ensure that students receive maximum instructional time. Teachers must hold students to high expectations of academic achievement while also providing considerable individual attention and support for students.

5. *Ambitious Instruction.* To prepare students for further schooling, specialized work, and responsible civic participation, teachers must move beyond the basic skills and ask students to do intellectually challenging work. Such learning tasks require students to organize and plan their work, monitor their progress, and often work in groups.

## Chapter Overview

This chapter provided a review of the literature from both local and international researchers and scholars regarding successful school leadership practices in challenging circumstances. Firstly, the chapter began with a discussion surrounding the notion of multiple deprivation; along with, the connection between multiple deprivation and educational performance. Secondly, the chapter highlighted the impact of school-based factors, family factors, bureaucratic factors, and poor leadership and management on leadership and multiple deprivation in the South African context. Thirdly, it examined existing international studies and educational debates related to leadership and multiple deprivation. While there is extensive literature on various notions of leadership, a gap still exists relating to leadership enactment by successful school leaders in the South African context.

Subsequently, this chapter provided a discussion about the key terms that underpin the conceptual framework of this study—leadership, the management of teaching and learning, multiple deprivation and school improvement which encompasses school effectiveness and school efficiency. Lastly, it presented the theoretical framework for this study that includes five relevant theories of leadership namely (1) transformational leadership, (2) instructional leadership, (3) distributed leadership, (4) servant leadership, and (5) asset-based leadership. In addition, detailing UCCSR 5Essentials theoretical framework that guides this study.

CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

This chapter includes a discussion surrounding the philosophical paradigms, positivism, interpretivism, and constructivism. Furthermore, it explains the rationale for situating this study within the constructivist paradigm. Subsequently, the chapter argues for the use of qualitative research as the methodological approach to this empirical study, and the selection of the case study method as the research design. The research methods are then described including an account of the sample selection plan, along with, the process and instruments used for data collection. Presented next, is a description of the data analysis process. The chapter concludes by discussing the criterion utilized to ensure research quality, which involves issues related to research validity, reliability, triangulation, researcher biases, and ethics.

## Philosophical Paradigmatic Discussion

### Positivism and Constructivism/Interpretivism

Kuhn (1962) defines a research paradigm as "the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed" (p. 45). According to Guba (1990), the characterization of research paradigms includes:

1. Ontology – What is reality?
2. Epistemology – How do you know something?
3. Methodology – How do you go about finding out?

Positivism and constructivism/interpretivism are the underpinning philosophical paradigms most associated with the social sciences. Pierce (2012) noted that positivism is more a traditional experimental (quantitative) approach to research, which views social reality as a set of facts to be known for all time by measuring people in the laboratory. While constructivism is a more critical, discursive (qualitative) approach, which views social reality as mutually constructed between people in the real world.

Patel (2015) explained that through your ontology and epistemology a holistic view is created of how knowledge is viewed and how you can view yourself in relation to this knowledge; and, the methodological strategies used to discover it. Consequently, an understanding of philosophical assumptions will improve the quality of research and heighten the creativity of the researcher. Table 3.1 below provides a more detailed synopsis of the paradigms

**Table 4. 1.** Research Paradigm

| Paradigms | Ontology<br>**What is reality?** | Epistemology<br>**How can I know reality?** | Methodology<br>**How do you go about finding out?** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Positivism | There is a single reality or truth (more realist) | Reality can be measured, and hence the focus is on reliable and valid tools to obtain that | Experimental Research<br>Survey Research |
| Constructivism/ Interpretivism | There is no single reality or truth. Reality is created by individuals in groups (less realist) | Reality needs to be interpreted. It is used to discover the underlying meaning of events and activities | Ethnography<br>Grounded Theory<br>Phenomenological Research<br>Action Research<br>Discourse Analysis<br>Heuristic Inquiry |

*Note.* Adapted from Patel, S. (2015). The research paradigm -methodology, epistemology and ontology--explained in simple terms. Retrieved from http://salmapatel.co.uk/academia/the-research-paradigm-methodology-epistemology-and-ontology-explained-in-simple-language.

In summation, positivist believes that there is a single reality, which can be measured and known, and therefore they are more likely to use quantitative methods to measure this reality. Constructivists/Interpretivists hold the belief that there is no single reality or truth, rather reality needs to be interpreted. Therefore, they are more likely to use qualitative methods to get those multiple realities (Patel, 2015).

This research study is designed to gather rich data—from which ideas are induced—from multiple stakeholder perspectives to increase the understanding of a phenomenon. Thus, positivism is not a suitable research paradigm.

**Suitability of Interpretivism versus Constructivism**

After an extensive review of the literature, it was found that the most suitable philosophical paradigm was entangled within the interpretivist and constructivist persuasions. In hindsight, it was clearly naïve for the researcher to assume that some level of simplicity would exist in the quest to find the most appropriate philosophical paradigm in which to situate this study. Unwarned, the researcher became a participant in the endless and ever-changing paradigm wars in the social sciences. After exhausting the relevant literature on interpretivism and constructivism, greater clarity was gained in recognizing the seemingly unidentifiable difference between the two approaches to human inquiry.

Schwandt (1994) explained that although the two paradigms share an intellectual heritage, the distinction between the two paradigms is best seen in their preoccupation with related yet somewhat different concerns. Interpretivism was conceived in response to the struggle to cultivate a natural science of the social. Interpretivists argued for the uniqueness of human inquiry and aimed to refute the naturalistic interpretation of science, by illuminating that the goal of natural science is to explain scientifically. While the goal of social science is to grasp

or understand the meaning of mental or cultural phenomena. Although constructivist do share the aforementioned concern, their frustration is with the notion of objectivism, which views the world as being "composed of facts and the goal of knowledge is to provide a literal account of what the world is like" (Knorr-Cetina, 1981, p.1). Constructivists are deeply committed to the perspective that knowledge and truth are the results of perspective, and that they are created, not discovered, but in the mind (Schwandt, 1994). Considering the overall intent of this study, the constructivist paradigm was the approach to this empirical research.

**Rationale for Constructivism**

Ontologically, constructivists view knowledge as a human construction, that can never be certified as ultimate truth, but problematic and ever-changing. In addition, constructivist take on the position of relativism which suggests that realities exist as multiple mental constructions within people's minds (Guba, 1990). This ontological view supported this research through the allotment of meaning-making and multiple interpretations of school leaders' experiences both conceptually and contextually.

Epistemologically, constructivists subscribe to subjectivity which recognizes that every theory or conclusion is a simplified and incomplete attempt to grasp something about a complex reality (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). This epistemological perspective supported this research, as it allowed for interaction between the researcher and the participants in unpacking the complexities of leadership practices, multiple deprivation, and forms of leadership.

Methodologically, constructivists adopt both a hermeneutic aspect (depiction of individual constructions with as much accuracy as possible) and dialectic aspect (comparing and contrasting the individual constructions) with the aim of producing a construction (or constructions) on which there is a substantial consensus (Guba, 1990). This methodological

approach supported this research in that it did not force the researcher to make a prediction and control the leadership practices to be explored. Rather it embraced the production of informed and sophisticated constructions to generate as much consensus as possible.

**Qualitative Research**

Berg (2008) indicated that the purpose of research is not only to amass data, rather it is to discover solutions to questions through the application of systematic procedures. The basis of quantitative research is the analysis of counts and measures of things. It performs research through the use of mathematical data, facts, and universal laws (Mbokazi, 2013). However, all experiences cannot be conveyed through numerical values. Consequently, a quantitative approach was not suitable as this study aimed to gather in-depth information of human experiences and analyze it through interpretations.

To the contrary, qualitative research allows for the systemic analysis of meaning, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbol, and descriptors of things. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggest that a qualitative approach be implemented when there is a necessity for multifaceted detailed information about the phenomenon under scrutiny. This study sought to explore behaviors, practices, and qualities of successful school leaders. Consequently, a qualitative approach was adopted for this study to aid in the accessing of unquantifiable data about the school principals through verbal engagement and documentary data (Berg, 2008).

**Research Design**

In social science, it is a commonplace to see research design treated as a method of data collection as opposed to a logical structure of the inquiry. Research design is an antecedent to methods as its function is to specify the type of evidence needed to answer the research question

as conclusively as possible (the context of design). Yin (1989) argues that research design "deals with a logical problem and not a logistical problem" (p. 29). The research design for this study was a case study method.

Research designs are generally equated with quantitative and qualitative research such as experiments and case studies, respectively. However, this is an erroneous assumption that can lead to poorly designed research and ambiguous or inconclusive evidence. Yin (1993), a key authority on case study design, stressed that the method does require the embracing of qualitative over quantitative, as it is suitable for both. While a qualitative case study approach was adopted for this study, it was done through much deliberation rather through the acceptance of a common practice.

By using a case study, it becomes possible to highlight the uniqueness or irreducible specificity of a certain event, experience, process, or situation (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Case study researchers, particularly those involved in intensive reflexive longitudinal case study research, are much “nearer” to the social reality that they are attempting to understand. Their participants “talk back,” allowing for the assumptions of the researcher to be both challenged and changed (Burawoy, 1998). Yin (2003) suggests a case study method as the preferred approach when (1) the aim of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions, (2) you cannot manipulate the behavior of the participants involved in the study, (3) you want to cover contextual conditions as you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study, or (4) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

The qualitative case study method allowed for an in-depth exploration of the behaviors, practices, and leadership forms of individual successful primary school principals within the context of multiple deprivation. Additionally, it enabled me to develop a holistic understanding

of how the leaders interpreted their leadership practices and how the other participants interpreted them.

Commentary by Goldkuhl and Cronholm's (2010) noted that researchers often build new knowledge on existing knowledge. Consequently, there is a risk of reinventing the wheel if one ignores existing theory. While this study is based on UCCCSR 5Essentials theoretical framework, its use was solely to provide a lens to gain perspective on successful leadership practices. As aforementioned, the 5Essentials were constructed in a different context from South African school navigating multiple deprivation.

**Sampling**

The sampling technique employed is a critical component of the overall sampling strategy. In probability sampling, participants are chosen at random and have a known probability of selection. The aim is to produce a statistically representative sample that is suitable for testing a hypothesis (Wilmot, 2005). McMillan and Schumacher (2006) stated that probability sampling procedures are not appropriate when "generalizability of the findings is not the purpose" (p.329).

As implied by its name, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) view purposive sampling as that which is "chosen for a specific purpose" (p.156). In purposive sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). The researcher must select participants who have "experiences related to the topic of research, not participants who necessarily represent some larger population" (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p.139). Patton (1990) argued that the "logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the

research, thus the term purposeful sampling" (p. 169). Sample selection was a critical task in this qualitative study. As the researcher, I adopted purposive sampling as a means to identify successful primary schools in the Soweto township.

**Site**

Soweto, which is an abbreviation for South Western Townships, is an urban residential area located southwest of the city of Johannesburg in Gauteng, South Africa. Demographically, it is estimated to be the residence of 33% - 40% of Johannesburg's residents. Its population consists of nearly 1.3 million inhabitants of which approximately 1.2 million are black Africans. While many of the 11 official languages are spoken within Soweto, almost 45% of the residents claim IsiZulu as their first language. Economically, while there are wealthier residents generally living in the southwest areas, Soweto ranks among the poorest communities in Johannesburg, as the majority of its dwellers are deprived. As customary, where you find large populations of black Africans in poverty, you can trace its roots to apartheid. Initially, Soweto was envisioned to exist only as a dormitory town for black Africans who were employed in white houses, factories, and industries. Consequently, the economic development of Soweto was cruelly curtailed by the apartheid state, which provided an exceptionally inadequate infrastructure and prohibited residents from opening their businesses.

**Sample Size**

In the context of South African primary township schools, there is a very limited number of schools that maintain a track record of high achievement according to the ANA results used for this study. Moreover, many of these schools were not willing to participate in a study that sought to illuminate the factors that contributed to such unusual success. Consequently, the number of case studies and participants involved in this study is limited. Furthermore, I

acknowledge that generalizability of my findings are limited because the sample size was drawn from two schools involving eight participants. Therefore, the extent to which my findings might relate to other successful primary township school is unclear. However, Willis (2014, p.1) argues that "criticism of generalizability is of little relevance when the intention is one of particularization."

In qualitative research there are no published guidelines or tests to determine an adequate sample size (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar & Fontenot, 2013). Nevertheless, smaller sample sizes are often called into question. In defense of the sample size of two case studies in this research, over many decades notable researchers have advocated for the use, advantage and high value of a single case study (Yin, 2009; Eckstein, 1975; Bryman, 2012; Bennett & Elman, 2010). Stake (2008) notes that as form of research, case studies are defined by their interest in an individual case and the object of that study is a unique, specific and bounded system. Gerring (2004) adds that a case study should be an intensive study of single case observed at a single point in time.

Barnett, Vasileiou, Thorpe & Young (2015) highlight that as with any qualitative study, the findings are not meant to be numerically representative rather the sampling method intends to showcase the responses of various stakeholders concerning a specific phenomena. As the researcher in this study I believe that individual case studies captured the range and diversity of experiences, beliefs and opinions that allowed for prominent themes to emerge from the data and conclusively answer the research questions aligned with this study.

**Participants**

The South African educational system and the citizens place great emphasis on and give much attention to secondary schools. The manifestation of challenges in the education system typically becomes more apparent at the secondary level of education because this is where the

results of 12 years of schooling are revealed to the nation (Christie, 2008). Considering that learners' performance on the Grade 3 Annual National Assessment (ANA) is lower by Grade 6 and only about 25% of students who start Grade 1 graduate from Grade 12, the researcher carries the assumption that the root of the problem is in primary schooling. In support of this assumption, Fleisch (2008) asserted:

> The evidence points to inextricable conclusions. While the studies use different "standards" or yardsticks to measure achievement, some deliberately avoiding judgments of "pass rates" altogether, they all, directly and indirectly, point to the predicament of primary education achievement. This is the predicament of extremely low average primary education attainment levels . . . the vast majority of children attending disadvantaged schools do not acquire a basic level of mastery in reading, writing, and mathematics . . . South Africa's primary education gap, with its distinct bimodal distribution, begins in the Foundation Phase, at the very earliest days of formal schooling, and continues unbroken to the end of primary education and beyond (p. 30).

The 2014 Soweto ANA results were used to identify successful schools. Although ANA is not standardized, changes yearly and becomes progressively easier, it remains the best assessment for ranking performance across schools. The dataset was reduced to include the maths scores of Grade 3 learners in quintiles 1-3 primary schools. The justification for using maths scores is: (1) it is common across schools, (2) there is no language variation, and (3) the questions generate correct or incorrect answers that limit subjectivity and potential biases. ANA results from 2012-2014 were analyzed considering the average performance in a single year for quintiles 1-3.

The top ten schools were identified by ranking the average marks in math. From the original Soweto ANA 2014 data set, a subset was created for each selected school to look at achievement across subjects and grade levels in the same year. The data included all subjects, average marks, population, registered, and wrote. I was prepared to repeat this step for the 10 schools looking at the Soweto ANA 2013 and Soweto ANA 2012 results provided by the

Gauteng Department of Education. However, a mental debate ensued considering if I should complete the process from the beginning including all the schools in the original dataset. I thought it would be interesting to see if these particular schools would rank similarly across annual data sets that are reflected below in Table 4.2, Table 4.3 and Table 4.4. Considering the integrity challenges with the proctoring and marking of the ANA exam, this exercise would increase my confidence in the credibility of the published results.

**Table 4. 2.** 2014 Top ten schools' average grade 3 ANA maths scores from 2012- 2014

| Top Ten 2014 Schools | 2014 | | 2013 | | 2012 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rank of 137 | Average | Rank of 162 | Average | Rank of 143 | Average |
| **S1** | 1 | 88.39 | 1 | 92.7 | 1 | 92.41 |
| **S2** | 2 | 79.11 | 17 | 70.65 | 5 | 70.84 |
| **S3** | 3 | 77.93 | 58 | 59.36 | 7 | 69.22 |
| **S4** | 4 | 76.48 | 51 | 61.04 | 56 | 50.43 |
| **S5** | 5 | 76.08 | 122 | 45.36 | 75 | 43.50 |
| **S6** | 6 | 74.65 | 87 | 52.11 | Did not test | Did not test |
| **S7** | 7 | 74.27 | 7 | 79.13 | 8 | 68.73 |
| **S8** | 8 | 73.44 | 75 | 56.8 | 87 | 39.90 |
| **S9** | 9 | 72.8 | 59 | 59.33 | 73 | 43.79 |
| **S10** | 10 | 72.26 | 10 | 75.62 | 42 | 53.51 |

***Note.*** S preceeding a number = school. Information presented in this table was retrieved from the Department of Education (2012; 2013; 2014). *Soweto Annual National Assessment results* Pretoria: DoE.

**Table 4. 3.** 2013 Top ten schools' average grade 3 ANA maths scores from 2012-2014

| Top Ten 2013 Schools | 2014 | | 2013 | | 2012 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Rank of 137** | **Average** | **Rank of 162** | **Average** | **Rank of 143** | **Average** |
| **S1** | 1 | 88.39 | 1 | 92.7 | 1 | 92.41 |
| **S11** | 132 | 35 | 2 | 86.05 | Did not test | Did not test |
| **S12** | 21 | 68.58 | 3 | 81.04 | 62 | 47.28 |
| **S13** | 87 | 52.59 | 4 | 80.98 | 23 | 58.43 |
| **S14** | 22 | 68.38 | 5 | 80.6 | 9 | 66.53 |
| **S15** | 71 | 55.97 | 6 | 79.24 | 29 | 57.17 |
| **S7** | 7 | 74.27 | 7 | 79.13 | 8 | 68.73 |
| **S16** | 32 | 66.28 | 8 | 76.42 | Did not test | Did not test |
| **S17** | 55 | 59.54 | 9 | 76.29 | 74 | 43.70 |
| **S10** | 10 | 72.26 | 10 | 76.29 | 42 | 53.51 |

***Note.*** S preceeding a number = school. Information presented in this table was retrieved from the Department of Education (2012; 2013; 2014). *Soweto Annual National Assessment results* Pretoria: DoE.

**Table 4. 4.** 2012 Top ten schools' average grade 3 ANA maths scores from 2012-2014

| Top Ten 2012 Schools | 2014 | | 2013 | | 2012 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Rank of 137** | **Average** | **Rank of 162** | **Average** | **Rank of 143** | **Average** |
| **S1** | 1 | 88.39 | 1 | 92.7 | 1 | 92.41 |
| **S18** | 25 | 67.66 | 24 | 68.68 | 2 | 74.23 |
| **S19** | Did not test | Did not test | 49 | 62.33 | 3 | 73.53 |
| **S20** | 27 | 67.31 | 43 | 63.61 | 4 | 70.85 |
| **S2** | 2 | 79.11 | 17 | 70.65 | 5 | 70.84 |
| **S21** | 31 | 66.44 | 81 | 56.25 | 6 | 70.66 |
| **S3** | 3 | 77.93 | 58 | 59.36 | 7 | 69.22 |
| **S7** | 7 | 74.27 | 7 | 79.13 | 8 | 68.73 |
| **S14** | 22 | 68.38 | 5 | 80.6 | 9 | 66.53 |
| **S22** | Did not test | Did not test | 62 | 59.33 | 10 | 53.51 |

***Note.*** S preceeding a number = school. Information presented in this table was retrieved from the Department of Education (2012; 2013; 2014). *Soweto Annual National Assessment results* Pretoria: DoE.

Of a possible 30 schools, 22 were unique schools signifying that some schools ranked in the top ten for multiple years—this information is reflected in Table 4.5. Schools that did not have three data points were eliminated decreasing the possible sample from 22 schools to 17 schools. For each of the remaining schools, the average was figured for the math scores from 2012-2014. As shown below in Table 4.6, the 17 schools were listed by highest ranking order. Schools were contacted in that order as mentioned above to be a potential sample school in this case study. Resultantly, the 2nd and 4th highest ranked schools agreed to be participants for this research study. They will be represented as School A (S7), School B (S14), and School C (S1).

**Table 4. 5.** Trends in top ten schools from 2012-2014

| Rank | **2014** | **2013** | **2012** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | **S1** | **S1** | **S1** |
| **2** | **S2** | **S11** | **S18** |
| **3** | **S3** | **S12** | **S19** |
| **4** | **S4** | **S13** | **S20** |
| **5** | **S5** | **S14** | **S2** |
| **6** | **S6** | **S15** | **S21** |
| **7** | **S7** | **S7** | **S3** |
| **8** | **S8** | **S16** | **S7** |
| **9** | **S9** | **S17** | **S14** |
| **10** | **S10** | **S10** | **S22** |

***Note.*** S preceeding a number = school. Information presented in this table was retrieved from the Department of Education (2012; 2013; 2014). *Soweto Annual National Assessment results* Pretoria: DoE.

**Table 4. 6.** Top seventeen schools based on average ANA maths scored between 2012-2014

| Rank | SCHOOL | SCORE | Original List (2014) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | S1 | 91.16 | X |
| **2** | S7 | 74.04 | X |
| **3** | S2 | 73.53 | |
| **4** | S14 | 71.83 | X |
| **5** | S18 | 70.25 | |
| **6** | S3 | 68.83 | |
| **7** | S20 | 67.25 | |
| **8** | S10 | 67.13 | X |
| **9** | S12 | 65.63 | X |
| **10** | S21 | 64.45 | |
| **11** | S15 | 64.12 | X |
| **12** | S13 | 64.00 | X |
| **13** | S4 | 62.65 | |
| **14** | S17 | 59.84 | X |
| **15** | S9 | 58.64 | |
| **16** | S8 | 56.71 | |
| **17** | S5 | 54.98 | |

***Note.*** S preceeding a number = school, X = school remained from the original list. Information presented in this table was retrieved from the Department of Education (2012; 2013; 2014). *Soweto Annual National Assessment results* Pretoria: DoE.

## Data Collection

Creswell (2012) argues that to generate an effective case study, numerous techniques for data should be employed. For this study, a multi-method approach was implemented for capturing data through semi-structured interviews and documentary data.

### Semi-Structured Interviews

McMillan et al., (2006) suggest that in-depth, semi-structured interviews are valuable in that they allow the researcher to obtain data of participants' meaning about how they perceive their world, and how they make sense of the important events in their lives. Semi-structured interviews are a useful technique for data collection based on the participants' opinions, feelings, emotions, and experiences (Denscombe, 2010). A series of key themes, issues, and questions (David & Sutton, 2004) were addressed, and semi-structured interviews allowed further probing into their insight about their practices (McMillan et al., 2006).

Semi-structured interviews are flexible in that they are neither fully fixed nor fully free. The interviews began with a defined questioning plan, but gradually became a conversation in which I saw questions answered during the flow of the conversation (O'Leary, 2004). Furthermore, depending on the direction of the interview, the order of questions changed, additional questions were asked (Corbetta, 2003), and I explained or rephrased questions if the participants were unclear about the meaning (O'Leary, 2004). In this study, individual interviews were conducted with the school principal, School Management Team (SMT) and educators. To treat participants as respected, knowledgeable partners whose time was valued, I aimed for each interview to last no more than 60 minutes (Schutt & Engel, 2012). However, there were variations in time based on the information provided by the participants.

With the consent of all participants, the interviews were audio recorded. Patton (2002) asserts that audio recording is essential for accurate data collection. In addition, it allowed me to concentrate on the participants even though it did not eliminate the need for taking notes. Smith and Osborn (2003) concurred and added that interviews should be transcribed verbatim as there is no alternative method that will allow for the documentation of every spoken word to be thoroughly analyzed afterward. Consequently, transcriptions were produced to assist in the data analysis process and as the source of direct quotes.

**Documentary Data**

Punch (2009) noted that documents are a rich source of data for education, as most educational institutions routinely produce a vast amount of documentary evidence that can be used to support educational research. Jupp (1996) suggests that the range of documents used by researchers includes diaries, letters, essays, personal notes, biographies and autobiographies, institutional memoranda and reports, government pronouncements and proceedings, and policy documents and papers. While Bush (2007) agrees that documentary data is an indispensable element of case study data collection, Cohen et al., (2011) questioned its reliability. However, Scott and Morrison (2005) contest their argument by explaining that, guided by the research question, the researcher can evaluate the quality of the evidence by emphasizing the following criteria for handling documentary data - authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and the establishment of the meaning of the document and its contribution to issues the researcher is hoping to illuminate.

Documentary data was an important part of the data collection process for this study in that national, district, and school level documentation, and other public domain material played an essential role in selecting participants for the study. Primary schools' Grade 3 learner mathematics results on the ANA—over the course of three years—were used to identify suitable participants. The dataset reflected in Table 4.5 showed the top performing schools in an individual formal year of schooling. The use of this form of documentary data allowed me to take notice of schools with a trend of high learner achievement.

In addition, school profile information was used to identify schools that serve learners afflicted by multiple deprivation. Some indicators used in this study included the schools classification as quintile 1-3, located in a high crime area of a township, learners reside in the aforementioned locale, informal settlements, and hostels, low socioeconomic status, and need for school-based feeding schemes.

**Instrument Design**

In this study, the instruments used to collect data were semi-structured interviews guides (Appendices 1.9 – 2.3). The semi-structured interview guides were designed to determine participants (1) perception of school leadership practices in relation to UCCSR 5Essential theoretical framework, (2) interaction with issues of multiple deprivation within their school, and (3) description of forms of leadership enactment by school leaders. With the consent of the participants, all interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed for the process of data analysis. A structured interview was not appropriate for the constructivist approach in this study as it did not allow for probing.

**Piloting**

NETSCC (2015) explained that a pilot study is a smaller version of the main study that focuses on its processes and tests whether the components can all work together. From the three case schools in this study, one school was selected as a pilot school. The fieldwork in the pilot school was successful. Consequently, it was unnecessary to alter the research design, methodology, and instrumentation of the study from the pilot.

A pilot study enables the testing of research methods, pre-empting some of the potential challenges, understanding of resource implications, and estimation of research parameters (Arain, Campbell, Cooper, & Lancaster, 2010; Kim, 2011; NETSCC, 2015; Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The pilot study involved the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews to determine if the range of questions to be used in the main study produced responses that were unambiguous and directly addressed the intent of the research questions. In addition, it took into consideration such issues as the appropriate length of time for data collection and the integrity of the research process.

**Data Analysis**

To address the research question, the qualitative data for this study were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The constant comparative method was used to develop concepts from the data by coding and analyzing simultaneously. In addition, it "combines systematic data collection, coding, and analysis with theoretical sampling in order to generate theory that is integrated, close to the data, and expressed in a form clear enough for further testing (Kolb, 2012, p.83).

As the researcher, I began with transcription to get a full written version of the interviews. Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2013) shared "more typically the recording is transcribed into text. This process, however, is fraught with slippage; it is dependent on the knowledge and skill of the transcribing person" (p.71). Considering potential cultural bias, I recognized my inability to effectively transcribe the interviews due to a language barrier. Consequently, a professional South African transcriber transcribed the interviews to ensure that I as the researcher did not misrepresent the ideas of the participants resulting from contextual misunderstandings. Upon reviewing the transcripts, it reflected what I heard during the interviews and what was captured in my field notes.

The constant comparative method was employed as I coded and analyzed the interview transcripts and field notes. Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel were used for the data analysis process. The aforementioned programs allowed me to manually organize, explore, and code data into categories so I could examine and compare codes. Saldaña (2013, p. 72) explains, "codes are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study." Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) defines coding as the critical link between data collection and their explanation. Charmaz et al., (2011) further shared:

> In qualitative data analysis, a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes, and this attributes interpreted meaning to each datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes . . . codes are primarily, but not exclusively, used to retrieve and categorize similar data chunks so the researcher can quickly find, pull out, and cluster the segments relating to a particular, research question, hypothesis, construct, or theme. Clustering and the display of condensed chunks then set the stage for further analysis and conclusions (p.72).

To assist with the initial coding, I used codes based on the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2 as a type of provisional coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Saldaña (2009) explains that the codes can be generated from the literature review, previous studies, the theoretical/conceptual framework, and the research questions. However, those codes should not be concrete or locked. As qualitative data are collected, coded, and analyzed, the provisional codes can be modified, deleted, or expanded to include new codes. Using the provisional coding permitted me to move into more in-depth data analysis in the second iterative process.

In the second iterative process, the coded data was analyzed and regrouped into categories manually using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to organize the data. Categories are conceptual elements that span many examples of the category (Merriam, 1998). Since the constant comparative method was employed in this study, the following guidelines proposed by Merriam (1998) for determining categories were useful. These are:

1. Categories should reflect the purpose of the research
2. Categories should be exhaustive
3. Categories should be mutually exclusive
4. Categories should be sensitizing
5. Categories should be conceptually congruent

As the researcher, engaging in that process entailed a committed focus to ensure the data were accurately interpreted.

The third iterative process was to integrate related categories to create themes. Themes are representative of the key ideas developed from the data (Creswell, Plano, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). The themes link back to answering the research questions and possibly expanding the theoretical framework of the study.

## Research Quality

### Transferability, Trustworthiness, and Triangulation

Transferability and trustworthiness are two central concepts in measurement that were observed by the researcher. Punch (2009) explained that transferability and trustworthiness are psychometric characteristics of measuring instruments used in research that together aid in the assessment of quality. Transferability deals with consistency over time (stability) and internal consistency. Bush (2007) argued that a measure is transferable if it generates the same results on two or more occasions, assuming that the object being measured has not been altered. Trustworthiness addresses the extent to which an instrument measures what it claims to measure (Punch, 2009). Trustworthiness is used to assess whether the research accurately illustrates the phenomenon it intended to describe (Bush, 2007). Kaplan and Maxwell (2005) suggested eight verification procedures for ensuring the quality and rigor of a qualitative study including (1) intensive long-term involvement, (2) rich data, (3) respondent verification (member checks), (4) intervention, (5) searching for discrepant evidence and negatives cases, (6) triangulation, (7) quasi-statistics, and (8) comparison. Triangulation was selected as the primary procedure for this study.

McMillian et al., (2006) indicated that the value of research depends on the ability of the researcher to demonstrate the credibility of their findings. Triangulation refers to the enhancement of confidence in the ensuing of findings, by using more than one approach to the investigation of research questions (Creswell & Clark, 2007). McMillan et al., (2010) express it as the acquiring of convergent data using cross-validation to affirm the trustworthiness and transferability of research studies. Patton (1999, p. 1193) identified four types of triangulation which contribute to verification and validation of qualitative analysis:

(1) checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods, that is, methods of triangulation, (2) examining the consistency of different data sources within the same method, that is, triangulation of sources, (3) using multiple analysts to review findings, that is, analyst triangulation, and, (4) using multiple perspectives or theories to interpret the data, that is, theory/perspective triangulation.

In this study, triangulation of interviews, field notes, and documentary data ensured that accurate conclusions were drawn. Creswell (1998) noted that triangulation is the "process involving corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective" (p. 202). Within each school, interviews were conducted with the principals, school management team, heads of departments, and educators. In addition, documents related to the schools went through a process of documentary analysis.

**Participant Bias**

Smith and Noble (2014) define participant bias as relating to both the process of recruiting participants and study inclusion criteria. Therefore, they note that successful research commences with recruiting participants who meet the study aims. Weisberg (2011) states that bias can be intentional, yet that often it is not. Nevertheless, Good and Hardin (2012) assert that with careful and prolonged planning, many potential sources of bias can be reduced or eliminated; however, seldom will all of them be eliminated. Consequently, researchers must accept bias as inevitable and endeavor to acknowledge and disclose all exceptions that do slip through the cracks.

To be transparent it should be noted that the principals in both schools selected the participants to represent their school in this research study. Selection bias does have the potential to distort findings and affect internal validity. If selection bias is not taken into

consideration, then some conclusions from the research study could be inaccurate (Smith & Noble, 2014). However, the use of selection sampling bias was not alarming to me, but rather expected. This study has a positive perspective as its focus is on success and defying the odds. Consequently, I was confident that the participants selected by the principals were those who had an in-depth understanding of the journey to the success of the school; and, who would focus on highlighting rather than hiding the leadership practices that contributed to the success of the learners.

Furthermore, Smith and Noble (2014) add that reducing bias can include respondent validation, constant comparisons across participant accounts and persistent observation of participants. Not solely relying on good intentions, due to the positive nature of the study, when interviewing participants I looked for congruency in their responses. While there were variations in their stories, examples and explanations, they were underpinned by similar leadership practices. Finding positive alignment across participant responses heightened my confidence that the participants selected by the principals did in fact meet the aim of this study.

**Researcher Bias**

Maxwell (1996) explains the impossibility of eliminating the researcher's theories, preconceptions, and values. Yet, the task is not to eliminate bias but to be aware of how values influence the conduct and conclusion of the study. A type of bias that is relevant to this study is cultural bias. As explained by Sarniak (2015), cultural bias involves assumptions about motivations and influences that are founded upon our cultural lens—on the spectrum of ethnocentrism or cultural relativism. Ethnocentrism regards the judgment of another culture solely by the values and standards of one's own culture. Cultural relativism is the principle that

others should understand an individual's beliefs and activities in terms of that individual's own culture.

I am an African-American researcher—ancestry unknown—conducting research in South Africa. While I have no personal affiliation with this nation, the struggle for educational equality for the historically disadvantaged is a global issue. Delpit (2012) stressed the prevalence of the continuing myth that Black children do not excel in school because they are innately less capable of learning, and they are therefore deemed "inferior." Blanchett (2006) agrees with that perspective as he notes students of the non-dominant culture are subjected to poverty-stricken ecologies, with educators who are less qualified and lack exposure to programs that promote higher education. Those quotes echo the same sentiments quoted by Fleisch (2008) earlier in this chapter. Yet, they are not referring to black South Africans, rather black African-Americans.

To limit cultural bias, I had to acknowledge the parallel challenges between the two aforementioned cultures and maintain objectivity while collecting and analyzing the data. I was careful not to view the data through my personal cultural experiences, but to process the information through the lens of my understanding of the South African culture. Achieving complete cultural relativism is impossible. However, to minimize culture bias, researchers must move toward cultural relativism by being cognizant of their cultural assumptions (Sarniak, 2015).

**Ethical Considerations**

Empirical research in education involves collecting data from people and about people; therefore, it inevitably carries ethical issues (Punch, 2009). For this reason, ethical considerations were taken into account to reduce potential harm to participants. The four-pillar

framework for ethical consideration addressed included informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and freedom to withdraw at any point.

Before the collection of data, an ethics application was submitted to the School of Education Ethics Committee of the university for ethical clearance. As my research involved the use of human participants, the committee assumed the tasks of ensuring that my research agenda was not invasive, damaging, or a cause of discomfort.

During the data collection process, informed consent involved potential participants being fully orientated on the nature and purpose of the study through the use of a participant information sheet (Appendices 1.1 -1.4). Those who voluntarily chose to become participants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendices 1.5 -1.8) that explained the scope of their participation in great detail. Participants' rights to privacy were protected through measures of confidentiality and anonymity. Confidentiality could not be fully guaranteed. However, reasonable precautions were taken to protect the privacy of participants. Confidentiality was protected through individual interviews with only the participant and myself in a secured location. To maintain participants' privacy, all verbal and written responses obtained were kept locked and secured. In addition, no fellow participants had accessibility to or knowledge of the information shared by individual participants. Anonymity could not be fully guaranteed. However, reasonable precautions were taken to protect the identity of participants. To anonymize participants, no identifiable information was disclosed. Furthermore, pseudonyms were used during data collection, analysis and the thesis to remove identifying particulars of participants and schools on verbal and written responses.

Moreover, all written data will be shredded and disposed of within 3-5 years after the completion of the project. All electronic data will be professionally wiped from the computer's

hard drive. However, if further use of the data is deemed necessary, the researcher will apply for a new ethics clearance. Punch (2009) highlights the notion that consent is an on-going process. As such, participants were made aware and periodically reminded that they had the right to not participate in some part of the research or to withdraw fully.

Roth (2004) argued that research ethics continuously evolves and would benefit from active reflection in issues related to practice. I understand that it is my responsibility to remain up-to-date on readings that address ethical dilemmas and actions related to my research, in an effort to continuously ensure that the rights of the participants are respected.

## Chapter Overview

This chapter on methodology began with a paradigmatic philosophical discussion explaining the variance between interpretivism and constructivism. Furthermore, it provided justification for locating this study within the constructivist paradigm. In addition, the chapter argued for the use of the qualitative case study method as the methodological approach and research design for this study. Subsequently, the chapter included an account of the sample selection plan, in conjunction with, the process and instruments used for data collection. Next, the plan of action for data collection was presented. The chapter concluded by discussing the criterion utilized to ensure transferability, trustworthiness, triangulation, and research ethics within this study.

The next chapter presents the profiles and findings of the two case study schools, with an emphasis on their individual and collective characteristics.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS CASE STUDY SCHOOL A AND SCHOOL B

This chapter aims to provide a detailed description of findings for case study School A and School B. The chapter first presents the context of School A including biographical data of participants, the school profile and school performance. It unpacks data from interviews conducted with the principal, two members of the school management team (SMT), and two educators. Each participant was individually interviewed. Subsequently, the context of School B is presented; along with, interview data collected from the principal, head of the department, and an educator.

The presentation of findings and analysis of the schools began by determining whether the schools enacted the five core leadership practices that the 5Essentials theoretical framework stated were necessary—regardless of context. The 5Essentials are (1) Effective Leadership, (2) Collaborative Teachers, (3) Involved Families, (4) Supportive Environments, and (5) Ambitious Instruction. After confirming the presence of the 5Essentials, as the researcher, I began to focus on how the findings linked to my key research question.

The key research question that drives this study is, "What can we learn about school improvement from the leadership practices of successful school leaders in primary schools educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto?" Consequently, this chapter is organized by the introduction of themes that developed in relation to the 5Essentials to identify successful leadership practices employed to achieve high academic performance in challenging circumstances. The final section of this chapter is a cross-case analysis of the themes discussed in School A and School B.

## Context of School A

### Interviews

The principal, two members of the SMT, and two educators were interviewed for this case study. In this section, a snapshot of each participant is provided to give the reader a contextual base for the respondents. Due to the sharing of biographical data being optional, the depth of descriptions vary among participants.

**Table 5. 1.** Demographic Characteristics of School A Participants

| Participants | Age Group | Years at School A | Current Role | Level of Study |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Principal** | 50-64 | 22 | Principal | Postgraduate |
| **SMT 1** | 35-49 | 21 | Head of Department Educator | Diploma |
| **SMT 2** | Unknown | 30 | School Secretary | Diploma |
| **Educator 1** | 50-64 | 3 | Educator | Degree |
| **Educator 2** | 50-64 | 1 | Educator | Degree |

*Note.* SMT = School Management Team

**Principal.** The principal of School A is a black African female who identified herself to be in the 50-64 age group. She served as a teacher at School A for 20 years before being promoted to deputy principal. After serving in the role of deputy principal for one year, she was promoted by the DoE as the principal of School A. The principal has served in this capacity for one year. Her highest level of study is a postgraduate degree. In this case study of School A, this participant will be referred to as *principal*.

**SMT Member 1.** The current role of SMT member 1 is Head of Department (HoD) for the Foundation Phase. This member is a black African female who has identified herself to be in the 35-49 age group. She has served as the HoD for two years. Concurrently, she is also a Grade 3 teacher. SMT member one has been a teacher for 21 years at School A. Her highest level of study is a diploma. In case study School A, this participant will be referred to as *HoD*.

**SMT Member 2.** The current role of SMT member 2 is school secretary. This member is a black African female who did not identify herself to be in a particular age group. She appeared to be in the 50-64 age group. SMT member two has served as the secretary for 30 years at School A. She has been a member of the SMT for 10 years. Her highest level of study is a diploma. In case study School A, this participant will be referred to as *SMT*.

**Educator 1.** Educator 1 is a black African female who identified herself to be in the 50-64 age group. She has served as an educator for 41 years. The last three years of service were at School A. Her current teaching roles are English Grade 4-5 and Life Skills Grade 4. The highest level of study for Educator 1 is a degree. In case study School A, this participant will be referred to as *Educator 1*.

**Educator 2.** Educator 2 is a black African female who identified herself to in the 50-64 age group. She has served as an educator for 22 years. She has been at School A for one year. Educator 2 did not provide her current teaching role. Her highest level of study is a degree. In case study School A, this participant will be referred to as *Educator 2*.

**School Profile**

School A is situated in the Soweto Township. It was established in 1974 as a Department of Education and Training (DET) primary school. Originally, it was a dying school facing closure by the district. While it faced many challenges, four were particularly pronounced. The

challenges were (1) it had poor leadership and management, (2) the school was highly dilapidated, (3) the community refused to be involved due to the way the school was being managed, and (4) there were high levels of fighting amongst the staff members that led to students being unruly.

In 2015, it had a learner enrollment figure of 545. It serves students in Grade 0- 7. School A is classified as a quintile three school—meaning that learners are not charged school fees, and the school relies heavily on funding provided by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). They are provided with free lunch, but breakfast was phased out due to financial constraint.

While the surrounding community is a perfect illustration of poverty, School A takes great pride in the appearance of its buildings and grounds. It has beautifully manicured lawns. The facilities are clean and well maintained. There is a bountiful garden that produces vegetables and fruits to nourish the learners. Also, the school has one Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that provides food parcels.

School A has three gardeners along with two cleaning ladies who are residents of the community. They are not volunteers but rather paid staff members. The school is able to provide them with a salary—which pours fiscal resources into the community—through funds earned by renting the school to a church on Sundays.

School A has both a library and a computer lab. Yet, neither are functional due to the lack of human resources. The school has 25 computers, however, there is no technology teacher. Furthermore, the educators are not computer literate which prohibits them from personally providing technology instruction. A former Wits student found a scholarship to develop a

library. A room within the school was converted into a library. Unfortunately, it will soon phase out as there is no librarian or person to monitor it.

The learners are generally residents of the community. Many of the learners come from the nearby hostel and informal settlements. The deprivation in this community consists of high rates of unemployment, illiteracy, crime, and drug activity. The community member depends majorly on support from the government to meet their basic human needs.

**School Performance**

Table 5.2 below showcases the ANA math results of Grade 3 learners in School A from 2012-2014 in comparison to provincial and national averages. School ranking among Soweto public primary schools is also highlighted in the table.

**Table 5. 2.** School A ranking among Soweto public primary schools

| Year | School A Ranking (Soweto) | ANA Math Results (School A) | ANA Math Results (Provincial) | ANA Math Results (National) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2012** | 8 | 68.7% | 46.9% | 41.0% |
| **2013** | 7 | 79.1% | 58.9% | 53.0% |
| **2014** | 7 | 74.2% | 60.3% | 56.0% |

*Note.* Information used to complete this table was retrieved from the Department of Education (2012; 2013; 2014). *Soweto Annual National Assessment results.* Pretoria: DoE.

Table 5.2 shows school ranking in Soweto and Grade 3 ANA math pass rates from 2012-2014. Additionally, the information presented highlights a consistent level of high achievement for School A. In relation to primary schools in its local context, its Grade 3 learners scored higher than 135 of the 143 primary schools that tested. In 2013, it outperformed 155 of the 162

primary schools. Followed by outscoring 130 of the 143 primary schools in 2014. In each year, the school's results greatly exceeded the national expectation for learner pass rates. Also, School A scored nearly 20% higher than its provincial and national counterparts. Significantly, the incumbent principal was appointed in 2013 where the data shows a notable increase in learner performance.

## Themes

Multiple layers of security are implemented to eradicate the issue of crime and disorderliness in school A.

### Theme 1 (T1): Stakeholder Involvement

The first theme to emerge was stakeholder involvement. Ensuring the safety of learners in School A is a collaborative effort involving a variety of stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals who are personally or professionally invested in the well-being and success of the school and the students. The stakeholders for School A were parents, teachers, patrollers, police officers, and the school governing body.

Among these stakeholders, everyone reported that patrollers played a crucial role in the safety of the school. The HoD indicated "the department has hired patrollers. They stand for the safety of the learners. For instance—when they come here at school in the morning - there must be someone who is standing at the gate to receive the learners." Educator 1 concurred:

> In our school, we have patrollers who do their work. They come and leave on time every day. They monitor the coming in and going out of children. They supervise the children when the children go to their cars to go home.

As a collective effort, stakeholders make their investment into promoting the safety of learners. Support is not limited to those employed by School A. One salient theme that emerged from administrators was support from parents. This was delineated by a SMT staff:

> We have engaged other parents who have got children in this school to assist us in keeping the learners safe in the yard. Why we have included parents is because the number of patrollers that department has given us is less . . . previously we had some burglaries…that is why we decided to include the parents because they are the ones that stay in the community around the school. So that they can help the patrollers because they might know the people who come to the school and make the burglary (SMT).

**Theme 2 (T2): Policy**

The second theme to surface was policy. There are clear policies and procedures which are enforced to ensure the safety of learners. Interviews with educators revealed visitor registration as a key policy in maintaining order in the school. When arriving at School A, visitors are confirmed by patrollers to have a scheduled appointment, otherwise, they will not be admitted on the property. In addition, the patroller thoroughly searches all vehicles for weapons as they are not permitted on school grounds. All confirmed visitors report to the secretary's office before they are allowed to talk with the staff members or learners. An educator commented on this firm stance by saying:

> the gate is locked in the morning. When you enter using the main gate, there is a patroller who takes your record. He searches the back of your car [to see] what weapons you have. Have you got an appointment when you are coming in to see someone? (Educator 2)

**Theme 3 (T3): Teambuilding**

Previously, School A had teachers and administrators who were uncooperative. The staff did not get along and would share details of the disunity with parents and community members. Resultantly, parents began to enroll their children in other school putting School A at risk for closure. From this challenge, teambuilding emerged as the third theme. Teambuilding involves a conscious decision to intentionally rally together to build a positive school culture founded on mutual respect and support. This was confirmed by a SMT who shared:

> The most important thing is to support each other because the main goal here is to see learners achieving academically. So within the school, we have developed that attitude of supporting each other and helping each other so that we can see this learner is

> progressing. It is not about us as individuals looking at yourself. Saying I cannot be beaten by this one, I am better than this one. Other schools still have those problems, but we have done away with those problems because we have seen that those things do not work in a school place. We must learn to support each other. I think that is the thing that works for us.

The administrator further stated:

> You know I can say the relationship between teachers is good. And God he made us learn from our previous mistakes. We share ideas in the staff room not only ideas about learners even personal ideas. So we are a family here, and we take each other as brothers and sisters. So when one of us feel pain, we do feel pain for her. And when one is happy we become happy with her (SMT).

This action was not a one-time event. The school has implemented a teambuilding day each term to continue this powerful work. An educator indicated:

> I think after each term we have got teamwork. Teambuilding which we sit down as a team and our leader, the foundation phase, the HODs, and the intermediate and senior . . . they go on their own, and we go on our own, to see what has gone wrong . . . so I like the team building because it is where the team members voice out what they have noticed in their classes not to be working and what went wrong in their classes. And the team comes up with good things what to do, how to discipline the learner that is like this. Then when we come out of the teambuilding, we see that we are fresh (Educator 2).

**Theme 4 (T4): Academic Support**

Learners require considerable instructional support for academic achievement. The fourth theme to emerge is academic Support. Academic support is defined as additional instructional support outside of the core curriculum and/or beyond normal school hours. Learners generally begin their formative education with two major deficits—lack of fluency in English and the absence of literacy readiness skills. While learners are typically multi-lingual, English is not one of those languages. This is problematic as core instruction is administered in the English language.

The root of the deficits extends from the home life. The cause can stem from parental illiteracy—which is highly prevalent—to lack of parental support. However, teachers do not

place blame on parents and consider it as a personal problem that needs to be solved within the family structure. As noted by one teacher, they try to take ownership and explore solutions to address the deficits:

> We try by all means to call the parents but if the parent does not come, we as teachers we assist the learners. Let's say if the learner has got a problem with reading, writing, and spelling, during summer we have morning classes where we teach the phonics. Because most of them you find that they did not get a good foundation from the lower classes. So we start them . . . actually like in English I teach them the vowels. The vowels in are different from those in isiZulu. And then after that, we teach them the phonics from a up to z. Actually, we teach them the alphabets. And then the sounds like ‘'a" you say the name is ‘'a" but the sound is ‘'a" [she makes the sound]. After that, we give them the rhyming words that have ‘'a" like bat and cat. And then after that, we assess them on that. If you see that they are doing well, you go to the next one (Educator 1).

This level of academic support is not an optional supplement for teachers. Teachers rallied together to strategically develop a school-wide initiative to combat the issue. As noted by the principal:

> Now as teachers we felt that let us start a program for the learners. We start at 7 am, just one hour Monday to Thursday we teach the learners only home language from 7 to 8. This is for grade 1 to 6. We teach the language as educators. On day one we focus on nouns and the next day we focus on the verbs. That is how we try to assist the learners.

The program provides the learners with the foundational literacy readiness skills, which are critical to academic achievement, but were not acquired in early childhood. One educator indicated:

> We do remedial because as I have said, I have got three sections those that do not grab easily all the things we do in class. I think they need to be alone. And I do the remedial work after school maybe the remainder 30 minutes or 40 minutes or so. Try to hold their hands to write, speak to them, when they are alone they are not ashamed of themselves. They say whatever we talk. And the next three weeks you see they are writing. I have done it (Educator 1).

In addition, they provide tutoring for learners who are struggling with grade level curricular content to further lessen the academic achievement gap. The SMT shared:

> Those learners who have those challenges remain at school in the afternoon, and they are being helped with their homework. And morning classes are mainly to assist learners to read with understanding. The Saturday classes are for the content of the subject if the learners do not understand the content of the subject (SMT).

Globally, you find educators at odds with governmental structures surrounding fiscal inequities. This disunity leads to both parties operating in extreme measures to clearly define their boundaries and prove their intolerance of each others warring tactics. These measures are generally displayed through teacher protest and their opposition enforcing furlough days or mass layoffs. This leads to teacher discouragement and the loss of momentum. While this is a serious issue, learners are impacted and experience the greatest loss.

Consequently, I must highlight that there is no additional pay for the aforementioned time intensive and intellectual labor given by the teachers. While these teachers are grossly underpaid and underserved by their government, they continue to have high expectations for their students and provide them with the support needed for them to manifest in the lives of the learners. The SMT stated ". . . teachers when they see that the learners are slow we do morning classes and afternoon classes. We even come on Saturdays to come and teach those learners without being paid" (SMT).

**Theme 5 (T5): Progress Monitoring**

The fifth theme to emerge is progress monitoring. Progress monitoring is usage of assessments as a data source that is analysed and used to drive instructional practices to improve learning. For learners to excel academically teachers are provide with a rigorous curriculum. In response to the question about the role assessments play in student achievement, all participants mentioned that informal and formal assessments play a major role in monitoring the progress of the students. One educator explained:

> So assessment . . . What I can say is that as I said the assessments are divided into two there is a formal and informal. So when you do the day occurrence everyday what you do with your children it forms an informal assessment. But towards the . . . when you look at the document what it says there, how many tasks are we entitled to do. Then you say no I have got two tasks to do. Some of the informal assessment they form as formal assessments looking at the introduction of the subject. This one can form a formal assessment. It gives you the progress of the learners because when you assess the learner you are doing the introspection how was the subject introduced, how was the activity done and have I done justice when I was assessing the learner. Then you come out and say okay this one looking at the marks and the level they got and you say maybe I lack (Educator 2).

Assessment are frequently administered and used as a tool for data-driven instruction. Teachers use the data to improve instruction so that learners are understanding the content and meeting the lesson objectives. The SMT expressed:

> It plays an important role because you cannot know how you learners are performing if you don't take assessments. So assessment is a tool whereby you can see that your learners are understanding what you are teaching. So we use assessment almost weekly to see whether the learners understand the work. We also have formal and informal assessment whereby we assess learners on what they have been taught and whether they understand.

As teachers identify areas that are challenging learners, they reteach those particular sections to ensure the acquisition of knowledge. One educator responded by saying:

> I think assessment is for helping the teachers to see how much the learner has grasped what you were teaching in class and to try to help those learners who are maybe not doing well. I think assessment is for that. We actually look at the questions where they did not do well and try and work on those areas (Educator 1).

In addition, to using assessments to monitor student progress, teachers use assessment to monitor the effectiveness of their instruction. There is a self-awareness that allows educators to differentiate when the lack of understanding is not due to the students inability to grasp the concepts rather that the presentation of the concepts is causing the challenges. When asked how assessments are used to improve instruction, one educator had this to say:

> Then it is where the team spirit comes in because if the activity was not well planned then I go to my colleague and say when I was introducing . . . say for instance I am teaching

> the watch if I see no the watch there maybe out of my class I have got 57 learners out [of] 57 I have got maybe 20 passes what I have taught. Then I [go to my] colleague and say how can I introduce . . . No or else I call him/her to come and I watch her teaching the subject as it is. Now I see okay it is where my introduction was lacking. Let me use these strategies that she is using (Educator 2).

**Theme 6 (T6): Collaborative Teachers**

The sixth theme to emerge is collaborative teachers. Collaborative teachers is defined as teachers feeling comfortable to learn and share each other's knowledge and expertise. In many schools you will finds teacher working in isolation within their own classrooms. There is a sense of distrust among colleagues and they lack the freedom to observe peer instruction. To the contrary, School A values the knowledge and expertise that each teacher brings to the school community. The SMT opined:

> We know that you excel in a certain learning area and then we ask you to come and assist us. So everybody has his/her own expertise. So we are using all the expertise of the teachers . . . I think that is what helps teachers to be cooperative.

Interviews with an educator and SMT emphasized that an environment based on trust and teamwork has been established affording teachers the liberty to learn and share with colleagues to promote effective instruction and academic achievement.

The SMT explained:

> We are not even afraid as teachers . . . let's say I am teaching maths when I am teaching division and I don't understand it clearly I am outspoken now I can go seek help from another teacher who I know and teaches maths and his/her learners are performing well. I go and ask that person to come teach in my class and teach the section that I see that my learners do not understand (SMT).

This willingness to share and exchange information is not just an independent venture. When a teacher is identified as an expert on particular subject that is beneficial to the teaching team, workshops are presented on best practice instructional strategies. The HoD shared:

> …we usually do workshops on ourselves. Maybe if someone is good in maths and then he will call the other teachers and he will show them how to teach maths. Maybe how to teach maths for learners who are struggling.

**Theme 7 (T7): Teacher Quality**

The seventh theme to emerge is teacher quality. Teacher Quality is defined as a teacher's quality as a content specialist, effectiveness of instructional strategies, and ability to cater to the holistic needs of learners. Historically, schools located within impoverished neighborhood tend to have the poorest quality of teachers. School A does not submit to this norm, but rather intentionally chooses teachers who are highly qualified to instruct leaners. The principal stated:

> . . . we look into teacher quality which refers to the ability for the teachers to teach learners in the classroom. For example, creating a conducive environment for the learner, the learning atmosphere and appropriate assessments . . . it is important if the teacher excels. We don't simply take teachers and put them in class, whether they know how to teach the subject is important. So qualification and working experience is important. So I also believe as a manager you need to support the educators with the necessary resources.

Along with being content specialist, another critical component is teachers being on task. On task is defined as being prepared for instruction and honoring their teaching periods. As explained by one educator:

> Teachers come prepared to school . . . teachers are encouraged to cover the prescribed work. And then teachers are encouraged not to do class visits for their own . . . if it's for academic purposes then it's ok but not for chat chat chat . . . we as staff are committed to our work. And then the kids are the first priority. And we spend most of our time in class (Educator 1).

The HoD echoed the explanation that "teachers are to be at school on time, observe the content hour and to teach the learners".

There is a culture of work in School A. This level of commitment and focus from teachers is essential element as they have high expectations of learners that align with the vision of the school. Concerning academic achievement, an educator had this to say:

> And the most important thing I think it's the vision of the school. When you teach the learner you focus on the vision of the school because we are looking at South Africa at large and the world as it is. You have to produce skillful learners, knowledgeable learners, the learners that will be marketable in the future. You know. So we don't come say I am a teacher it is my profession I must come to school. You come with a vision,

> you have goals to achieve. You want to see learners being marketable in future, being working for the community and being leaders for the future. I think that is the most important thing (Educator 2).

An administrator concurred with this belief indicating that "we are all conscious of we want best achievement from our learners…we are eager to work towards the achievement of the learner" (SMT).

Teachers are not limited by academic instruction. They focus on holistic teaching. As indicated by the educators:

> The vision and mission of our school is to teach the learners effectively. To teach the learners to communicate well. And then to teach them in totality that is academically and spiritually. And for them to have respect and to have basic skills. Like we don't teach them just academically, we teach them to know other basic things (Educator 1).

Educator 2 also noted "like the last part of it, it says we are going to make the South African to be so successful about teaching these learners effectively, in totality, emotionally, physically, spiritually and socially".

School-wide it is practiced through the explicit teaching of moral and values Monday-Friday at an assembly for learners. In addition, teachers build upon the teaching in the classroom setting. An educator highlighted:

> This environment if you pass by during the weekends there is a lot of alcohol. Some of the parents are alcoholics. But we as teachers we preach that gospel that no liquor is not for the children, liquor is for the old people. Don't enjoy it, when you see them drinking it is because they are old enough. Yours is to learn and to be a successful person in life so that in future you will be someone then you see if it is good you take it and if it is not don't . . . you see some of them they use vulgar language which is not acceptable but because they are growing and they are young it is difficult for them to differentiate when they are at school. But we are trying as teachers we say no we don't speak like that . . . most parents are not working, they are illiterate. But we understand our kids and we try to talk to them and say you know what education is very important. If you are educated you won't live the life that your parents are living. So that's the encouragement that we give them and here at school we try to give them love (Educator 2).

**Theme 8 (T8): Parental Involvement**

The eighth theme that emerged as an essential component to the success of a school and its learners is parental involvement. Parental Involvement is defined as the representation of home-based support partnering with learners and the school to promote academic achievement. Impoverished communities tend to struggle with healthy home-school relationship. In School A, a few of those challenges include alcohol and drug addiction, illiteracy, and unemployment. Yet, they have worked to strengthen the relationship over time. The HoD noted:

> At present really the relationship is good because when we call the parents meeting they do attend. While in the past really they were not attending and they didn't care. So the parents we are having now they are concerned about the school and when we have events they do attend. So I think it's a good relationship (HoD).

The dynamic of the relationship shifted once the school took the initiative to actively involve parents in the learning process of the their children. As illustrated by an educator:

> Because when you involve the parent in the education of the child and you tell them the necessity what is it you need as a teacher. So the parents they see the necessity which is look if you reluctant to come to school to help your children, it won't be successful for teachers to work alone . . . and mostly these learners that we teach their mothers are the young generation. I think that's the most important thing. Some of them they have passed grade 12. When you tell them what to do at home because when you look up the child...as a teacher when you look at the child. You tell the parent when you call the meeting we tell them no look for us to be so successful it's like cooking a pot I had to tell my parents. When you teach a child it is like cooking a pot, when you cook rice you don't simply put rice and water and leave it like that. You sit with it, you say three cups of rice will be enough for my children for my family. Let me say it like that one. So it's a learner, the teacher, and parent then when we work hand in hand what comes out is a food that we eat the ready to be eaten. If I discipline the learners, the parents must also have a discipline at home as well (Educator 2).

Due to their addictions, some parents still did not feel comfortable coming to the school. School A was so committed to connecting with the parents that they sent the community liaison on home visits. Educator 1 stated:

> We try by all means to support the learners and parents. He takes time and go visit that parent. Some of them don't come to school because they are afraid to come because they have this problem of alcohol. In the morning the parent is drunk already. So they are

> afraid to come and face the teachers. Whereas if they come we will try and help them (Educator 1).

The continued effort from the school staff eventually resulted in a reciprocal relationship whereby the parents are now giving back to the school. The educators have this to say:

> The relationship is good because some of the parents if you can go outside you will see they are busy planting in the fields. They are going to grow cabbage, potatoes, and onions. Some of them are participating. I can say maybe 80%. It's only those few that don't come when they are called to come do something. (Educator 2).

> When we call them for meetings they come and then others they just volunteer in coming to assist in the cleaning of the school. You can see our school is clean [*laughs*]. We also have a beautiful vegetable garden we have parents they are just doing it voluntarily (Educator 1).

**Theme 9 (T9): Distributed Leadership**

The ninth theme to emerge is distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is defined as the sharing of leadership responsibilities with staff members who have the competency to fulfill the task while fulfilling their primary job role. The style of leadership School A attributes to its success is the distributed leadership approach. The principal explicitly stated "we believe in shared leadership."

The principal builds teacher capacity by empowering them to take on leadership roles. Teachers are able to balance their instruction with gaining leadership experience. The HoD noted in the interview that she teaches Grade three in addition to, supervising seven teachers in her department.

In the context of School A, distributed leadership involves collaborative decision-making with voices of multiple stakeholders:

> I would say the style of leadership here is democratic but when I say this I don't mean that anybody can do what they like. There are rules and policies of the department and policies of the school that we do every year. The beginning of the year we sit down as a staff and look at the previous year's policies and we amend where we have to. I say it is democratic because we allow people to come with ideas. As long as these ideas will help

> us as a school to achieve our vision of seeing our learners excelling academically. So this is why I say the leadership here is democratic. The doors are open for anybody to come. Like I said the parents who have got good ideas that would help our school develop, we allow them to come and share those ideas. Even the teacher can also share their ideas with the SMT (SMT).

Open communication is also an important feature in effectively enacting the distributed leadership approach. In addition to including the staff in academic-related matters, the principal is transparent about the management of the school. The educators noted "the leadership is doing well. She communicates very well with the staff members. There is transparency in this school concerning finances and the principal reports to the staff. And she respects us" (Educator 1).

> I think it is a good one because there is transparency. If there is something special from the department of education, the principal and SMT calls us, they tell us there is something like this . . . there is transparency in everything (Educator 2).

If challenges arise, the principal takes time to develop teachers to improve their effectiveness. As illustrated by Educator 1 "if she sees you have a problem in a certain area, she tries by all means to develop you. She encourages us and is a good listener." An administrator agreed "we usually have meetings and we discuss the challenges that teachers are having in class . . . we will be having teambuilding" (HoD).

The leadership team is fully aware of what is happening in the school. A system of accountability is in place to confirm that teachers' instruction and practices are in alignment with the vision and mission of the school. Most importantly, leadership holds teacher accountable to ensure that learning is taking place. As explained by an administrator:

> I think at present the leadership is good . . . we make it a point that teaching and learning is taking place. And when it is time for assessment, the teachers have done the reports and then we take those documents to the district . . . everything is running smooth and we have cooperative teachers that are hard-working, always in time doing their work . . . that makes it easier for the management to function . . . and there are no complaints from the parents and from our district. When it is time for submissions everyone is prepared, there are no problems so far. I think we are at the right place.

## Context of School B

### Interviews

The principal, a member of the SMT and an educator were interviewed for this case study. In this section, a snapshot of each participant is provided to give the reader a contextual base for the respondents. Due to the sharing of biographical data being optional, the depth of descriptions vary among participants.

**Table 5. 3.** Participants Demographic Characteristics of school B

| **Participants** | **Age Group** | **Years at School B** | **Current Role** | **Level of Study** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Principal** | 50-64 | 5 Months | Principal | Degree |
| **SMT** | 50-64 | 15 | Head of Department Educator | Diploma |
| **Educator** | 50-64 | 15 | Educator | Diploma |

**Principal.** The principal of School B is a black African male who identified himself to be in the 50-64 age group. He has served as the principal of School B for 5 months and this is his first appointment. Previously, he was a deputy principal for 11 years and a teacher for 25 years. His highest level of study is a degree. In case study School B, this participant will be referred to as *principal*.

**SMT Member.** The current role of the SMT member is Head of Department (HoD). This member is a black African female who has identified herself to be in the 50-64 age group. She has served as the HoD for 2 years. Concurrently, she teaches English, Home Language, and

Social Sciences. The SMT member has been an educator for 28 years. For 15 of those years, she has been at School B. Her highest level of study is a diploma. In case study School B, this participant will be referred to as *HoD.*

**Educator.** The educator is a black African female who identified herself to be in the 50-64 age group. She has served as an educator for 20 years, with fifteen years of service at School B. Her current teaching role is English and Art & Culture at the Intersen Phase. The highest level of study for the educator is a diploma. In case Study School B, this participant will be known as *educator*.

**School Profile**

School B is a former DET primary school located in the Soweto township. School B echoed the previous challenges experienced by School A. The school suffered from poor leadership and management. The infrastructure of the school was highly dilapidated. There was intense struggle for community participation—this remains a challenge particularly with parents. Also, there was gross disunity amongst the staff members, which negatively impacted the behaviors of the students.

In 2015, it had a learner enrollment of 446, of which 242 were male and 204 were female. It serves students in grade R-7 ranging in age from 5-13 years old. School B is classified as a quintile 2 school—this indicates that learners are exempt from paying school fees and the GDE is their primary source of funding. They are provided with free lunch. However, they rely on the support of an NGO to provide breakfast and additional meals for learners.

School B is situated in an impoverished area, yet their edifice and grounds are very well maintained. They recently underwent renovations funded and completed by an NGO. The lawns are well manicured and great pride is taken in the overall appearance.

The majority of learners are not residents of the community. They travel a great distance—which is quite dangerous—to school from an informal settlement. The deprivation experienced by School B consists of crime, drug activity, child-headed households, illiteracy, and high rates of unemployment. The community members depend heavily on support from the government to fulfill their basic human needs.

**School Performance**

Table 5.4 below shows the ANA math results of Grade 3 learners in School B from 2012-2014. School ranking among Soweto public primary schools is also highlighted in the table.

**Table 5. 4.** School B ranking among Soweto public primary schools

| Year | School B Ranking (Soweto) | ANA Math Results (School B) | ANA Math Results (Provincial) | ANA Math Results (National) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2012** | 9 | 66.5% | 46.9% | 41.0% |
| **2013** | 5 | 80.6% | 58.9% | 53.0% |
| **2014** | 22 | 68.3% | 60.3% | 56.0% |

*Note.* Information used to complete this table was retrieved from the Department of Education (2012; 2013; 2014). *Soweto Annual National Assessment results* Pretoria: DoE.

Table 5.4 shows school ranking in Soweto and Grade 3 ANA math pass rates from 2012-2014. The information in the table also depicts a consistent level of learner achievement in School B. In each year, the school's results exceeded the national expectation for learner pass rates. In relation to the primary schools that tested in Soweto, in 2012 School B ranked above

134 of the 143 schools. In 2013, the school outperformed 157 of the 162 schools, and in 2014, school B outscored 115 of the 137 schools. It should be noted that the current principal was appointed in 2014. This is the same year in which the school experienced a drastic decrease in learner achievement from the previous year.

## Themes

A multi-tiered security system has been developed to combat the violence and gross misconduct in School B.

### Theme 1 (T1): Stakeholder Involvement

The theme to first emerge is stakeholder involvement. As aforementioned in the previous chapter, stakeholders are individuals who are personally or professionally invested in the well-being and success of the school and the learners. The stakeholders for School B were teachers, patrollers, police officers, and students. School B has a formalized approach to school safety. There is an established safety committee that is overseen by educators, but it involves the participation of all the stakeholders. Policy and guidelines are developed, enforced and monitored to ensure they are implemented with fidelity. As noted by the principal:

> We've got a committee eh consisting of educators who look at the safety of the school . . . yeah, the committee does eh it first does a policy around the safety of the school. It gives out - you know guidelines to what must happen eh in school, in terms of safety. So from time to time they meet and discuss challenges around the security of the school. So theirs is just to monitor you know and eh ensure that everything runs way in terms of safety.

An educator further explains how the safety committee functions:

> When we have like serious problems, teachers will refer the children or the matter to the committee and they will deal with it in whatever way and sometimes they will, it will go to an extant where the parents will be called in where its severe but otherwise on a day to day basis we do have children that stand during break, they will stand at some posts by teachers . . . but otherwise we make sure that they are playing in a safe way . . . the other thing is also that they should be in class at the time when they should be in class, that is the duty roaster must be followed and the time table. Duty roster is the teacher has to be there when they are playing . . . children help all the time . . . they are just assisting it's

> not like formal. You choose them in your class and as you see fit that they can help . . . maybe it does happen that children fight, and sometimes it becomes a big thing . . . then in that case we have the School Base Support Team (SBST) we repair them, we refer the matter to them and in that case, parents are called (Educator).

While all stakeholder plays a specific role in the safety of school, all stakeholders reported that patrollers play a critical role. As note by the principal "we also have eh, the department has actually given us patrollers who are on school grounds on school grounds 24/7 they actually make sure that everything is fine . . . they ensure that teachers are not attacked by people from outside." An administrator concurred "since they have employed these security guards that are at the gate there's a big difference because the parents are no more or anybody doesn't come at any time now" (HoD).

**Theme 2 (T2): Policy**

Another theme identified was policy. There are clear policies and procedures outlined and monitored by the safety committee to promote the safety of leaners and staff. Visitors cannot come at will. Before being permitted on school grounds, they must be confirmed to have a scheduled visit. The administrators in this school highlighted visitor registration as a key policy in maintaining orderliness:

> If people get into the school eh they are being registered and they are checked as to what they want at the school and we have got certain times when people can come to school. They don't just come at any given time (Principal).

The HoD also shared "there's a special time or specific time that they should report to school especially after school and they should have an appointment if they wanna see a teacher concerning the child or anything."

**Theme 3 (T3): Academic Support**

The third theme to emerge is academic support. Students require extensive academic support for academic achievement. Academic Support is defined as additional instructional

support outside of the core curriculum and/or beyond normal school hours. The curriculum introduces learners to foundation reading skills beginning at Grade R, yet at School B there are students in Grade 2 who are unable to read. The third theme to emerge is academic support. In School B, this is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders.

Educators create space in the school day to attend to learners' academic deficits. This was highlighted by an educator, who shared:

> You know with those that are doing well and those are the ones that will be making sure that they get it right and that would mean extra time, extra time. You know we take, it will be 5 minutes of break before when others are going for break then this one will have to be left behind for 5 minutes and then it means break time for that child will be less. Then after school again, then they don't go same time with the others they go and again that little time when others are in class you know we are doing one thing with everybody they will be having that time out with the person that could be there to help like I'm telling. It could be an ex-learner or a parent and sometimes when they are writing now, you choose those few, you sit on the side with them, you make, you try and so that they are at the same level with that one which never happens again but they do become better (Educator).

In addition, university students come during the day to offer academic support to the learners. As noted by an administrator "our children, they struggling to read and also in maths you know counting so we will seek extra support that we are going to get from university students" (Principal).

Another source of support are parents that live in the community, but do not have learners who attend School B. An educator explained:

> They are not parents at our school, they are parents because they realise that we have problems and we trying to sort, to to you know, come out of the problems so they come in that way they help in that way. We have parents that will come say I can avail myself for the morning session and then when the parents does that you can always have a few children those that, because they are struggling with reading. That is, we have a serious problem with reading so we really have to give all the time because in our timetable and in our, I would say our what would you say? The curriculum has very little time for reading, so how do we make more time is through those parents when they come. They can always have a few children or one child at a time for 15 minutes or more with that parent and that child and the parent can help with the reading. Sometimes it would be

> writing, but mostly reading. Yeah we have that even not just sometimes they are not parents per se (Educator).

The school does provide extra classes after school to support learners. However, due to the danger in the community and the journey of nearly 5 kilometers to their informal settlements it can only be an hour. An administrator had this say:

> We do extra classes in the afternoon like the children live here the school knocks off at 2 o'clock and we take them from 2 o'clock to 3 o'clock because we are, we are another thing the thing is we are sensitive about the fact that some live far so we can't take them for a long time to be with us because at the end they go on foot back home and it's a bit far for them and it's not safe (HoD).

To remedy this issue, School B had partnered with an NGO that is located within the informal settlement where the learners reside. An administrator explained the partnership:

> We are working with a club that assists us in helping the children to learn or to read the books because each time they would come in and ask us what is it that we are going to do with the children, the curriculum, the way in which we are going to be teaching the learners. And then they asked for the work that we are going to be giving the learners for homework then they assisting them at the club at that club (HoD).

**Theme 4 (T4): Progress Monitoring**

The fourth theme to emerge is progress monitoring. Progress monitoring is the usage of assessments as a data source that is analyzed and used to drive instructional practice to improve learning. When asked about the role of assessments in student achievement, all participants identified progress monitoring as an essential element for academic achievement. The principal indicated "assessment I think is very vital in the sense that it gauges the learner and eh you know eh so that you are able to see whether the learner has achieved the objectives of a lesson."

As noted by a educator:

> Assessment I would say, it plays a big role because that's where the teacher first gets to see that probably this I didn't do well when I was delivering this teaching, and maybe I wasn't doing it well or I did it excellently you see it from, it's a reflection (Educator).

Progress monitoring is an ongoing process ranging from daily checking for understanding to frequent informal and formal assessments. An educator stated:

> I would say we assess almost every day. Depending on how because you assess them orally, after you know a while even while delivering while teaching you are assessing, whether also they are listening, whether also you are reaching them. It's just often, I think always throughout my teaching I do assessment, and then there will be this formal one that comes. It depends because with spelling it will be eh once a week and with eh comprehension also it's once a week, but we have the general one that comes eh every month, on monthly basis. You will be assessing everything now (Educator).

After assessments, a thorough analysis of the data is performed to identify gaps in learning. The administration described the process by noting that "after assessment we sit down and control the work mark and then we do what we call analysis, item analysis. Check where the gaps are in terms of answering the questions, check where the problems are" (Principal).

The HoD also shared:

> What we normally do with assessment is that when we assess the learners, firstly we wanna find out what is happening does the child understands and when we do marking, we could maybe, we find that there is a problem in a certain portion of these questions that we have given the learners (HoD).

The findings from data analysis is used to drive instruction and determine effective instructional practice. The principal shared:

> If he or she didn't understand then you have to try and make sure that you teach the learner up to that level where you want the learner to be. So assessment it's more of giving support you know to the learner . . . then we sit down and come up with a strategy eh to address those shortcomings or those challenges a-around assessment (Principal).

In School B, learners are also engaged in the progress monitoring process. They are expected to self-assess and reflect on their performance. An educator stated:

> You have prepared and learners know when the assessment will happen and they know what is expected them from the assessment and when they have not [done] well after the assessment we reflect on that assessment, they see where they went wrong (Educator).

An administrator further explained:

> Then we do a lot of revision eh past papers, we give them past papers that they should do revision and then when we do assessment we make it a point that these children do not get easy things we actually what we do is we set questions in such a way that they should be able to assess themselves and then that's where we see how they are perfo, how their performance is pertaining to the way in which they have answered the questions (HoD).

**Theme 5 (T5): Collaborative Teachers**

The fifth theme to emerge is collaborative teachers. Collaborative teachers is defined as teachers feeling comfortable to learn and share each other's knowledge and expertise. Discomfort and distrust prevent educators from learning from each other's knowledge and expertise. However, interviews with the administrators and educators revealed that School B has learned to lay aside difference and work together to focus on academic achievement. This was further highlighted by the HoD:

> I really praise the teachers for whatever they have done for the school. There are differences in my school, here in my school, there's a lot of differences but when we dealing with the child, everybody puts his or her differences away from everything and we focus on the child that one I can praise, I am proud to say that the school has got this team of teachers who are working together.

This united effort has resulted in teachers learning and sharing effective instructional strategies to advance the learners. As described by an educator:

> In the phase meetings that's where we discuss the assessments, how the children have fared in your assessment and we reflecting and we could always sometimes we get some coaching from other, from the HoD, from other teachers, we discuss and this is how I tackled this. For instance you still have a problem in Maths with data handling and after that I really felt I got help from the phase meeting cos others say no from the way I handled it I really found good success maybe if you could approach it like this. We just sharing information as to how we can tackle some things and topics in the class and it does help to a lot of, yeah. And also you know we have, I'm a Grade 2 teacher, I'm meeting there with a Grade 1 teacher who knows that child who, you know, we also discuss these children so you are able to get through to the children. You get to understand and your children that you are with currently because of the previous teacher in the phase meeting (Educator).

Teachers are not limited to sharing academic information about previous learners. They have developed a mentorship program whereby teachers stay connected with learners as they advance to new grade levels to support their academic success. An educator commented:

> In the school we have the mentorship. The mentorship works, it's not formal but it happens many times because I teach as I'm teaching the Grade 2 so I'm knowing this child from that tender age and I am chipping in on their relationship until that child leaves the school. Sometimes if it's a problematic child he knows that the teacher at, eh intersen phase or the senior phase we discuss with you and you're able because you know the child and sometimes you become ultimately that child's parent in a way and you keep track and the teacher if, with the teacher-child that is not open then maybe some times, in most cases actually it becomes easy for the previous teacher to deal with that teacher. It has happened a lot of times with the children we have had serious problems with children like that, but you find that there are better dealt with the previous teachers more, more than they are with the current teachers (Educator).

**Theme 6 (T6): Teacher Quality**

The sixth theme to emerge was teacher quality. Teacher quality is defined as a teacher's quality as a content specialist, effectiveness of instructional strategies, and ability to cater to the holistic needs of learners. An important teacher quality noted by all participants was being on task. As previously stated, on task is characterized as being prepared for instruction and honoring teaching periods. As noted by an administrator:

> Honoring the periods, coming to school in time and seeing to it that each and every time the teacher follows the timetable and it's just the participation of the teachers that makes everything to be effective because even if the teacher is in class . . . there should be lessons that are happening in class. So we, like an HoD, I do class visits I check the children's books to see if instruction is taking place in the class so I think that makes teaching effective on my part (HoD).

An educator also stated:

> In the classroom, again I will firstly mention that the timetable that they, we both the teacher and the learner has to adhere to the timetable, be in class at the time when you should be, and the teacher both the learner and teacher and eh the timetable is always there and of course when they are in class the teacher should be prepared, have your planning, you have your planning and preparation and its ready and you do whatever you have to do to teach the children learners (Educator).

In addition to being on task, teachers engage in the process of reflecting on their teaching. There is awareness and ownership that at times learners do not understand the lesson because of ineffective instructional practices. This was further explained by an educator:

> That's where also as a teacher I come in, because if most did well the problem is not with me but it's with the learner. But if most did badly, then it's mainly, maybe it's me so I reflect on that as a teacher. That's how I view it and I feel that it's always important that we use, we use assessment as a yardstick (Educator).

Teachers are not restrained by academic instruction. They embrace holistic teaching whereby they cater to the academic, emotional, and physical needs of the child. As indicated by an educator:

> We try to cater for their needs, which is not always easy, but we deal with them individually, give your time, understand them, and listen to them because sometimes they just come crying or they are just you know, not in a mood or sometimes they are just very very rowdy and they will not listen. So that's where you have to understand them and just have to have time, just have time, which it isn't there at the same time, so you, you make time between the times of teaching. Whilst the other ones are writing you are attend to this one, you talk and sometimes you don't have to talk you just listen and sometimes you just give a hug. You just show that I am here in whatever way that you can (Educator).

An administrator shared a personal experience:

> She started to cry telling that she lost the mother and the father and I didn't even know that. They are so brave and they participate in class. If you see a problem then you are able to follow it up and see what is happening, but all in all they are just participating. I think what they enjoy is that they eat here and maybe they take that problem after and take that baggage again or that burden and take it home. But when they come to school they are behaving as though there's nothing wrong but you can be able to identify the issues when you are busy with their work (HoD)

**Theme 7 (T7): Parental Involvement**

The seventh theme to emerge is parental involvement. Parental involvement is defined as the representation of home-based support partnering with learners and the school to promote academic achievement. Parental involvement is a critical element for the success of learners. In School B, the relationship with the parents is damaged. Some parents refuse to be involved with

the school. An NGO in the community where the learners reside works as a mediator between the school and home. In addition, it is trying to encourage parents to re-engage with the teachers. The HoD stated:

> This organization was the one that made, that pushed the parents to come to our school, "go to your school see what your child is doing." Because what the parents normally did they would go to the NGO and say, 'we are not happy' as to, I'm not happy as a parent as to how my child is performing. I don't know what is happening with the teachers (HoD).

A few parents are willing to be involved but are not able to academically support their learners. They offer domestic assistance and insight about the learners' living conditions since there is a knowledge gap - due to illiteracy and lack of education. An educator noted:

> There's one parent, she was even in my class this morning, she even cleaned my class. That one is helping the school with many children. Hers are okay because she's there but she also helps you, we talk to her about the child. Sometimes she comes and tells us what she knows about the child and what we, how she can help and how we can meet her half way (Educator).

The majority of the parents are stricken by poverty-related issues and do not have the ability to be involved in the lives of their children at home and school. To remedy this issue, teachers partner with NGOs who stand in proxy for the parents by meeting learners basic needs such as food. This was further explained by an educator:

> Even in terms of food because we can also talk about food. They will just be eating, there's a place they call, they say its France but actually it's a dumping site, so they will be bringing food from that area, eating that food but since we have the NGO and this supply at school of food we don't have that anymore, because they will be sick and when you inquire they would have eaten that food, but now that doesn't happen a lot . . . parents are not working so they really come with empty stomachs to school because of the NGO [the problem] was solved but otherwise they would come in the morning they are hungry (Educator).

An administrator agreed:

> There's a big difference now because there are, this other NGO that's occupying the school that is feeding the children before they go back home because some of the children here are from very poor families. The thing that happens is they can eat here at

> school today and then sleep without food and come back to eat here in the morning so these people are giving them something to eat (HoD).

Some learners are from child-headed households as a result of the parent's HIV-related death or neglect. In these instance, an NGO support these children with caring for their hygiene and assisting with homework. As noted by an educator:

> And the other thing their living, we have child headed eh families and then they would come not clean, not having done their schoolwork. Sometimes they tell you that they slept next door, the mother is not there and stuff like that, and then they, most of the time if they are not again it's the NGO that will help with the homework and things (Educator).

Teachers also make personal sacrifices to ensure that their learners are properly clothed. An educator shared:

> They don't have uniform. We do have fortunately now the supply but it's not all the children that are able to get uniform, so the teachers have to help in their own way and comes with whatever they have to help, especially on days like this when it's cold and on days when it's raining, they just come soaking wet and you know almost not with no clothes, it will be just a shirt and a vest, a shirt and a jersey and they will just be sent like that with no raincoat and they are wet when they come here. You have to do something, you can't just teach like that. Yeah, so it's a lot of unemployment more than anything and some kind of, I don't know. It's just they live in those poverty stricken areas (Educator).

**Theme 8 (T8): Distributed Leadership**

The eighth theme to emerge was distributed leadership. Distributed leadership is defined as the sharing of leadership responsibilities with staff members who have the competency to fulfill the task while fulfilling their primary job role. The style of leadership School B acknowledges for its success is the distributed leadership approach. Teacher capacity is built through sharing leadership responsibilities with educators—they teach and are members of the leadership team. This was supported by a staff who shared:

> …timetable itself which is drawn by the HoD, the SMT, and they they make sure that we are in class the time when we should be and they are no learners outside the the the that's what they do. The Principal sometimes moves, literally moves around, that no learners

> are outside. And as a teacher you are in trouble when you are not in class at the time when you should be in class (Educator).

In the context of School B, distributed leadership involves collaborative decision-making with the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. The principal stated:

> It is consultative nature whenever I take decisions I don't take decisions alone. I consult with all the stakeholders then together we can make a decision. Basically I'm more of a democratic you know, not just going to take decisions alone and my word is final. Everybody wants to have everybody on board, so that everybody buys in into whatever we agree . . . the stakeholders will be the parents themselves, and the Department of Education, eh the NGOs, and the community-based organizations (Principal).

An educator concurred "I would say it's more democratic yeah the, everybody is involved. The Principal and the SMT involves us a lot in the decisions that they make."

The leadership team has developed a system of accountability to ensure that effective instruction and learning is taking place in the classrooms. In addition, it allows them to have constant awareness of what is happening within the school. As stated by an administrator:

> It's monitoring, we have HoD for foundation phase and HoD for intermediate phase. So they from time to time even myself I move around, especially after break eh move around to ensure that teachers are in the classroom. Besides being physically there, we have schedules whereby the HoD would visit teachers in the classroom and you know request learners book and check you know the work you know and all that control and yeah. So the class visits are are the mechanism that we use to make sure that eh there is teaching and learning, and from time to time they have to give report on what is happening in the classroom (Principal).

An educator further explained the system:

> Sometimes you just you would find he was standing there but mainly the books, they do they check the books, eh they are checked eh it's once in 3 months, and you see you have your planning that would reflect that this is what was done on such a day. And we also have an assessment record book that your assessment was done at the right time and your assessment was on what you were supposed to teach. Well, you know it's just record keeping, they make sure that they check the records (Educator).

## Cross-Case Analysis

A cross-case analysis of the findings provides an understanding of the various elements of cases through a critical examination of the relationship between them. Table 5.5 below shows the themes for School A and School B. There were nine unique themes to emerge from the data analysis of School A and School B—eight of those themes were present in both schools. Those eight themes will be discussed regarding their convergences and divergences in the enactment of each theme and how they link to related literature.

**Table 5. 5.** Themes for School A and School B

| | **School A Themes** | **School B Themes** |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Stakeholder Involvement | Stakeholder Involvement |
| **2** | Policy | Policy |
| **3** | Academic Support | Academic Support |
| **4** | Progress Monitoring | Progress Monitoring |
| **5** | Collaborative Teachers | Collaborative Teachers |
| **6** | Teacher Quality | Teacher Quality |
| **7** | Parental Involvement | Parental Involvement |
| **8** | Distributed Leadership | Distributed Leadership |
| **9** | Teambuilding | |

### Theme: Stakeholder Involvement

The National School Violence Study conducted by South Africa's Centre for Justice & Crime Prevention (CJCP) included 12,794 learners from primary and secondary schools, 264 school principals and 521 educators (CJCP, 2018). The study revealed that 15.3% of learners have experienced some form of violence while at school, most commonly threats of violence,

assault and robbery. Principals, whereby more than 80% of them reported incidents of physical violence, corroborate the experience of the learners. This is consistent with Kamper's (2008) observation, and Pillay's (2017) assertion that discipline is a serious concern in many South African township schools. In this study, both case schools were able to successfully manage disciple and prevent violence within the school. There were three sub-themes to emerge from the stakeholder involvement theme: patrollers, parental support, and safety committee. For this theme, there was variation in how School A and School B approached safety and orderliness.

In both case studies maintaining a safe and orderly environment was identified as an essential element to their school success. This aligned with other studies where safety and order (by other names) was addressed as a requirement for school effectiveness: Edmonds (1986) uses the term "a safe and orderly atmosphere conducive to learning"; Schreens (2013) calls it "school climate"; Sammons (2007) name them "learning environments", "positive reinforcement" and "pupil rights and expectations"; and Lezotte (1990) calls it "productive climate and culture." In School A and School B, all participants noted the significant role that patrollers played in maintaining the safety of learners and staff. In School A, the interviews revealed the importance of parental support to assist in school safety as patrollers are few, and the parents serve as informants for what's happening in the community. While School A stakeholders are more independent in their roles and functions, School B has a formalized safety committee. In School B, the educators lead the safety committee ensuring that the policies and guidelines are clearly understood and carried out by the involved stakeholders. In this regard, Collarbone and West-Burnham (2008) promote the adoption of a cultural shift from dependence on leaders to one that values the shared, collective potential of leadership throughout the organization.

**Theme: Policy**

In South Africa, the crime overall has decreased by 1.8%, but there had been an increase in violent crimes such as murder and robbery (SAPS, 2017). In the South African Police Annual Crime Report for 2016/2017, former Police Minister Mbalula reports that in general crime is down; however, when you look closely at the numbers you realize there is a major problem where violent crime has risen by 4.9%. Moreover, according to the Institute for Securities Studies (2018), South Africans are at a significantly higher risk of be victimized by crime than in the previous five years.

In response to this growing concern, where neighboring schools displayed symptoms of crisis, both case study schools were remarkably vigilant in sheltering their learners from the violence in their communities (Christie, 2001; Christie, 2008; & Pillay, 2017). There was one sub-theme to emerge from the policy theme: visitor registration. Both School A and School B explained that clear policies and procedures require patrollers to confirm that all visitors have a scheduled appointment and that they are searched for weapons before being admitted on school grounds. Concerning this level of attention to protect the learners and teachers, Marzano (2003) rates a safe and orderly environment as the fourth of five school-level factors associated with successful schools. Further, he states that if students and teachers do not feel protected, they will not have the necessary psychological energy for learning and teaching.

**Theme: Academic Support**

The struggle for students to achieve academic success has become more challenging with the advent of the standards and accountability movement as it seeks to make coursework more intellectually rigorous (Southern Regional Education Board, 2010). A study conducted by Convissor (2010) showed that students fail eighth grade reading or math are seventy five percent

more likely to dropout of high school than their peers. Balfanz, McPartland and Shaw (2002) argue that "there is clearly a great need to develop and provide...effective means of providing students with the extra help and support they need to take and pass courses…" (p. 5).

Fluke, O'Connor and Peterson (2014) define academic support as "programs and strategies that are used by schools to increase academic achievement of students, particularly for students who may be at risk of diminished academic achievement" (p. 2). Moreover, they claim that tutoring is the most widely implemented strategy for academic support. In alignment with current research, there was one sub-theme to emerge from the academic support theme: tutoring. In School A and School B, there were school-wide programs to meet the academic needs of learners. Both School A and School B took ownership for addressing academic deficits and ensuring learners understood the grade-level content. The difference was their approach for implementation.

In School A, teachers bear the bulk of the responsibility for supplemental direct instruction. They provide tutoring before and after school. In addition, they educate learners on the weekend. Research has proven that before and after school programs provide additional time and academic support for students to complete homework, and allow opportunities for adult assistance without taking students away from their normal instruction in school (Fluke, O'Connor & Peterson, 2014). A South African study revealed that students who attended tutorial sessions scored higher marks than students who did not receive additional support (Baleni, Malatji, & Wadesango, 2017).

In School B, teachers play a significant but much more minor role with additional direct instruction. The educators use spare time during the day to tutor learners. Also, they rely on tutors from the university along with parents and alumni. Tutoring is provided for only one hour

after school. A study by Tomic (2016) notes that effective tutoring programs should be an additional support for students who need skill remediation after receiving the best instruction possible during teacher contractual hours. Given the context of School B, it is too dangerous and their journey home is too far to keep the learners for an extended time after school.

To remedy the issue, educators partner with an NGO that is located in the community where the learners reside. The NGO supports learners by assisting them with their homework. Balfanz, Herzog and Mac Iver (2007) note that schools providing additional help and support, particularly in the early stages education, have the potential to guide disadvantaged learners on the path towards academic success, decrease the likelihood of behavior, and increase the possibility of high school graduation. In the South African context, Hassan (2017) asserts that "tutors are instrumental in enhancing learning among tutees and they play a pivotal role in improving the academic performance of tutees" (p. 99).

**Theme: Progress Monitoring**

The National Center on Response to Intervention (2012) defines progress monitoring as the repeated measurement of academic performance for the purpose of informing instruction of individual students in both general education and special education. According to Kanjee (2008), there is a growing trend in South Africa towards the implementation of school-wide progress monitoring. However, Vandeyar and Killen (2007) argue that in the post-Apartheid curriculum, the provision of appropriate support to teachers to effectively incorporate classroom assessments remains one of the most critical challenges facing the Department on Basic Education in South Africa. There are many factors that impact the effective use of classroom-based assessments such as: inadequate teacher expertise and content knowledge, high teacher workloads and large class sizes, limited access to relevant teaching and learning resources, poor

understanding of assessment and the new curriculum, continued reliance on traditional assessment practices, and the inability and/or unwillingness to adapt their assessment practices to the changing demands of the new education system (Fleisch, 2008; Kanjee, 2009; Otieno, Odongo & Aloka, 2015).

While teachers are expected to create their own classroom assessments, Machona and Kampabwe (2003) note the impracticality of expecting teachers, particularly those situated in disadvantaged schools, to develop high quality assessments to evaluate learners given the significant amount of time required for development and their limited expertise. Despite the multiple barriers, there were five sub-themes to emerge from the progress monitoring theme: data collection (informal and formal assessments), frequently administered assessments, data analysis, data-driven instruction, and student progress monitoring. Four of the sub-themes were present in both School A and School B.

In School A and School B, progress monitoring plays a critical role in student achievement. This aligns with the view of Lezotte (1990) who sees monitoring of learner progress as essential for improving individual learner performance. In both schools, students are frequently administered informal and formal assessments ranging from checking for understanding to national exams. Cotton (2003) concurs by stating, "successful principals ensure that there are systematic procedures for monitoring progress at both school wide and classroom levels" (p. 71). In School A and School B, following data collection, the data are thoroughly disaggregated and analyzed to understand academic successes and areas of growth. Barlett (2013) similarly notes that the data should be used to (1) identify students who are not demonstrating adequate progress, (2) estimate rates of improvement, and/or (3) compare the efficacy of varying forms of instruction to design more effective, individualized instruction.

In both case study schools, the analyzed data drives the instruction, allowing teachers to determine if they should proceed forward with the curriculum sequence due to mastery of the content, or if they should re-teach concepts that were not fully understood by the learners. This practice is supported by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (2008) which states that a key function of school leaders is to develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress. Further, the author asserts that instructional decision-making based on progress monitoring for the purpose of continuous improvement should be embedded in the school culture. In School B, the learners are required to monitor their own progress through self-assessment and reflection of their academic performance. Wiliam (2011) describes this practice as "activating learners as owners of their learning"; and, he claims that self-regulation of learning should be a part of classroom assessment practices as it leads to improvement in student performance.

**Theme: Collaborative Teachers**

Findings from a study conducted by Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel and Tlale (2013) indicated that South African teachers continue to believe that they are inadequately trained and unskilled to participate in a collaborative partnership and would rather link learners experiencing barriers to other support structures and professionals for assistance. However, Botha (2012) advocates for the implementation of learning communities in schools, in response to the dire need to improve the quality of South African education. Moreover, the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa states that by 2017, a professional learning community should be introduced in all public schools (DoBE, 2011). In alignment with that vision, there were four sub-themes to emerge from the collaborative teacher's theme: value

knowledge and expertise of colleagues, peer observation, teacher-led professional development, and mentorship program. Three of the four sub-themes were enacted in School A and School B.

Berry, Daughtrey and Wieder (2009) argue that in disadvantaged schools accomplished teachers innately understand that teaching is a collaborative enterprise, requiring substantial peer support and input for success. In School A and School B, the teachers were willing to learn from each other because they place value on the knowledge and expertise that each individual brings to the team. Leana (2011) states "when a teacher needs information or advice about how to do her job more effectively, she goes to other teachers...when the relationship among teachers in a school is characterized by high trust and frequent interaction...student achievement scores improve" (p. 33).

Collaboration--sharing ideas and knowledge--is a risk; and, it can be difficult to enact without a sense of trust (Berry, Daughtrey and Wieder, 2009). Byrk and Schneider (2002) add that teachers who work in trusting environments have a basis for inquiry and reflection into their own practice, which allows them to take risks, challenge and critique each other, and collectively solve tough problems. Teachers at School A and School B have developed a professional relationship built on mutual trust and respect. This allows them to feel comfortable with peer observations. Teachers are open to allow their peers to observe and critique their instruction to become more effective in their practices. Berry, Daughtrey and Wieder (2009) also assert that improving the quality of teaching and increasing student achievement in high needs schools requires sufficient time for teachers to collaborate and professional development with an emphasis on systemic, sustained, and the collective study of student work whereby peers critique and help each other teach more effectively.

Viadero (2009) notes that teacher who are afforded consistent opportunities to work with effective colleagues improve their teacher effectiveness. In School A and School B, when a teacher has a best practice or instructional strategy that has resulted in student achievement, the teacher leads a workshop for the entire team for professional development. In School B, there is a mentorship program whereby teachers stay connected to previous learners as they advance to new grade levels. They provide support to both the learners and the educator. A US study, over a two-year period, involving 9,000 teachers in 336 schools showed that student achievement improves by greater rates when teachers engage in collaboration (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen & Grissom, 2015).

**Theme: Teacher Quality**

Murray (2016) asserts that the South African system of education is highly polarized whereby wealthy schools are appointed highly qualified teachers, while vastly under-resourced rural and township schools are appointed under qualified teachers. A study conducted by the author indicated that Black African students who attend a quintile five school outperform their otherwise identical Black counterparts who have been forced to attend lower quintile school. If the students are the same, one can infer that underperformance is not due to an inability to learn rather it is related to what is taught and by whom it is taught. This line of reasoning is supported by a study, on the impact of teacher knowledge on student achievement in fourten Sub-Saharan African countries, which found that teacher knowledge has a very large and significant impact on learner achievement in South Africa. In this study, there were five sub-themes that emerged from the teacher quality theme, namely content specialist, on task, high expectation of learners, holistic teaching, and teacher reflection. Two of the sub-themes were mentioned in both School A and School B.

A study by Goe (2007, p. 2) concluded that teacher quality focuses on four categories of teacher quality indicators--t*eacher qualifications, teacher characteristics, teacher practices, and teacher effectiveness*. *Teacher qualifications* are the credentials, knowledge, and experiences that teachers bring with them when they enter the classroom, such as: coursework, subject-matter education, degrees, certifications, and experience. *Teacher characteristics* are the attitudes and attributes that teachers bring with them when they enter the classroom such as: expectations for students, collegiality or a collaborative nature, race, and gender. *Teacher practices* are classroom practices teachers employ--that is the way in which teachers interact with students and the teaching strategies they use to accomplish specific teaching tasks, such as: communicating clear learning objectives and expectations for student performance, using formative assessment to understand what and the degree to which students are actually learning, and subscribing to cohesive sets of best teaching practices. *Teacher effectiveness* is a "value-added" assessment of the degree to which teachers who are already in the classroom contribute to their students' learning, as indicated by higher-than-predicted increases in student achievement scores.

In School A and School B, the majority of participants noted teachers being on task. The teacher comes to school prepared for instruction and ensure learning is taking place the entire period. In both School A and School B, the teachers take a holistic approach to educating learners. They cater to the academic, emotional, and physical needs of the child.

In School A, teachers being content specialist was highly valued, while in School B, teacher reflecting on their instructional practices was deemed to be of great importance. In School A, it was noted that the teachers had high expectations of their learners so there is a culture of work whereby teachers stay focused on instruction and avoid chit chatting with colleagues.

**Theme: Parental Involvement**

There is a lack of consensus regarding parental involvement beginning with from how it is defined, from Larocque, Kleiman, and Darling (2011) who state that "family involvement can be generally defined as the parents' or caregivers' investment in the education of their children" (p.116), to a more detailed definition that perceives parental involvement as " parents' behaviors in home and school settings meant to support their children's educational progress (El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010, p. 989). Nevertheless, positive impacts of parental involvement on student academic achievement has been recognized by policymakers who have interwoven various aspects of parental involvement in new educational initiatives and reforms (Graves & Wright, 2011). In the case studies, there was one sub-theme to emerge from the parental involvement theme: build partnership. While the sub-theme was noted in School A and School B, it was enacted differently.

According to Mncube (2010), in the South African context families living in high poverty, high unemployment and low-education communities are known to engage in fewer education-oriented practices with their children. In both School A and School B, they struggled with parents who are challenged by poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, alcoholism, and drug addiction. School A has managed to repair a broken relationship with parents by building a partnership. They value the parents' role in their learners' education and intentionally provided opportunities for them to be involved academically and within the school at-large. Parrett and Budge (2012) assert that leaders in high-performing, high-poverty schools continually explore ways to provide opportunities for involvement and to gain back their trust. In addition, they have a community liaison who performs home visits for parents who are unable for various reasons to visit the school. South African parents are more comfortable with private involvement rather

with public involvement (Mncube, 2010); consequently, a study by Parrett and Budge (2012) agrees that high poverty schools can involve students' families through home visits.

School B was not as fortunate as School A in repairing their broken relationship with parents. However, they were innovative and found another avenue to ensure the learners had home-based support. They built a partnership with a local NGO to stand proxy for the uninvolved parents. They communicate and collaborate to ensure learners have the support they need between school and home.

**Theme: Distributed Leadership**

Williams (2011) argues that in the South African context the majority of schools do not operate in a manner that is conducive to distributed leadership. Moreover, Maringe and Moletsane (2015) assert that South African school leaders are lacking in education in the area of distributed leadership. However, Botha (2016) claims that if implemented well, in South African schools distributed leadership can make a significant contribution to improved student achievement. This claim aligns with the findings in both School A and School B. There were four sub-themes to emerge from the distributed leadership theme: teachers as leaders, collaborative decision-making, open communication, and system of accountability for teachers. In both School A and School B, three of the four sub-themes were mentioned.

In School A and School B, the principals built teacher capacity by empowering them to take on leadership roles. Teachers were a part of the SMT as the HoD of an instructional phase. They balanced their role as an educator with leading and managing their colleagues. This aligns with the work of Harris (2003) and York-Barr and Duke (2004) who advocate for teachers being empowered as leaders. In School B, the delegation of leadership was further extended to the non-teaching staff, whereby the school secretary was a member of the SMT. Spillane &

Diamond (2007) argue that distributed leadership should focus on the relationship between all stakeholders. In agreeance, Hallinger and Heck (2011) promote leadership responsibilities being shared not only among the principal, administrators and teachers, but by "others."

The principals at School A and School B subscribed to collaborative decision-making. Both principals implemented a democratic approach to leadership. While they ultimately made the final decision, it was never without input from multiple stakeholders. The resonates with Hallinger and Heck (2011) who encourage broad participation in decision making. Harris et al. (2008) adopt the perspective that collaborative decision making shows value for the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practices, not just those who are formally identified as leaders. School A uniquely referenced open communication, which spoke to the transparency of the principal when sharing information with staff.

In School A and School B, the principals were fully aware of what was happening in the classrooms. There was a formal system of accountability for teachers to ensure that learning was taking place in the classroom that aligned with the vision and mission of the school. This speaks to the work of Bush et al. (2010) who suggests that the influence process is independent of formal authority. Therefore, the notion of leaders can extend beyond formal roles and include anyone in the school as long as the principals retains considerable power and remains ultimately responsible for the management and leadership of the school.

## Chapter Overview

In this chapter, data obtained from interviews and documentary data were analyzed based on the theoretical framework of the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research 5Essentials. From this data analysis, nine major themes emerged: (1) stakeholder involvement, (2) policy, (3) academic support, (4) progress monitoring, (5) collaborative

teachers, (6) teacher quality, (7) parental involvement, (8) distributed leadership, and (9) teambuilding. The cross-case analysis revealed that eight of the themes—not including teambuilding—were present in both School A and School B. However, there was variation in the enactment of each of the themes. Furthermore, there was a critical examination of the convergences and divergences of the sub-themes that emerged from the major theme. The next chapter will present the discussion, implications, and recommendations for future research.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter aims to reveal the answer to the research questions. It begins with a summary of findings in connection with empirical research. Then, presents the link between the theoretical framework to the findings. Furthermore, the chapter proposes a model of successful leadership practices for school improvement in disadvantaged township schools. The chapter then presents the implications for practices. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research and the conclusion of the thesis.

## Summary of Findings

The study was guided by the following three objectives:

1. Identify leadership practices of successful primary school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto
2. Understand how successful primary school leaders in Soweto define, identify and navigate issues of multiple deprivation in their schools
3. Determine which leadership form appears to be most closely associated with school improvement among successful primary school leaders afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto.

The key research question of the study is: what can we learn about school improvement from the practices of successful school leaders in primary schools educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto? To explore the key research question, the following sub-questions were addressed:

1. What are the leadership practices of successful school leaders?
2. How do successful school leaders define, identify and navigate the issues of multiple deprivation in their schools?

3. Which leadership forms appear to be most closely associated with school improvement among successful primary school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto?

**Research Question # 1**: **What are the leadership practices of successful school leaders?**

This question sought to answer what leadership practices contributed to school leaders success in primary township school afflicted by issues of multiple deprivation. Moreover, it sought to discover the enactment of these practices. Nine themes emerged from the data analysis process. In reflecting on the themes, I generated four distinct core leadership practices (see Table 6.1). The core leadership practices are interrelated and they show how the case schools were successful by enacting various leadership practices.

**Table 6. 1.** Research Question # 1: Leadership practices of successful school leaders

| Core Leadership Practices | Associated Themes | School A | School B |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Safety Practices** | Stakeholder Involvement | X | X |
| | Policy | X | X |
| **Academic Practices** | Academic Support | X | X |
| | Progress Monitoring | X | X |
| **Instructional Practices** | Collaborative Teachers | X | X |
| | Teacher Quality | X | X |
| | Teambuilding | X | |
| **Family Engagement Practices** | Parental Involvement | X | X |

*Note.* X = the presence of a particular leadership practices in School A and School B.

**Safety Practices**

In studies investigating what makes schools work, creating a safe and orderly environment is addressed as a correlate in academic achievement (Bryk et al., 2010; Lezotte, 1990; Marzano, 2003). My findings support the research themes around school safety to include stakeholder involvement and policy.

To have the necessary psychological energy for teaching and learning, teachers and students must feel safe in school. Moreover, without a minimum level of safety and order, a school has little possibility of positively impacting student achievement (Marzano, 2003). In School A and School B, patrollers played a significant role in maintaining the safety of learners and staff. In School A, parents assisted in school safety and served as informants for what was happening in the schools. An effective school safety program emphasizes prevention, intervention, and emergency response (Lezotte, 1990). In School A and School B, there are clear policies and procedures that require patrollers to confirm scheduled appointments for all visitors and searching for weapons before admitting them on school grounds.

Creating a zone of physical safety involves implementing strategies that encourage students to act with pride and respect school policies and property (NCSL, 2007). While School A stakeholders are independent in their roles and functions, School B has a more formalized safety committee. In School B, the educators lead the safety committee ensuring that policies and guidelines are clearly understood and enforced by the involved stakeholders.

**Academic Practices**

My findings concur with the widely expressed view that successful schools systemically and individualistically tend to the academic needs of learners and strategically monitor their

progress (Byrk et al., 2010; Elmore, 2006; Lezotte, 1990). In the case study of School A and School B, academic support and progress monitoring emerged as two relevant themes..

NCSL (2007) notes that leadership should be learning-centered with a relentless focus on student learning process and outcomes, especially pedagogic development. In School A and School B, the learners were challenged with learning the core curriculum due to deficits in their foundational knowledge. To overcome this challenge, school leaders accepted ownership for addressing academic deficits and ensuring that learners understood the grade-level content.

In School A, educators provided learners with supplemental academic support before and after school. In addition, they instructed learners on the weekend. In School B, teachers played a less significant yet meaningful role in providing learners with additional direct instruction. Educators provided supplemental instruction on spare time during the day and one hour after school. Considering the context of School B, it was too dangerous to keep learners for an extended time after school. Also, their journey between school and home was very far. As a solution, educators partnered with a NGO that was located in the learners' community. The NGO supported the learners by assisting them with homework.

In School A and School B, progress monitoring played a critical role in learner achievement. Elmore (2006) indicated that sustainable improvements rely on diagnostic capacity; therefore, formative assessments and progress monitoring are crucial for personalized learning (Elmore, 2006).). In School A and School B, students are frequently administered informal and formal assessments ranging from check for understanding to national exams. Subsequent to data collection, the data are thoroughly analyzed and disaggregated to reveal academic strengths and areas of growth. The data drives the instruction, whereby teachers determine if they should re-teach concepts that were not fully understood by leaners, or present new concepts based on

mastery of assessed content. In School B, the learners are required to self-monitor their progress through self-assessments and reflections on their academic performance.

**Instructional Practices**

My findings align with research that suggests that teacher quality and collaboration are crucial elements in successful schools (Goddard, Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Hart, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2006; NCSL, 2007). In the case study of School A and School B collaborative teachers, teacher quality and teambuilding emerged as themes.

Leithwood et al., (2006) claims that teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement. Therefore, when teachers are provided the opportunity to engage in professional discourse, they can build upon their content, pedagogical, and experiential knowledge to improve instruction (Goddard et al., 2007). In School A and School B, the educators were open to learning from each other because they valued the knowledge and expertise that each individual brought to the team. Educators at School A and School B developed a professional relationship based on mutual trust and respect. In School A, school leaders and educators rallied together to build a positive school culture built on mutual respect and support. Furthermore, they implemented a teambuilding day each term to continue that powerful work.

NCSL (2007) shared that collaboration increases awareness, widens frames of knowledge, provides powerful learning environments, and allows effective practices to spread. In School A and School B teachers were willing to allow their colleagues to observe and critique their instruction to become more effective in their practice. When a teacher had a best practice or instructional strategy that resulted in student achievement, the teacher led a workshop for the entire team as professional development.

Hart (1998) stated that a learner's educational experience becomes fragmented when educators possess unique knowledge of the child's needs and refrain from sharing it with their

colleagues (Hart, 1998).). In School B, there is a mentorship program whereby teachers stay connected to previous learners as they advance to new grade levels. They provide both learner and educator with supports to promote academic success.

Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) discovered that differences in teacher quality explained the largest portion of the variation in reading and math achievement. In School A and School B, educators came to school prepared for instruction and ensured learning took place for the entire period. Although all groups of learners benefit from effective educators, the effect is stronger for poor and/or minority students than for their affluent and/or white peers (Center for Public Education, 2005). Considering their context, educators in School A and School B took a holistic approach to educating learners. They catered to the academic, emotional and physical needs of the child. In School A, the teachers had high expectations of their learners. To help learners meet the expectations the teachers adopted a culture of work whereby avoided chit-chatting with their colleagues and instead stayed focused on instruction throughout the entire day.

In School B, teachers reflection on their instructional practices were considered to be of great importance; while in School A, teachers being content specialist was highly valued. The teacher provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) underscore the importance of these findings. In the US, teachers are required to be highly qualified. They must meet existing state certification requirements and demonstrate mastery of the content area in which they teach either by passing a content knowledge test or by having majored in the subject in an undergraduate or graduate program.

**Family Engagement Practices**

Research shows that positive home-school relations are an essential component for successful schools (Byrk et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2006; Lezotte, 1990). In this study, my findings are consistent with previous research. In the case study of School A and School B, parental involvement emerged as a theme.

Conventionally, parental involvement is described as a combination of active participation and commitment on the part of the parents to the student and the school (LaBahn, 1995). This traditional model of parental involvement, which involves a partnership especially around academics, was not displayed in the challenging context of School A and School B. According to Garcia and Thorton (2014), family engagement in school improves learner achievement through the reduction of absenteeism, higher grades and test scores, and better behavior and social skills. Understanding and embracing the issues of multiple deprivation experienced by the learners, the school leaders in this study took alternative approaches to fill in the gap of this essential component to academic success.

In both School A and School B the learners were challenged by parents who struggled with poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, alcoholism, and drug addiction. Through building a partnership, School A managed to repair a damaged relationship with parents. They placed value on the parents' role in the lives of the learners and intentionally afforded opportunities for them to engage academically and within the school at-large. Also, they had a community liaison who performed home visits for parents who for a variety of reasons were unable to visit the school.

For a leader, in any given situation and environment it is not only what you do, but how you do it that makes the difference (NCSL, 2007). School B had to consider a different approach to fill in the gap of family engagement, as they were unsuccessful in repairing their broken

relationship with parents. They built a partnership with a local NGO to stand proxy for home-based support. They routinely communicated and collaborated to ensure learners had the support they needed between school and home.

**Research Question # 2**: **How does successful school leaders define and navigate the issues of multiple deprivation in their schools?**

This question sought to highlight the forms of deprivation experienced by learners, and how successful school leaders navigate those issues in their schools. This question will be answered with the framework of the South African Index of Multiple Deprivation for Children (SAIMDC) 2007 (see Table 6.2). The SAIMDC 2007 has five domains of deprivation: (1) Income and Material Deprivation, (2) Employment Deprivation; (3) Education Deprivation, (4) Biological Parent Deprivation and (5) Living Environment Deprivation (Wright, & Noble, 2009).

**Table 6. 2.** Research Question # 2: Definition and navigation of the issues of multiple deprivation in schools A and B

| **Domains of Deprivation** | **Deprivation in Schools** | **School A** | **School B** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Income and Material Deprivation** | Hunger | X | X |
| **Employment Deprivation** | Unemployment | X | X |
| **Education Deprivation** | Truancy | X | X |
| | Illiteracy | | |
| **Biological Parent Deprivation** | Child-Headed Households | X | X |
| **Living Environment Deprivation** | Hostel | X | X |
| | Informal Settlement | | X |
| | Electricity | X | X |
| | Sanitation System | X | X |
| | Running Water | X | X |

**Income and Material Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to capture the proportion of children experiencing income and/or material deprivation. Children categorized in this domain lived in a household with an income of R1003 per month or less. National statistics show that one in twenty children are afflicted by income and material deprivation.

In School A and School B the impact of income and material deprivation resulted in child hunger. In School B, the hunger was such an issue that learners were found eating disposed food from a landfill. To navigate this issue school leaders have developed feeding schemes within the schools. The students received two to three meals per day. This was made possible through contributions from the government, community members, and NGOs.

**Employment Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to measure the proportion of children living in workless households. National statistics show that two in five children do not have working adults in their household. In both School A and School B, unemployment of parents was a significant issue. However, the school leaders did not take on the responsibility of tackling this form of deprivation.

**Education Deprivation Domain**

The purpose of this domain is to capture the extent of children's educational deprivation in an area. National statistics show that one in twenty learners are not attending school. In both School A and School B, truancy for some learners was an issue of concern. In School A, they had a Community Liaison who visited the home of truant learners and work with the families to get them to return to school. In School B, the principal visited the community to collect truant learner and usher them to the school.

In School A and School B, the impact of education deprivation resulted in illiteracy. Most learners were not exposed to early childhood learning in their homes mainly due to parental illiteracy. In addition, the informal learning that they did experience was in their home language, not in the instructional language, which is English. To remedy this issue, School A and School B provide academic tutoring for the learners. In School A, remedial classes were offered before

and after school. Moreover, additional support was provided on Saturdays. In School B, the danger of the neighborhood limited the opportunity for remedial classes. Consequently, teachers provided additional support on breaks during the school day. Also, they provided supplemental tutoring for one hour after school. The school leaders realized that the learners required more intensive academic support. Resultantly, the school leaders connected with an NGO located in the neighborhood of the learners. Through this partnership, students were given support with their homework and tutoring.

**Research Question # 3**: **Which leadership forms appear to be most closely associated with school improvement among successful school leaders in schools facing multiple deprivation?**

This question sought to determine which of the leadership styles, if any, appear to be most commonly adopted among successful school leaders in the Soweto primary school context, to illuminate if particular leadership styles are more impactful for leaders facing multiple deprivation. A review of scholarly studies revealed five leadership theories that tend to be recurrently linked to leadership and deprivation, namely transformational leadership, instructional leadership, distributed leadership, servant leadership, and asset-based leadership.

In the literature review, transformational leadership was explained as a process whereby the leaders engaged with the follower and established a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in them both (Northouse, 2013). Instructional leadership was defined based on the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model, which suggest it is a three-dimensional leadership practice, with each consisting of multiple functions. These functions include (1) defining the mission- framing clear goals and communicating clear school goals, (2) managing the instructional program- supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum and

monitoring student progress, and (3) creating a positive school climate-protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning.

Distributed leadership adopts a perspective of leadership that values the work of all individuals who make a contribution to leadership practices, not simply those who are formally designated or classified as leaders (Harris et al., 2008). Servant leadership was described as "a paradoxical approach to leadership that challenges our traditional beliefs about leadership and influence . . . it emphasizes that leaders should be attentive to the needs of followers, empower them, and help them develop their full human capacities" (Northouse, 2013, p .248). Asset-based leadership is defined by Kretzmann et al., (1993) as a shift in perspective from that of services to empowerment. It focuses on what is currently present in the environment, in addition to the capacities inherent to the individuals and the environment. It stresses that all school stakeholders boast a unique combination of assets and capacities.

**Table 6. 3.** Research Question # 3: Forms of leadership most closely associated with school improvement in Schools A and B

| **Theories of Leadership** | **School A** | **School B** |
|---|---|---|
| Transformational Leadership | | |
| Instructional Leadership | | |
| Distributed Leadership | X | X |
| Servant Leadership | | |
| Asset-Based Leadership | | |

*Note*. X = Presence of the theories of leadership most closely associated with school improvement in School A and School B.

Leadership in School A and School B was unanimously identified by all participants as distributed leadership (see Table 6.3). Distributed leadership within both schools showed that the central focus of leadership was sharing roles and responsibilities with skilled staff members—especially educators. Harris et al., (2008) noted a growing realization that the historical organizational structure of schools requires a shift to a model based on collaboration, networking, and working with external constituencies. In both School A and School B, three sub-themes emerged from the distributed leadership theme including: teachers as leaders, collaborative decision-making, and a system of accountability for teachers.

In School A and School B, the principals built teacher capacity by empowering them with leadership roles. In School A and School B, teachers also serve on the school management team as Head of Department (HoD) for an instructional phase. The principals recognized the educators' ability to effectively lead the teaching staff and decided to share their role of instructional leadership. NCSL (2007) concurred by expressing that as the role of principals has intensified and become more complex, so as the need to share leadership increased, bringing with it the responsibility to develop other leaders. Furthermore, it supports Harris (2004) who suggested that distributed leadership has normative power which eradicated the singular, heroic leader model, and promotes teams and places greater emphasis on teacher, support staff, and students as leaders.

Distributed leadership is not to be equated with simply flattening the hierarchy or delegation of leadership. Its premise is founded on the provision of an alternative lens to view leadership as a shared experience between leaders and followers. It awakens the realization that the follower can be a vital element in defining school leadership (Harris et al., 2008). In School A and School B, principals viewed decision-making as a collaborative process. It was the

practice of the principal to solicit the input of multiple stakeholders before finalizing decisions. In addition, the principal of School A was noted to communicate openly and transparently when sharing information with the staff.

A major finding that emerged was the sub-theme - system of accountability for teachers. This echoes the work of Elmore (2006) which asserted that leaders in successful schools monitor what is taking place inside classrooms and across the whole school by utilizing data, observing teaching and learning, recognizing strengths, and the development needs of teachers and determine priorities for groups of students and units of the school. In School A and School B, all participants expressed that the principals are fully aware of what is happening in the school. Additionally, there is a formal system of accountability for teachers to ensure that learning aligned with the vision and mission of the school is taking place in the classrooms.

## Significance of the 5Essentials Theoretical Framework

This study began its journey by locating the theoretical context within what Bryk et al., (2010) identified as 5Essentials supports for school effectiveness. As previously mentioned, the 5Essentials framework studied successful school leadership in a context different to that of South Africa. Consequently, the use of the 5Essentials framework to explore leadership practices was done in consideration of the specific context of the township primary schooling in South Africa. Nevertheless, the findings of this study were consistent with the UChicago Consortium on Chicago School Research 5Essentials framework for successful schools.

The findings supported the argument that regardless of context to achieve school effectiveness, there must be a strong implementation of the 5Essentials: (1) effective leaders, (2) collaborative teachers, (3) involved parents, (4) supportive environment, and (5) ambitious instruction (Klugman et al., 2015). In both School A and School B, all the themes that emerged

were in alignment with the 5Essentials framework (see Table 6.4). This section will briefly re-state how each essential is conceptualized and identify the associating themes that emerged from the findings.

**Table 6. 4.** Significance of 5Essentials Theoretical Framework

| **5 Essentials** | **School A Associated Themes** | **School B Associated Themes** |
|---|---|---|
| **Essential 1: Effective Leaders** | T9: Distributed Leadership | T8: Distributed Leadership |
| **Essential 2: Collaborative Teachers** | T7: Teacher Quality<br>T6: Collaborative Teachers<br>T3: Teambuilding | T7: Teacher Quality<br>T5: Collaborative Teachers |
| **Essential 3: Involved Parents** | T8: Parental Involvement | T7: Parental Involvement |
| **Essential 4: Supportive Environment** | T1: Stakeholder Involvement<br>T2: Policy<br>T4: Academic Support | T1: Stakeholder Involvement<br>T2: Policy<br>T3: Academic Support |
| **Essential 5: Ambitious Instruction** | T5: Progress Monitoring | T4: Progress Monitoring |

*Note.* T preceded by a number = Theme.

**Essential 1: Effective Leaders**

Essential 1 involves leaders advancing their objectives, particularly with respect to improving instruction, while simultaneously seeking to develop supportive followers for change. That process resulted in the cultivation of other leaders—teachers, parents, and community members—who can take responsibility for and help expand the reach of improvements efforts.

In both School A and School B, the argument for the necessity of Essential 1 was confirmed with the distributed leadership theme.

**Essential 2: Collaborative Teachers**

Essential 2 encompasses the quality of the human resources recruited and maintained in a school, the quality of ongoing professional development focused on improvement efforts, the base beliefs and values that reflect teacher responsibility for change, and the presence of a school-based professional community focused on the core problems of improving teaching and learning. In both School A and School B, the argument for the requirement of Essential 2 was confirmed with teacher quality and collaborative teachers themes. Additionally, Essential 2 was also confirmed in School A with the teambuilding theme.

**Essential 3: Involved Parents**

Essential 3 relates to school staff reaching out to families and communities to engage them in the processes of strengthening student learning. In both School A and School B, the argument for the need of Essential 3 was confirmed with the parental involvement theme.

**Essential 4: Support Environment**

Essential 4 describes a safe and orderly environment that is conducive to academic work as critical to a supportive environment. There must be clear, fair, and consistently enforced student behavioral expectations. Also, teachers must hold students to high expectations of academic achievement while also providing considerable individual attention and support for students. In both School A and School B, the argument for the requirement of Essential 4 was confirmed with the stakeholder involvement, policy, and academic support themes.

### Essential 5: Ambitious Instruction

Essential 5 involves teacher requiring that students organize and plan their work and monitor their progress to prepare them for further schooling, specialized work, and responsible civic participation. In both School A and School B, the argument for the necessity of Essential 5 was confirmed with the progress monitoring theme.

## Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to theory on school leadership linked to the four core leadership practices discussed previously in this chapter: *safety practices, academic practices, instructional practices and family engagement practices.* The core leadership practices are grounded in data, and they highlight the work of successful school leaders in the South African primary township school context. These core leadership practices were enacted in both case study schools, but not uniformly. A systematic account of the core leadership practices will be presented to illustrate the significant contribution of this study to the field within the specific context of the South African primary township school. This study discovered that the core leadership practices are not independent, but rather interdependent as it relates to the success of primary township schools.

### Significance Related to Safety Practices

As reported by the South African Police Service (2017), violent crimes on are on the rise in South Africa. Even more devastatingly, learners are victims of violent crimes within schools (South African Centre for Justice & Crime Prevention, 20XX). Research echoes this concern by noting that discipline is a major concern in many South African township schools (Kamper, 2008 & Pillay, 2017). The literature around creating a safe and orderly environment identifies the

management of discipline as an indisputable requirement for school success (Bryk et al., 2010; Lezotte; 1990; & Marzano, 2003).

In this study, the significance of the core leadership practice *safety practices* is that it gives insight into the leadership practices of successful school leaders who are able to effectively manage discipline and prevent violence within a South African primary township school despite the overwhelming issue of crime in the surrounding community. It presents the idea of sharing the responsibility of ensuring safety by involving teachers, parents, community members and students, rather than making it the sole responsibility of patrollers. Moreover, it notes that there should be clear policies and procedure that are routinely monitored.

**Significance Related to Academic Practice**

Decades into the post-Apartheid South African educational system, it yet remains true that primary school learners' reading levels range from illiteracy to at minimum two levels below national expectations (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). Moreover, teachers are ill-equipped to monitor progress which is essential to ensuring that learning is happening and closing the achievement gap (Vandeyar & Killen, 2007; Otieno, Odongo & Aloka, 2015). However, there has been some research on how to remedy these issues in the South African context (Baleni, Malatji & Wadesango, 2017; Hassan, 2017; Kampabwe, 2003).

Therefore, the significance of the core leadership practice *academic practice* is to contribute to the limited body of research on the leadership practices of successful school leaders who have overcome the challenge of helping struggling learners excel academically by strategically and effectively addressing their deficits in foundational knowledge and language barriers. It provides strategies to afford learners to engage in quality tutorial sessions held before school, after school and/or on weekends. Further, it suggests that the tutoring be delivered by

qualified instructors such as teachers, university students, and NGOs that specialize in academic support. In addition, it highlights practical ways to integrate progress monitoring into the classroom culture; and, how to use the data to assess learning and inform instruction.

**Significance Related to Instructional Practices**

The issue of financial inequity continues to plague South Africa and it is reflected in the educational system in the disparity of teacher quality between wealthy schools and historically disadvantaged schools (Murray, 2016). The imbalance affects dysfunctional schools whereby the teachers lack the skill and training needed to empower their colleagues through collaborative partnerships (Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Tlale, 2013). In response to this crisis Botha (2012) promotes the development of professional learning communities in schools--which would be led by effective teachers (Viadero, 2009).

The significance of the core leadership practice *instructional practices* is that it suggests effective approaches to build teacher capacity through the construction of a collaborative teacher network that involves establishing a positive school culture that embraces the expertise of colleagues to strengthen teacher best practices; along with, providing professional development and teambuilding opportunities to improve teacher quality and academic achievement among learners.

**Significance of Family Engagement Practices**

Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, alcoholism and drug addiction are just a few of the impediments to parental involvement that are faced by South African township schools. Research shows that the children of these parents are known to be exposed to fewer education-oriented practices (Mncube, 2012). While schools should work diligently to involve the biological parents or caregivers in the home-school relationship, issues of multiple

deprivation can make it nearly impossible in some cases. The significance of the core leadership practice *Family Engagement Practices* is that it extends the concept of "parent" beyond biological affiliations. It offers the perspective of "proxy parents" whereby teachers, community members and NGOs take on the role and responsibility in the home-school relationship left void by the absence of the biological caregivers.

## An Emerging Model of Successful Leadership

An Emerging Model of Successful Leadership Practices in School Afflicted by Multiple Deprivation in Townships

Currently, there are no existing frameworks that explain the leadership practices of successful school leaders educating multiply deprived learners in the South African context. The findings of this study have produced outcomes which expand the 5Essentials theoretical framework; by contributing to the emergence of a model of leadership practices of successful school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in primary township schools. In this model, the four core leadership practices with related themes explain the leadership practices which underpin good academic performance in primary township schools. These core leadership practice with their related themes are shown in Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6. 1.** Core Leadership Practice for Learner Achievement in Township Schools


Figure 6.1. Outer circles represent the four core leadership practices with related themes, as contributing to the learner achievement in township schools (inner circle).

As with all successful schools, the two schools in this case study did *what* made schools work. However, what sets them apart was *how* they made their schools work. The two schools won the battle against issues of multiple deprivation and achieved academic success. Conversely, others impacted by the same challenging circumstances are unable to succeed. To assist school leaders in difficult context, the model is being presented based on the findings of this study.

This model can serve as a starting point for primary education practitioners and administrators to begin to understand how to overcome issues of multiple deprivation to achieve academic success in township primary schools. The four core leadership practice works interdependently and not in isolation. Collectively, they produce learner achievement when implemented with consistency and fidelity. The following section explains the four core leadership practices along with implementation strategies for school leaders.

**Safety Practices**

Learners and educators require a safe and orderly environment to engage in effective teaching and learning. Crime and violence are a major concern in townships. Moreover, they find their way into schools, endangering learners and staff. An additional challenge relates to the limited number of patrollers made available by the Department of Education. In schools situated in dangerous contexts, schools learners can enlist involvement from school stakeholders. This could include parents, educators, community members, and learners. Together they can create a formalized system to maintain order in the school. Clear policies and procedures should be developed and enforced with fidelity. It could be beneficial to form a safety committee to lead and monitor the implementation of the safety practices

**Academic Practices**

Learners in township schools come with literacy challenges due to not being fluent English speakers and/or a lack of exposure to foundational literacy skills. School leaders can be proactive rather than reactive by developing supplemental curriculum and courses to attend to learners' academic deficits. School leaders can build partnerships with local universities and community organizations to provide tutoring for learners who struggle with understanding grade level content. Additionally, there should be formalized system to monitor learners' academic achievement. This process should include frequently administered informal and formal assessments. The collected data should then be analyzed and used to guide educators' instruction. Also, learners could be taught to take ownership of their academic performance and growth by self-monitoring their individual progress.

**Instructional Practices**

Teachers tend to work in isolation and do not welcome critiques of their instruction. Yet, teacher collaboration is an essential component to improving academic performance. School leaders should strive to cultivate a school climate built on mutual trust and respect among educators. A school environment should develop where educators value the knowledge and expertise of their colleagues and are open to learning from each other to improve their practice. Furthermore, when school leaders identify exemplary educators, they should provide professional development opportunities for them to share their best practices and instructional strategies with the teaching staff.

### Family Engagement Practices

Positive home-school relations is a crucial element in academic success. In township schools, parental involvement is very limited. School leaders should first attempt to establish traditional parental involvement by building meaningful relationships with the biological parents of the learners. A partnership should be developed whereby parents are made to feel valued in the work of educating learners. Also, school leaders should provide training to strategically equip and empowered parents to academically support their children.

Considering the impact multiple deprivation has on the parents, there are simply instances when traditional parental involvement cannot be formed. In this case, school leaders should think outside the box and find "proxy" parents to support the learners. This could include already involved parents in the school, community members, or community organizations. The goal is to find a caring and consistent adult to help fill in the gap for home-based support.

## Limitations of the Study

While the research achieved its objectives, the findings of this study should be considered in the context of certain limitations. Two limitations are acknowledged in this study namely, sampling and language considerations.

For this study, purposive sampling was used as it allowed the researcher to intentionally select sites to understand a central phenomenon. As the researcher, I was instrumental in selecting the schools and defining the type of participants to be interviewed for the case studies. However, the selection of the participants was the exclusive decision of the principals. The responses of all participants appeared to be authentic and were determined to be valid through the triangulation of data sources. Nevertheless, it was evident that the principals selected

participants who were deemed by them to be credible, knowledge, and willing to be in full compliance with this study. Randomly selected participants may have produce different results.

The interviews were conducted in American English and British English. The researcher was a native American English speaker. English was not the native language for any participant, and it was British English. The participants were multi-lingual speaking several African languages who at times struggled with findings the proper word to articulate their responses. Additionally, there were instances when the researcher struggled to understand the word choices for their responses. While both the researcher and participants were comfortable with the interviews being carried out in English, it would have been beneficial if the interviews were conducted in the participants' native language. Native language interviews may have produce different results.

## Recommendations

This section makes recommendations for school leaders educating learners afflicted by issues of multiple deprivation and future research.

### Recommendations for School Leaders

The two schools in this student were highly successful. While most schools are defeated in the face of challenging circumstance, these schools have defied the odds and succeeded. The findings of the study showed that success of the two schools was achieved by developing and implementing effective safety practices, academic practices, instructional practices, and family engagement practices.

School leaders in similar circumstances may find the following recommendation to be useful:

1. To combat issues of safety, school leaders should develop a formalized safety committee. It should involve representation from all school stakeholders. Clear policies and procedures should be created, and the enforcement of safety practices should be carefully monitored.
2. To close the achievement gap due to issues of language barriers and deficient foundational literacy skills, school leaders should provide tutoring for struggling learners. They should connect with local universities and NGOs to assist this effort. Also, school leaders should ensure educators are routinely progress monitoring student learning through frequent assessments. The data collected from the assessment should be analyzed and used to guide instruction to promote student academic growth.
3. To foster teacher collaboration, school leaders should cultivate a school environment whereby teachers are receptive to share and obtain knowledge from each other to improve their practice. Further, school leaders should build teacher capacity by providing opportunities for exceptional teachers to share their best practices and effective instructional strategies with their colleagues.
4. To build positive home-school relations, school leaders should find ways to involve parents through parent-teacher conferences, curriculum-related training to support their learners. They should help parents feel like a valued stakeholder with the school. Multiple deprivation has a severe impact on some parents which impedes parental involvements. To appease this issue, school leaders should consider "proxy" parents to

support learners. This involves identifying caring and consistent adult school stakeholders who are willing to fill in the gap for parental support.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

There is limited research on the leadership practices of successful school leaders in the South African context—even more so in township schools. Consequently, it would be advantageous for researchers to conduct similar studies that contribute to the body of knowledge concerning school leaders and leadership practices within the township school context. The following are recommendations for future research.

1. The findings of this study are not exhaustive and reflect the leadership practices of successful primary school leaders at two schools in Soweto. Future research can build upon the findings of this study by exploring schools in similar contexts to unveil additional implementational strategies of the essential core leadership practices in successful schools.
2. Leadership is a critical component of school success. In the South African context—with the overwhelming number of school categorized as dysfunctional—the lack of leadership development for principals is a significant issue. Resultantly, future research can be conducted on effective international principal preparation programs regarding the selection and training of successful school leaders in challenging context similar to those in South African township.

## Conclusion

In this qualitative case study, a better understanding of the leadership practices of successful primary school leaders educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto was attained. The findings revealed that the schools were successful at defying the odds in different ways. Furthermore, it was due to a distributed leadership model, not the principal acting alone.

Nine themes emerged from the data: stakeholder involvement, policy, academic support, progress monitoring, collaborative teachers, teacher quality, teambuilding, and parental involvement. From those nine themes, four core leadership practices were generated, namely: safety practices, academic practices, instructional practices, and family engagement practices. The study provided implication for practitioners and researchers. The study also recommended areas of future research.

This study concludes that while we know *what* makes schools work, *how* we make schools work differs contextually. In South Africa and other countries that have schools impacted by multiple deprivation, school leaders must be innovative and resilient in their enactment of the essential core leadership practices. Also, they would benefit from a distributed leadership model as the task of overcoming issues of multiple deprivation to achieve academic success is not a battle that can be won alone. The significance of this study is that it provides struggling school leaders with a model of core leadership practice and methods of enactment that have the potential to enable higher academic performance in their schools.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1.1

Letter to the Principal

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

Letter to the Principal

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is Bria Hoosier. I am a PhD student in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

From the Foundational phase of education and beyond, the vast majority of learners afflicted by multiple deprivation (black Africans) are not acquiring the basic level of mastery in reading, writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, there is another positive and encouraging truth that there are always some disadvantaged students from poorly resourced schools who excel despite obstacles (Fleisch, 2008). These schools serve as role models for the educational system as they perform heroic deeds notwithstanding the affliction of multiple deprivation (Taylor, Muller, & Vinjevold 2003).

Consequently, the proposed study seeks to explore what can be learned about school improvement from the leadership practices of successful school leaders in primary schools educating learners afflicted by multiple deprivation in Soweto.

Of the more than 260 public primary schools in Soweto, three schools were selected as case study schools for this research. Schools were chosen based on achieving a pass rate of 80% or above on the Annual National Assessment for over the past three years, and educating learners who face multiple forms of deprivation. One-on-one interviews will be conducted with the principal, (2) members of the School Management Team, (2) teachers and the chair of the School Governing Board. The interviews, lasting no more than one hour, will focus on the leadership practices employed in your school. All interviews will be audio taped as Patton (2002) asserts that a tape recorder is essential for accurate data collection, in addition, it allows me to concentrate on you even though it does not eliminate the need for taking notes. Smith & Osborn

(2003) concur and add that interviews should be transcribed verbatim as there is no alternative method that will allow for the documentation of every spoken word to be thoroughly analyzed afterwards.

I invite you to participate in a study that aspires to contribute new knowledge aimed at improving student achievement, in underperforming schools in South Africa, through leadership development. If you accept the invitation, please note the following concerning your participation:

- It is voluntary and you have the right to not participate in some part of the research or to fully withdraw
- Confidentiality will be protected as participants will be individually interviewed by only me in a secured location and none of your responses will be shared with fellow participants
- Anonymity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms to remove identifiable information

All written data collected will be securely stored inside a locked box within a locked cabinet, which are only accessible by me, in a locked room. All electronic data will be stored using password protected encrypted software. Within 3-5 years after the completion of the project, all written data will be shredded and disposed. All electronic data will be professionally wiped from the computer's hard drive.
The end result will be a report in the form of a thesis to the University of the Witwatersrand and to its professional community in the School Education. Also, the Gauteng Department of Education will be notified of the results to assist in the further development of their school leadership programs.

If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to contact me without hesitation. I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Bria Hoosier
071 512 9126
brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

**Appendix 1.2**

Letter to SMT

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

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Sincerely,

Bria Hoosier
071 512 9126
brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

**Appendix 1.3**

Letter to the Educator

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

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Sincerely,

Bria Hoosier
071 512 9126
brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

**Appendix 1.4**

Letter to SGB

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

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- Confidentiality will be protected as participants will be individually interviewed by only me in a secured location and none of your responses will be shared with fellow participants
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Sincerely,

Bria Hoosier
071 512 9126
brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

**Appendix 1.5**

Principal's Consent Form

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

Project: Leadership Practices of Successful Primary School Leaders Educating Learners Afflicted by Multiple Deprivation in South Africa

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

**Permission to observe you in school**

I agree to be observed in school. YES/NO

**Permission to be audiotaped**

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview or observation lesson YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only YES/NO

**Permission to be interviewed**

I would like to be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

**Informed Consent**

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

**Appendix 1.6**

SMT's Consent Form

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

Project: Leadership Practices of Successful Primary School Leaders Educating Learners Afflicted by Multiple Deprivation in South Africa

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

**Permission to observe you in school and class**

I agree to be observed in school and class. YES/NO

**Permission to be audiotaped**

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview or observation lesson YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only YES/NO

**Permission to be interviewed**

I would like to be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

**Informed Consent**

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

**Appendix 1.7**

Educator's Consent Form

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

Project: Leadership Practices of Successful Primary School Leaders Educating Learners Afflicted by Multiple Deprivation in South Africa

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

**Permission to observe you in class**

I agree to be observed in class. YES/NO

**Permission to be audiotaped**

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview or observation lesson YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only YES/NO

**Permission to be interviewed**

I would like to be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

**Informed Consent**

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

**Appendix 1.8**

SGB'S Consent Form

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

Project: Leadership Practices of Successful Primary School Leaders Educating Learners Afflicted by Multiple Deprivation in South Africa

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

**Permission to observe you in school**

I agree to be observed in school. YES/NO

**Permission to be audiotaped**

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview or observation lesson YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only YES/NO

**Permission to be interviewed**

I would like to be interviewed for this study. YES/NO

I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

**Informed Consent**

I understand that:

- my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

**Appendix 1.9**

Instrument Number 1: Interview Guide for Principal

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

**Opening Remarks:**

- Thank participant for their time
- Explain the purpose
- Indicate the interview will last no more than 40 minutes
- Assure of confidentiality and anonymity
- Emphasis their right to withdraw at any time during the interview

**Section 1: Leadership Practices**

***University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research 5Essentials***

| Correlates | Implementation | Degree of Effectiveness | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1st Generation | 2nd Generation |
| **Safe & Orderly Environment** | 1. What is done to create a safe and orderly environment? | | |
| | 2. How do you negotiate issues that challenge the safety and order in the school? | | |
| | 3. In what ways can you improve safety and order in your school? | | |
| **High Climate of Expectations for Success** | 1. What is done to create a climate in which your staff believes that all learners can attain mastery of the curriculum; and, that your staff believes they have the ability to help? | | |
| | 2. How do you deal with issues that challenge your high expectations for success? | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 3. In what ways can you further heighten your expectations for success? | | |
| **Instructional Leadership** | 1. What is done to address instructional effectiveness within the classroom setting? | | |
| | 2. How do you handle the issue of implementation of ineffective instructional strategies and within the classroom setting? | | |
| | 3. What is your plan to improve teaching and learning in the school? | | |
| **Clear & Focused Mission** | 1. What is the vision/mission of the school? | | |
| | 2. How do you carry out the vision/mission of the school? | | |
| | 3. Where do you see the school in the next five years? | | |
| **Opportunity to Learn & Student Time on Task** | 1. How does the school ensure that the learners get their full time entitlement? | | |
| | 2. What are some of the challenges to learners getting their full time entitlement? | | |
| | 3. What improvements can the school make concerning learners and their time entitlement? | | |
| **Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress** | 1. How is student progress measured? | | |
| | 2. What are some of the challenges in measuring student progress? | | |
| | 3. How can the school improve how it measures student progress? | | |
| **Home-School Relations** | 1. How would you describe the relationship between the parents and school? | | |
| | 2. What are some of the challenges within the relationship? | | |
| | 3. How can the relationship be further developed? | | |

**Section 2: Issues of Multiple Deprivation**

1) What does deprivation mean to you?
2) Which forms of deprivation impact your learners mostly?
3) How do you deal with the issues caused by deprivation?

**Section 3: Leadership Forms**

1. How would you describe your style of leadership?

**Closing Remarks:**

- Thank participant for their time
- Indicate how the findings will be used
- Ask them if further contact can be made, if necessary

**Appendix 2.1**

Instrument Number 2: Interview Guide for SMT

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

**Opening Remarks:**

- Thank participant for their time
- Explain the purpose
- Indicate the interview will last no more than 40 minutes
- Assure of confidentiality and anonymity
- Emphasis their right to withdraw at any time during the interview

**Section 1: Leadership Practices**

***University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research 5Essentials***

| CORRELATES | QUESTIONS |
|---|---|
| **Safe & Orderly Environment** | *What role does leadership play in the safety and discipline within the school? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **High Climate of Expectations for Success** | *What are the leadership's expectations of the learners and educators concerning academic success? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **Instructional Leadership** | *What role does leadership play in classroom instruction? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **Clear & Focused Mission** | *What is the vision and mission of the school? Where do you see the school in the next five years?* |
| **Opportunity to Learn & Student Time on Task** | *How does leadership ensure that the learners get their full time entitlement? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **Frequent Monitoring of** | *How is student progress measured? What are some* |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Student Progress** | *strengths and challenges?* |
| **Home-School Relations** | *How would you describe the relationship between the parents and school? What are some of the strengths and challenges?* |

**Section 2: Issues of Multiple Deprivation**

1. What does deprivation mean to you?
2. Which forms of deprivation impact learners mostly?
3. How are the issues caused by deprivation dealt with in the school?

**Section 3: Leadership Forms**

1. How would you describe the style of leadership in the school?

**Closing Remarks:**

- Thank participant for their time
- Indicate how the findings will be used
- Ask them if further contact can be made, if necessary

**Appendix 2.2**

Instrument Number 3: Interview Guide for Educator

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

**Opening Remarks:**

- Thank participant for their time
- Explain the purpose
- Indicate the interview will last no more than 40 minutes
- Assure of confidentiality and anonymity
- Emphasis their right to withdraw at any time during the interview

**Section 1: Leadership Practices**

***University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research 5Essentials***

| **CORRELATES** | **QUESTIONS** |
|---|---|
| **Safe & Orderly Environment** | *What role does leadership play in the safety and discipline within the school? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **High Climate of Expectations for Success** | *What are the leadership's expectations of the learners and educators concerning academic success? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **Instructional Leadership** | *What role does leadership play in classroom instruction? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **Clear & Focused Mission** | *What is the vision and mission of the school? Where do you see the school in the next five years?* |
| **Opportunity to Learn &** | *How does leadership ensure that the learners get their full* |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Student Time on Task** | *time entitlement? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress** | *How is student progress measured? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **Home-School Relations** | *How would you describe the relationship between the parents and school? What are some of the strengths and challenges?* |

**Section 2: Issues of Multiple Deprivation**

1. What does deprivation mean to you?
2. Which forms of deprivation impact learners mostly?
3. How are the issues caused by deprivation dealt with in the school?

**Section 3: Leadership Forms**

1. How would you describe the style of leadership in the school?

**Closing Remarks:**

- Thank participant for their time
- Indicate how the findings will be used
- Ask them if further contact can be made, if necessary

**Appendix 2.3**

Instrument Number 4: Interview Guide for SGB

Wits School of Education

27 Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 ~ Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa

Tel: +27 71 512-9126 ~ Fax: +27 11 717-3009 ~ Email: brianetta.hoosier@yahoo.com

**Opening Remarks:**

- Thank participant for their time
- Explain the purpose
- Indicate the interview will last no more than 40 minutes
- Assure of confidentiality and anonymity
- Emphasis their right to withdraw at any time during the interview

**Section 1: Leadership Practices**

***University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research 5Essentials***

| CORRELATES | QUESTIONS |
|---|---|
| **Safe & Orderly Environment** | *What role does leadership play in the safety and discipline within the school? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **High Climate of Expectations for Success** | *What are the leadership's expectations of the learners and educators concerning academic success? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **Instructional Leadership** | *What role does leadership play in classroom instruction? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **Clear & Focused Mission** | *What is the vision and mission of the school? Where do you see the school in the next five years?* |
| **Opportunity to Learn & Student Time on Task** | *How does leadership ensure that the learners get their full time entitlement? What are some strengths and challenges?* |
| **Frequent Monitoring of** | *How is student progress measured? What are some* |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Student Progress** | *strengths and challenges?* |
| **Home-School Relations** | *How would you describe the relationship between the parents and school? What are some of the strengths and challenges?* |

**Section 2: Issues of Multiple Deprivation**

1. What does deprivation mean to you?
2. Which forms of deprivation impact learners mostly?
3. How are the issues caused by deprivation dealt with in the school?

**Section 3: Leadership Forms**

1. How would you describe the style of leadership in the school?

**Closing Remarks:**

- Thank participant for their time
- Indicate how the findings will be used
- Ask them if further contact can be made, if necessary

## Appendix 2.4

2013 5Essentials Survey Items by Essential and Individual Measure

1. **EFFECTIVE LEADERS**

| **A. Teacher Influence** |
|---|
| Teacher Survey: How much influence do teachers have over school policy in each of the areas below: |
| 1. Hiring new professional personnel. |
| 2. Planning how discretionary school funds should be used. |
| 3. Determining books and other instructional materials used in classrooms. |
| 4. Setting standards for student behavior. |
| 5. Establishing the curriculum and instructional program. |
| 6. Determining the content of in-service programs. |
| *Response Options: Not at All, A Little, Some, To a Great Extent* |
| **B. Principal Instructional Leadership** |
| Teacher Survey: The principal at this school: |
| 1. Participates in instructional planning with teams of teachers. |
| 2. Knows what's going on in my classroom. |
| 3. Carefully tracks student academic progress. |
| 4. Understands how children learn. |
| 5. Presses teachers to implement what they have learned in professional development. |
| 6. Communicates a clear vision for our school. |
| 7. Sets high standards for student learning. |
| 8. Makes clear to the staff his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |

| **C. PGMC–Program Coherence** |
|---|
| Teacher Survey: To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following: |
| 1. Many special programs come and go at this school. |
| 2. Once we start a new program, we follow up to make sure that it's working. |
| 3. Curriculum, instruction, and learning materials are well coordinated across the different grade levels at this school. |
| 4. We have so many different programs in this school that I can't keep track of them all. |
| 5. There is consistency in curriculum, instruction, and learning materials among teachers in the same grade level at this school. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |
| **D. Teacher-Principal Trust** |
| Teacher Survey: Please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following: |
| 1. It's OK in this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with the principal. |
| 2. The principal looks out for the personal welfare of the faculty members. |
| 3. I trust the principal at his or her word. |
| 4. The principal at this school is an effective manager who makes the school run smoothly. |
| 5. The principal places the needs of children ahead of personal and political interests. |
| 6. The principal has confidence in the expertise of the teachers. |
| 7. The principal takes a personal interest in the professional development of teachers. |
| 8. Teachers feel respected by the principal. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |

**2. COLLABORATIVE TEACHERS**

| **A. Collective Responsibility** |
|---|
| Teacher Survey: How many teachers in this school: |

| |
|---|
| 1. Feel responsible when students in this school fail. |
| 2. Feel responsible to help each other do their best. |
| 3. Help maintain discipline in the entire school, not just their classroom. |
| 4. Take responsibility for improving the school. |
| 5. Feel responsible for helping students develop self-control. |
| 6. Feel responsible that all students learn. |
| *Response Options: None, Some, About Half, Most, Nearly All* |
| **B. Quality Professional Development** |
| Teacher Survey: Overall, my professional development experiences this year have: |
| 1. Included opportunities to work productively with teachers from other schools. |
| 2. Included enough time to think carefully about, try, and evaluate new ideas. |
| 3. Been sustained and coherently focused, rather than short-term and unrelated. |
| 4. Included opportunities to work productively with colleagues in my school. |
| 5. Been closely connected to my school's improvement plan. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |
| **C. School Commitment** |
| Teacher Survey: Please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following: |
| 1. I wouldn't want to work in any other school. |
| 2. I would recommend this school to parents seeking a place for their child. |
| 3. I usually look forward to each working day at this school. |
| 4. I feel loyal to this school. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |
| **D. Teacher-Teacher Trust** |

| |
|---|
| Teacher Survey: Please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following: |
| 1. Teachers in this school trust each other. |
| 2. It's OK in this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with other teachers. |
| 3. Teachers respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts. |
| 4. Teachers at this school respect those colleagues who are experts at their craft. |
| 5. Teachers feel respected by other teachers. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |

**3. INVOLVED FAMILIES**

| |
|---|
| **A. Human & Social Resources in the Community** |
| Student Survey: How much do you agree with the following statements about the community in which you live: |
| 1. People in this neighborhood can be trusted. |
| 2. The equipment and buildings in the neighborhood, park, or playground are well kept. |
| 3. There are adults in this neighborhood that children can look up to. |
| 4. Adults in this neighborhood know who the local children are. |
| 5. During the day, it is safe for children to play in the local park or playground. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |
| **B. Outreach to Parents** |
| Teacher Survey: Please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following: |
| 1. Teachers work closely with parents to meet students' needs. |
| 2. This school regularly communicates with parents about how they can help their children learn. |
| 3. Teachers work at communicating to parents about support needed to advance the school mission. |

| |
|---|
| 4. Teachers encourage feedback from parents and the community. |
| 5. The principal pushes teachers to communicate regularly with parents. |
| 6. Teachers really try to understand parents' problems and concerns. |
| 7. Parents are greeted warmly when they call or visit the school. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |
| **C. Teacher-Parent Trust** |
| Teacher Survey: Please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following: |
| 1. Parents do their best to help their children learn |
| 2. Teachers feel good about parents' support for their work |
| 3. Parents support teachers teaching efforts |
| 4. Teachers and parents think of each other as partners in educating children. |
| 5. Staff at this school work hard to build trusting relationships with parents. |
| 6. Teachers feel respected by the parents of the students |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |

**4. SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONEMENT**

| |
|---|
| **A. Peer Support for Academic Work** |
| Student Survey: How many of the students in your [target] class: |
| 1. Think doing homework is important. |
| 2. Feel it is important to pay attention in class. |
| 3. Feel it is important to come to school every day. |
| 4. Try hard to get good grades. |
| *Response Options: None, A Few, About Half, Most, Nearly All* |
| **B. Academic Personalism** |
| Student Survey: How much do you agree with the following statements about your [TARGET] |

| |
|---|
| class: The teacher for this class: |
| 1. Helps me catch up if I am behind. |
| 2. Notices if I have trouble learning something. |
| 3. Gives me specific suggestions about how I can improve my work in this class. |
| 4. Is willing to give extra help on schoolwork if I need it. |
| 5. Explains things in a different way if I don't understand something in class. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Ag*ree |
| **C. Academic Press** |
| Student Survey: In my [target] class, how often: |
| 1. The teacher asks difficult questions in class. |
| 2. The teacher asks difficult questions on tests. |
| 3. This class challenges me. |
| 4. This class requires me to work hard to do well. |
| *Response Options: Never, Once In a While, Most of the Time, All the Time* |
| How much do you agree with the following statements about your [target] class: |
| 5. This class really makes me think. |
| 6. I really learn a lot in this class. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |
| In my [target] class, my teacher: |
| 7. The teacher wants us to become better thinkers, not just memorize things. |
| 8. The teacher expects me to do my best all the time. |
| 9. The teacher expects everyone to work hard. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |
| **D. Safety** |

| |
|---|
| Student Survey: How safe do you feel: |
| 1. Outside around the school. |
| 2. Traveling between home and school. |
| 3. In the hallways and bathrooms of the school. |
| 4. In their classes |
| *Response Options: Not Safe, Somewhat Safe, Mostly Safe, Very Safe* |
| **E. Student-Teacher Trust** |
| Student Survey: How much do you agree with the following: |
| 1. My teachers always keep their promises |
| 2. I feel safe and comfortable with my teachers at this school. |
| 3. My teachers will always listen to students' ideas. |
| 4. When my teachers tell me not to do something, I know they have a good reason |
| 5. My teachers treat me with respect. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |
| **F. School-Wide Future Orientation (H.S. Only)** |
| Student Survey: How much do you agree with the following. At my high school: |
| 1. Teachers work hard to make sure that students stay in school. |
| 2. Teachers pay attention to all students, not just the top students. |
| 3. Teachers make sure that all students are planning for life after graduation. |
| 4. Teachers work hard to make sure that all students are learning. |
| 5. All students are encouraged to go to college. |
| 6. High school is seen as preparation for the future. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |

| **G. Expectations for Postsecondary Education (H.S. Only):** |
|---|
| Teacher Survey: Please mark the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following: |
| 1. Most of the students in this school are planning to go to college. |
| 2. Teachers expect most students in this school to go to college. |
| 3. Teachers at this school help students plan for college outside of class time. |
| 4. The curriculum at this school is focused on helping students get ready for college. |
| 5. Teachers in this school feel that it is a part of their job to prepare students to succeed in college. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |

**5. AMBITIOUS INSTRUCTIONS**

| **A. Course Clarity** |
|---|
| Student Survey: How much do you agree with the following statements about your [target] class: |
| 1. I learn a lot from feedback on my work. |
| 2. The homework assignments help me to learn the course material. |
| 3. The work we do in class is good preparation for the test. |
| 4. I know what my teacher wants me to learn in this class. |
| 5. It's clear to me what I need to do to get a good grade. |
| *Response Options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree* |
| **B. English Instruction** |
| Students Survey: In your ENGLISH/READING/LITERATURE class this year, how often do you do the following: |
| 1. Rewrite a paper or essay in response to comments. |
| 2. Improve a piece of writing as a class or with partners. |
| 3. Debate the meaning of a reading. |

| |
|---|
| 4. Discuss how culture, time, or place affects an author's writing. |
| 5. Discuss connections between a reading and real life people |
| *Response Options: Never, Once or Twice a Semester, Once or Twice a Month, Once or Twice a Week, Almost Every Day* |
| **C. Math Instruction** |
| Student Survey: In your MATH class this year, how often do you do the following: |
| 1. Write a math problem for other students to solve. |
| 2. Write a few sentences to explain how you solved a math problem. |
| 3. Apply math to situations in life outside of school. |
| 4. Explain how you solved a problem to the class. |
| 5. Discuss possible solutions to problems with other students. |
| *Response Options: Never, Once or Twice a Semester, Once or Twice a Month, Once or Twice a Week, Almost Every Day* |
| **D. Quality of Student Discussion** |
| Teacher Survey: To what extent do the following characteristics describe discussions that occur in your class: |
| 1. Students use data and text references to support their ideas. |
| 2. Students provide constructive feedback to their peers/teachers. |
| 3. Students build on each other's ideas during discussion. |
| 4. Most students participate in the discussion at some point. |
| 5. Students show each other respect. |
| *Response Options: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Almost Always* |